

DoE fines paper mill, brick fields

STAR REPORT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined three paper mills in Chittagong and six brick kilns in Rangpur, Feni and Chittagong a total of Tk 2,625,000 for environmental pollution.

Jafar Alam, director of DoE Chittagong Office, fined Hakkani Pulp and Paper Mills Limited Tk 4.50 lakh, Ambea Pulp and Paper Mills Limited Tk 2.50lakh and Anwara Pulp and Paper Mills Limited Tk 7.50lakh in Patiya upazila.

The director also fined Keranir Hat Bricks in Satkania Tk 75,000, said a DoE release.

The paper mills were discharging waste into the river Karnaphuli without setting up any effluent treatment plant (ETP). The paper mills and the kiln had no environmental clearance certificates.

Spelling Bee

FROM PAGE 20

Some 1,400 students selected from the primary round will join the battle for the spelling supremacy.

"I hope viewers will enjoy the show. Their perception of Bangladesh's poor education system would change once they start watching the show," said Russell T Ahmed, CEO of champs21.com, the organiser of the contest.

Asked about the response to the contest, he said it has been very positive. "To my knowledge, no TV show in the country has ever had so many students."

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said this event proves that one can become a star through studying.

"Such an event through games makes studies simpler," he mentioned adding, it is not only the students but also their families have got themselves involved in the contest.

Nearly one lakh students of classes VI - X from 932 schools across the country had joined the contest.

From the divisional round, 72 students will advance to compete in 12 quarter-finals. The top 24 spellers from the quarter-finals will make it through to six semi-finals.

Six top contestants of the semi-final rounds will battle it out for the Spelling Bee championship in the grand finale on June 20.

The champion will win a trophy, a trip to Washington DC with one parent and an education insurance of Tk 5 lakh.

Besides, the first runner-up will receive a trophy, Tk 3 lakh education insurance and a gift from the British Council in Dhaka, while the second runner-up will secure Tk 2 lakh education insurance and a gift from the British Council.

Pawan Sud, general manager of consumer healthcare GlaxoSmithKline, and Md Nurul Islam, regional senior vice-president of Metlife Alico, were present.

ROAD CRASH

Rowdy protest after death of a student

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka College students yesterday vandalised vehicles and blocked the road in front of the college protesting the death of a fellow student in a road accident.

They also clashed with police during the protest as the law enforcers tried to prevent the students from vandalising vehicles.

Students obstructed traffic movement on the Mirpur Road from Science Laboratory intersection to New Market area for about two hours from 10:30am and damaged at least seven vehicles with sticks and brickbats, said police and witnesses.

The move created a severe jam in the area causing suffering to commuters.

Witnesses said chases and counter chases took place between police and students when the law enforcers tried to interfere. The students threw brickbats at the police. No casualty was reported in the clash, however.

Earlier on Monday night, a recklessly driven bus killed

SM Jakaria Dalim, 25, an MA student in English Literature of the college. Hailing from Rampal upazila in Bagerhat, Dalim was on his way to Azimpur staff quarter from a private firm in Dhanmondi.

Police detained the driver Yasin and seized the bus. The investigation officer placed Yasin before a Dhaka court seeking a seven-day remand.

Students said the news of Dalim's death spread soon as they went to college yesterday morning. They gathered inside the college around 10:00am and took to the streets half an hour later.

Officer-in-Charge of New Market Police Station Mostafizur Rahman said police diverted vehicles from near Science Laboratory and Nikhet intersection and set up barricade at both ends to avoid more vandalism during the protest.

Vehicular movement resumed normally after principal of the college and high officials of police assured the students of trial of the accused driver and compensation for the victim's family.

Conman caught

FROM PAGE 20

Banasree in Rampura, narrated the story to The Daily Star yesterday. He said he got into a bus from Meradia bus stop around 12:30pm on March 21 to get to his shop.

"The bus had very few passengers. This man [the vendor] was selling coconuts only for Tk 15. As soon as I sipped on the milk, I saw two people sit next to me and two more behind my seat," he said.

Mosharraf could not recall what happened afterwards. He passed out. He came around at Al-Razi Hospital at Farmgate in the capital in the afternoon.

"They took Tk 32,000 from me. I did not even know who took me to the hospital," Mosharraf said.

Mosharraf saw the same vendor yesterday from a bus. "I got down quickly and challenged him."

Mosharraf gathered pedestrians and locals and told them how he had been robbed.

