



Dried sludge and household discards thickly deposited in this stormwater drain of Wasa in the capital's Madinabagh is lush with water hyacinths and grass. If its original depth is not restored before the upcoming monsoon due in just two weeks, a vast area encompassing the neighbourhoods of Bashabo, Ahmedbagh, Rajarbagh, and Sabujbagh is surely to see severe waterlogging, bringing tremendous sufferings to the residents, as it is the only major rainwater outlet there.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## REFUSAL TO PAY EXTORTION BCL forcibly stops construction at BRUR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) forced labourers to stop some ongoing construction works on the campus on Monday after the contractors refused to pay them extortion money.

Around 10-12 activists, led by the unit BCL General Secretary Mostafa Mahmud Hasan and Vice President Ariful Islam Arif, also threatened that if the construction firms did not "please" them, the contractors would have to incur huge losses, said the firm owners.

According to BRUR officials, two students' dormitories, a mosque, an administrative building and a cafeteria are being constructed at a cost of Tk 103 crore by five firms: Zakir Enterprise, Habib & Company, Sayeed Electronic, Harun Construction, and Royal Enterprise.

Milon, owner of Zakir Enterprise, said the BCL men went to the site of an under-construction dormitory and asked the project manager, Al Amin, to immediately pay them money. Refused, the BCL men forced the workers to leave the site.

Milon declined to disclose how much they demanded but a university official, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star that it was Tk 50,000.

The contractors said earlier they paid the BCL men eight to ten times, and they kept coming for money every week.

The university unit BCL vice president, Arif, denied the allegations.

Harun Tazif Joy, registrar (additional charge) of BRUR, said the contractors had verbally informed him about the extortion. If they file a written complaint, the university authorities will take action against the troublemakers, he said.

GONOJAGORON MANCHA

## Imran-led faction starts month-long campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fearing procrastination of the ongoing war crimes trial, a faction of the Gonojagoron Mancha yesterday launched a month-long countrywide campaign to reinforce their six demands, including banning of the Jamaat-e-Islami and capital punishment for all war criminals.

Recently, news on the "stagnancy" of the crimes trial and government's "lenient" attitudes towards war criminals has created suspicion in the public mind about the delivery of justice, said the faction spokesperson, Imran H Sarker, addressing the press in front of the capital's National Museum, while distributing leaflets marking the campaign's inauguration.

For one month, the faction's district-level activists

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## ENCOURAGING SCIENCE EDUCATION

# Govt, NGO, civil society synergic move sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A coordinated initiative from the government, non-government organisations and the civil society is needed to encourage students in science education, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

However, as the allocation for education in the national budget has shrunk over the years, it remains a question whether the government can prioritise science education, they said at the roundtable, "Disinterest in Science Education: Our Responsibilities", organised by Bangla daily the Prothom Alo with support of the Bangladesh Freedom Foundation (BFF) at the daily's office in the capital.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said the number of science students had declined all over the world.

"There is no reason to be alarmed. Popularity of science is fluctuating according to the needs of the world," he said.

The minister also asserted that the number of science students had increased in the country in the last couple of years.

Only one percent of the students took vocational education in 2009, he said, adding that the figure had now increased to seven percent.

"We are trying to make graduates who can meet the demands of an industrialised world," he said.

Noted educationist Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury said an international organisation should be hired to survey the standard of education in the country.

Syed Manzur Elahi, chairman of BFF, said the country's economy was dominated by service sector, where science graduates were not wanted.

"But the ready-made garment sector, which is a major driving force of the economy, now employs 12,000-15,000 foreigners in the mid-level management posts. The educational institutions must create graduates who can work in this sector," he added.

Eminent educationist Rasheda K Choudhury urged the government to increase the education budget.

She also called on businesses such as banks and large corporations to provide fund for organising science fairs at schools and colleges.

Citing education ministry data, Sajjadur Rahman Chowdhury, executive director of BFF, said, "While 41.35 percent of students took science in SSC exams in 1998, it has come down to 22.92 percent in 2013."

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## ORDER FOR REGULARISING JOBS OF 77 HC summons expat welfare secretary for non-compliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Khondaker Showkat Hossain for not complying with its directive for regularising the jobs of 77 employees.

Showkat has to appear before the HC by 10:30am on June 3.

The HC bench of Justice Md Ashfaque Islam and Justice Ashraf Kamal passed the order after hearing a contempt of court petition filed by 11 employees of a project under the Bureau of Manpower, Empowerment and Training.

Petitioners' lawyer Salahuddin Dolon told The Daily Star that the HC following a writ petition on April 7, 2011, had directed the government to regularise the jobs of 77 employees of five projects under the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry.

On August 1 last year, the Appellate Division of

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PHOTO: COURTESY

From left, Humaira Sharmeen, head of operations of Prothom Alo Jobs; Belal Ahmed, deputy director, PR, North South University; Prof Amin Sarkar, vice chancellor, NSU; Mohammad Hannan Miah, faculty adviser, Young Entrepreneur Society! (YES!) of NSU; Syed Mahabub Islam Shohan, president, and Fahim Mamun, joint secretary, of YES!, at a press conference announcing the grand finale of a competition titled Ad Maker Bangladesh 2014, organised by YES! at Jatiya Press Club in the capital on Sunday. The Daily Star is the English print media partner of the competition.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with the students of Waseda University in Tokyo yesterday. She spoke on education and empowerment of the youth at the institution.

## Dua Mehfil



Mominul Haq (Khoka)

With profound sorrow we inform you all, Mominul Haq (Khoka), prominent freedom fighter, has passed away on May 23, 2014 (Friday) in Singapore at the age of 81. He was a longtime associate of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his cousin.

There will be a dua mehfil to be held at Asr prayer at Baitul Aman Mosque, Road 7, Dhanmondi, Dhaka on May 30, 2014 (Friday). Family members of the deceased have requested all his friends, relatives and well-wishers to join the dua mehfil and pray for his departed soul. May Almighty Allah grant him eternal Heaven.

\*There will be separate seating arrangement for women.

- On behalf of the family, Farhana Haq Chowdhury

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- Participants of "Idea Flight" and "Imagine the Future", must bring your projects on the above mentioned day

The Daily Star

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