

This is my protest

Says Tanha as she skips Gono Bhaban meeting

DU CORRESPONDENT

Like all her fellows who won the Ducsu elections, Lamea Tanjin Tanha was also invited to the Gono Bhaban yesterday. But she did not attend the event, protesting the alleged irregularities during the polls. "I, along with my panel, boycotted the election on March 11 afternoon as there were allegations of election rigging. But even after that I was elected as a member from my hall union," Tanha, who elected as a member of Kabi Sufia Kamal hall, told The Daily Star. She said she had pledged to work to preserve the rights of every student of the university which, she said, was seized by the anomalies that took place during the elections. "So, despite being elected, I decided to boycott the election," she added.

Tanha, a first year student of English department, contested the hall union polls for a member post from the Pragatisheel Chhatra Oikya - the combined panel of left-leaning Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote and Samrajjobad Birodhi Chhatra Oikya. She won the post securing 841 votes but rejected the results raising allegations of voting irregularities.

"Some people told me that I could have gone to the Gono Bhaban and notify the Prime Minister about the irregularities, but we all know that she has already been informed about it," she further said.

"Not going there is a kind of protest from my end. As a representative of the students, I did not go there showing respect to the voting rights of students," she added.

Liton Nandi, who contested for the Ducsu VP position from the same panel, said, "The ethical stance of this girl is very strong, which is why she refused to be a part of such a questionable election."

Asked about their next course of action, he said the five panels that had boycotted election would hold a press conference around noon today at the Madhur Canteen to announce their next moves.

The newly elected leaders of Ducsu and the 18 hall unions met the prime minister yesterday at her official residence the Gono Bhaban.

Four minibus and six bus carrying the leaders left the university's Mall Chatter area at 2:00pm.

In Monday's elections, which came after 28 years, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) got 23 of the 25 Ducsu

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Help revive

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prime minister all the student representatives.

'MY MOTHER'S IMAGE'

After meeting the PM, Nur told journalists, "I have told the prime minister that there had been some irregularities in the Ducsu election. I requested her to investigate those and she said she would look into the matters."

Earlier at the meet, he expressed gratitude to the prime minister for helping the DU administration arrange the Ducsu election, reports UNB.

"She cooperated with the university administration. Or else, the election would not have been held," he said, adding that the successive governments after 1990 did not want to take any risk over holding the Ducsu polls but Sheikh Hasina has done this.

"I expect the prime minister's cooperation in proper functioning of Ducsu," said Nur, who contested the March 11 polls from the quota reformists' panel.

Praising the Father of the Nation, he said Bangabandhu was not only the leader of Bangladesh but also of the entire world, and Hasina epitomised all the qualities of the great leader.

He touched the prime minister's feet in respect.

"I lost my mother at the age of two and a half. After losing her, I saw my mother's image in one of my school teachers during my childhood and now I have found it in the prime minister," he said.

On the movement for reforms in civil service quota, Nur said the prime minister was misinformed by the sources who were asked to report on the student agitations.

That is why a misunderstanding was created between the PM and students, meeting insiders quoted him as saying.

Ducsu Social Welfare Secretary Akhter Hossain, another candidate of the quota reformists' panel, who became known for his hunger strike against question leak in a DU admission test last year, urged the prime minister to act against those involved in such types of scam.

Other Ducsu leaders, including Saddam Hossain, projected before the prime minister their vision for their campus.

Ducsu AGS Saddam Hossain said Sheikh Hasina will be made the first lifetime member of central students' union at its maiden meeting.

Hall union leaders informed the premier about various problems including severe accommodation crisis at the DU dormitories, Forhad Ali, VP of Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall, told The Daily Star.

Earlier around 3:00pm, the student leaders elected from BCL panel reached the Gono Bhaban, starting from DU Mall Chatter by university buses.

BCL President Shovon and DU unit BCL chief Sanjit Chandra Das accompanied them.

Twenty minutes later, Nur and Akhter went to the PM's residence by a

car rented from a ride sharing service instead of DU buses or the vehicle provided by the PMO, said Faruk Hasan, joint convener of quota reformists' platform.

The BCL-backed panel dominated the polls but its VP candidate was defeated by quota movement leader Nur in the Ducsu election, held after 28 long years.

The quota reformists' panel secured two posts while BCL men bagged 23 out of the 25 posts of the Ducsu.

The polls were boycotted by BCL's rival candidates amid allegations of irregularities.

'YOU'LL HAVE TO PROMISE...'

Hasina asked the student representatives to maintain a peaceful atmosphere on the campus and said, "We want the universities to be run properly and for this there has to be a good environment."

Talking about the accommodation crisis of the DU students, she said her government constructed a number of dormitories at the university. It will take measures to repair all dilapidated buildings at the university.