The vendor, who was carrying five green coconuts in a basket, denied outright any involvement in Mosharraf's getting robbed.

"When I told him that I would buy all the coconuts and asked him to chop the tops off the coconuts [so that the milk could be had], he

refused to sell two of the coconuts saying those had already been sold."

Mosharraf said, "Insisted on by the crowd, he finally chopped off the tops of the two coconuts but deliberately dropped them, spilling the milk on the ground."

The crowd, however, was persistent. It made him drink whatever milk that was left inside the coconuts.

"The vendor was unconscious within five minutes," Mosharraf said.

Ahmed Ali Mollah, sub-inspector of Khilgaon Police station, reached the scene as the vendor was made to drink the milk.

Ahmed Ali told The Daily Star, "We saw him lose consciousness within a few minutes and we rushed him along with Mosharraf to Dhaka Medical College Hospital."

He said they found marks of syringe on the coconuts which the vendor had been made to drink from. "We will look into the matter after he regains the consciousness and try to find out how many criminals are involved in this," he added.

The sexagenarian vendor, still unidentified, was undergoing treatment at the hospital in police custody.

JU crisis deepens

Classes suspended for teachers' strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The agitating teachers of Jahangirnagar University yesterday observed an all-out strike programme on the campus for the seventh consecutive day that apparently put all kinds of academic activities in suspension.

They have been demanding the resignation of the 'unelected' vice-chancellor for not meeting their demands, including the formation of a judicial probe committee over the death of a student, holding elections to the post of VC and halting teachers' recruitment.

Boycotting classes and examinations, the agitating teachers under the banner of 'Shikkhak Samaj' laid a siege to the administrative and VC offices in the morning and also obstructed the campus buses' operations.

The teachers also prevented employees of the university from entering their offices and urged their fellow teachers not to attend classes in order to create pressure on the administration.

Therefore, in all departments except for two or three, no classes or regular examinations were held.

At one stage of the programme, the agitating teachers got into an altercation with the university's registrar and the president of the officers' association when the duo tried to enter the registrar's office by evading obstruction in the morning.

Yesterday's strike was part of their ongoing 10-day agitation programme that began on March 18. Their demands also include punishment of former proctor Prof Arzu Miah for his alleged attack on the president of the teachers' association and setting a date for holding elections to the posts of VC, dean, senate and syndicate members.

"We are observing the agitation programmes to demand the resignation of the non-elected vice-chancellor, who has turned the campus into an undemocratic institution by appointing teachers based on partisan considerations," said Prof Nasim Akhter Hossain, spokesperson of Shikkhak Samaj.

They have been demonstrating following the murder of Zubair Ahmed, an honours final year student of the English department, on January 9 demanding the formation of a judicial probe committee to investigate the murder and punish the killers.

However, VC Prof Shariff Enamul Kabir termed the teachers' demonstration undemocratic, irrational and harmful for the teachers and the students.

"The teachers are agitating for my resignation to make political gains. Their activities are seriously hampering the academic activities that might swell session jam," he claimed.

Prof Kabir also said the way they were demanding his resignation was undemocratic. He asked the teachers to cancel their agitation and join discussions to settle the demands.

"I have already met a key demand by replacing the whole proctorial body and told them to come for discussions over their any democratic demand, including holding election for the post of VC," he said.

Prof Nasim Akhter said the VC had earlier broken the promises he made during the previous discussions over the demands put forth by the agitating teachers.

Although academic and administrative activities were almost stalled yesterday due to the agitation, the university's public relations office in press releases claimed everything to be normal.

Meanwhile, a group of students, mostly of the first year, brought out a procession on the campus against the agitation of Shikkhak Samaj, allegedly under pressure of the pro-government Chhatra League leaders.

Prof Nasim Akhter claimed, however, that those students were backed by the administration.

The agitating teachers will observe a similar strike programme today.

Friends of freedom

FROM PAGE 1

Recalling the recipients' contributions to our independence war, the president said, "Their valuable inspiration and support gave us impetus for achieving victory."

Hasina said, "They gave us all sorts of help available -- food, shelter, medicine, and even military training. Most importantly, they gave greater voice to our legitimate cause, facilitated our access to global media, mobilised public opinion and financial support."

"Their moral and logistics support had been a constant source of inspiration for our valiant freedom fighters."

This was the second phase of presenting awards to foreign nationals and organisations.

Earlier on July 25 last year, "Bangladesh Freedom Honour" was posthumously conferred on former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi.

