

DEMAND FOR HALL

Jagannath students stage rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agitating students of Jagannath University (JnU) yesterday announced that they would stage a two-day sit-in from tomorrow on their campus to press home their demand for residential halls on the land of Dhaka Central Jail.

Along with their class boycott programme, they called for the sit-in during a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Holding placards, several thousand students of JnU and other educational institutions joined the two-hour-long programme that began around 3:00pm. Students and teachers of the institutions expressed their solidarity with the movement.

"Apart from our ongoing boycott of class and examinations, we will hold the sit-in on Sunday and Monday," Mahidul Islam, a student of the university, said at the rally.

He also said they would continue their movement until their demand is met.

Eminent personalities also joined the rally.

Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, Dhaka University teacher Robaet Ferdous and

Gonojagoron Mancha spokesperson Imran H Sarker, among others, expressed solidarity with the students.

"Authorities have to answer why the students, who are supposed to be busy with their studies, have taken to the streets," Jyotirmoy said.

The protesters should not be divided over their political beliefs, he added.

Imran H Sarker called upon the students to continue the protest.

"It does not matter where and how the dormitories will be built. Fact is that the students badly need dormitories, and the authorities have to ensure them," he said.

The students began their demonstration on August 2 for new halls to be built at the spot where the Dhaka Central Jail was previously situated on Nazimuddin Road in old Dhaka.

On July 29, all the inmates of the jail were shifted to the newly-built central jail in Keraniganj.

Authorities are now planning to set up a training institute, a park and a museum on the premises of the 200-year-old Dhaka jail.

The protesters said many of their existing halls are occupied.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Jagannath University students demonstrate at the Central Shaheed Minar to press home their demand for residential halls on the land of Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

England's tour

FROM PAGE 1

"Tonight [Thursday] we discussed details with the players and management in an open meeting. They asked lots of questions, have time to ask more and will clearly want to take it all in -- we understand that. Selection for the tour will be made after the end of the summer internationals. We will, as always, continue to monitor the situation right up to and throughout the tour," he added.

There are still a few aspects which are yet to be cleared though. For instance, it's still not certain if England's players will be given an option to opt out of this tour. Regardless, the fact remains that England have received the green signal to come to Bangladesh on September 30 to play three one-day-internationals and two Tests.

It was a decision that was lauded by Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan Papon. Speaking to

reporters at his Gulshan residence on Friday afternoon, he thanked the ECB for taking the positive step.

"I would like to thank the ECB, the England team, our law enforcement agencies like police, RAB and our security agencies. There is no point in saying anything before thanking them," said Papon.

After the terror attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery on July 1, the tour was thrown into uncertainty and the routine security visit of the relevant areas by a three-man ECB team assumed special importance, as their verdict would determine whether the tour would take place as planned.

"I want to thank the prime minister as well. Our prime minister took the matter upon herself," said Papon. "She did the same during the Under-19 world cup. The support we are getting from the government is unbelievable and I believe that the decision that England have taken is right," he added.

TRAWLER CAPSIZE

Another body recovered

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Death toll in the Madaripur engine boat capsize incident rose to two as body of a missing passenger was recovered by rescuers last evening.

The victim was identified as Noni Baroi, 45, wife of Haradhan Baroi from Kalagachhia village of Kendua union in Madaripur sadar upazila.

With this recovery one more passenger -- Suchitra Baroi, 42, wife of Maharaj Baroi from the same village -- of the boat remains missing till filing of this report at 9:00pm last night.

Earlier in the day, the boat was salvaged from the river in a joint effort of fire service and Bangladesh Navy, deputy assistant director of Madaripur Fire Service, Nazrul

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

PM to brief media today on Rampal

FROM PAGE 1

Board and the National Thermal Power Corporation Limited of India.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told The Daily Star yesterday that the premier would hold the press conference around 4:00pm at her official residence Gono Bhaban.

