



Resign by today, for 'reshuffle'

Health minister suggests Bangabandhu medical university VC; AL-leaning doctors to take over 'hospital of corruption'

MAHBUBA ZANNAT



Vice-Chancellor Prof Nazrul Islam of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) has been asked to resign by today citing 'personal reasons'.

Health Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque yesterday told him to step down so the government could press ahead with its plans to reshuffle the BSMMU administration.

Contacted, the minister told The Daily Star in the evening, "The government has indeed some reshuffle plans. So, while talking to the VC around noon, I dropped a hint that he should resign. I know I cannot directly ask him to quit."

Earlier in the afternoon, Nazrul claimed Ruhul had asked him to resign without mentioning any allegations against him or his administration.

"He told me there is some pressure on him and it would be better if we [VC and his colleagues] tendered our resignation citing 'personal reasons' by tomorrow. He also said that would be more dignified on our side as well," he told The Daily Star.

Prof Nazrul Islam

during the BNP-Jamiat coalition rule in 2001-2006.

Corruption there by Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB), a pro-BNP doctors' forum, was so pervasive that the university became known as 'hospital of corruption'.

Just when higher medical education, research activities and treatment facilities were teetering on the edge of a breakdown thanks to a "corrupt" admin, Nazrul's appointment by the caretaker government last year came as welcome news, said senior teachers of BSMMU.

In the preceding years, DAB pulled strings

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VC Nazrul also alleged that from day one of this government, pro-Awami League doctors' association Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad has been out to disrupt activities of the BSMMU administration.

Ruhul Haque is president of Chikitsak Parishad.

BSMMU, the country's premier institution for post-graduate medical education, saw rampant politicisation

Poor show of BNP MPs in JS bodies

Anwar, Abedin yet to hold any meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two parliamentary standing committees, each headed by a BNP lawmaker, have ignored the rules of procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad by not holding any meeting in over last one month since their formation.

The House on February 28 constituted the parliamentary bodies on the ministries of environment and forest, and fisheries and livestock, appointing BNP lawmakers MK Anwar and Joynal Abedin as chairmen of the bodies.

On the functions of the committees on ministries, section 248 of the rules of procedure of parliament says each such standing committee shall meet at least once in a month.

But the two parliamentary bodies did not hold any meeting and they have yet to convene a meeting. The parliamentary bodies on other ministries, however, have already held one or two meetings since their formation.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday BNP lawmaker Joynal Abedin, chairman of the parliamentary body on the fisheries and livestock ministry, said there is no such mandatory provision in the rules of procedure for holding meeting at least once in a month.

But he said he would not convene the meeting of his committee until the treasury bench resolves their demands for two more chairs of the committees.

"The treasury bench has pledged to give chairs of four standing committees, but they gave only two. Even, they made us chairmen of the two committees without making any consultation with us," Joynal said.

Abdus Shahid, chief whip of the treasury bench, said they did not make such pledge. "I told the main opposition that they might get highest four chairs," Shahid told The Daily Star on Thursday at his office.

When his attention was drawn to the provision yesterday, MK Anwar, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on

BDR CARNAGE

Faruk Khan claims to have more proof

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Lt Col (retired) Faruk Khan yesterday said they have found some more proof of "various types of organisations' involvement in the BDR carnage" on February 25-26.

"However, we won't disclose anything until we reach a stage to prove those beyond doubt," he added.

Talking to reporters after a

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Probe into 'armed outsiders' entry'

Investigators try to know their identity; BDR chief says border force to get new name

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigators of the February 25-26 BDR carnage are still examining information on some armed people's entering the Pilkhana BDR headquarters on vehicles from outside.

"We have information from different sources and witnesses that some armed people and vehicles entered Pilkhana during the February 25-26 bloodbath. We are verifying the information gathered so far and it will take more time to come to a conclusion on the matter," said a high-level law enforcer tasked with the investigation.

A few survivors from the Pilkhana carnage earlier said they had seen a few armed people getting down from a grey pick-up van inside the BDR headquarters on February 25.

Meanwhile, new BDR chief Brig Gen Md Mainul Islam yesterday made his first visit to a BDR battalion and border outpost outside the capital after the carnage.

