



Construction materials of a building brazenly left on the side of Road 17 (block D) in the capital's Banani Model Town, obstructing pedestrian movement and adding to the area's traffic woes. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BANGLADESH MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL Strike called off following HC directive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors, teachers, and interns of Bangladesh Medical College Hospital (BMCH) yesterday withdrew their ongoing strike at the directive of the High Court.

Their decision came hours after the HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice Mohammad Ullah passed an order asking the BMCH doctors to withdraw their strike within six hours yesterday.

The HC bench issued the directive around 12:00 noon after hearing a petition filed by Prof Niaz Ahmed Chowdhury, an honorary secretary of Bangladesh Medical Studies and Research Institute (BMSRI) -- the parent body of BMCH -- seeking necessary directives for the withdrawal of the strike.

Prof Nafis Ahmed Chowdhury, director of BMCH, told The Daily Star that the doctors and others withdrew the strike and joined work from 4:00pm to comply with the court order.

The petitioner's lawyer Eunos Ali Akond told The Daily Star that the doctors, teachers, and interns of BMCH led by its principal enforced a strike since March 15, protesting the transfer of a medical officer to its Uttara branch from Dhanmondi branch.

Their strike is illegal, as they cannot stop work and they are bound to discharge their duties in accordance with the relevant law, he added.

The doctors, teachers and interns began the strike on March 15, a day after Dr Saiful Islam -- a medical officer of BMCH in Dhanmondi -- was transferred to Uttara Adhunik Medical College Hospital, which is a sister concern of BMCH.

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DETAINING BREAST-FEEDING MOTHERS HC summons Madaripur OC, SI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned two police officers of Madaripur to appear before it for detaining and keeping two breast-feeding mothers away from their children for 13 hours.

Madaripur Sadar Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Ziaul Morshed and Sub-inspector Md Mahtab Hossain have been directed to appear on March 29 to explain their conduct.

In response to a writ petition, the court asked the inspector general of police to submit a report to it by May 9 after probing the incident, Deputy Attorney General Tapas Kumar Biswas told The Daily Star.

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PATENGA-SOUTH HALISHAHAR IN CTG Water woes for 12 lakh residents

MINHAJ UDDIN, Ctg

Patenga, the southernmost tip of Chittagong city, is surrounded by water on its three sides -- Bay of Bengal to the west and Karnaphuli river to the south and east.

Ironically, its residents are suffering from shortage of water for years.

Established in 1963, Chittagong Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) is yet to bring the area, home to over 12 lakh people, under its service.

As a result, locals are solely dependent on tube-wells for water. But that option is also getting limited as ground water level is depleting due to over-extraction, they said.

"From the last winter, we are not getting sufficient water through shallow tube-wells. Usually, our rooftop tank would have been filled within twenty minutes using an electric motor. Now, it takes more than an hour," said Rajia Sultana, a resident of Middle Patenga.

In Muslimabad area of Ward-40,

Mohammed Mia is also facing a similar crisis.

"The water that comes from shallow tube-well is high with iron and quite reddish. Still we have to use that, as there is no alternative," he claimed. "I have to set-up a deep tube-well as there is no Wasa water connection here."

According to councillors of Wards 38, 39, 40 and 41, the four adjacent city corporation wards at the southern part (Patenga-Halishahar area) of the city, over 12 lakh residents of their areas are still out of Wasa's network.

Some residents of Ward-38 (south middle Halishahar) yesterday submitted a memorandum to Wasa demanding water connection.

Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury, councillor of Ward-41 (south Patenga), said they have submitted a written application several months ago to Wasa for setting up water pipelines in his ward where 1.3 lakh residents live.

"The Wasa managing director told us that they had a shortage of fund. They said they have applied for a pro-

ject, as soon as they get approval they will set up the pipelines in our area."

AKM Fazlullah, Chittagong Wasa managing director, could not be contacted for comments as he is in the capital for attending a meeting, marking World Water Day today, said Wasa sources.

Contacted, Ratan Kumar Sarker, deputy managing director (engineering) of Chittagong Wasa, said they could not expand the water supply network for mainly two reasons -- inadequate production and fund crisis.

