

DU freshers facing acute accommodation crisis

KAMRUL HASAN KHAN

Over 3000 freshers of Dhaka University (DU) are facing serious accommodation crisis as they find it very difficult to get a place in the residential dormitories.

The academic activities of 2006-07 session have begun over two months ago, but many students still cannot manage to have a seat in their respective dormitories, which are crammed with students of previous sessions.

Students coming from outside the capital are bearing the brunt of the accommodation crisis.

"When I asked the hall authorities for a place in the hall, they said that freshers are not allowed to stay in the hall. But where I will live now as I've no place to live in the capital," said a student who came from Khulna and is attached to Ziaur Rahman hall. At present, he is living in the house of one of his relatives.

Taslima Akter from Jhenidah, who has been attached to Rokeya Hall, has tried for the last two months to get or share a room at the hall. She has applied to the hall authorities and also sought the help of senior residents, but to no avail.

"Now I wonder how long I would be able to stay in the house of my distant relative," she said.

In previous years, student leaders used to provide accommodation for freshers by cramming them into a number of rooms known as 'Gono rooms' in every dormitory, where

they live in an unhygienic condition.

Mainly the student organisations of the ruling parties managed accommodation for the freshers so that they can be used in the political activities on the campus.

But this year, with the change in political scenario, the freshers have failed to get such facilities.

Although the rules and regulations of the university do not allow too many students to live in a room, the student organisations made it a common practice for many years to cram freshers into a room while the hall authorities remained indifferent to it.

The university administration is now trying to comply with the rules that bar freshers from cramming into the rooms in dormitories.

The university authorities said they are now struggling to accommodate senior students in the dormitories.

"We are sympathetic to the problems of freshers, but we don't want our students to cram into rooms in an unhygienic condition. We also can't do anything to address their problems at the moment," a provost of a dormitory said, preferring anonymity.

Former vice-chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the university administration as well as the government should look into this issue, as the government is trying to bring changes to the rules of appointment of VCs and

other related issues.

Meanwhile, a number of teachers and students blamed the university administration for remaining indifferent to the acute crisis prevailing for years.

They also said the authorities did not construct a single dormitory during the tenure of the previous four-party alliance government, worsening the crisis.

About 20,000 students, out of more than 32,000 students, are staying at 16 residential dormitories, sources said. And hundreds of them are living in 'Gono rooms' in inhuman condition in almost every dormitory.

The accommodation crisis in four female halls is worse than in the male halls.

Prof Azad said the number of students is increasing every year, but the university administration did not take any steps to address the accommodation crisis.

Bangabandhu Hall and Ziaur Rahman Hall were built in 1985 and two more dormitories in 1997, he said. But no dormitory was built in the last 10 years, whereas at least four dormitories should have been built by this time, he added.

DU VC Prof SMA Faiz said the university authorities could not construct new halls due to lack of space. The authorities, however, are going to build a female hall near the Curzon Hall to ease the accommodation crisis, he added.

Bomb explodes at Kamalapur Railway Station

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A hand-made bomb exploded at Kamalapur Railway Station in the city yesterday, creating panic among the passengers and officials.

The Government Railway Police (GRP) said the bomb went off with a huge bang at No. 8 platform at around 5:15pm. However, there were no reports of casualties.

The GRP and Mujibhel police rushed to the spot and recovered an unexploded bomb lying nearby.

The bombs were put in two empty Phensidyl bottles, police said.

No-one claimed responsibility for the blasts as of filing of this report at around 9:00pm, they added.

When asked whether Jaded al Qaeda, who was responsible for the bomb blasts in three major railway stations on May 1, was behind the current bomb blast, the police said they did not find any materials on the scene linking the militant outfit to the incident.

65,000 devotees to perform Hajj this year

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 65,000 devotees from Bangladesh will be able to perform Hajj this year under a set of new pacts with the Saudi government.

Three agreements were signed by Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Dr ASM Matinur Rahman and Saudi Hajj Minister Dr Fuad Bin Abdus Salam Al Farashi in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, said an official announcement yesterday.

Formulation of a 'master plan' for the better management of the country's Hajj pilgrims through mutual cooperation between the two countries was discussed in the signing ceremony.

High officials, including two deputy ministers of Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh envoy to Saudi Arabia Maj Gen (ret'd) SM Iqbalul Haque and Consul General of Bangladesh in Jeddah Ali Akbar were present on the occasion.