Talking to reporters in Jamaipur, he said the force would be reconstituted under a new name with courageous and patriotic members.

Work is on to settle on new uniforms, insignia and motto of the force, he continued.

Replying to a query, he said as per their preliminary assessment, some 1,800 border troops have been absent since February 25-26 carnage. "We'll soon hand over a list to the authorities concerned to hunt down the deserters."

A Dhaka court yesterday placed 20 suspected mutineers on five-day remand. Sixteen BDR members who had fled the BDR headquarters following the incident but later surrendered to different police stations in Dinajpur were sent to BDR headquarters on Friday.

Pointing at the coloured clothes used as slings of rifles BDR jawans were carrying during the alleged "mutiny", a few other

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Ministers asked to keep mum till probe ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Remarks should not be made about the massacre at Pilkhana BDR headquarters before completion of investigation into the incident, said speakers at the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap yesterday.

The perpetrators of the carnage should be given severe punishment through fair trial, they told the dialogue on country's current affairs organised by BBC Bangla

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Asthma thrives on air pollution

Infection goes up by 15pc a year; children worst victim

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Worsening air pollution in the capital has led to increasing rates of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases especially in children, health experts say.

The estimated cost of health problem due to air pollution in Dhaka comes to about Tk 2,500 crore per year, according to a study by consulting firm VisionRI.

Asthma and respiratory-tract infections have gone up by 15 percent due to emissions of hazardous particulate matters from cars and intensive road and building constructions in Dhaka, according to the experts at National Institute of Diseases of Chest and Hospital (NIDCH).

They said cases of children suffering from respiratory diseases such as bronchitis and chronic cough have also shot up with the increasing air pollution.

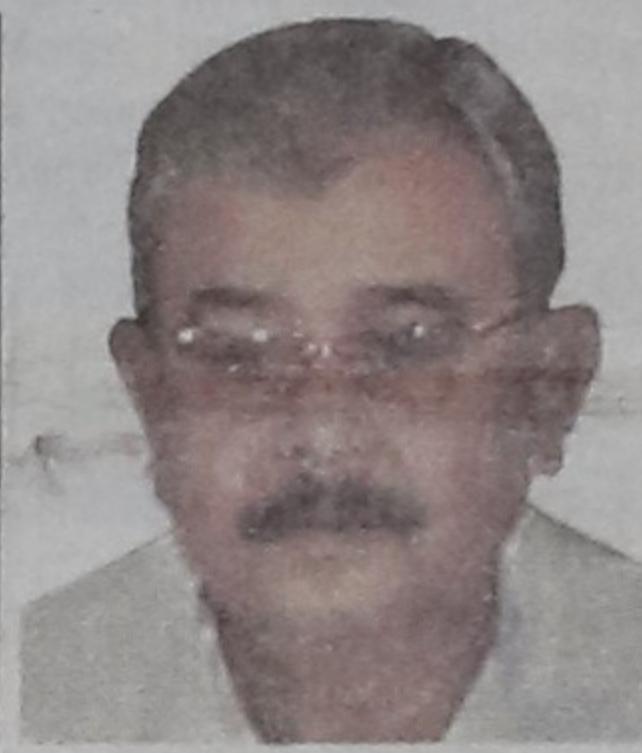
Currently around 70 lakh people across the country are suffering from asthma and more than half of them are children.

Dhaka's current annual average of particulate matter-10 (solid particles) is 265 micrograms per cubic metre (mcg/m³) compared to the 70mcg recommended by World Health Organisation's (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines (AQG), 2005.

By reducing the particulate matter-10 level to 20mcg from 70mcg, air quality related deaths could be cut by around 15 percent, according to the WHO AQG.

Dr Saifuddin Ben Noor of NIDCH said asthma should be a priority for health experts as it ranks second among the lung diseases in Bangladesh behind tuberculosis.

"Air pollution leads to Interstitial Lung Disease in which the lung cannot function properly, ultimately turning into lung cancer. At the same time, due to the lung's inappropriate functioning the excessive pressure on the heart leads to heart disease," said Noor.