She also said those who are followers of the ideology of Bangabandhu work for the country's welfare and those who grabbed power did not do so.

"So we'll have to go ahead with the Liberation War spirit. You'll have to promise that future Bangladesh will be built with this spirit," she said.

About the quota reform movement, the prime minister criticised the attack on the residence of DU vice chancellor.

She said the Dhaka University was the centre of all movements beginning from the Language Movement. "But incident like torching the VC's residence never happened before."

About the quota system in government jobs, Hasina said Bangabandhu had preserved quota for the underprivileged and ethnic minority people, the women and the disabled, reports BSS.

"Following his footsteps, we had preserved the quota for them. But when the quota was not fulfilled, we relaxed the provision by taking the candidates from other lists."

On the road safety movement, Hasina said many outsiders took part in the movement in the guise of students. "So we had to take steps naturally and the students returned home responding to our call," she said.

"So I would like to tell those who will give leadership to remain alert so that none can carry out any sabotage centring on such issues."

She expressed happiness over peaceful holding of the Ducsu election. "Any incident of terrorism or bomb blasts didn't take place centring on the polls as strict instructions were given to the law enforcement agencies and university administration."

The prime minister congratulated the leaders of Ducsu and hall union leaders and said it is their responsibility to look after the welfare of the students.



Electric transformers hang in precarious positions in the capital's West Islambagh area. Such installations can cause fatal accidents any time. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

No fitness test paper

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A faulty cylinder could explode causing massive casualties and it was thought to be the cause of the Chawkbazar inferno.

Visiting the victims of the fire at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on February 22, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said the government had instructed authorities to find alternatives to gas cylinders.

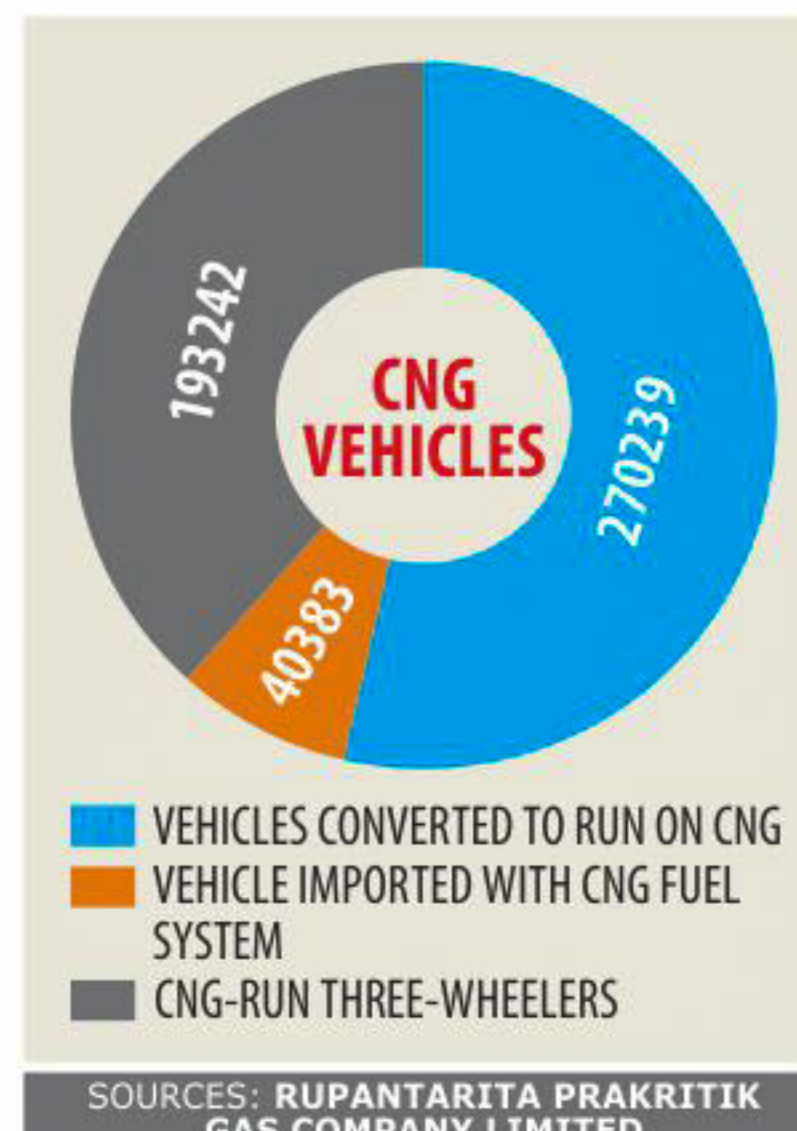
The BRTA held a meeting in this regard on February 26 and came up with the opinion that instead of banning CNG-run vehicles, proper monitoring of their cylinders should be ensured.

