

KMC teacher 'assaulted over harassing female student'

A CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An assistant professor of Khulna Medical College (KMC) yesterday was physically assaulted on the campus over an allegation of sexual harassment of a fourth year female student.

Soon after being harassed, the female student yesterday informed her boyfriend, also a student of the college, who later beat up the teacher along with his friends, who are activists of KMC Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), according to sources. Being informed by the college authorities, Sonadanga police rescued the teacher.

KMC Principal Sudhangshu Kumar Ballav told The Daily Star that they would verify the allegation but to pacify the students immediately, they, following an emergency meeting, had to recommend the higher authorities to transfer the teacher.



Trees stand with partially cut roots due to a road expansion project on the Barisal-Dhaka Highway. Around 12 trees were cut this way, which not only puts the trees at risk but also increases danger for the thousands of vehicles plying the road on a regular basis. The photo was taken in Gariar Par area of Barisal yesterday.

PHOTO: ARIFUR RAHMAN

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE IN CHILDREN

Low birth weight, obesity, undernutrition blamed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children, who are born with low birth weight and remain underweight until one year of age, are likely to suffer diabetes, cancer and heart failures when they grow up.

Since adolescent pregnancy, malnourishment during pregnancy and lack of exclusive breastfeeding are the major reasons behind low birth weight and underweight babies, addressing these issues can largely keep the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) at bay, said experts at an event yesterday.

"It's particularly important to provide underweight newborns with exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continue it for two years to prevent NCDs," said Dr Khurshid Talukder, research coordinator of the Centre for Woman and Child Health (CWHC). The event "Expert Consultation Workshop on Child Non-Communicable Disease" was organised by CWHC and Bangladesh Pediatric Association at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) office in the capital yesterday.

"Breast milk also reduces obesity. Babies who get proper amount of breast milk are less likely to become overweight. If the overweight babies grow up to be obese adults, they are more likely to suffer

from diabetes and cardiac complications," he said.

This year's Global Nutrition Report, released in June, found Bangladesh slipping back from the progress it made earlier in exclusive breastfeeding. It said Bangladesh's exclusive breastfeeding rate was little over 55 percent, which was 60 percent a few years back.

Prof M Rahman of the department of public health and informatics at Jahangirnagar University pointed out that low birth weight, under five undernutrition and childhood obesity are responsible for NCDs.

"They are linked and fundamentally preventable through good nutrition counselling in pregnancy, the newborn period, childhood and adolescence," he said.

CWHC Chairperson MQK Talukder said, "Children who have NCDs suffer throughout their lives." He stressed on healthy diet from early childhood.

DGHS NCD Director Dr Faruk Ahmed Bhuiyan highlighted other childhood NCDs including indoor air pollution, thalassaemia, congenital anomalies, autism and adolescent risk behaviour such as smoking. Director General of DGHS Prof Abul Kalam Azad also spoke.

Regent starts Dhaka-Kathmandu flights

PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY from Kathmandu



Regent Airways now operates flights between Dhaka and Kathmandu. Air Vice-Marshal

Ehsanul Gani Chowdhury, chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab), inaugurated the service at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

Nepal's Chargé d' Affaires to Bangladesh Dilli P Acharya, Regent's Chief Executive Officer Lt Gen (ret'd) Fazle Akbar, its Chief Commercial Officer Akhter U Ahmed and Director Salman Habib were present at the programme.

Thanking the airline for starting the flight, Dilli said the flight would play a vital role in improving the relations between the two countries.

After the inauguration, the Regent flight left for Nepal with 126 passengers at 3:00pm and reached there at 4:15pm (local time).

Mashfee Binte Shams, ambassador of Bangladesh to Nepal, and senior officials of the airways in Nepal welcomed the passengers at Tribhuvan International Airport. The flight left Kathmandu with 65 passengers at 5:15pm (local time) and arrived in Dhaka at 6:45pm. There will be flights to Kathmandu from Dhaka on Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays. The economy class fare is Tk 12,493 for a one-way trip and Tk 17,512, including all taxes, for a round trip. It is the sixth international flight of Regent.

Scientist creates harmless food preservative

Dr Mubarak's 'chitosan' could replace formalin

HELEMI ALAM

Food preservatives have long injected fear into the collective psyche of the country's people, particularly after the widespread use of formalin creating serious health hazards. But a scientist has found the long sought-after solution -- a harmless preservative.

The preservative called "chitosan" can be used in fruits, vegetables, and fish, and it does change the taste and quality of the food, said Dr Mubarak Ahmad Khan, chief scientific officer of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC), who developed the preservative.

Chitosan is derived from the hard outer skeleton of the shellfish like crab and shrimp.

Dr Mubarak said that as many traders of the country used harmful preservatives in fruits, vegetables, and fish, chitosan could ensure safe food by replacing formalin. But chitosan is costly in other countries, he said. "But this chitosan is cheap."

One kilogramme of chitosan costs even Tk 5 lakh in some countries, while in India the price could be Tk 1 lakh, he

treated by only Tk 1 worth of chitosan, and 1kg of chitosan could be achieved from 6kg of shrimp shell.

