

JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIVERSITY

60 injured in BCL infighting

JU CORRESPONDENT

At least 60 people including two teachers, two journalists and a policeman were injured in a factional clash of Bangladesh Chhatra League on Jahangirnagar University campus yesterday.

Mehedi Iqbal, assistant professor at the Department of Geography and Environment, and Mohibur Rouf Shaibal, assistant proctor, were among the injured, said ASM Firoz-Ul-Hasan, acting proctor of the university.

A group of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall students beat up two students of Mowlana Bhashani Hall at a shop in Battola area of the campus around 2:00pm over a trifling matter. Later, Mowlana Bhashani Hall students made a counter attack, triggering the clash, he said.

Both the groups chased each other with sharp weapons and sticks, and hurled brick chips, according to police and medical sources.

Sound of gunshots were also heard during the two-hour long clash.

Police fired several rounds of tear shells to bring the situation under control, the acting proctor said.

The injured were taken to the university medical centre, Dr Rezwan of the medical centre said adding that 40 of them were shifted to Enam Medical College Hospital.

Organising Secretary of JU BCL unit Tarek Hasan of Mowlana Bhashani Hall said, "Proctor failed to handle the situation. He ordered police to fire on us. He along with his body is trying to shelter a group of BCL on the campus. We want his resignation immediately."

Affan Hossain Apon, joint secretary of JU BCL unit and a resident of Bangabandhu Hall, said, "JU Proctor will have to take all responsibilities for this incident. He de-layed to reach the spot after the clash began when our men were beaten up by our opponents."

Two journalists -- Jubaer Kamal of Daily Sangbad and Riju Molla of Bhorer Kagoj -- were also assaulted by some BCL activists for capturing photos.

Contacted, JU proctor Firoz said, "We have brought the situation under control. We deployed over hundred policemen on the campus to avoid any unwanted situation."

"We will form a probe body to investigate the incident and will try to find out the culprits behind the clash," he added.

About the allegation of ordering police to open fire on students, he said, "We did not order police to fire on the students. We just took help from them to take control over the situation."

3 minor girls raped in two dists

STAR REPORT

Three minor girls were allegedly raped in Bagerhat and Patuakhali on Tuesday.

In Bagerhat, Hira Aktar, 12, a student of Gazirhat Dakhil Madrasa in Morrelganj upazila, was allegedly killed after rape.

The victim's father Gaus Sheikh said her daughter was alone at home in Paschim Baharuniya village. When he and his wife returned home

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City doctor

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Intensive Care Unit of Square Hospitals around 10:00am.

She was a student of 32nd batch of Mymensingh Medical College.

Dr Ashif Iqbal, a friend of Nigar, said she died from complications caused by dengue fever, which led to cardiac arrests.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 2,277 people have been infected with dengue fever, a mosquito-borne viral disease, across the country since January.

Dr Aysha Akther, assistant director at the DGHS control room, said Nigar was admitted to Popular Hospital with high fever at 1:30am on Monday.

She was diagnosed with dengue shock syndrome and her platelet count was found to be 11,000 per cubic millimeter (cmm).

The count increased to 15,000 cmm on Tuesday morning, said Aysha quoting information from Popular and Square hospitals.

She said Nigar suffered cardiac arrest twice at Popular Hospital. She was shifted to Square Hospitals on Tuesday morning. She suffered a third cardiac arrest before dying yesterday.

A normal platelet count ranges from 150,000 to 450,000 platelets per microlitre of blood.

According to DGHS statistics, 193 people were infected with dengue fever in May and 1,671 more in June. The figures for the corresponding months last year were 52 and 295.

Experts say climate change effects, intermittent rain, changing pattern of weather and lack of cleanliness are the main reasons for this increase in dengue cases in the country.



Sokhina Begum breaks down in tears after learning that rescuers found the charred remains of her husband Selim Kabir inside the fire-ravaged Auto Spinning Mills, right, in Gazipur's Sreepur yesterday.

PHOTO: ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE AKAND



Russel



Shah Jalal



Sujon



Anwar Hossain



Selim Kabir

Six killed in factory fire

The Gazipur spinning mill caught fire on Tuesday; origin of the blaze unclear

STAR REPORT

Six employees, including a textile engineer, of a spinning mill in Gazipur were killed in a factory fire on Tuesday.

