

PATUAKHALI SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

7 including 2 BCL men expelled for vandalism

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The authorities of Patuakhali Science and Technology University yesterday temporarily expelled seven students, including two BCL activists, for vandalism on the campus and Dumki upazila town.

Assistant registrar Md Ashiqur Rahman also issued a show-cause notice, asking them to reply within seven days to explain why they would not be expelled permanently.

The expelled students are Kamruzzaman Sohag, Md Billal Hossain, Abu Syed Md

Hasan and Md Arifur Rahman Pial of agriculture department, Md Saiful Islam of agriculture extension and rural development department, Md Kawar Ahmed of business administration and management department and Md Imam Hasan Rubel of genetics department.

Of them, Kamruzzaman was identified as president of university unit Chhatra League and Saiful as its secretary, said Aminul Islam Tito, deputy registrar of the university.

Earlier, the decision to expel the seven was taken at a meeting of 'students disci-

pline board' with vice chancellor M Shamsuddin in the chair on February 14, he said.

Referring the decision to expel the students, Kamruzzaman said they did not get justice in the hand of the authorities.

On January 22, the afore-said students along with others went on rampage on the campus and vandalised around 100 shops at Pirtala Bazar in the upazila town.

Later, separate probe bodies headed by Prof Abul Kasem Chowdhury, were formed to investigate the incidents.

Farmers opt for wheat in 8 northern districts

Cultivation exceeds target

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Wheat cultivation has exceeded target in eight northern districts this season as the farmers showed increased interest to the item for better profit.

A large number of the farmers, who incurred losses due to low market prices of paddy in both aman and irri-boro seasons in the last two years, have opted for wheat farming this year.

DAE officials, however, claimed that it was the result of their efforts to motivate farmers to switch over to wheat cultivation from irri-boro paddy to reduce use of groundwater.

But farmers said they faced trouble in collecting quality seeds at the beginning of the season as Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) failed to ensure proper supply.

They overcame the situation by using locally preserved seeds and buying seeds from private companies at higher rates.

About 1,25,130 hectares of land have been brought under wheat cultivation against the target of 1,08,423 hectares with a production target of 3,03,584 tonnes in Rangpur Agriculture Zone, DAE officials said.

Of the total, farmers have cultivated wheat in Thakurgaon district on 60,500 hectares against the target of 58,427 hectares with a production target of 1,63,596 tonnes, in

Panchagarh 16,550 hectares against the target of 11,358 hectares with a production target of 31,802 tonnes and in Dinajpur 20,425 hectares against the target of 16,446 hectares with a production target of 46,049 tonnes.

Farmers in Nilphamari cultivated 4,615 hectares against the target of 1,116 hectares with a production target of 11,525 tonnes, in Rangpur 3,260 hectares against the target of 3,111 hectares with a production target of 2,711 tonnes, in Gaibandha 3,385 hectares against the target of 2,067 hectares with a production target of 5,788 tonnes, in Kurigram 15,085 hectares against the target of 11,891 hectares with a production target of 32,175 tonnes and in Lalmonirhat it was 1,310 hectares against the target of 9,407 hectares with a production target of 3,940 tonnes.

"I had opted for wheat considering its growing demand and reasonable price in the market," said Hekmat Ali, 45, of Bothina village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

Cultivation of wheat, requiring only three times irrigation, is much easier and less costly than irri-boro paddy cultivation, said Shamsuzzoha of Shakoya village in Boda upazila of Panchagarh district.

The per bigha production cost of wheat is Tk 5000 at the maximum while it needs around Tk 9,000 to 10,000 to cultivate irri-boro crops, he

said. Horticulturist Khondakar Mesbahul Islam of Rangpur told this correspondent over cell phone that they motivated farmers to cultivate wheat to reduce pressure on groundwater.

Wheat cultivation areas increased as the DAE also took effective steps -- including providing adequate assistance of the latest technologies, inputs including quality seeds and fertilisers to the farmers, Mesbahul said.

Prolonged winter and timely irrigation help wheat plants in the area to grow fast, said Dr. Dinabandhu Pandit, principal scientific officer at Wheat Research Centre (WRC) in Dinajpur.

WRC has developed two new high yielding varieties of wheat -- Bari-26 and Bari-27. Both have already been introduced at the farmers' level and gaining popularity, Dr. Dinabandhu said.

Today, the farmers use high yielding varieties of wheat seeds, such as Shatabdi, Prodeep, Shourav, Bijoy, Gourab, Bari-26, Bari-27 developed by the WRC.