Talking to this correspondent, Environment and Forest Minister Anwar Hossain Manju said the prime minister would elaborately speak on the power project.

A patriot like Sheikh Hasina would never do anything that would harm the country, he said.

No organisation, person or study could say for certain that the Sundarbans would definitely be affected by the construction of the power plant, which is necessary for the country's development, Manju said.

"So far, some studies have made

hypothetical indications that the Sundarbans would be affected if the power plant is built in Rampal."

If anyone or any organisation can prove that the plant's construction would definitely affect the Sundarbans, the PM would certainly consider relocating the project site, added the minister.

The power plant site is about 14 kilometres away from the Sundarbans.

Environmental experts have warned that the Rampal project will cause substantial damage to the Sundarbans and its wildlife.

They say the project would harm the Unesco World Heritage site, as it would affect the climate, topography, land use pattern, wetlands, flora and faunal diversity and quality of air and water in the Sundarbans.

Sultana Kamal, convener of the National Committee to Save the

Sundarbans, has urged the youth of the country to join the movement for cancellation of the project.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports, has also called for scrapping the project.

Besides, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has urged the government not to implement the project, saying it is anti-people and against the country's interests.

On July 12, the government signed an agreement with an Indian firm to set up the India-Bangladesh joint venture plant on the bank of the Pashur River.

The \$1.49 billion plant is likely to start producing electricity in 2019. Seventy percent of the project cost would be covered by the Indian Exim Bank as loan, and the rest by the governments of Bangladesh and India.



The Kutubkhali canal at Purbo Dholaipar in the capital is almost dead after years of waste dumping by local residents and shop owners of the adjacent bazaar in the absence of a proper garbage management system. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Act of single man

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh has also witnessed what a lone wolf can do.

Take the instance of Mesbahuddin, a student of Buet, the country's top engineering university. He embraced militant ideology and hacked dead fellow student Arif Rahman Dwip in 2013.

Why did he commit the murder? Mesbah explained this to the investigation officer, a judicial magistrate and journalists on April 18, 2013.

Son of a retired government official, Mesbah got admitted to Buet's civil engineering department in 2007.

He was a fourth-year student in 2013, residing at Dr MA Rashid Hall. A couple of years before that he came across a mawlana of the city's Gandaria Faridabad Madrasa, Muktamim Mufti Abu Syeed. Mesbah wanted to know from the mawlana what action should be taken against those who undermine Islam.

Mufti Abu Syeed told him that the state should take action against such persons. But if the state does nothing, anyone can take it upon himself if he wants.

"Then I swore to myself that I would take drastic action against the enemies of Islam or the atheists. I am ready to become a martyr," Mesbah told the magistrate.

"On April 9 [in 2013] I was at Dr MA Rashid Hall. I went to Nazrul Islam Hall, brought out a machete from my bag and struck Dwip on the head. As he was falling down on the floor, I hacked him in his back.

"Then I spent some time on the fourth-floor rooftop and climbed down the pipe to the ground floor. I walked to Kamrangirchar, from where I went to Sadarghat in a rickshaw and started for Shariatpur in a launch. I got down in Chandipur and spent the night at Naria Madrasa. The next day I came to Dhaka and stayed at my hall at night."

Mesbah said he had learnt that "Dwip had beaten up the imam of the Shaheed Smriti Hall mosque."

"I thought it was my holy duty to kill Dwip," he said.

Imam Abdul Alim had given shelter to activists of Qawmi madrasa-based Islamist group Hefajat-e Islami who had come to Dhaka to join Hefajat's grand rally on April 6, 2013. Dwip confronted the imam and handed him over to police.

"When the state does not take action against the enemies of Islam, a devoted Muslim can take drastic action out of his own conviction. That's why I hacked him," Mesbah said.

Dwip, critically injured on April 9,

died at a hospital on July 3.

Mesbah was arrested on April 17 and he confessed his crime to the police the next day, without any hesitation. He did not repent. He also gave confessional statement to a court.