"For many years, we could not produce adequate water and as a result could not supply water to our existing consumers. That's why we could not expand the network to new areas."

Besides, the expansion needs sufficient funding, he stressed. "The areas that are still out of our network could be included within 2022," he hoped.

He said at present, Wasa is producing around 300 million litres of water daily against a demand of 500 million litres.

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SAGAR-RUNI MURDER CASE

Five years, 3 agencies and 48 dates later...

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Five years, three agencies and 48 dates later, the current investigation agency, Rapid Action Battalion, yesterday received another month and a half to submit its probe report of the Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Runi murder case.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Khurshid Alam directed Rab to submit its probe report on May 2 after scrutinising a "progress report" submitted by the elite force over the murder of the journalist couple.

The Rab assumed responsibility of the investigation of the dual murder on April 18, 2012. Prior to yesterday's date, the three agencies -- the Rab, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police and the detective branch -- took 48 dates for submitting their investigation reports.

In compliance with a February 9 order of a Dhaka court, the Rab yesterday submitted a "progress report" of the investigation.

The court had directed the Rab to submit the "progress report" by yesterday as Rab Assistant Director Wares Ali Miah, the investigation officer, failed to submit any report on February 9.

In yesterday's report, the IO said he had interrogated a section of journalists about the murder as the victims were media personalities.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



PM to attend autism confce in Bhutan next month

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit Bhutan in the second half of April (18-20) to attend an international conference on autism and hold bilateral meetings with the country's top leadership on the sideline.

She will hold meetings with Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and discuss bilateral and regional issues.

The conference on Autism and Neuro-developmental Disorders is being hosted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh and Ministry of Health of Bhutan with the technical support of Shuchona Foundation, Ability Bhutan Society and World Health Organization South-East Asia Regional Office.

Saima Wazed Hossain, member of expert advisory panel on mental health of WHO, has taken initiatives to hold the conference in the Bhutanese capital of Thimphu at WHO's request, said foreign ministry officials.

The conference will bring together government leaders, policymakers, experts and activists from around the globe to discuss how to spread awareness on autism.

Keep close watch on students

Nahid urges teachers, guardians at SEU convocation

UNB, Dhaka

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday called upon teachers and guardians to keep a close watch on students so that they cannot get involved in militancy.

"A number of brilliant students have already got involved in militant activities due to the wrong interpretation of Islam and thus ruined their lives. We should keep students engaged in creative activities through inspiration, affection and love," he said while speaking at the 6th convocation of Southeast University (SEU) at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city.

He was presiding over the ceremony on behalf of President Abdul Hamid, also the chancellor of SEU.

He urged the private university authorities to fix tuition fees considering the socio-economic condition of students and the country's reality.

Describing private universities as a potential sector, he said some 1,632 foreign students are currently studying in those universities.

The government never discriminates between students of private and public

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A cargo tractor goes over a huge muddy puddle collected on a road in Companyganj upazila in Sylhet yesterday. Most the roads in the upazila are in a dilapidated state, making it almost impossible for smaller vehicles to ply.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASTIR

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পরিবেশক: আজিজ সুপার মার্কেট, শাহবাগ: প্রথমা (৯৬৬৮২৫), পাঠক সমাবেশ (০১৭১৩০৩৪৪৪০)
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কুষ্টিয়া: বইমেলা (০১৭১১ ৫৭৫৬০৬)। চট্টগ্রাম: বাতিঘর (০১৭১৩৩০৪৪৪)

SCBA election begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day annual election to the 14-member executive committee of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) begins today.

The polling will continue from 10:00am to 5:00pm at the bar building while the result is likely to be announced on Thursday night, SCBA Superintendent Nimesh Chandra Das said yesterday.

He said 5,081 lawyers have been listed to exercise their voting rights.

Awami League lawmaker and former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru, BNP leader and former SCBA president Zainul Abedin and Eunos Ali Akond are contesting for the post of president.

Former Bangladesh Chhatra League leader Robiul Alam Budu, incumbent SCBA secretary and former BNP lawmaker AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, Ashoke Kumar Ghosh, and Abu Yahia Dulal are contesting for the post of secretary.

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