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Strike on river fronts called off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Nourjan Samik Federation yesterday called off its countrywide indefinite water transport strike following government assurance of removing inconsistencies in the newly announced wage structure for them.

The strike was withdrawn at 4:30pm after an agreement between the chairmen of two parliamentary standing committees and representatives of the federation at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The agreement says that besides removing the wage structure inconsistencies, cases filed against workers for the strike will be withdrawn and all detained workers will be freed, said a press release of the federation.

Shortly after this announcement, movement of passenger vessels on all routes

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Rajuk school the best

New performance criteria bring changes in order of top-notchers

RAKIB AHAMMED and NAJMUL ALAM NOBIN

New criteria for selecting top schools in SSC and equivalent examinations have pushed last year's chart leader Viqarunnisa Noon School to fourth position while bringing Rajuk Utara Model School to the peak from eighth place.

Heads of the two schools noted that it's the new yardstick that has brought such big changes in the rankings.

Since introduction of the GPA system in 2001, the education ministry had been selecting top ten schools on the basis of the number of GPA-5 achievers and pass rate.

This year the ministry has ranked top 20 schools under each board by academic standards in four categories.

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Students of Rajuk Utara Model College pose for a group photo yesterday. Their school beat all other schools in Dhaka Board in this year's SSC exams. PHOTO: STAR

Diabetic hospital turns battlefield

DU students clash with staff over use of lift; 15 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A trivial incident led to a fierce clash between students of Dhaka University and employees of Birdem Hospital, leaving at least 15 people injured yesterday.

During the clash, DU students barricaded roads at Shahbagh causing city dwellers to suffer for an hour and a half.

Sources said students wrecked the collapsible gates at the entrance of Birdem and smashed the glass windows at the counters of Emergency Unit of Ibrahim Cardiac Centre and Ibrahim Medical College by hurling bricks.

Several hundred patients and their attendants who were trapped inside the hospital were terrified.

Jewel, a student of DU Institute of Modern Languages, accompanied his ailing father to Birdem around 10:00am, said Jahir, an injured student of DU.

As the elevator designated for the patients and their attendants was too crowded he

wanted to use the one reserved for Birdem staff only, which led to an argument between Jewel and the Birdem staff.

At one point the security guard assaulted Jewel physically, said Jahir.

When Jewel spoke to his friends about the matter, Jahir and a few others informed the matter to DU authorities who assured them of settling the matter.

At about 1:30 pm, 15 to 20 DU students went to the hospital to demand apology from the security guard. Suddenly around 50 employees of Birdem armed with iron rods and bamboo sticks attacked the students, resulting in a violent clash, said Jahir.

At least 10 students and three employees of Birdem were badly injured.

The students left the scene and around 2:30pm another group of 500 DU students stormed the area and tried to get into the hospital, said witnesses.

On failing, they resorted to vandalising

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4 drowned in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four persons including two school students drowned yesterday in ponds and lake in the city's Gulshan, Ramna and Rampura areas.

Of them, Kawsar Hawlader, 15, and Mohammad Tusher, 15, were class-10 students of Moghbazar T&T High School.

Mohammad Selim, 35, was a patient at National Institute of Chest Diseases & Hospital in Mohakhali, while the other victim was yet to be identified.

Relatives said Kawsar and Tusher went to a pond in Aftab

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Prayer Timing		
May 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

8 more die as urban warfare hits Bangkok

AFP, Bangkok

Raging violence in the heart of the Thai capital claimed eight more lives yesterday as the embattled premier vowed no turning back and the army threatened a crackdown on thousands of protesters.

Two days of street battles between soldiers and anti-government "Red Shirts" have left 24 people dead, all civilians, and 187 wounded. The military declared one area of Bangkok a "live fire zone" as troops struggled to regain control.

Scenes of urban warfare erupted on the southern and northern fringes of the Red Shirts' sprawling encampment in the heart of Bangkok, after the army moved in Thursday to seal off the area.

Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, who last week shelved a plan to hold early elections because the protesters refused to disperse, warned the government "cannot turn back" in the two-month standoff.

Soldiers opened fire on demonstrators, some of them armed or hurling Molotov cock-

tails, as plumes of black smoke billowed from burning tyres.

Three bodies were seen lying on the ground in the area where the military posted a sign declaring live ammunition was being used, according to an AFP photographer.

More than 50 people have been killed and 1,600 have been wounded since the protests began on March 12, according to figures from the emergency services and the public health ministry.

"The current situation is almost full civil war," said a protest leader, Jatuporn Prompan. "I am not sure how this conflict will end."

Protesters rolled burning tyres at soldiers and launched fireworks at helicopters hovering over the capital, which is under a state of emergency. The army warned it would move against the demonstrators' main rally site unless they disperse, but it gave no timetable for the action.

"There is a plan to crack down on Ratchaprasong if the protest does not end," said the army spokesman, Sunsern Kaewkumnerd.

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SON'S SSC SUCCESS Overjoyed father dies of heart attack

UNB, Dhaka

Father of an SSC candidate reportedly died of cardiac arrest being overjoyed as his son passed the examination this year after he failing in the past two years.

Retired schoolteacher Projesh Roy, 45, is a resident of Tophkana in the capital. His only son Pulok informed him about his success over cell phone at about 3pm yesterday.

He got the news and started returning home from Taltala. On the way he suddenly fell sick and was rushed to nearby

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

OnlinePoll

Do you think the government's move to hike power tariff is justified?

No (52.3%)
 Yes (46.0%)
 No Comments (1.7%)

Total votes: 842

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the police should continue with requisition of private transport?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

2 outlaws killed in shootouts

STAR REPORT

Two outlaws were killed in separate incidents of "shootouts" between their cohorts and Rapid Action Battalion personnel in Pabna and Kushtia early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Saidul Haq Sayeed, 40, a regional commander of outlawed group "Gono Bahini" of Kushtia and Abdul Malek alias Kata Malek, 35, an operative of "Bahini" of Pabna.

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Stalking triggers clash in Sylhet Polytechnic

Leaves 10 people injured

UNB, Sylhet

Alleged sexual harassment of a female student by a Bangladesh Chhatra League leader of Sylhet Polytechnic Institute led to a clash on campus yesterday that left 10 activists wounded.

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