

EXTRA ADMISSION FEES Govt gives 3 schools 1 month for refund

WASIM BIN HABIB

Five months past its earlier directive, the government yesterday gave three prominent non-government schools in the capital one month to return or adjust in monthly fees the extra money the institutions had charged during admissions.

Punitive measures, including cancellation of monthly pay order (MPO), will be taken if the schools, Ideal School and College, Motijheel; Viqarunnisa Noon School and College; and Monipur High School and College, do not comply, said education ministry officials.

The government, on January 30, directed schools having "a section" of teachers enjoying MPO facilities not to charge over Tk 8,000 in admission and other fees for Bangla and Tk 10,000 for English mediums.

Schools having all their teachers enjoying MPO facilities must not charge over Tk 5,000. But most of the schools did not comply.

The ministry, in a letter yesterday, asked the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) to serve notices to these institutions.

Yesterday's directive came following a report by a four-member DSHE committee which recently visited 17 schools in the capital to see if January's directive was being complied with.

The report found that Ideal School and College realised an excess of Tk 3.39 crore by enrolling 3,049 class I students in Bangla and English mediums.

Viqarunnisa Noon School and College realised Tk 68.17 lakh as extra fee from 1,627 class I students in both mediums while Monipur High School and College realised an excess Tk 5.23 crore by enrolling 3,054 students.

The extra fees had not been returned or adjusted as the governing bodies of the three schools did not have any decision in this regard, said the report.



Former Indian president Dr APJ Abdul Kalam meets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Jatiya Sangsad office in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

TEESTA WATER SHARING PM calls for early signing of deal

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for signing the much-awaited Teesta water sharing agreement with India at an early date for mutual benefits.

She expressed this when former Indian president Dr APJ Abdul Kalam called on her at her Jatiya Sangsad office in the capital.

"There is a high expectation of inking the Teesta water sharing deal at an early date," the PM said.

Deputy Press Secretary to the PM Bijan Lal Dev briefed journalists after the meeting.

During the meeting with Kalam, Hasina reiterated that Bangladesh attaches highest importance to its relationship with India.

She mentioned that bilateral trade between Dhaka and New Delhi has boosted substantially, especially the export of Bangladesh's readymade garment products to India, following reciprocal visits of the premiers of India and Bangladesh to each other's country.

Termining poverty a common enemy of the region, she said, "We should fight together against poverty to achieve our goal."

Kalam said rural development should be the main focus to alleviate poverty. He stressed the need for regional cooperation, extended up to the Asia-Pacific region, to this end.

He appreciated Digital Bangladesh and Vision 2021 concepts of Bangladesh and lauded the country's sustainable economic development.

He is on a two-day visit to Bangladesh to attend the 33rd foundation day celebration of Cirdap.

Rab to train six puppies for dog squad

BSS, Dhaka

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) is expected to train six puppies in next three months to induct them in its dog squad.

"One of the squad's British Labrador bitches gave birth to six puppies on April 23 at Mirpur police barrack... we expect to include them in the squad with appropriate training in next three months," Rab dog squad Chief Captain Abu Naser Md Tanjirul Hassan told the news agency yesterday.

With the induction of the puppies, the number of the dogs in the squad would be 60, he said.

The government brought 25 trained British Labradors and German shepherd dogs in 1998 for Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and Rab was entrusted with the charge of taking care of the dog squad in 2004.

COMMON RIVER MANAGEMENT Assam CM wants neighbours' role

BSS, New Delhi

Chief Minister (CM) of Assam Tarun Gogoi said China, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh should be included in the proposed North East Water Resources Authority (Newra).

He said this while speaking at a press conference in Guwahati yesterday.

During his visit to Assam in 2004, Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh proposed for forming an agency to manage water resources in the region.

However, the plan has not been executed yet as Arunachal Pradesh has been opposing it. As an autonomous body, the proposed authority is supposed to have the power to issue environmental and other clearances to projects in the region.

"We need to set up the Newra as a long-term strategy suggested by experts to mitigate the impact of floods. I would again request Arunachal Pradesh to rethink its stand," Gogoi said.

"We should widen the parameter of the authority by including neighbouring countries," he added. China, Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh are linked to the region's river system in various ways.

Due to erosion, Assam has so far lost more than 4.5 lakh hectares of land.

Equal facilities for govt, non-govt teachers urged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day strike of teachers and employees of secondary schools and colleges ended yesterday with demonstrations and protest rallies held in several districts across the country.

Under the banner Bangladesh Shikhhok-Karmachari Oikkyia Parishad, a platform of five teachers and employees' organisations, the agitating teachers who were boycotting classes from Tuesday urged the government to realise their 17-point demand.

In Dhaka, they held a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club where parishad leaders said they would be compelled to announce tougher movements including non-stop strike if demands are not met.

Their demands include nationalisations of all education system, implementation of the National Education Policy, removal of discrimination between government and non-government teachers, and providing facilities

similar to those for government teachers.

"We know it is not possible to meet all the demands at a time but we want the government to implement some of our demands," Ranjit Kumar Saha, coordinator of the Parishad, told The Daily Star.

He said parishad leaders will sit tomorrow to chalk out their next course of action and hopefully announce those on Saturday.