Biman board reconstituted

BSS, Dhaka

The government yesterday reconstituted Bangladesh Biman Corporation Management Board with adviser for civil aviation and tourism as its chairman.

The board has been reconstituted under 9(1) clause of Bangladesh Biman Corporation Ordinance 1977, an official handout said.

Other members of the committee are: Principal Secretary to the chief adviser's office, finance secretary, civil aviation and tourism secretary, chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, chairman of civil aviation authority, chairman of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation and managing director of Bangladesh Biman Corporation.

DEATH OF RISIL SANGMA Inquiry body to start hearing soon

BSS, Dhaka

The inquiry commission constituted to probe the death of Chales Risil Sangma will start hearing and recording of the statements of the eyewitnesses and others related to the incident soon.

The probe body has requested eyewitnesses and concerned people to register their names at Maganteenagar village from 10:00am to 4:00pm on June 5 and with inquiry commission office at Central Circuit House, Circuit House Road in Dhaka from 10:00am to 4:00pm on June 7, said an official handout.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

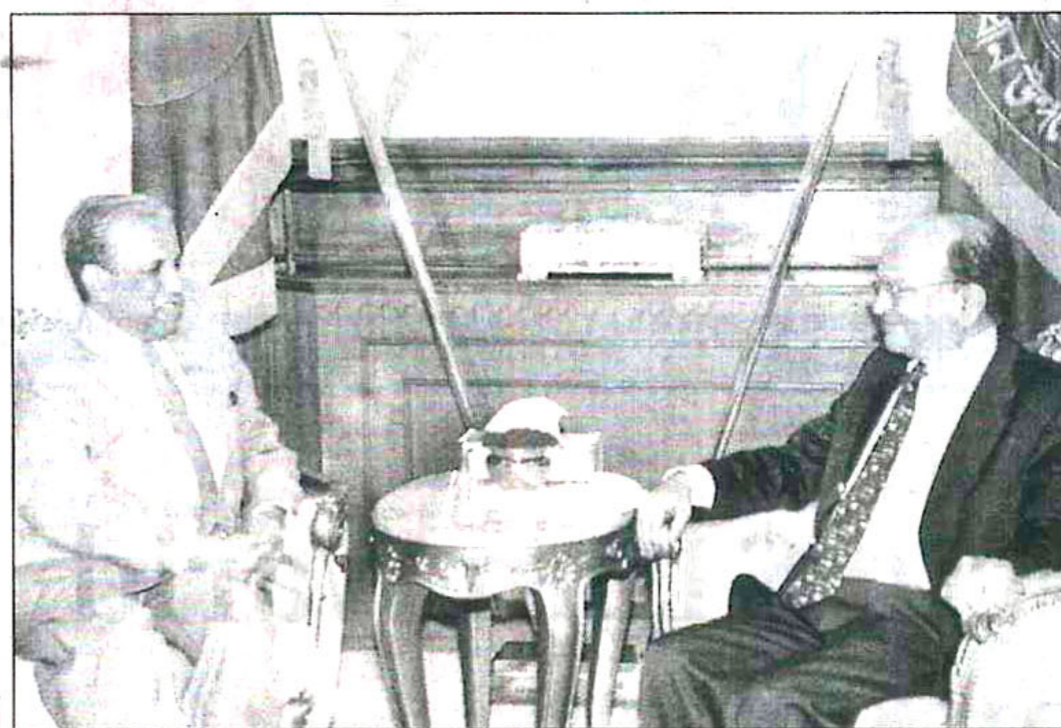
Centre for Law Research and Support organises a seminar on 'Ways to solve the grave crime jute and the jute industry in Bangladesh is undergoing'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

Memorial meeting

Bhasani Samarthak Goshthi will hold a memorial meeting to pay tribute to Tofazzel Hossain Manik Mia. Venue: Hall room of Taxes Bar Association. Time: 4:00pm.

Inauguration

The inauguration of Saaj, a new fashion house, will be held. Venue: House 2, Road 11, Banani. Time: 11:30am.



Pratul C Patel, vice-president of South Asian Region of World Bank, calls on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office in the city yesterday.

