

BSMMU RECRUITMENT SCAM

No progress in bringing persons responsible to book

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Though 10 months have already passed since the investigation committee's report on recruitment scam at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) was submitted to the vice-chancellor, there is no progress in bringing the persons involved in the scam to book.

The committee that submitted its report on July 26 of last year revealed that gross irregularities took place in recruiting the teachers and doctors along with other employees during the BNP-led four-party alliance government that doubled the number of health professionals at the university.

It also found the involvement of many senior teachers and administrative officials in the scam.

But a review committee that was formed on August 5 tried to justify the recruitment irregularities quoting the decision of the 21st meeting of the syndicate, known as 'partisan syndicate', which recommended that the 'conditions are relaxable for candidates with special qualifications', several senior teachers told The Daily Star.

The review committee for-

warded its observations to the syndicate to legalise the recruitment of professors, associate professors and assistant professors who lack experience, publications and academic qualifications, they said, adding that this was enough to ruin the post-graduate medical education in the lone medical university of the country.

Considering the three criteria of teachers' recruitment -- qualification, experience and publication according to the recruitment rules of the university -- the investigation committee identified the appointment of some 14 professors as totally irregular.

Irregularities in recruitment were also detected in the cases of 12 associate professors and many assistant professors.

"The review committee just tried to safeguard the accused teachers and doctors as they are now holding posts in the administration," one of the aggrieved teachers said, adding that the topmost positions in the administration are still occupied by life members a pro-BNP professional body.

Even the 26th syndicate meeting on March 18 ignored the issue

of irregularities, saying that it would be discussed in the next meeting.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has started to investigate the purchase-related corruption cases of the university.

"It is good that the ACC is investigating the issue, but bringing the persons involved in recruitment irregularities to book is more important as the future of the university depends on the teachers," a senior teaching staff said, adding that if the university absorbs inefficient teachers and medical professionals it would lead the university to ruin.

According to the probe committee report, financial irregularities involving around Tk 8 crore were detected in the case of purchasing cathlab, an important instrument for heart surgery, and other things while some 3600 teachers and employees were recruited against 1600 posts, and most of the administrative officials, who still hold the important positions, were involved in the process.

Talking to The Daily Star, BSMMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Mohammad Tahir said the ACC has

been investigating the administrative irregularities, which also include recruitment scam, for the last one month.

"But we can't say how much time it will take to reach a decision on the issue," he added.

Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Prof Nazrul Islam said, "As the ACC is not working with the recruitment issue, the UGC will start investigating both academic and recruitment irregularities within a month."

"As we came to know that the university itself had formed committees to investigate the issue and the ACC has also come forward to investigate, we did not feel like starting of our own investigation prior to this," he said, adding that the UGC is yet to receive any investigation report from BSMMU, and by this time the UGC's intervention has been demanded by different groups and the UGC is also becoming concerned over the issue.

Talking to this correspondent, Major Mahmud, team leader of the ACC taskforce, said they are investigating all kinds of irregularities at BSMMU.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League acting president Zillur Rahman speaks at a programme at the party's central office in the city yesterday. Residents of Tungipara living in Dhaka arranged a doa mahfil for party chief Sheikh Hasina's recovery from illness and her release.

CU TRANSPORT CRISIS

Only 6 shuttle trains for over 12000 non-resident students

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Ctg

Indifferent attitude of the authorities to transport crisis has been forcing several thousand students of Chittagong University (CU) to risk their lives while travelling between the university campus and the city everyday.

Thursday's tragic demise of Mahmudul Hasan Mamun, a third year student of Accounting department, was yet another reminder to the crisis the CU students have been facing since long.

Earlier, Sabina Yasmin, a third year student of CU Bangla department, was also crushed under the wheels of a shuttle train at CU Railway Station while trying to get on a train on August 19, 2006.

Besides, incidents of getting injured after falling off the rooftop and the staircases of the shuttle trains take place very often though most of them remain unreported.