At yesterday's ceremony, eight heads of state and government were awarded the "Bangladesh Liberation War Honour" and the others "Friends of Liberation War Honour."

Of the eight, only Nepalese President Ram Baran Yadav is alive. The others are Third King of Bhutan Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, former Soviet president Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev and Nikolai Viktorovich Podgorny, ex-Soviet prime minister Alexei Nikolaevich Kosygin, former Yugoslav president Marshal Josip Broz Tito, ex-UK prime minister Sir Edward Richard George Heath and former Nepalese prime minister Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala.

The organisations that received awards are the BBC, Akashbani (All India Radio), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Oxfam and Kolkata University Shahayak Samiti.

The award consists of a gold-plated silver metallic

plaque bearing a replica of the National Memorial and a citation on a silk cloth.

Bangalees received support from these foreign friends at a time when they stood up against genocide and other atrocities by the Pakistan occupation forces and their collaborators.

The nine-month war eventually led to the emergence of a sovereign Bangladesh.

The ceremony yesterday was a unique experience for many who travelled to Bangladesh for the first time to receive the awards on behalf of the recipients.

The awardees thanked the Bangladesh government for honouring them.

Hari Kumar Shrestha, Nepalese ambassador in Dhaka, was the first to receive the "Bangladesh Liberation War Honour" from Zillur Rahman on behalf of his country's President Dr Ram Baran Yadav.

Lyonpo Chenkyab Dorji, chairman of the Royal Privy Council, took the award on behalf of Third King of Bhutan Jigme Dorji Wangchuck.

Alexander A Nikolaev, Russian ambassador in Dhaka, received three awards on behalf of two former presidents and a prime minister.

Aleksandr Broz, son of former Yugoslavia president Marshal Tito, received the award on behalf of his father. The EHF trustee received the award for ex-British prime minister Edward Richard George Heath.

The son of former Nepalese prime minister Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala took the award for his father.

Pankaj Saran, the Indian high commissioner in Dhaka, received the "Friends of Liberation War Honour" award for the people of India, while Indian State Minister for Defence MM Pallam Raju took the award as a Mitra Bahini representative.

Meghalaya Chief Minister Mukul Sangma received the award for his late mother Rawshan Ara Begum

Sangma.

Director General of All India Radio Leeladhar Mandloi received the award for Akashbani.

The ceremony started with the screening of a documentary on the foreign friends after the prime minister had reached the venue around 10:00am.

Cabinet Division Secretary Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan introduced the foreign friends to the audience and read out a citation describing their role during the Liberation War.

Lt Gen Jack Frederick Ralph Jacob of India gave a salute to the audience after receiving the award. He then chanted "Joy Bangla" and the audience reciprocated with an even louder chant.

Speaking on behalf of the recipients, former British Labour MP Michael Barnes said they were greatly honoured at the Bangladesh government's invitation.

"We accept the honour. Long live Bangladesh. Joy Bangla."

A list of 132 foreign friends was made but the government finally invited 110, of which, 83 have attended or sent representatives to receive the awards.

The government has so far prepared a list of 568 foreign friends from all over the world. They include 257 Indians, 88 Americans, 41 Pakistanis, 39 Britons, nine Russians, 18 Nepalese, 16 French and 18 Japanese.

At the function, the prime minister said the government would continue to honour foreign friends.

A foreign ministry source said lawmakers and leaders of most political parties, except Jamaat-e-Islami, were invited to the ceremony. No BNP leader was seen at the programme.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Mujahedul Islam Selim, among others, attended the function.

A restriction unexplained

FROM PAGE 1

reservation "on the instructions of an intelligence agency".

Scheduled to be held at the hotel's Winter Garden yesterday from 3:30pm to 6:00pm, the event had been organised by the pro-BNP research body Group-2009.

The opposition leader was expected to arrive at 4:00pm to launch five books penned and edited by journalist Shafik Rehman. The books deal with life and work of late president Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia.

On Monday night, the hotel authorities demanded that the contents of the books be made known to them and then scrapped the permission after a half hour's conversation, the organisers said during a news briefing at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The booking was made on March 20.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Mahbubul Alam Hanif, special assistant to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said Khaleda had called the programme despite knowing that a cultural show and dinner would be held at the Ruposhi Bangla yesterday in honour of foreign guests who were in the city at state invitation.

Interestingly, as per the official programme schedule, the events that Hanif, who is also a joint general secretary of the ruling Awami League, was talking about were held in the ballroom of Pan Pacific Sonargaon.