Around 2:15pm, the fire erupted at a unit of the Auto Spinning Mills in Sreepur's Nayanpur and soon spread to different units of the factory, reports our Gazipur correspondent.

Md Aktaruzzaman, deputy assistant director of Gazipur Fire Service and Civil Defence, said 18 fire engines doused the flames around 1:22am yesterday.

But he could not say how the fire began. Three bodies were recovered from the factory yesterday, while an injured died at Sreepur Upazila Health Complex on Tuesday, said Aktaruzzaman.

"Still, two bodies among the victims are under

the debris and work is going on to recover those," said the official.

Five dead workers are Anwar Hossain, 32, Shah Jalal, 25, of Gazipur, Abir Raihan, 21, Russel, 45, of Mymensingh, and Sujon, 30, of Pabna, while Selim Kabir, 42, of Gazipur, was a textile engineer at the factory.

Ratan Sheikh, a mill worker, said the fire suddenly engulfed the factory. The dead were trying to douse the fire, he said.

A five-member committee, led by Additional District Magistrate Md Shahinur Rahman, has been formed to investigate the incident and has been asked to submit its report within seven working days, said SM Tariqul Islam, deputy commissioner of Gazipur.

In another incident, 11 female apparel workers

were injured while escaping a fire that broke out at a garment factory in Chattogram city's Nasirabad area yesterday morning, reports our staff correspondent in Chattogram.

The factory workers were able to put out the flames before firefighters arrived, said fire service sources.

Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters in Chattogram said the fire originated from an electric short circuit on the second floor of MS Garments Ltd around 9:00am.

Alauddin Talukdar, assistant sub-inspector of Chattogram Medical College Hospital police outpost, said the female workers were injured as they tried to leave the spot hurriedly.

Some of them were admitted to the CMCH while others took first aid, said the police official.

CMC aims to make antivenom locally

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snakes in our lab so far."

According to a 2018 report of the World Health Organization (WHO), seven lakh people fall victim to snakebites in Bangladesh annually and more than 6,000 of them die. This is the second biggest cause of deaths during floods when snakes slither out of their habitats and take shelter in human homes.

Dr Aniruddha Ghosh, the principal investigator and associate professor of medicine at CMC, said hospitals treat patients with anti-venoms, but in many cases they do not work and result in deaths. The goal of this research is to develop effective anti-venoms for treating snakebite patients in the country, he added.

The problem was explained by Dr Robed Amin, an associate professor of Dhaka Medical College. He said, "Imported anti-venoms hardly match with the venoms from the snakes in the country. There is a chance of adverse reactions when the patients are administered those. That's why doctors in most cases refuse to use them."

Bangladesh usually imports anti-

venoms from India.

Dr MA Faiz, president of Toxicology Society of Bangladesh, said, "WHO recommends that anti-venoms be made from the snakes of the country where it will be used because the poison properties of snakes vary with geographical locations."

It was found that the same snakes even within the same country have different composition of venoms if locations change. There are also variations in venom properties of the same snake species, he added.

"So, in 2017, WHO adopted a resolution that snakebite patients would have to be treated with anti-venoms produced in the native country," said Dr Aniruddha. "That's why the government took this initiative."

There are at least 80 species of snakes in Bangladesh, but only 10 of them are poisonous (two species of cobras, five of kraits and three of vipers) for humans, according to Dr Aniruddha. Among the three species, bites by kraits and cobras are the principal cause of snakebite mortality, he added.

Asked, why CMC was chosen for

the project, Aniruddha said some of the teachers here did academic research on snake venoms, and their proposal also convinced the commissioning authority, Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Abdullah Abu Sayeed, a co-investigator and assistant professor of medicine at CMC, said the laboratory collects venoms using two techniques.

One of them involves a beaker where the snake is made to release the venom. The other uses an artificial environment where snakes are deceived into biting the extraction containers as enemies, he said.

"Now we are analysing the properties of the venoms. It's the first stage," said Dr Aniruddha. "In the second stage, we will see whether the anti-venoms available in the market can fully neutralise the effects of the venoms."

The next stage will be standardisation (documentation of categories and properties) of the venoms. "Then we will inject a very low dose of venom into the body of a horse or a strong animal," said Abdul Wahed Chowdhury, another co-investigator and assistant professor

of zoology at CU.