It is possible to get 4-5 tonnes of wheat per hectare of land if the farmers sow the seeds within proper cultivation period (till 10 December), Dr. Dinabandhu pointed out.

The country now produces 9 to 10 lakh tonnes of wheat per year against the demand of about 30.35 lakh tonnes, WRC officials said.

SOLIDARITY WITH SHAHBAGH MOVEMENT



PHOTO: STAR
Students and teachers of all educational institutions across the country hoisted national flag and rendered national anthem yesterday, expressing solidarity with the ongoing Shahbagh movement for capital punishment to war criminals. Photos show 1) Students of Mominunnesa Mohila College in Tangail, 2) kids of Sheulibagh Bidyapit in Narsingdi, 3) teachers and students of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy Government College in Magura, 4) teachers and students of Darus Sunnah Yakubia Madrasa in Sylhet, and 5) teachers, students and employees of Government Debendra College in Manikganj.



PHOTO: STAR
The water Development Board (WDB) authorities completed the 'closure dam' on Feni River in Char Chandina area yesterday afternoon. Built under a Tk 10 crore project, the dam, however washed away in just 3 hours at 6:00 pm due to strong tidal surge. The photo was taken moments before the completion of the dyke.

Cargo ship sinks with cement

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A cargo ship capsized with 2200 bags of cement at Molhed point of the Meghna River yesterday.

Cargo staff Ayub Ali said, MV Akim sunk due to strong wind in the river at about 2:00pm while heading towards Chandpur from Dhaka.

However, three staffs of the cargo managed to swim ashore, he said.

Lt Badruddoza, station commander of coastguard, Chandpur, said though they spotted the sunken vessel, they could not salvage it for want of necessary equipment.

Experts collect artifacts to know the past of Kuakata boat

MORSHED ALI KHAN, from Kuakata, Patuakhali

Experts excavating the ancient boat that surfaced on the Kuakata beach in July last year have found a good number of artifacts, including a 200-foot-long iron chain.

The chain was dug out of three feet soil of the beach. However, the anchor, believed to be attached with the chain, could not be found.

While entirely removing the sand from the hull of the 72 feet long and 23 feet wide wooden boat, archaeologists also found some pieces of garment and shards of iron and pottery.

"These would greatly help us determine the history of the boat which is so visibly unusual," said Afroza Khan Mita, an archaeologist working here to salvage the boat.

A group of boat rescuers from Nagarbari have also joined the team of salvage workers.

Yves Marre, a French-born Bangladeshi expert on traditional boat who heads the salvage team, said that the Nagarbari group would be crucial in lifting the 30-ton boat to



PHOTO: STAR
Excavation of the ancient boat that surfaced on the Kuakata sea beach in July last year has entered its final phase.

the surface.

"For generations these people have made traditional boats and so they have the traditional expertise to lift it intact," Yves said.

Since Saturday the rescuers have been working under extremely difficult conditions as the boat is only yards away from the sea. During high tides, it becomes very difficult to

work as water starts invading the site.

Yves said that every step of the salvage operation is a new challenge. "With whatever equipment available locally we are trying to salvage the boat," he added.

Once the boat is rescued it would be put at the maritime museum site earmarked in the Masterplan of Kuakata.

The hull of the boat is

entirely covered with strong copper plates, a practice unknown to the local experts. Experts also believe that it could well be an occidental boat arriving here for trade and collect fresh water of Kuakata.

Some others also believe that the boat belonged to the first Rakhaine settlers in the area who fled Arakan war.

Two 'robbers' beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A mob beat dead two suspected inter-district robbers at Boleswarpur village in Alamdanga upazila of Chuadanga on Saturday night.

The deceased are Amirul Islam, 35, son of Monowar Ali of Tiorbilla village, and Tariqul, 30, son of Mofazzel Ali of Hakimpur village in the upazila.

Police quoting witnesses said, a gang of 8/10 robbers entered the village at about 10:30pm. Sensing their presence, villagers chased them and caught two of them at about 11:30pm at a local field. They gave them a good beating, leaving both dead on the spot.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies. Two hand bombs and a sharp knife

were recovered from the spot, police said. Syed Abdullah, office in-charge of Alamdanga PS, said Amirul was a notorious robber. He was wanted in at least three cases for murder and extortion.

Abdur Rahim Shah Chowdhury, superintendent of police, said a case was filed against 150 unidentified people in connection with the killing of the two robbers.