

DRAFT UMBRELLA ACT FOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Proposed law to face same fate of uni-track edn system Say eminent academics

SURANJITH DEABNATH

The caretaker government's move to approve the draft of an 'umbrella act' for all public universities without consulting the academics and others concerned will destroy their autonomous characters, said eminent academics of the country. They said the proposed draft, if approved, might face the similar fate of the much-talked uni-track education system at secondary level that the immediate-past BNP-Jamaat alliance government tried to introduce without any discussion with the experts concerned. The alliance government was forced to postpone the system in the face of widespread criticism by leading academics and intellectuals.

The University Grants Commission (UGC), an apex body to monitor both public and private universities, has already sent the draft of the 'umbrella act' to education ministry.

"At any day, the draft is likely to be approved at a meeting of the advisory council," said a high official of the education ministry.

In the name of lack of time, the education ministry will not discuss the draft with experts especially academics and others concerned before sending it to the advisory council, he added.

Sources in education ministry and UGC said a vested quarter which was involved with previous controversial initiative of uni-track education system, is now trying to approve the draft of the 'umbrella act' in violation of Public University Ordinance 1973 which is the pro-

tector of university's autonomy.

According to the draft of the new 'umbrella act', a search committee will select persons for all top posts including vice-chancellors, pro-vice-chancellors, treasurers, syndicate members and deans of public universities.

The President will form the search committee to be headed by a retired vice-chancellor.

But according to Public University Ordinance 1973, syndicate members and deans are elected.

UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said they had sent the draft of the 'umbrella act' as per the directive of the education ministry issued on March 21.

He, however, admitted that discussion with the experts is needed before approving the draft.

"We obeyed the instruction of the education ministry to make the draft of the 'umbrella act'. What I can do if the higher authorities decide not to discuss the issue with educationists and others concerned," he replied when asked why he did not arrange a discussion on this issue?

The Daily Star talked to several renowned academics about this issue and all of them expressed their concern over the move of the caretaker government.

They said all public universities cannot run under one rule because these are not similar.

They also said it will be a great mistake if the government approves the draft of the 'umbrella act' without scrutinising all its aspects through exchange of views with educationists and others

concerned.

Prof Syed Manzurul Islam, member of the search committee formed on May 15, said the spirit of the university autonomy will be affected if the 'umbrella act' is approved.

"We always welcome the reform of Public University Ordinance 1973, but the unilateral move for approving the proposed 'umbrella act' is not acceptable to teachers.

The ministry should form a committee to be led by a noted educationist for holding discussions n the umbrella act," he told The Daily Star.

Dr Mohammad Anower Hossain, general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta), said there were moves for removing the university ordinance in the past, especially during the tenure of Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad, but the ill-initiatives were not successful.

"BNP-Jamaat-led government took a initiative to introduce uni-track education system without consulting teachers, students and guardians, but their initiative was not successful. In the similar way, this unilateral decision of introducing 'umbrella act' will also not be successful," he said.

Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, a renowned academic, said autonomy is essential for a public university and it is a wrong decision to run all public universities under one rule.

"We got autonomy for public university after our liberation war. The Public University Ordinance 1973 is related to our independence, and this move for 'umbrella act' is an undesirable initiative," he

told The Daily Star.

"At first, discussion with students and teachers will have to take place before taking the initiative for a new act. This unilateral steps will not be well for the nation," he added.

Former chairman of UGC Prof Asaduzzaman said he does not understand why such an initiative has been taken without consulting teachers and students of public universities.

"Only four universities including Dhaka University are now running under the university ordinance. Rest of the public universities are running under their own individual rules. However, during my tenure I recommended that the ordinance should be reformed," he said.

AAMS Arefin Siddique, former president of Duta, said public universities especially Dhaka Universities have been facing various pressure since 1973, but the university authorities could resist the pressure with the help of the ordinance.

Terming the 'umbrella act' as black law, he said its provisions, especially the nomination system for syndicate, dean and other vital posts will create anomaly.

"We might update our ordinance but this should be done by our teachers and students," he told The Daily Star.

It may be noted that the draft of 'umbrella act' has recommended banning of party-affiliated politics by students and teachers on the campuses of all public universities.



PHOTO: PID

A team of National Youth Forum Bangladesh called on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

Four killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least four people, including a schoolboy, were killed in separate road accidents in Rangpur, Mymensingh and Magura yesterday.

