

'ANTI-GOVT FACEBOOK POST' Comilla univ teacher relieved of hall duties

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

An assistant professor of the English department of Comilla University, who is also a house tutor at a hall, has been temporarily relieved of his hall administrative duties for posting "anti-government" remarks on his Facebook account.

Mohammad Akbar Hossain, the house tutor of Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam Hall, however, said he had never posted any such remarks and only shared posts in support of the quota reform movement.

Akbar is also a member of the Bangabandhu Parishad, a teachers' association.

Following the posts, students of the hall submitted a written complaint to the authorities, and they temporarily relieved the teacher of administrative duties, said Dr Abu Taher, registrar of the university.

The university authorities also issued a notice on Monday and formed a four-member probe committee in this regard, he added.

Contacted, hall tutor Akbar Hossain said, "I was never involved in any anti-state activities. I shared statuses and

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Chhatra League activist Tawhidul Islam tries to intimidate a student (not seen in the photo) in front of teachers during yesterday's human chain on the campus of Chittagong University. Inset, teachers hold a rally in front of Dhaka University's Aparajeyo Bangla yesterday demanding release of arrested students and protesting harassment of teachers over the quota reform movement.

PHOTO: COLLECTED/STAR



BCL actions outrageous

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reform or cancel" the quota system in public service was extended by 90 more working days yesterday.

The public administration ministry issued a gazette, signed by Secretary Faiz Ahmed, in this regard.

The committee, led by Cabinet Secretary M Shafiqul Alam, was formed on July 2 and was given 15 days to submit its report. The deadline would expire on Monday.

DU RALLY

Taking a firm stance against the BCL attacks and terming them outrageous, the group of teachers held a solidarity rally in front of Aparajeyo Bangla on the DU campus.

At the programme, organised under the banner of "Teachers against Repression", speakers demanded immediate release of detained students and protested the assaults on students and teachers across the country.

Around 60 teachers from Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University and BUET as well as over 300 students took part in the rally presided over by Gitiara Nasreen, a teacher of DU's Mass Communication and Journalism department.

Many of the teachers said Chhatra League has become "more frightening than the student organisation of Ayub Khan's regime".

Prof Akmal Hossain, a former teacher of International Relations department at DU, said, "Students were tortured during the regime of dictator Ayub Khan who had his own student organisation [National

Students Federation].

"But the activists of Chhatra League are even more aggressive. Chhatra league not only beat up protesters but also assaulted teachers," he said. "This era is more frightening than the era of NSF."

Prof Anu Muhammad of Jahangirnagar University's Economics department said, "The prime minister has said she could not understand the rationale behind the quota reform movement. Had she given an hour to students and teachers [to discuss the issue with her] she would have understood the logic behind the protest."

He then accused DU proctor AKM Golam Rabbani of protecting the BCL activists who attacked the reformists.

"The activities of present BCL are more aggressive than that of Ayub Khan's student organisation NSF. What could be a bigger attack than this on the spirit of Liberation War?" he asked.

"We also see police leaving when Chhatra League attacks," he said.

Prof Nasreen Wadud, chairperson of Dhaka University's Psychology department, said she took part in the 1969 Mass Uprising as a BCL activist and she was proud of that. "But the name of the organisation has now become a slang."

Criticising the vice-chancellor and the proctor, she said, "They are not worthy of being guardians of this university. They would have done something had they got any self respect."

Ahmed Kamal of DU's history department said he joined the protest on being "driven by his conscience".

"Do your duty properly forgetting that you were a Chhatra League activist," he said addressing the proctor.

Prof CR Abrar said, "I don't have any political affiliation. I came here on my own. I have expressed my support for the demonstration."

"We may be small in number but our moral strength is quite big," he said.

Fahmidul Haq of DU Mass Communication and Journalism department said students were being tortured for taking part in a peaceful protest while teachers were being assaulted for giving moral support to their students.

"We were told that we are instigating the students. The allegation is totally baseless. We want the return of the atmosphere congenial for studies," he said.