Three people, including a student of Finance department, got injured when he fell off the rooftop

of a city-bound shuttle train on November 30 last year. Cables of satellite connections threw them off the rooftop near Sholoshahar Railway Station.

Sources at the university said the students are forced to stay in the city and travel up to the university risking their lives everyday since the university authorities in nine dormitories can provide accommodation to some 4500 out of 18,000 students studying in 35 departments under six faculties and three institutes at the university.

Besides, around 1,000 male students can stay at 200 cottages, privately owned rented house alongside the campus, when the rest live in the city, some 22 kilometres off the campus.

The non-resident students numbering over 12,000 travel by six shuttle trains to and from the university campus and the city while some minibuses named Tori ply between the university rail station and New Market in the city everyday.

The shuttle trains each with seven to nine 120-seat compartments carry students more than two to three times of its capacity in rush hours everyday, said the sources.

When the trains leave Sholoshahar Railway Station in the city in the morning or CU Railway Station in the afternoon, no space is left to allow even a single person to stand inside the compartments, students alleged.

Shaheda Akter, a student of Biological Science department, alleged that if the female students are late, they cannot travel due to the jam-packed condition inside the compartment.

The situation forces the male students to travel on the rooftop of the trains to attend classes or examinations, on time, he added.

Sumon Sharma, a BBA student, said he is bound to travel on the rooftop everyday as he resides with his parents at their Patenga residence, at the south end of the city.

He said if the authorities don't

increase the number of the shuttle trains and its compartments the crisis would not be met soon.

Sources said the authorities only introduced two new trips of the shuttle trains on March 9, 2007 to mitigate the problem.

When contacted, CU Vice-Chancellor Prof M Badiul Alam told The Daily Star that the authorities at a high level meeting on September 27, 2007 proposed the railway authorities to introduce an inter-city train in this section.

"But, the railway authorities think it is not possible at this moment since the existing tracks in this route are not fit enough to run trains with additional compartments," said the VC.

However, the VC along with a team would meet the higher authorities in the ministry in the first week of the next month to this end, he added.

"We have taken the matter seriously and hope that the present caretaker government would also help us in this regard," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a press conference styled 'Forests endangered, indigenous people tortured in the name of development' at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday. Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) organised the press conference. (Story on page 16)

DU students

FROM PAGE 1

SMA Faiz said recognising the gravity of seat crisis the university authorities have decided to encourage students, those who can afford, to rent houses or rooms near the campus.

"The hall administration should take steps to rid the halls of illegal occupants and make room for the resident students," he observed.

For a place to sleep, new students have to throw themselves on the mercy of JCD leaders, who control the hall mosques, corridors and 'Gono' rooms.

Describing the ordeal they go through every night, Saifullah, an Islamic history student living at Bangabandhu Hall, said, "There's no way we can have some sound sleep here. While in bed on the floor, we can't move to our right or left since the room is usually stuffed full of students like us."

"To make things worse, new faces [those enrolled for academic session 2007-08] join the ranks on almost every night. Many of us prefer sitting on chairs at the reading room or wandering the streets on campus till the night is over."

Rashed, a student of Zia Hall, said, "Even if anyone finds space to lie down he cannot get to sleep due to heat and bites of mosquito and other bugs. Some of us are already suffering from skin diseases."

Kabir, a second semester student of mass communication and journalism who spends night in the Bangabandhu Hall mosque, said, "Speaking at our faculty's reception ceremony for us [freshers], the VC sir said the seat crisis would soon be solved. Since then, seven months have passed, but I haven't seen any house tutor or anyone from the authorities visiting us to take note of the situation."

The story is the same at almost every hall. The number of 'Gono' rooms keeps growing also at Surya Sen, Zahurul Haque and Kabi Jasimuddin halls.

Students of Bangabandhu Hall alleged that despite repeated demands the hall authorities did not allocate them the two rooms adjoining the mosque that have been fell uselessly.

Following student demonstrations, the hall administration in February announced they would rehabilitate those without seats within three seven days. But that did not yet come about.