When corrected, he said, "Then I don't know anything."

Home Minister Sahara Khatun, however, said the authorities had not given any instructions to police or any other agency about the book launch.

"Police did not obstruct the event," she told reporters after a programme at the Rapid Action Battalion headquarters in the city.

The hotel authorities said they had merely conveyed the "higher authorities' decision" to the organisers.

"It's a state-owned hotel. I

was in charge at the time. I just conveyed the message to them [organisers] as per the higher authorities' instructions," Mosharraf Hossain, catering sales executive of Ruposhi Bangla, told The Daily Star.

When contacted, a senior National Security Intelligence (NSI) official said the authorities had not given any instruction about postponing the programme of the opposition leader.

On February 27, the organisers booked the Sonargaon Hotel ballroom for yesterday and paid the charge in advance.

But on March 18, the hotel authorities expressed regrets, saying the prime minister's office wanted the ball room for the same day, said Group-2009 President Saiful Islam at the urgent press briefing.

They then opted for the Ruposhi Bangla Winter Garden.

Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, BNP's acting secretary general who was also present at the press conference, vehemently protested the booking cancellation and called upon the government to make it clear which intelligence agency had forced the hotel authorities to cancel the reservation.

"The government must explain who were behind the decision. It is now a question whether the government has taken the shelter of intelligence agencies."

The government has once again proved that it believes neither in democracy nor in people's freedom of opinion, he said.

He said the government had become weak as it had lost public support. "It seems that non-political persons are now running the country. And it's not clear whether the advisers are the citizens of Bangladesh or India."

The BNP leader said the party is concerned at the government restrictions on and obstructions to the opposition leader's movements over the past couple of days.

"Don't block democracy and politics. It won't bring any good," he asked the ruling alliance.

Shafik Rehman said the government could have replied to his writing by using pro-government writers, journalists, television or radio instead of obstructing the launch of his books.

Urging the country's intelligence agencies not to carry out government orders, he said the AL administration has become "illegal".

The future of this government is zero, zero and zero, Shafik Rehman added.

15 hurt as students, cops clash in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 people were injured in a clash between students of Titumir College and police in the capital's Mohakhali late last night.

Of the hurt, 10 are students and the rest cops.

During the clash, students smashed around 30 vehicles and blocked the Mohakhali to Gulshan-1 road for around two hours. Police have detained 26 students from the spot.

It all began around 10:00pm when a group of students went to the Parjatan Corporation's band in Mohakhali and demanded drinks for free. As the bartenders refused to serve free booze, the group began vandalising the bar.

Police reached the spot around 10:15pm and tried to bring the situation under control but to no avail. As the unruly youths hurled brickbats at them, the cops charged baton, leading to chase and counter-chase.

The clash ended around 12:30am. As of filing this report at 1:45am, additional police were deployed in the area to avert further violence.

THE AWARDEES

Recipients of "Bangladesh Liberation War Honour"

1. Dr Ram Baran Yadav, President of Nepal
2. Late Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the Third King of Bhutan
3. Late president Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev of Russia
4. Late president Nikolai Viktorovich Podgorny of Russia
5. Late prime minister Alexei Nikolaevich Kosygin of Russia
6. Late president Marshal Josip Broz Tito of former Yugoslavia
7. Late prime minister Sir Edward Richard George Heath of UK
8. Late prime minister Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala of Nepal

Recipients of "Friends of Liberation War Honour"