"When injected, the animal body would produce an antibody against the antigen of the venom. We will collect the antibody [a sort of protein] from the animal, do further processing, and come up with a sample anti-venom in the final stage."

The entire procedure would follow WHO guidelines.

Dr Aniruddha said they would like to have the first anti-venom by 2023. "Then we will submit it to WHO for approval, which would pave the way for the country to go for mass production of anti-venoms."

The project is set to cost Tk 8 crore over a period of five years. Anti-venoms are available at all state-run tertiary-level and district hospitals and distributed free to patients in the country, said Dr Abdullah.

The upazila health complexes do not keep them, and give primary treatment because administering anti-venoms needs special skills and proper care for patients, he said. One dose costs the government about Tk 15,000-20,000, he added.

Biman to further spread its wings

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Following a \$2.1 billion deal made in 2008, the carrier has been receiving modern planes from Boeing since 2011. But Biman could not turn things around as it had been in the reds in six of the last nine fiscal years.

It incurred losses between fiscal years 2009-10 and 2013-14. It made profits in the following three years but lost money in 2017-18, according to Biman officials.

Corruption and irregularities, inefficient management, improper route planning and absence of proper business plan were the reasons of the losses, said Kazi Wahidul Alam, a leading aviation expert of Bangladesh, recommending a thorough reformation.

Wahidul, who was a member of the Biman Board of Directors when the deal for the purchase of 10 aircraft was signed, also said Boeing, at the time of the deal signing, gave a business

plan for best use of the planes. It also projected a timeframe for the return of the Biman investments into the planes.

"Unfortunately, Biman has not yet expanded its routes, rather slashed some routes. Planes suitable for ultra-long-haul flights are being used for short-haul flights," he told The Daily Star on June 25.

"Those aircraft which would have been an opportunity for us now have become burdens because of the losses," he said, adding that inefficient management was responsible for this.

Asked about the route planning after the last two Biman Boeing 787s join the fleet, Mohammed Salahuddin, general manager (marketing and sales) of Biman, said they were going to start flights to Guangzhou and Madina in Saudi Arabia.

Biman now has flights to three destinations -- Jeddah, Dammam, and Riyadh -- in Saudi Arabia.

They were also considering to open another destination in Europe and restarting flights to Colombo and Male with Boeing 737s by this year end.

Salahuddin, on June 23, said they have a plan to operate 787s on Dhaka-London route during hajj seasons as the Boeing 777-300ERs would be busy with hajj flights.

The hajj flights begin today and when asked yesterday about the hajj flights, he said two Airbus planes leased for the hajj flights have joined the Biman fleet.

About flights to Guangzhou, he said there was a possibility to get the route permit in September.

Biman now serves seven domestic and 16 international destinations with 14 aircraft -- four Boeing 777-300ERs, two 787-8s, five Boeing 737-800s, and three Bombardier Dash-8 Q400 planes. In the 90's, Biman used to serve 26 international and seven

domestic destinations.

FINAL TWO 787s

On July 23, the third Boeing 787-8 aircraft of Biman, named "Gangchil", will fly from Seattle. Its 14.5-hour nonstop flight to Dhaka would end the next day.

The plane, capable of flying 16 hours nonstop with an average speed of 650 miles per hour, is expected to start commercial operations this month.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is to inaugurate the plane.

The fourth and final Biman Boeing 787, "Rajhangsha", is supposed to join the fleet in September. It would be the last of the 10 planes Biman bought in 2008.

Biman's 271-seater 787s have 24 business and 247 economy class seats.

Biman's first 787, "Akash Beena", joined the fleet on August 19, 2018. And the second one, "Hangsabalaka", arrived on December 1, 2018.

14 crew killed in fire on Russian sub

AFP, Moscow

Fourteen Russian seamen have died in a fire on a deep-water research submersible, Russia's defence ministry said yesterday, amid local media reports that the vessel was a secretive nuclear-powered mini-submarine.

Russian officials have offered little information about the vessel or the circumstances of the accident, but the presence of many senior ranking

officers on board could suggest it was not on an ordinary assignment.

The defence ministry said the 14 crew were killed on Monday by inhaling poisonous fumes after a fire broke out on a "scientific research deep-sea submersible" studying sea floor terrain in Russia's territorial waters in the far north.