After the rally ended, Gitiara Nasreen placed a six-point demand including punishment of those who attacked the students and assaulted the teachers, withdrawal of cases against quota reform leaders and return of stability on the campus.

The teachers later brought out a procession which ended at the same spot after parading through Ducusu. The teachers would also hold a cultural rally against repression in Bot Tola area of the campus on July 23.

Meanwhile, students of Jahangirnagar University continued their protest yesterday by boycotting regular classes and examinations.

Around 200 students formed a human chain on the campus to press

home their four-point demand, including for quota reformation in civil service.

BCL ATTACK AT CU

A group of Chhatra League men, led by Chittagong University BCL Deputy Secretary Rakibul Hasan and activist Tawhidul Islam, swooped on a human chain on the campus around noon, said witnesses.

The programme, organised to denounce the declaration of persona non-grata of two CU teachers, was attended by several students and teachers.

The BCL men snatched the banner of the programme from the teachers and assaulted several protesters, reports our CU correspondent quoting witnesses.

They showed audacity to the teachers, said Saima Alam, an assistant professor of the university's Communication and Journalism department.

One of the injured students was Arif Hossain of the same department.

Later around 1:30pm, BCL men beat up another student, Emon Kaiser, at the ground floor of dean's office.

Of the attackers, Rakib and Tawhidul were masters' students of Dramatics and History departments respectively. Tawhidul is accused in three cases. Earlier, he was suspended from the university for beating a journalist.

Contacted, Rakib said, "Two teachers were trying to provoke students and other teachers. It is our duty to stop anyone who supports those two teach-

ers and we have done exactly the same today".

Tawhidul echoed the statement of Rakib.

Recently, CU BCL has declared Moidul Islam, assistant professor of sociology department, and Khandakar Ali Ar Raji, assistant professor of journalism department, persona non-grata on the campus over their Facebook posts in favour of the quota reform movement.

On July 17, BCL submitted a memorandum to the university's vice-chancellor against the two teachers.

After yesterday's attack, the protesters submitted a memorandum to the CU proctor's office seeking security and demanding action against the BCL men.

Meanwhile, in a statement yesterday, Bangladesh Chhatra Union urged the university authorities to identify and punish the attackers from the BCL. 'PLOY OF BNP-JAMAAT'

The government yesterday said the quota reform movement had become "a ploy of BNP-Jamaat who wants to destabilise the country".

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali briefed this to foreign diplomats at State Guest House Padma in the capital.

He said even after assurances from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a vested quarter "high jacked the movement and created anarchy on campuses", reports UNB.

UN reports

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There was no immediate reaction from authorities in Myanmar, where it is a holiday. Previously, they have denied widespread abuses.

The United Nations struck an outline deal with Myanmar in May aimed at eventually allowing hundreds of thousands of Rohingya in Bangladesh to return safely and by choice. But the secret agreement, seen by Reuters, offers no explicit guarantees of citizenship or freedom of movement throughout the country.

"The young men I spoke with were particularly anxious, showing signs of deep trauma. Without education and livelihood I fear for their future," said investigator Radhika Coomaraswamy.

The investigators will report their findings on Sept 18 to the UN Human Rights Council, a 47-member state Geneva forum which launched the inquiry.

ARMY'S 'SYSTEMATIC' CRACKDOWN PLAN

In another development, a rights group yesterday said Myanmar's military were engaged in "extensive and systematic" preparations for the bloody crackdown on Rohingyas, in a damning new report that it says justifies a genocide investigation.

A bloody military campaign that started last August forced some 700,000 of the effectively stateless minority over the border into Bangladesh, where they have recounted allegations of rape and extrajudicial killings.

The UN and US have called the campaign ethnic cleansing. Myanmar denies the accusations, saying it was responding to an attack by Rohingya militants.

But Fortify Rights said its report, based on months of research in Myanmar and Bangladesh and hundreds of interviews with both victims and authorities, found that security forces disarmed Rohingya civilians and trained non-Rohingya communities to fight.

The Myanmar army also cut off food aid from Rohingya and removed fencing from their homes for a clearer line of sight, according to the report.