Mesbah said he decided to launch the attack after Dwip "harassed" the imam on April 6. But it seems he had started preparing for the crime quite some time ago.

According to a receipt found with him, Mesbah had purchased the machete from New Market on February 28. He told the court that he had bought the machete to kill the 'enemies of Islam'.

The arrest of Mesbah prompted his brother and brother-in-law to rush to the detective office on April 18.

They told journalists that Mesbah is the ninth among 13 children of former bureaucrat Mafizur Rahman.

Of the seven brothers, four were engineers -- two of them then doing PhD in the US. Two other brothers were medical students.

All his six sisters graduated from various universities of the country.

The family members were aware that Mesbah used to visit Faridabad Madrasa's Mufti Syeed. They had previously tried to persuade him not to meet the mawlana.

At one point, Mesbah promised to his family members that he would not meet Mufti Syeed. But they were totally unaware of what he was nurturing inside.

"Our family has become startled. If Mesbah has committed this crime, someone must have instigated it. This whole incident is a dark spot on our family," said one of his brothers.

Now it is urgent to understand through research what elements in the society prompts youths like Mesbah to become a militant.

Mesbah apparently did not grow up in a family environment that encourages someone to become a militant. None of his siblings was involved in politics. There was no incident involving his family to provoke him to take revenge on someone.

Mesbah is now in jail. The trial for Dwip murder is still going on.

It is not known whether the authorities have cared to check out the mawlana who awoke the monster in him. It is also not known how many such religious preachers across the country are imparting such perverted instructions to the youths today.

How many lone wolves like Mesbah are there in the society is not known either.

Home minister sees political instigation

FROM PAGE 1

auditorium in the capital. Dhaka City Chhatra League (North) organised the programme marking the National Mourning Day.

"You [journalists] know whose patronisation made them militants. You had seen what Bangla Bhui did in Bagmara. You also know who were running the country at that time."

Asaduzzaman also said the masterminds of the Gulshan and Sholakia attacks would be arrested "anytime".

"These conspirators, these masterminds who finance and assist [militancy] are being identified one after another. We will be able to bring them to book after arrest," he said.

At another programme later in the day, Asaduzzaman reiterated that the Holey Artisan attackers had no links with Islamic State (IS).

Referring to police, he claimed that the number of misguided youths involved in militancy would not be more than 150.

"Militants have become isolated and will be stamped out. We've identified them and found out their financiers and leaders."

The people of this country are united against all sort of militant activities and they have already showed their resentment at it, he said.

The minister reiterated that the defeated force of the 1971 Liberation War were out to tarnish the country's image before the world. "Let's deter them whoever want to establish IS presence in Bangladesh," he said.

"I have travelled from Teknaf to Tetulia but did not find the organisational presence of IS."

He also said police have already

gleaned "enough information" from the person detained during the drive on a militant den at Kalyanpur in July. "We are working on it."

Asaduzzaman was addressing an anti-militancy rally organised by Jongi-Santrash Birodhi Nagorik Oikya in the playground of Bangla College at Mirpur in the city.

At the programme, Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque called for not doing politics over police activities. "Don't create controversy over the role of police in [handling] militancy," he said.

He also said police would not spare those who would become threat for common people.

"If anyone flees from their home without informing anyone, police will not take that responsibility," he added.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP)

Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia requested city landlords to provide police with information about tenants. "Give us information, we'll ensure your security," he said.

Lawmaker of Dhaka-11 Aslamul Haque said white flags would be hoisted on top of 23,000 "holdings" in his constituency on September 23 to declare that people are united for peace and prosperity.

Gunmen stormed the Holey Artisan Bakery in the capital's Gulshan diplomatic zone on this July 1 and killed 20 hostages, mostly foreigners. Two police officials were also killed during the 12-hour hostage standoff.

Four people, including a suspected attacker, were killed in a militant attack near the Sholakia Eid congregation ground on July 7, the Eid day, in Kishoreganj.