Our correspondent from Rangpur reports: Two people, including a schoolboy, were killed in a road accident on Rangpur-Bogra highway at Sathibari under Mithapukur upazila yesterday.

Witnesses said a Bogra-bound truck loaded with rice hit a rickshaw van at Sathibari Bazar, leaving van pulver Sahidul, 40, and schoolboy Azizul Islam, 11, dead.

BSS from Mymensingh adds: A helper of a passenger bus was killed and eight others were injured in a road accident at Tangabo under Gaffargaon upazila on Gaffargaon-Pagla road yesterday. The deceased was identified as

Ratan, 25.

Gaffargaon police said the accident occurred when a Pagla-bound bus from Gaffargaon collided head-on with a truck coming from the opposite direction, leaving Ratan dead on the spot.

The injured were rushed to Gaffargaon Upazila Hospital and local clinics.

Our correspondent from Magura adds: One person succumbed to his injuries at Faridpur Medical College Hospital (FMCH) yesterday.

The dead identified as Nimai

Bhajan, 55, of village Mochlondopur in Madhukhali upazila of Faridpur, was critically injured in a road accident in Magura on Monday.

He was in the Faridpur-bound pick-up van from Jhenidah with his fish fries, police said.

The accident occurred when a pick-up van hit a passenger loaded rickshaw van from behind on Monday at Hulinagar area on Magura-Faridpur highway, leaving one Chaitanya Sarkar, 45, dead on the spot and two others including Nimai injured.

EMISSION OF BLACK SMOKE 125 vehicles fined in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A mobile court in separate drives at Patenga and Olonkar intersection in the port city fined 125 vehicles Tk 5 lakh for emitting black smoke in the last two days.

Sources said the court set up air pollution measuring devices on both sides of the road at Olonkar intersection and found 71 vehicles were seriously emitting black smoke.

The vehicles, including bus, truck, covered van and lorry, were emitting black smoke about 18% to 20% above the standard level of emission.

The court conducted by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Muhammad Munir Chowdhury realised Tk 3 lakh from the vehicles under Environment Act and detained four trucks for lacking in fitness and having date-expired fitness certificates, said the sources.

The same court in another drive at Patenga fined 54 vehicles Tk 2 lakh on the same ground on Monday.

Officials of Air Quality Management Project of DoE and traffic department of Chittagong Metropolitan Police assisted the mobile court.

Meanwhile, the same court yesterday fined 10 cargo-vessels, seized during separate drives at port channel on Sunday and Monday, Tk 3 lakh for risky movement with overloaded cement clinkers and chemical goods.

The fined vessels are MV Banglar Jihad, MV Mou-1, MV Golup-4, MV Salman Selim, MV Erfan Selim, MV Tiger of Comilla, MV Dewan Mehedi, MV Seven Circle-2, MV Master Saniyat-1 and MV Masud-1. The court suspended the movement of the vessels temporarily.

Steps to help acid survivors

BSS, Dhaka

The government has taken stronger and more effective initiatives in aid of acid survivors, said an official handout yesterday.

It has undertaken multifarious programmes, including ensuring enforcement of existing laws to 'control acid, check acid-related crimes and assist the victims of acid attacks', the handout said.

It added the government activities also include formulation of guidelines as per section 5 (a), (b) and (c) of Acid Control Act 2002, formation of district units of National Acid Control Committee and national acid control fund and district committee fund.

Establishing rehabilitation centres for acid survivors -- first in

Dhaka on a priority basis and later in all divisional headquarters in phases, opening one-stop service centres for acid affected people in all medical college hospitals and district hospitals, and training of doctors and staff of different district hospitals under the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital are among the measures taken by

the government.

The government has also taken measures for regular monitoring of the cases filed under Acid Control Act 2002 and its related laws and strengthening the programme of distributing the money realised from the convicts in acid-related cases among the affected people, said the handout.

MOTHER'S DEATH Son, daughter demand trial of father

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student and his sister yesterday demanded that their father be brought to justice, accusing him of killing their mother.

At a press conference in the city, Munkir Nayeem Sunny, a second year student of Notre Dame College, said his father Obaidur Rahman Shyamal killed their mother Sultana Yasmin Mani at their residence at Baridhara at about 3:00pm on June 18 and then hung her body from a ceiling fan with a scarf to make it look like a suicide.