"Myanmar authorities made extensive and systematic preparations for the commission of mass atrocity crimes against indigenous Rohingya civilians during the weeks and months before Rohingya militant attacks on August 25, 2017," Fortify said.

The report also said that deadly August attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, which Myanmar has cited as a reason for its counteroffensive, was a far more ad hoc operation than previously believed, and that crackdown plans were already under way.

Fortify co-founder Matthew Smith told journalists at the report's launch in Bangkok that security forces made the Rohingya Muslim population in Rakhine weaker and vulnerable to attack.

"This is how genocide unfolds. And this is how genocide has unfolded in Rakhine State," he said.

Fortify echoed calls by other organisations for the UN Security Council to refer the case to the International Criminal Court, singling out 22 military and police officials as responsible, including armed forces chief Min Aung Hlaing.

Shorten overall exam period

PM to education boards

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the authorities concerned to hold public examinations in a shorter time to avert too much of talks and rumours over the exams.

She was addressing a function at the Gono Bhaban marking the hand-over and publication of this year's HSC and its equivalent examination results.

"You took too much time in taking the examinations. This year, the exams started on April 2 and ended on May 24. But you didn't take that much time in publishing the results," she said, adding that it used to take only seven days to hold an examination during her student life.

Hasina, however, thanked the teachers and all others concerned for publishing the results within a short time.

She also appreciated this year's examination system calling it "very excellent".

The PM thanked all concerned, particularly the education ministry, teachers, guardians, chairmen and staff members of the education boards, law enforcement and intelligence agencies for working sincerely to hold the examination properly.

"Question leak is not a problem in our country alone. This is seen in many countries at times," she said, adding that there were some demerits of digitization alongside its merits.

Hasina said her government was giving more importance to technical education and vocational training, which would create employment scope for youths both at home and abroad.

"Our students are very meritorious, we have to utilise them," she said, mentioning that the government was making efforts to improve the

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11-year low

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Average-5) this year, the lowest in eight years. Last year, there were 33,242 GPA-5 achievers.

Even with madrasa and technical boards included, the combined pass rate of HSC and equivalent exams under 10 education boards dropped -- to 66.64 percent from last year's 68.91 percent.

The number of GPA-5 achievers in the 10 boards is 29,262. Last year it was 37,969.

"The results may seem to have a negative trend, but to us it does not matter whether it's negative or positive as we've stressed on improving our standard of education," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said while announcing the results at a press conference at his ministry around 1:00pm.

"Our target is to give the students better education," he said.

Replying to a query, he said, "We have published what the real result is. We asked our teachers neither to increase the marks nor decrease them. We asked them to evaluate the answer scripts properly and we're strictly following the evaluation method."

"A high pass rate draws criticism and so does a low pass rate," Nahid said.

The minister found some positive changes in the results, including the rise in the number of examinees, more students from science group, and better results by the girls.

Earlier, he handed over a copy of the results to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban.

3 CRUCIAL SUBJECTS

The questions for English and physics were more difficult this year while the students of the humanities group performed badly in information and communication technology (ICT), dragging the overall success rate down, said board officials and teachers.

Analysing the data provided by the

HSC RESULTS				
BOARDS	PASS RATE 2018	PASS RATE 2017	GPA-5 2018	GPA-5 2017
DHAKA	66.13	69.74	12,938	18,930
RAJSHAHI	66.51	71.30	4,138	5,294
COMILLA	65.42	49.52	944	678
JESSORE	60.40	70.02	2,089	2,447
CHITTAGONG	62.73	61.09	1,613	1,391
BARISAL	70.55	70.28	670	815
SYLHET	62.11	72.00	873	700
DINAJPUR	60.21	65.44	2,297	2,987
TOTAL	64.55	66.84	25,562	33,242



boards, it was seen that the pass rate of these subjects fell in most of the boards. Only students of Comilla Board did well in the three subjects.

In Jessore Board, the pass rate in English came down to 65 percent from last year's 72.95 percent. In Dinajpur Board, it was 65.51 percent from 70.30 percent of 2017.