PROBE INTO GRAFT CHARGES AGAINST BARISAL MAYOR ACC taskforce finds evidence of ill-gotten gains

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A taskforce of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has found evidence that Barisal City Corporation Mayor Mojibar Rahman Sarwar has amassed huge wealth and properties worth cores of taka through illegal means, sources said yesterday.

On the third day of its investigation into graft charges against the mayor, the taskforce found that he has huge landed properties in different areas and also deposited huge amount of money in several banks, which did not match his legal source of income.

The ACC and bank sources said Mayor Sarwar deposited huge amount of money in Dhaka and Barisal branches of Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited and National Bank Limited and conducted transactions amounting to cores of taka.

He has a fixed deposit of Tk 50 lakh in the name of one of his daughters and a cash deposit of Tk 50 lakh in regular account in Barisal branch of DBBL, they added. He has also two

fixed deposits of Tk 30 lakh each in the name of his two daughters and Tk 50,000 in regular account in NBL Barisal branch.

The taskforce chief Major Abdul Hye and members Fazul Huq, deputy director of Barisal ACC, Maniruzzaman, deputy director of Taxes, Hayatul Islam, assistant commissioner of Barisal Metropolitan Police, and Zainul Abedin, ASP of Rab, visited Sadar Upazila sub-registry office yesterday and inquired about landed properties owned by the Mayor and his family members.

They asked Sub-registrar Sirajul Islam to submit detailed reports about the properties within 24 hours.

Sources said the mayor has valuable landed properties worth cores of taka in Chandamari, Textile, Kashipur and Purnapara areas of the city.

Meanwhile, panic gripped the ward commissioners, officials, staffs and employees of the Barisal City Corporation as the taskforce also asked for information about their wealth and properties and inquired about various irregularities in the corporation activities.

Some officials even did not turn up in their offices.

Sources said the taskforce might lodge a case against the mayor on charges of corruption and irregularities in city corporation activities within a short time.

SC vacation begins June 8

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin has nominated Justice M Joyntul Abedin and Justice M Hassan Ameen to dispose of the matters relating to urgent cases of the Appellate Division during the Supreme Court vacation from June 8 to July 21.

Justice Abedin will hear the cases on June 12, 19 and 26 while Justice Ameen will hear the cases on June 10, 11 and 12 at the chamber court from 10:00am, said a PID handout yesterday.

SC disposes of govt petition, orders best treatment for Ctg mayor

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday disposed of a government petition that sought leave-to-appeal against a High Court order granting Chittagong city Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury interim bail on health grounds against his detention order.

A five-member full bench of the apex court, however, directed the authorities to ensure best available treatment for the detained mayor.

Before passing the orders, the bench perused the medical report of ailing Mohiuddin Chowdhury, which was submitted by the government side.

Mayor Mohiuddin, arrested by the army-led joint forces on March 7 on charges of corruption, was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital from Bandarban jail on May 14 following a heart attack.

Later, he was shifted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University hospital in the capital as his condition deteriorated.

Meanwhile, more criminal cases have been filed against him.

Attorney General Fida M Kamal appeared for the state.

Obituary

M Hayatur Rahman, former managing director of Uttara Bank, passed away at BirDEM Hospital in the city on Wednesday at the age of 71, says a press release.

He also served at the House Building Finance Corporation and Janata Bank.

He was buried near the mausoleum of Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah at Nalta in Satkhira.

His quikhwani will be held at his Pisciculture Housing Society residence at Shaymoli in the city after Asr prayers on June 3.

Abdul Latif Bhuiyan

Abdul Latif Bhuiyan, an eminent educationist, social worker, passed away at Bangladesh Medical Hospital on Tuesday, says a press release.

He also actively took part in the language movement and the Liberation War.

He is survived by his wife, three sons and two daughters. Two of his sons were awarded 'Bir Protik' for their contribution to the Liberation War.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Jafarpur in Nabinagar, Brahmanbaria. His quikhwani will be held at his ancestral home today.

Ujjal Ahmed

Ujjal Ahmed, eldest son of veteran freedom fighter and renowned actor late Raju Ahmed, passed away at a hospital at Mindanao in the Philippines on May 21 at the age of 42, says a press release.

He was suffering from high blood pressure, diabetes and kidney problems.