Asked about the crisis, Bangabandhu Hall Provost Prof Mohammad Mahfujul Islam said they would soon hand over two rooms near the mosque to the students and allot regular seats for them by next June or July.

"I have issued notices several times asking the non-students to leave the hall. But they don't comply with the orders," he said about those occupying seats even after completion of studies.

Queried if they have any specific plans to resolve the seat crisis in the long term, Provost of Muhsin Hall Prof Ahmed Jamal Anwar, also convener of the Provost Committee, said, "We have discussed the matter at the provost committee on a number of occasions but could not find a way out."

He added that without building new halls it is impossible to end the crisis.

About those in residence at the halls despite completing studies, he said, "Most of them are political leaders and are staying taking support from fellow activists."

"Sometimes we conduct raids and evict them. But after a few days they return with help from the leaders and workers of their organisations," he added.

6 killed, 32 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least six people were killed and 32 others injured in separate road accidents in Khulna, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Bagerhat in last two days.

Our Correspondent from Sathira reports: Three people were killed and 30 others injured in separate road accidents on Tala-Paigacha road in Khulna yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Riazuul Islam Biswas, 34, and Alamgir Hossain, 16, son of Samsur Rahman Biswas and Khorsheed Ali Sardar, 55, of Nalia village under Koirapazila in Khulna.

Riazuul and Alamgir were killed and at least 30 others injured in a road accident on Tala-Paigacha road at Aladipur village in Tala upazila.

Quoting locals police said the accident occurred when a Khulna-

bound passenger bus skidded off into the roadside ditch leaving them dead on the spot and 30 others injured.

The injured were admitted to local health complexes and their identities could not be known immediately, police sources said.

Khorsheed Ali Sardar, 55, of Nalia village under Koirapazila in Khulna, was killed in another accident on the same route at Shosh Nagar in Tala upazila.

Quoting locals police said the accident occurred when he was crossing the road a speeding truck knocked him leaving him dead on the spot.

BSS from Chittagong adds: Two people -- a female garments worker and a school student -- were killed in separate road accidents in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar on Thursday.

Police and hospital sources said Mina Akhter, 20, a worker of Rosy F&N Garments Factory in Sheikh Mujib Road in the city died on the spot as a truck ran over her while she was crossing the road at

Pathantuli Chowmohoni under Dublemooring upazila in Chittagong on Thursday night.

Syed Alam, 16, a school student and son of Jahangir Hossain of Cox's Bazar Sadar area who sustained injury at an accident at Cox's Bazar town on Thursday succumbed to his injuries at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) on Thursday night.

UNB from Bagerhat adds: One person was killed and two others were injured in a collision between two motorcycles near Kendua bridge in Mollahat upazila, Bagerhat, yesterday.

The dead was identified as Iqbal Chowdhury, 27, Kushi village in Tungipara of Gopalganj.

The police the accident occurred at about 2:00pm when Iqbal was returning home from Benapole by a motorcycle.

Two other injured motorcycle riders were admitted to a local hospital. They could not be identified.



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz speaks at the inaugural ceremony of the UCB 2nd Inter-School and College Debate Competition at TSC auditorium of the university yesterday. Dhaka University Debating Society organised the competition.

'Gang leader' Abdur Rahman held in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Alleged gang leader and drug trader Abdur Rahman was arrested by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) from Salami Tila area of Moulvibazar town yesterday.

He is the husband of woman commissioner of Moulvibazar Municipality Dilara Rahman.

He faces several cases for alleged extortion, land grabbing and murder, police said. Earlier he was jailed for eight times.

After proclamation of emergency, Abdur Rahman and his wife left the country. They returned few months ago but were on the run, police said.

Social negligence frustrates people with disabilities

BSS, Dhaka

The three children were born with physical disabilities but with the firm determination of their mother they are learning to overcome their challenges.

Yet the social negligence and tendency to look them down often expose the children -- Jely, Mahbub and Milon -- to utter frustration.

Jalal, father of the children with disability, resides at Nimnagar village of Panchagarh district. He maintained his family by selling nuts. Jalal left his family due to his poverty and disability of the children.