He also alleged that his father had also manipulated the postmortem report, which said that Mani committed suicide, although there were injury marks in different parts of the body, including her chin.

His father's shady dealings with some unscrupulous officials has made all this possible, he added.

He also demanded that autopsy be performed on his mother's body again to find out the real cause of her death.

Nayeem said his father often tortured his mother in order to take landed property of her parents under his possession.

He also alleged that some police officials of Cantonment Police Station are not taking the case seriously as they have some understanding with his father.

CG has established transparency Matin tells Chinese envoy

BSS, Dhaka

Adviser for Communications Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin yesterday said the present government has established transparency and accountability in its works.

It has also been providing all kinds of assistance for attracting local and foreign investments, he added.

Matin said this when Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Zhen Qingdian made a courtesy call on him at his secretariat office in the city.

They discussed the bilateral issues of mutual interest between the two friendly countries at the meeting. Political Attaché of the Chinese Embassy Shi Weh was also present during the meeting.

The ambassador said that as a friend, his country is always assisting Bangladesh in its development efforts and is ready to continue this cooperation in future.

Zheng Qingdian said the Chinese investors are eager to construct bridges on the roads as the standard of quality of their work is satisfactory. He mentioned that six highway bridges, which are known as Bangladesh-China friendship bridges, were built by them.



PHOTO: STAR

College student Munkir Nayeem Sunny shows pictures of his father and mother at a press conference in the city yesterday. On his left is his sister.

WEATHER TODAY

Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at many places over Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi division in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy rainfalls are also likely over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions during the period, Met Office said in a forecast.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Highest temperature 36.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.8 degree Celsius at Khepupara.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:16am 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	33.3	26.8	74	93
Chittagong	29.0	25.0	92	95
Rajshahi	33.6	26.5	81	70
Khulna	31.5	25.4	90	96
Barisal	32.2	25.6	86	90
Sylhet	36.8	24.9	67	81
Cox's Bazar	27.5	25.3	96	96

Pronunciation workshop

DU CORRESPONDENT

Nandankanan, a pronunciation and recitation institution, is going to organise a four-month workshop at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University (DU) from July 6, says a press release.

Classes of the workshop will be held every Friday.

Application forms of the workshop are available at the TSC, Theatre Corner at Baily Road, Surer Mela at Aziz Super Market and Shop-Twenty at Kazipara Bus Stand.

The last date for submission of the application form is July 5.

For further information, applicants are requested to dial 01915680502.

1,341 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police and members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), in separate drives, arrested 1,341 people on various charges across the country in 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

During the drive, they also recovered 13 firearms, 10 other weapons and ammunition and filed seven cases under the Arms Act, said a handout.

BANGLADESH UNIVERSITY Pharmacy students to attend classes from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of pharmacy department of Bangladesh University have agreed to attend their classes again from today.

In a statement yesterday, the university authorities said they will take necessary initiatives to get membership of Bangladesh Pharmacy Council soon.

The students started boycotting classes from June 30 due to misunderstanding over the recognition of Bangladesh Pharmacy Council, the statement added.

9-yr-old boy killed in city for mobile set Three arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The police recovered the body of a nine-year-old schoolboy yesterday, six days after he was killed at Badda in the city for a mobile phone.

Three youths killed Zahidul Islam, a class II student of North Badda Government Primary School, on June 27 and dumped the body in the bush in Bashundhara Residential Area.

The incident came to light after one of the suspects, Bilal, was arrested on Monday. Acting on his statement, the police arrested two others -- Arman and Khokon -- yesterday and recovered the decomposed body. The three youths, aged between 17 and 20, are vagabonds.

Bilal told the police that he along with the other two took Zahidul to Bashundhara project area, saying that they would have his mobile phone set repaired, which went out of order.

But they tied up his hands and legs and snatched his mobile phone.

Then they also planned to hold him hostage and demand a Tk 10,000 ransom from his father, police said quoting Bilal.

But the three strangled the boy when he told them that he would tell everything to his father who knew them.

On Monday, Zahidul's father Mujibur Gazi caught hold of Bilal with the help of locals under suspicion and beat him, prompting Bilal to return the mobile phone set. He was later handed over to the police.

Sub-Inspector Shamsuzzoha said he will produce the three before a Dhaka court today.

Anwarul Haq joins Brac



MANwarul Haq, a noted journalist, columnist and former diplomat, has been appointed director, Public Affairs and Communication

ns of Brac, says a press release.