He had been living in the Philippines since 1993. He left behind his wife, three daughters and one son to mourn his death.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held on the premises of Raju Ahmed Memorial Association office at Courtpara in Kushtia today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Death anniversary

Today is the 11th death anniversary of Golam Kibria, one of the organisers of the War of Liberation, a journalist and litterateur, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and discussion will be held at his Badda residence in the city after Juma prayers. Similar programmes will also be arranged at his village home at Gournadi.

Relatives and admirers have been requested attend the programmes.

Usha Das Purakayastha

Today is the second death anniversary of Usha Das Purakayastha, a veteran activist of anti-British movement and Liberation War, says a press release.

She passed away on this day in 2005 due to a cardiac arrest at Sohrawardi Hospital in the city.

Various programmes have been taken in Dhaka and Sylhet, marking the day.



Officials of G4S Bangladesh, a security service provider, stand guard in front of the KFC at Gulshan in the city yesterday. They acted as security guards from 8:00am to 12:00 noon to express solidarity with the G4S guards as part of a programme called 'Lead by Example'.

Only restrictions on locals can't save biodiversity in Sundarbans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bawali, Moual, Jele and Golpata harvesters are the worshippers of Bon Bibi, like their own children they nurture the Sundarbans, which has been the source of food and shelter to their forefathers, they can never destroy their forest.

Representatives from the wood collectors (Bawali), Golpata harvesters, honey and beeswax collectors (Moual) and fishermen (Jele) communities said this at a workshop on 'Customary use of biodiversity and traditional practices in the Sundarbans' in the city's LGED auditorium.

Abdul Majid, a Bawali (wood collector), said "Why should we destroy the Sundarbans? What will our children do if the forest disappears? The forest saves us from flood".

The seminar was focused on Article 10 (c) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that provides a strong basis for recognition of the connection between local and indigenous communities and conservation and use of biological resources and the workshop was organised to make the policymakers aware of this truth.

Nijera Kori, Bangladesh, Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (BELA), Forest People's Programme, UK and Unnayan Onneshan jointly organised the workshop.

Dr Chowdhury Sajjadul Karim, adviser for Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, Environment and Forest, said it will not be possible to save biodiversity in Sundarbans impact zone only by imposing restrictions on the 3.5 million people, rather they can be sensitised not to exploit beyond sustainable level.

While presenting his case study on CBD article (c), Dewan Muhammad Humayun Kabir said the present policies are not equipped to achieve the goal of protecting biodiversity and the lives and livelihoods of different communities in the Sundarbans.

Due to hostile institutional attitude, the provisions of the Forest Act, 1927 fail to give any protection to the customary rights of the ethnic

communities," he added.

Stressing the involvement of ethnic communities, Dr Maurizio Farhan Ferrari of Forest People's Programme, UK said indigenous people and local community represent 95 percent of the world's cultural diversity and cultural diversity is threatened by the loss of biodiversity and vis-à-vis.

"In Thailand the forest people make a bamboo case to keep the umbilical cord and placenta and tie it to the sacred trees, they never cut that tree. This is symbolic of the relation between nature and man," he said, adding, "you recognise that relation too- you bury the umbilical cord and placenta in the soil".

Dr Aimin Nishat, country director of World Conservation Union (IUCN), said the community must

get the access to resources and they should be strongly involved in natural resource management.

"The communities possess indigenous knowledge and sharp instinct, they have very good understanding of this inhospitable and hostile environment", he added.

However, he expressed concern over the increasing level of salinity, saying the Sundari trees are getting rot in the top and dying. There will be an ecological disaster in the largest and unique mangrove forest, he alleged.

Munda community members presented a solidarity song while S Rizwana Hasan of BELA discussed the legal issues regarding biodiversity. Khushi Kabir, coordinator, Nijera Kori, chaired the session.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and weather is likely to remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Mild to severe heat wave is sweeping over Rajshahi, Khulna divisions and the regions of Patuakhali, Comilla, Noakhali, Dhaka, Faridpur and Tangail and it may continue, Met Office said.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

Highest temperature 41.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Dinajpur and lowest 23.7 degrees at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:42 pm today and rises at 5:11 am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	37.1	28.5	71	50
Chittagong	34.2	27.8	79	77
Rajshahi	40.2	27.5	00	49
Khulna	38.0	28.2	00	53
Barisal	35.6	27.6	84	58
Sylhet	33.5	23.7	87	69
Cox's Bazar	34.5	28.0	73	70