The BRTA in its proposal said currently the authority checks cylinder retest certificates before issuing annual fitness certificates but some vehicles do not bother to get the fitness certificate and ply on roads illegally.

"But, all CNG-run vehicles have to go to the filling station to refill. For this reason, showing of retest certificate of cylinder can be made mandatory for refilling, meaning no retest certificate, no CNG refill," said the proposal.

Lokman Hossain Mollah, director (engineering) of BRTA, said they, in their proposal, said a particular time should be given to the vehicles owners to retest the cylinders and get the certificates.

"After the deadline, everyone has to



show retest certificate to refuel," he told The Daily Star.

When this correspondent pointed out that there were only around 30 retest centres across the country and it would take a long time to have all cylinders checked, Lokman said, "That's why we didn't mention any particular deadline. The ministry will decide after considering all aspects."

The BRTA also proposed initiatives to ensure proper monitoring of CNG

filling stations, CNG conversion workshops, cylinder retest centres, and conduct mobile court drives against CNG-run vehicles operating illegally.

In Bangladesh, the use of CNG as automobile fuel began in the mid 80s but became popular after 2001.

Even though officials say 5,03,864 CNG-run vehicles are on the road, industry insiders claim that over the years a lot of vehicles have been converted at unauthorised conversion workshops as those charge less than that of official workshops.

Mohammad Ali Biswas, general manager (operation) of Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Ltd (RPGCL), the authority that issue licences to CNG filling station and conversion centres, found the proposal "impractical".

"It would be difficult to implement. Because people now have to wait a long time to refill. Once the proposal is implemented, people would have to wait even longer."

He said the BRTA has to ensure that no vehicle operates without the annual fitness certificate and in that process, they will also ensure no CNG-run vehicles operate without retested and certified cylinders.

"This is an attempt [of the BRTA] to deflect its responsibilities," he told this correspondent yesterday.

Actors shut parts

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based on brain scans of thespians.

In a series of experiments, actors were placed in MRI machines and asked to respond to questions as if they were Romeo or Juliet during the "balcony scene" from William Shakespeare's play.

Scientists were surprised to see that as the participants mused on concepts ranging from romance to religion, their brains were truly taken over by those of the famous star-crossed lovers.

They watched as brain activity dropped off, with a notable deactivation in a part of the frontal lobe.

This result suggested the portrayal of a fictional character goes far deeper than simply learning a script.

The research was led by Dr Steven Brown, a neuroscientist at Canada's McMaster University, who specialises in how the brain behaves while people are participating in music, dance and other art forms.

As no one had ever attempted to measure the brain activity underpinning drama, Dr Brown recruited a group of willing, university-trained actors to participate in his new study.

Inspired by a visit to Brazil in which he witnessed an indigenous possession ceremony, he thought there may be parallels to be drawn with actors.

"I got the idea that maybe acting was a bit similar to possession - that when you're acting you're kind of being taken over by character," said Dr Brown.

This, he said, influenced his interpretation of the experiments, which

he had originally assumed would reveal something quite different.

Normally his team looks for increases in brain activity that may underlie artistic pursuits, but in this study they were surprised to find activity was actually decreasing in certain key areas.

"There wasn't a literature to go by to make predictions, because this was the first study of its kind," he said. "We thought there might be activation increases relating to pretending to be some kind of character - but instead we saw this activation decrease. That was very surprising to us."

Over the course of four sessions in the MRI machines, the participants had to respond in four different ways - as themselves, as themselves with a British accent, answering for a friend and finally as if they were either Romeo or Juliet.

Only while undertaking their Shakespearean role did the people show deactivations in regions across their brains.

Like the people in the ceremony he had witnessed, Dr Brown suggested these people were actually losing their "sense of self" as they inhabited the characters' minds.

Though this new area of research is still in its early days, publishing their findings in the journal Royal Society Open Science, the scientists said their study provided the first step towards understanding how people's brains change when they take on different roles - whether in their daily lives or on stage.

An aid consignment for Bangladeshis was intercepted in Chittagong and rerouted towards Karachi.

Source: Liberation War Museum

Nation marks Bangabandhu

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respected Muslim family at Tungipara village of Gopalganj sub-division, now district.

He was the third among four daughters and two sons of his parents - Sheikh Lutfur Rahman and Saira Khatun.

The nation will celebrate the day through extensive programmes with fanfare and gaiety. Bangladesh missions abroad have also chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate the day.

The theme of this year's birthday of Bangabandhu and National Children's Day is "Bangabandhu's birthday, rinse life of the children with colour".

In observance of the day, President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages paying profound respects to the memory of Bangabandhu.

Both the President and the Prime Minister also greeted all children in Bangladesh and other parts of the world.