Parishad convenors Atiar Rahman, Nur Mohammad Talukder, and Shahjahan Alam Saju spoke at the rally.

Classes in 240 schools in Bagerhat were suspended for the last two days due to the strike while teachers of 176 schools, colleges and madrasas in five upazilas in Gopalganj observed the strike, report our correspondents in Bagerhat and Gopalganj.

In Chittagong, teachers and employees in 14 upazilas participated in the rally held at Chittagong Press Club.

Similar reports came from Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Chandpur, and Barisal districts.

10-TRUCK ARMS HAUL Ex-DIG cross examined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The cross examination of former Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Farrukh Ahmad, a prosecution witness in the 10-truck arms haul cases, continued for the second day yesterday.

It started at 12.20pm and with an hour interval for lunch it continued till 5.45pm when the judge of Chittagong Metropolitan Special Tribunal-1 SM Mojibur Rahman adjourned the proceedings for the day.

The incomplete cross examination would resume today.

Lawyers of five accused including former NSI Director General Brig Gen (ret'd) Abdur Rahim, former DGFI Director Brig Gen (ret'd) Rezzakul Haider, ex-NSI Director Major (ret'd) Liakat Hossain, ex-NSI field officer Akbar Hossain Khan and Hafizur Rahman cross examined Farrukh.

During the cross examination, Liakat's lawyer Mohammad Ahasan asked Farrukh whether he was aware that Major Liakat was never in charge of NSI Chittagong Office. Farrukh replied that he could not recall the information.

Replying to a question of Rezzakul's lawyer Advocate Kamrul Islam, Farrukh said he asked former General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Chittagong Cantonment about the destination of 10-truck load of arms as he [Farrukh] knew that no case was filed in connection with seizure of one trawler load of arms at Cox's Bazar in 1996 due to intervention of the then GOC.



Bangladesh Shikhhok-Karmachari Oikkyia Parishad, a platform of five teachers and employees' organisations, forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday for realising a 17-point demand, including nationalisation of their jobs.

PHOTO: STAR

Take moral responsibility for Padma bridge fiasco

Fakhrul asks PM, tells her to step down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday asked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to accept the moral responsibility for the corruption charges over the Padma bridge project and step down.

The government was corrupt from top to bottom and that was why no action was taken against the corrupt people identified by World Bank, he said.

He was addressing a rally organised by the city unit BNP at the capital's Naya Paltan protesting repression on the opposition.

"The bribe money had been distributed even before the Padma bridge's construction had begun. The government failed to start the construction only for this corruption," he said.

Protesting the government's decision to provide transit and transshipment facilities to India, Mirza Alamgir stated

that this decision ignored the country's interests.

"We want good relations with each and every country but our country's interest must get top priority. We still did not get Teesta's water and people are being killed at the borders everyday," he said.

Blaming the Awami League-led government for the disappearance of BNP's organising secretary Ilias Ali, he said the country's human rights situation had deteriorated alarmingly due to a decline in the rule of law.

Meanwhile, BNP standing committee member MK Anwar demanded the finance minister's resignation if he failed to ensure the Padma bridge project's funding.

"The finance minister made irresponsible statements regarding World Bank in parliament. As a finance minister he cannot make such statements," he said while addressing a discussion at Jatiya Press Club.

VISA FORGERY

Libyan embassy refutes media allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Libyan embassy in Dhaka yesterday refuted allegations reported by three news agencies recently that it had forged visas and its chargé d'affaires had fled to Malaysia with Tk 100 crore realised in the excuse of providing visas.

At a press conference in the capital's Hotel Lakeshore, the chargé d'affaires, Kamel Al Mahjub, expressed dismay at Bangladesh foreign ministry's inaction against the media outlets.

The news run by a private television channel on June 22 and two newspapers were "totally false and a propaganda of a certain plotting group," he said.

He demanded an apology from the news organisations. "Otherwise, we will take proper legal action," he said.

The channel's news report had also stated that nearly 6,000 visa applications were

pending with Kamel.

In late May, 200 Bangladeshi workers were deported by the Libyan immigration authorities, citing that they had fake visas. However, Bangladesh's Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training stated that the embassy had verified the visas.

Libyan Herald, quoting the Libyan foreign ministry on June 30, reported that investigators would come to Dhaka soon to look into the allegations.

On Bangladesh's expatriates' welfare minister's statement in the June 22 news that the embassy issued fake visas, he said, "I wonder and fail to understand how a very responsible man like him could say (something) like that. No embassy can issue fake visas."

Kamel expected Bangladesh to play its due role in stopping unwanted practices and take up the job opportunities being created for the rehabilitation, construction and development works in Libya.

Fire breaks out at Mouchak Market

UNB, Dhaka

A fire broke out at Mouchak Market in the capital yesterday.

Quoting shop owners, fire fighters and Khilgaon police said the fire broke out at 'Shahi Crockeries', a crockery shop on the ground floor of the four-storied building, at about 9:30am.

Electric short circuit sparked the fire, they said.

On information, six fire-fighting units rushed to the spot and with the help of locals doused the flame.

The crockery shop was gutted and Monihar Jewellers, an adjoining jewellery shop, was partly burned in the fire.



Jatiya Garment Sramik Federation stages demonstration in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding fair prices of basic food commodities for them.

PHOTO: STAR