Ex-dy speaker Siddiqui held

Furious BNP terms the case fabricated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

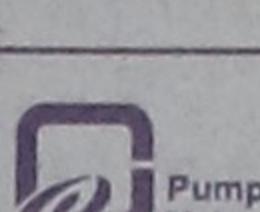
Rajshahi

The Detective Branch (DB) police in Naogaon arrested former deputy speaker and BNP leader Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui from Mohadevpur upazila yesterday evening under the Special Powers Act (SPA) for making 'seditious statements'.

"He has primarily been arrested under the SPA for making anti-state statements and threatening the police," Mofazzel Hossain, Superintendent of Police (SP) in Naogaon, said.

The SP told The Daily Star that government high-ups were apprised of the situation before the arrest was made,

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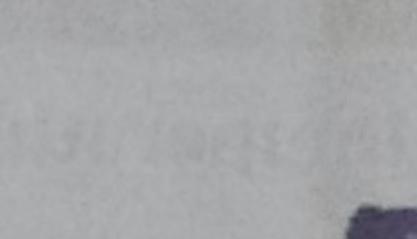
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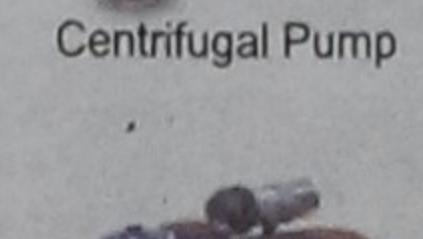
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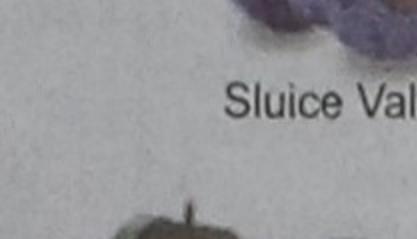
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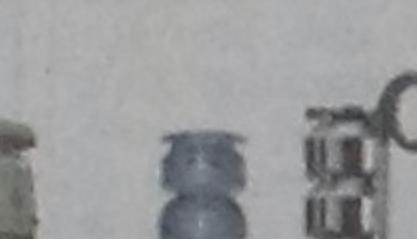
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Tk 1,200 crore left aside in govt coffers

Legal cover required before using the money realised in anti-graft drive

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The Bangladesh Bank and National Board of Revenue (NBR) have suggested the government take a decision on Tk 1,200 crore which was realised by the army-backed caretaker government during its anti-graft drives as both the bodies have no authority to determine the legality of the money to use it.

During the drive in 2007 and 2008, the joint task forces realised the money from different businessmen and politicians in fines. Finance and planning adviser of the caretaker government Mirza Azizul Islam in his budget speech mentioned that the money was deposited with the Bangladesh Bank.

But sources at the finance ministry said the money remains unused, there being no clear-cut decision as to its legality.

Recently the finance ministry had sent letters to the Bangladesh Bank and NBR to know about the money.

In reply, the Bangladesh Bank said, "The authority over the deposited money in government account lies with the government and in this case Bangladesh Bank only plays the role of a banker. It has no authority to determine the legality of this money and it absolutely goes under jurisdiction of the government whether money will be returned. Bangladesh Bank will

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DMCH interns end strike after 14hrs

Over 2,000 patients put to untold sufferings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Interns of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) called off their strike after a long fourteen hours yesterday.

DMCH interns went on the strike on Friday evening as relatives of an injured trader Shah Imran, who died half an hour into his admission, misbehaved with them alleging that the trader died due to negligence of interns.

Shah Imran was admitted at the DMCH on Friday evening after a portion of the roof of a six-storey building fell on him at Rampura in the city.

During the 14-hour strike the body of Shah Imran was not handed over to their relatives.

Over 2,000 patients were not able to receive treatments and many of their relatives could not even come out of the hospital to buy medicines and other necessary items as all entrances were padlocked.

Meanwhile, relatives of the deceased put up barricades on the Rampura TV Road for one hour in the morning and staged demonstrations at Rampura Bazar in the afternoon yesterday protesting at not handing over the body and the arrest of the two.

Agitating interns called off their strike at around 2:00pm and returned the body to the relatives of the deceased after Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque and Health Adviser Prof Modasser Ali assured of meeting their demand at a meeting held at DMCH.

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