Their mother tries hard to maintain their family working as maid servant. They live hand to mouth. Their mother get marry again due to tremendous economic hardship and to protect them. Thus, the three impaired children got shelter with their mother. Mahbub and Milon work at a shop while Jely helps her mother at home works.

Their life simply became better. At least, they get few square meal to avoid death. But they have remained still laughing object to society. Some people used to teased them saying dwarf. Some pull their hair, pinch their body.

Many people suggest them to become joker of the circus. They are become hurt psychologically by the behaviours of some people.

Three percent people of the total population of Bangladesh are disabled. According to the report of World Health Organisation (WHO), there are about 30 lakh disabled people in Bangladesh. They are neglected in socially in the country. But intellectually impaired people are playing vital role in economic activities in the developed world.

Society for the Welfare of Intellectually Disabled (SWID) is cooperating the children with disability through their 41 branches. It is helping to rehabilitate such children permanently in society through special education, professional training and suitable employment.

About 5,602 disabled children have been taught in life skill, social skill and communication skill through 41 special schools. They also practice other areas including painting, sports and culture. A total of 442 teachers are working for the purpose.

Senior Executive Officer of the SWID Nurul Islam said many children become disabled due to birth

complications. Parents having same blood group are also responsible for child disability. So, it is important to avoid marriage among close relatives, especially among first cousins.

SWID Secretary General GWH Chowdhury said the main demand of the present world is to create equal rights for the disabled, and protection and implementation of the rights as well.

Persons with disability will not be a social burden once the law formulated for the disabled is implemented. The law protects the rights of education, training, employment, social security and safer movement on roads.

Sonia Zaman, teacher of a school for intellectually challenged, said many intellectually challenged children remained unaccounted for at homes as few people know them. They are neglected socially and are being deprived of education. However, they can contribute significantly to the nation, if they are taken care of.

Shariar Parvez is a disabled. Shariar won one gold medal, one silver and one bronze in Special Olympic in 1996. He also won two gold medal in 1999. His mother

Hosne Ara was upset for his disability. The success of Shariar has brought smile on his mother's over depressed face.

Her son has contributed like a normal people despite his physical and mental limitations. Hosne Ara believes that disabled children are not burden. Instead, they can contribute like a normal person, if opportunities are given to them.

Bangladesh won 45 gold medals, 28 silvers, and 28 bronzes in four Olympics between 1991 and 2003. Special Olympic is also held in 2003 in Dublin, Ireland, where a total of 21 disabled sports persons took part.

Social discrimination is the greatest barrier for the development of disabled. Shariar is one of the exceptions, who some how privileged enough to break social barriers.

But many disabled of the country are not so lucky as they pass their whole lives in darkness. Many people suppress them. So, we need to change our attitude towards persons with all forms of disability. Only then, thousands of disabled like Mahbub, Milon and Jely would be able to play vital role for the development of the country.

DHAKA

TODAY

Discussion

Society of Justice organises a discussion on 'Judicial accountability in Bangladesh: Is Ombudsman an option?'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 4:00pm.

Computer fair

The inaugural ceremony of the City IT 2008 Computer Fair will be held. Venue: BCS Computer City. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

World University organises a seminar on 'Engineering education for sustainable development of Bangladesh'. Venue: IEB seminar room. Time: 11:00am.

Cultural function

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy organises a cultural function titled 'The trend of Bengali songs of 19th and 20th centuries'. Venue: Shilpakala Academy. Time: 7:00pm.

Rotary Dhaka Central

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.



No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 35.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Madaripur and the lowest of 21.3 degrees at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:39pm today and rises at 5:12am 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	34.8	24.0	81	59
Chittagong	33.5	26.1	74	76
Rajshahi	34.8	23.2	78	65
Khulna	34.2	24.4	78	69
Barisal	34.0	26.6	76	69
Sylhet	31.0	22.5	80	67
Cox's Bazar	33.5	24.5	76	75