Prior to joining Brac, Haq was the Minister (Press) at the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi.

He also served several national publications, including The Daily Star, the now-defunct Morning Sun and The People, in various capacities.

He was also the publisher and editor of the Endeavour, one of the country's first magazines.

Haq was elected president of Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) for two consecutive terms. He was also the secretary general of Old Faujians Association, organisation of the former cadets of Faujdharhat Cadet College.

Missing



8:30am.

He was last seen wearing a full pant and full sleeve check shirt.

A general diary (no 159) was filed with Khilgaon Police Station on June 2.

Anyone having information about his whereabouts is requested to call Mamunur Rashid Mamun at 7216848 or 01711640193.

Obituary

Kaniz Rahman Koli, 71, former teacher of Shaheed Anwar Girls' School and College and wife of late Lt Col Imdadur Rahman, passed away at Combined Military Hospital (CMH), Dhaka on Sunday, says a press release.

She was buried at Cantonment graveyard after a namaz-e-jaanaza at Banani Old DOHS Mosque in the city.

To pray for salvation of her departed soul, a doa mahfil will be held at Banani Old DOHS Community Centre after Asr prayers on Friday.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the function.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Abdul Halim Khan Khoka, a former Rupali Bank officer and son of late Alhaj Abdul Aziz Khan, will be held at his residence at 64 Siddheshwari Circular Road after Maghrib prayers today, says a press release.

He passed away on July 1. Friends and admirers are requested to attend the qulkhwani.



PHOTO: ISPR

Commodore Mostafizur Rahman hands over the documents of a newly built house to the daughter of liberation war martyr Able Seaman Md Muzammel Haque at a simple ceremony at Sitakunda in Chittagong yesterday.

Navy hands over house to family of liberation war martyr

Bangladesh Navy has constructed a house at Sitakunda in Chittagong district for the family members of Able Seaman Md Muzammel Haque who embraced martyrdom during the liberation war in 1971, says an ISPR press release.

Commodore Mostafizur Rahman handed over the documents of the newly built house to the daughter of the martyr at a simple ceremony at Sitakunda.

Officials of local administration and big guns and common people of the locality were also present.

Mamun jailed for 10yrs in arms case

FROM PAGE 1 The trial, which began on June 9, was completed in 44 workdays.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 26 prosecution witnesses including the complainant and investigation officer (IO) of the case.

The prosecution told the court that they were able to prove the charges against Mamun beyond doubt and prayed for the highest punishment. The defence appealed to the court for acquittal of their client.

Mamun told the court that the joint forces arrested him from his friend's Paltan residence on January 31 and produced him before the court on March 26 implicating him in the arms case.

Police, however, showed Mamun arrested at his Banani DOHS residence on March 26. They also seized a .22 Spanish-made pistol and eight bullets from his house.

Sub-Inspector Kazi Abdul Awal filed an arms case and Mamun was placed on a four-day remand.

On April 26, Shahrum Khan,

officer-in-charge of Cantonment Police Station and IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, against Mamun, showing 29 people as prosecution witnesses.

Additional Public Prosecutor Kabir Hossain appeared for the state while advocate TM Akbar defended the accused.

Mamun was earlier sentenced to three years' imprisonment for not submitting wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) within its stipulated time fame.

Mamun, a close associate of Tarique Rahman, son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, faces at least half a dozen more criminal cases.

NADIM'S CASE The Second Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Rajshahi sentenced former BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa and his three associates to five years' imprisonment for swindling Tk 1 lakh from a Puthia upazila villager promising to give his son a job.

Judge Rejaul Islam read out the verdict in the absence of Nadim and another accused Abdul Majid Mollah, brother of upazila BNP Vice President Abdul Hamid.

Two other convicts-- Bhalulugachhi union BNP General Secretary Nazmul Gani Pintu and Darampur College Principal Omar Ali--were present on the dock when the verdict was pronounced.

The court also fined them Tk 7,000 each and in default another four months' imprisonment.

The punishment of Nadim and Majid will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, the judges said.

MIR NASIR'S CASE A Special Court set up at the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hostel will deliver today the judgment of a graft case against Mir Nasir and his son Mir Helal. Second Special Judge AK Roy will start delivering the verdict at 11:30am.

The case was filed against the two for submitting false wealth statements to the ACC. Helal was also accused of abetting his father in amassing illegal wealth.