"We will be able to produce chitosan in a cheaper way... because of availability of shrimp shell in our country and the method we invented to produce chitosan," he said.

While in other countries chitosan is made through the costly chemical method, they used the radiation method, which is cheap, he said.

On an experimental basis, chitosan was used on a one-acre pineapple field in Tangail's Madhupur at the start of cultivation last year, producing good results, said Dr Mubarak.

A huge demand of chitosan was created in the area afterwards, he said, adding that they would provide chitosan to the farmers of the area free this year.

Chitosan makes pesticide unnecessary, he said. Dr Mubarak said the horticulture department in Chapainawabganj used chitosan on mangoes and got good results.

Chitosan can also be used in fish.

Fish starts to rot after three to four hours normally, but chitosan could



Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council Executive Chairman Dr Abul Kalam Azad, fourth from left, along with other guests and authors holding copies of a book titled "A Farm View of Bangladesh" launched at Jatiya Press Club yesterday. The Forum for Information Dissemination on Agriculture and Syngenta Bangladesh published the book.

PHOTO: STAR

Coordination among seed growers a must

Says Matia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday underscored the need for coordination among the country's seed producers to meet food security and development and stated that the government has taken various initiatives to combat a major challenge, climate change.

She was addressing a Victory Day Commemorative Lecture 2016 on "Agriculture in Bangladesh: Development, Challenges and Way Forward" organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) in its auditorium.

"The public sector organisations have been producing seeds, mostly of rice, wheat, potato, pulses, oil and small quantity of vegetable seeds which can meet only about 20 percent of the requirement," she said.

Quoting prediction of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, she said crop production would reduce by 13 percent this century whereas by 2050, rice and wheat production in Bangladesh by 8 and 32 percent respectively.

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Focus on waterlogging, salinity issues in south

Scientists tell launching of 'A Farm View of Bangladesh'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has emerged as a strong agricultural economy with its yearly rice output well surpassing its requirement and its vegetable production hitting third and freshwater fish output fourth in global production rankings.

Now this country needs to focus on challenges of salinity and waterlogging faced by farmers of the southern coastal belt and ensure nutrition security by shifting towards a more balanced diet from a predominantly rice-centric calorie intake.

Some of the country's leading scientists, academics and officials involved with National Agricultural Research System (NARS) came up with these views at a book launching and discussion programme at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The Forum for Information Dissemination on Agriculture (FIDA) in league with agribusiness company Syngenta Bangladesh jointly organised the programme to launch the book, "A Farm View of Bangladesh", co-edited by journalists Kawser Rahman and Reaz Ahmadi.

Palok Publishers published the book, rich with 17 distinct chapters depicting a wide range of issues from innovation in rice science to seaweed, from farm technology to jute to floriculture.

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Executive Chairman Dr Abul Kalam Azad along with heads of NARS bodies formally launched the book appreciating its authors and editors for coming up with a rich anthology of farm writings.

Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University Vice Chancellor Prof Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute Director General Dr Md Rafiqul Islam Mondal, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute Director General Dr Bhagya Rani Banik, Department of Agricultural Extension Director (Plant Protection Wing) Golam Maruf, Syngenta Bangladesh Managing Director Md Sazzadul Hassan and Palok Publishers Proprietor Forkan Ahmed spoke, among others, at the discussion chaired by FIDA President Kawser Rahman.

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FBUTA rejects TIB report on public univs

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teacher's Association (FBUTA) yesterday condemned and rejected a recent TIB report on recruitment of lecturers at public universities, terming it "biased" and "conspiratorial".

A statement signed by FBUTA President Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed and Secretary General Prof Maksud Kamal said the report aimed to humiliate public university teachers

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Dr Mubarak Ahmad Khan, chief scientific officer of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC), centre, with his team at BAEC in the capital recently.

said, adding that they were using the cheapest way to produce it. Each kilogramme would cost around Tk 20,000 here, he said.

Giving the details of its benefits, Dr Mubarak said 1kg of mangoes could be

extend it to 21 hours; in the refrigerator, the preservation period would be 20 to 25 days, he said. Dr Mubarak said though there was a huge demand for chitosan, they could not supply it

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STAR WEEKEND
in other news...

This week our Spotlight is about how Christmas has always been celebrated in our country, by all members of society, from all walks of life, and from all religious sects, as a celebration of peace and joy. We also have a piece that talks about the on-going gas crisis in the city, and an experience piece by a member of the 100 Member Youth Delegation in India. Don't forget to grab your copy of the Star Weekend, tomorrow, Friday!

WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

As the star of Bethlehem approaches, the cakes get ready for the oven and the city lights up - we get ready to celebrate a very Merry Christmas. However, in many colonies of Dhaka city, families belonging to different beliefs also partake in the celebrations. To know more about them, turn to pages 8 and 9.

APURBA JARANGIR
PHOTO: KAZI TARIKUN AKAZ APURBO

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