The pass rate in English in Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Barisal boards also dropped and Sylhet remained unchanged.

Students of all boards, with Comilla being the exception, did worse in physics than last year.

The pass rate in physics in Dhaka Board dropped to 86.15 percent from 92.17 percent of last year. In Rajshahi, to 86.10 percent from 91.73 percent while in Chittagong Board, it dropped by around 10 percent.

Students of Comilla Board did better in physics than last year's stu-

dents of the board -- pass rate 92.50 percent this year, 86.44 percent last year.

Comilla Board examinees' performance in ICT was similar. Students of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Jessore, Chittagong, Barisal, and Dinajpur boards could not do as well.

The pass rate in ICT in Dhaka Board dropped to 82.83 percent from last year's 88.54 percent. In Rajshahi, it dropped to 93.54 percent from 96.67.

Chittagong Board came out worst with the pass rate dropping by around 14 percentage points from last year's 97.89.

Students of Comilla Board did better in ICT too. The pass rate went up to 92.15 percent from 83 percent.

"All the boards were asked to look into why the students performed badly in these subjects," said an official of Dhaka Board wishing not to be named.

COMILLA SURPRISES; JESSORE, SYLHET DISAPPOINT

After performing not so well in the last two years, Comilla Board bounced back with the pass rate rising 15.9 percentage points. This made it fourth among the boards.

Md Asaduzzaman, exam controller of the board, told this newspaper that they took several measures this year following debacles of previous years.

"We had held workshops at every institution in our board and gave the students proper guidance. Besides, we did not allow students who had failed in the test examination, especially in English, to sit for the HSC exams."

However, around 27 percent still flunked English, he added.

The pass rates in Jessore and Sylhet boards dropped by around 10 percentage points this year.

The minister said apart from the respective boards, education ministry too would investigate to find out what went wrong.

Among the education boards, Barisal topped the chart with a 70.55 percent success rate.

JUBILATIONS

Colleges across the country wore a festive look ahead of the results yesterday. The results, published 55 days after the exams concluded, were available at the colleges, on the education boards' websites, and on mobile phones via text messages from 2:00pm.

Many students and their parents, who had been anxiously waiting for weeks, erupted in jubilation as soon as they received the results.

Some danced, some took selfies flashing the V-sign.

"After my father died during my SSC exams, I did not discontinue my studies. I was determined and worked hard as my father would have wanted me to," said Israt Jahan, who got GPA-5 in commerce group from Viharunnisa Noon School and College.

Her mother Hasina Akhter was almost in tears. She said, "Although there was hardship, I wanted my daughter to pursue her studies. She received a scholarship from the college and finally her hard work paid off."

There were some gloomy faces too. One of them was seen crying at the college. Her mother said she was crying because she had achieved GPA-5 in the SSC but got GPA-4.67 in the HSC.

"She worked hard but could not get her desired result. We don't know what went wrong. She might have done not so well in ICT," the mother said.

A total of 12,88,757 students -- 6,80,848 boys and 6,07,909 girls -- from 8,945 institutions sat for this year's HSC and its equivalent exams. Of them 8,58,801 students passed.

Of the 285 Bangladeshi students who sat for the tests in seven centres abroad, 263 passed and 16 of them with GPA-5.

WHO DID BETTER?

Like in this year's SSC exams, girls have done better than boys in HSC. Their pass rate was six percentage points better than that of the boys.

However, boys edged ahead in securing GPA-5s. A total of 15,581 boys and 13,681 girls got the highest grade.

In the eight general education boards, students from science group did the best with a pass rate of 79.14 percent, followed by 68.55 percent from business studies, and 56.46 percent from humanities.

"The number of students from science had been declining, which was alarming. But the trend has been reversed as we see the number of students studying science has been on the rise in the last five years," Nahid said.

For the students who passed, the concern now is getting into a reputed university or one of their choice. Like the previous years, there will be stiff competition as the number of spots available is lower than the number of students who passed the HSC.