The government has taken decision to observe the 100th birth anniversary

of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as Mujib Year from March 17, 2020 to March 17, 2021.

Like previous years, elaborate programmes have also been taken to celebrate the day at Tungipara.

The day is a public holiday.

President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will lay wreaths at the mausoleum of Bangabandhu at Tungipara in Gopalganj at 10am and offer fateha and munajat today.

The Prime Minister will also place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhaka.

As per the schedule, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will receive a replica of the logo of Branding of Gopalganj District at the mausoleum of Bangabandhu at Tungipara in Gopalganj from 10am to 12.10pm.

Besides, she will join a book unveiling ceremony, sewing machine distribution ceremony, video screening on "Amar Kotha Shono", discussion meeting on National Children's Day and

deliver speech as the chief guest.

The Prime Minister will inaugurate a book fair, join a photo session with children and also visit painting exhibition on "Bangabandhu and Bangladesh".

Apart from this, public hospitals, clinics and healthcare services organisations would provide free of cost treatment at its outdoor wards from 8:30am to 12:30pm on the day. Quality foods will be supplied to all hospitals. Illumination will be ensured at the child wards.

Bangladesh Awami League will hold a discussion meeting at 3pm on March 18 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will chair the discussion.

The Information Ministry will publish special supplements in newspapers.

On the day, record of the historic March 7 speech of Bangabandhu would be played. Documentaries on the life of Bangabandhu and Liberation War will be screened.

5 Bangladeshis still missing

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The five missing Bangladeshis are Dr Abdus Samad, Husne Ara Farid, Omar Farukh, Zakaria and Mozammel, he said.

The injured were Selim Reza, Rubel, Mutasim Billah and Lipi, he added.

On Friday, Shafiqur had told this newspaper, "So far, we can say three Bangladeshis are among the dead." His wife Mahbuba Aziz said the dead had been identified as Dr Abdus Samad, his wife, and Husne Ara Farid.

But yesterday, the consul said they had learnt that information from the Bangladeshi community in Christchurch. After he went to the city yesterday, he found that Dr Samad's wife was alive.

"We had got incorrect information about Dr Samad's wife. She didn't die in Friday's attack. She's fine," he said.

"As we are yet to get the official confirmation, we are still considering Dr Samad and Husne Ara to be missing," he

added.

Meanwhile, UNB yesterday reported that the Bangladeshi authorities have confirmed that two Bangladeshis were killed in the terror attack.

"Ten Bangladeshis were affected [by the attacks]. Two of them died and three are missing," said State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam while addressing a seminar in the capital.

Around 150 to 200 people of Bangladeshi origin live in Christchurch. Some of them are teachers and students at the Canterbury Christchurch University and Lincoln University. Some Bangladeshis, who migrate to Singapore as skilled labourers, also go to Christchurch to work as welders and technicians at different places, including at ship building sites, they added.

Most of the Bangladeshis there attend prayers at Al Noor Mosque, which is close to Hagley Park.

Meanwhile, Bangladeshis kept

thronging the Christchurch Hospital throughout yesterday, hoping to have a glimpse of the missing ones.

Mesbahuddin Chowdhury, who teaches business and law at Canterbury Christchurch University, said the families of the missing Bangladeshis started to lose patience as the authorities had not disclosed the names of the victims.

"The families want to know whether their loved ones are alive. They might have to arrange funerals," he told The Daily Star over phone.

He also said New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and other leaders from her party as well as top police officials visited the Hagley College area and expressed sympathy for the affected ones.

"Police have told us that they were doing their best to settle the issue as soon as possible," he added.

Auckland based daily The New Zealand Herald reported that Jacinda

Ardern led a cross-party group of politicians, including Deputy Prime Minister and NZ First leader Winston Peters, Opposition leader Simon Bridges, Green Party co-leader James Shaw and senior ministers on a visit to the Canterbury refugee centre.

There were emotional scenes when Muslim community leaders spoke of their shock at the events of Friday, and the kindness they had experienced in the aftermath.

Ardern assured them that payments were available for lost income - many of those killed were the primary money-earners in their families - and funeral costs, and that the local authorities were working to provide facilities for gathering and worship.

The group of politicians, at the request of the community leaders, also went to Hagley College to visit families and loved ones of those who had lost their lives, the daily added.

Mujib meets Yahya

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would continue until the goals were met.

Yahya invited People's Party Chairman ZA Bhutto to Dhaka.

On March 17 night, the next meeting date was announced. It was said that President Yahya Khan would meet Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 19.

On that night military men attacked

trucks in Tejgaon and Mohakhali where they mugged money and tortured the unarmed men. The act of army turned people more angry towards West Pakistan's rulers.

An aid consignment for Bangladeshis was intercepted in Chittagong and rerouted towards Karachi.

Source: Liberation War Museum