9. Mitra Bahini (India)
10. People of India
11. Michael Barnes (UK)
12. Ms Barbara Dasgupta (Germany)
13. Sunil Dasgupta (Germany)
14. Dr Rathin Datta, Padmasree (India)
15. Rajmata Bibhu Kumari Devi (Tripura, India)
16. Simon Dring (UK)
17. Julian Francis (UK)
18. Ms Arundhati Ghose (India)
19. IP Gupta (India)
20. Lt Gen (retd) Jack Frederick Ralph Jacob (India)
21. Lear Levin (USA)
22. Biman Mullick (UK)
23. Tsuyoshi Nara (Japan)
24. Manik Sarkar (chief minister of Tripura, India)
25. Barrister Nora Shariff (Ireland)
26. Takayoshi Suzuki (Japan)
27. Father Richard William Timm (USA)
28. David Weisbrod (USA)
29. Dr William Greenough (USA)
30. Dr Kirsten Westergaard (Denmark)
31. Late Rear Admiral Sergey Pavlovich Zuenko and his team (Russia)
32. Late Debudul Bandyopadhyaya (India)
33. Late Dasharath Dev Barman (India)
34. Late Archer K Blood (USA)
35. Late Dilip Chakraborty (India)
36. Late Subrata Roy Chowdhury (India)
37. Late Senator Frank Forrester Church (USA)
38. Late DP Dhar (India)
39. Late Edward C Dimock Junior (USA)
40. Late Ambassador Anatoly Dobrinin (Russia)
41. Late Nikolai Firubin (Russia)
42. Late Andrei Andreevich Gromyko (Russia)
43. Late Pjotr Kirillowitsch Koschewoi (Russia)
44. Late Yakov Alexandrovich Malik (Russia)
45. Late Bruce Douglas-Mann (UK)
46. Shaheed Lance Naik Albert Ekka (India)
47. Shaheed Father William P Evans (USA)
48. Reverend Father Eugene Homerich (USA)
49. Late John Kenneth Galbraith (USA)
50. Cornelius Edward Gallagher (USA)
51. Late Joseph Garst (USA)
52. Late PN Haksar (India)
53. Late Takashi Hayakawa (Japan)
54. Late Bhupen Hazarika (India)
55. Late Ustad Ali Akbar Khan (India)
56. Late Sean MacBride (Ireland)
57. Late Andre Malraux (France)
58. Late Field Marshal SAM Manekshaw (India)
59. Late Justice Syed Sadaf Abul Masud (India)
60. Late Gunnar Myrdal (Sweden)
61. Late Siddhartha Shankar Ray (Ex-chief minister of West Bengal, India)
62. Late Annada Shankar Roy (India)
63. Late Angshuman Roy (India)
64. Purno Agitok Sangma (India)
65. Late Rawshan Ara Begum Sangma (Mother of Meghalaya chief minister, India)
66. Senator William B Saxbe (USA)
67. Pandit Ravi Shankar (India)
68. Late Lord Peter David Shore (UK)
69. Dr Karan Singh (India)
70. Late Sachindra Lal Singh (India)
71. Late Sardar Swaran Singh (India)
72. Late Valdimir Stanis (Russia)
73. Richard K Taylor (USA)
74. Ms Anna Braun Taylor (USA)
75. Major General SS Uban (India)
76. Late Naoaki Usui (Japan)
77. Shaheed Father Mario Veroneice (Italy)
78. Akashbani (All India Radio, India)
79. British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, UK)
80. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
81. Kolkata University Shahayak Samiti (India)
82. Oxfam
83. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Many key witnesses

FROM PAGE 20

An application was placed on March 20 in response to a March 18 court order which asked the prosecution to submit the application explaining its future course of action regarding witness testimonies.

Tribunal Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq yesterday asked prosecutor Haider Ali to read out the application before the court as it was a "different kind of application".

The prosecutor then read out the application detailing the situation of 19 eyewitnesses, who were either sick or missing.

"We have reports that some witnesses have left their areas after being threatened by supporters of the accused," said Haider Ali.

Another 78-year-old witness Usha Rani Malakar of Pirojpur was seriously ill and could die if she travels from home, said the prosecutor, adding that the witness has also lost her voice and memories.

Shukharanjan Bali, another witness in the case, went to Parerhaat bazaar in Pirojpur one day and did not return, according to a general diary filed by his daughter, the prosecutor added.

Three other witnesses--a mother, her son and another

person--could not be found, and their neighbours said that they had probably left for India.

The prosecutor said a group of armed men had been patrolling Sayeede's native Pirojpur district and threatening potential witnesses with dire consequences.

As the witnesses could not be traced, producing them before the court would be "time consuming" and "expensive".

As a result, their statements given to the investigation officer should be accepted as their depositions, said Haider Ali.

Abdur Razzaq, chief defence counsel of the Jamaat-e-Islami leader, said it was "a very serious application" and an "unprecedented one". He prayed to the court that the defence be allowed to deliver its counter arguments today.

Earlier, the three-member tribunal rejected a defence petition seeking to examine parts of the investigation report used for bringing formal charges against Sayeede.

nesses for at least 15 times.

Delawar Hossain Sayeede was produced before the court yesterday. He is among six Jamaat and two BNP leaders who are facing charges of crimes against humanity at the tribunal.

PROSECUTION NOT APPRECIATED

At one point of the hearing, Prosecutor Haider Ali told the tribunal that many questions have been raised about the efficiency of the prosecution regarding producing witnesses.