However the Novaya Gazeta newspaper cited sources as saying that the accident took place on an AS-12

nuclear mini-submarine, which is capable of going to extreme depths.

And Norway's radiation authority revealed that Russia had informed it that there had been a gas explosion onboard the sub -- a claim swiftly denied by Moscow.

"There has been a gas explosion, confirmed by the Russian authorities", Per Strand, director of the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority (NRPA), told AFP.

"We are waiting for information from the Russian side about whether there was a reactor onboard the submarine," he told AFP, adding that the NRPA had not noticed an increase in radiation levels in the area.

Russia's defence ministry however said "there were no notifications sent to the Norwegian side regarding the Russian science research deep water apparatus".

Wasa water

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of the zones was marked safe.

He will produce the report, sent by the LGRD minister a few days ago, before the High Court on Sunday.

Excessive levels of chlorine and arsenic in water have health effects.

DAG Motaher, however, could neither specify the extent of contamination nor name the areas where the supplied water was contaminated.

Hearing a writ petition, the HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Khairul Alam on May 21 directed the LGRD ministry to test Wasa water supplied to 34 areas.

It has also directed the Wasa to pay Tk 1.7 lakh to a committee formed by the LGRD ministry for the test and asked the ministry to submit the test report before it.

On May 16, Dhaka Wasa admitted that its water supplied to 57 areas was polluted because of faulty pipes.

In April, several residents of Jurain appeared at the Wasa Bhaban in Karwan Bazar with lemons, sugar, and a jar of murky water which they said was supplied by the Wasa.

They tried to make Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan drink sherbet made from the water.

A few days before that, Taqsem said Wasa water was completely safe for drinking.

On May 7, a platform of residents of Jurain, Shyampur and Kadamtali areas told a mass hearing that Wasa should be held accountable for supplying polluted water.

Rahul resigns

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Congress has dominated Indian politics since independence in 1948, but it has seen a spectacular collapse in support in the past decade.

Gandhi said immediately after his party's defeat in the April-May national elections that he would not continue as leader, but party barons had hoped to change his mind and yesterday's official announcement still came as a surprise.

Congress won only 52 of the 543 seats in the lower house of parliament in the election. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) took 303 seats, increasing its majority as it won a second consecutive five-year term.

"Rebuilding the party requires hard decisions and numerous people will have to be made accountable for the failure of 2019," Gandhi said.

"It would be unjust to hold others accountable but ignore my own responsibility," he added.

Gandhi accused the BJP, however, of seeking to "destroy the fabric of our nation" and vowed to "protect" the country until his "last breath".

"I have no hatred or anger towards the BJP but every living cell in my body instinctively resists their idea of India," he said.

Critics accuse the BJP of stoking religious tensions and trying to undermine the country's secular credentials.

Around 80 percent of India's 1.3 billion population is Hindu, but it is also home to large numbers of Muslims, Christians and Buddhists.

The great-grandson, grandson and son of three past premiers of the world's biggest democracy, Gandhi had set out to rejuvenate the party after it lost to BJP in the 2014 election.

But he struggled to shed his image as a privileged, dynastic scion.

China builds

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sailing routes to planning loading and unloading processes.

It can also increase workers' efficiency and help the ship save about five percent of energy while sending freight across ocean.

With a loading capacity of 308,000 tonnes, the "intelligent" ship, called New Journey, is the first of its kind in the world, according to the manufacturer Dalian Shipbuilding Industry.

The vessel is 300 metres (984 feet) long, the equivalent to roughly 35 heavy trucks parked end to end. Its surface area is as big as three football pitches.

"[The system] can monitor the state of all equipment on the ship and the consumption of petrol, as well as meteorological information such as waves, speeds of currents, wind speeds and wind directions," Li Zhipeng, the chief engineer of New Journey, told CCTV.

"It can also plan the ship's sailing routes and speeds scientifically," Li added.

The very large crude carrier, also known as a VLCC, was delivered to an unnamed client on Saturday from Dalian, a port city in north-eastern China.

It's regarded as a breakthrough in China's effort to become a global maritime superpower.

"Its successful delivery means our country now has the capabilities of developing highly intelligent large vessels," said CCTV.

China has extremely high demand for crude oil, but domestic production satisfies less than 30 percent of the need.

The country imports more than 10 million barrels of crude per day in April, according to Bloomberg, and most of them are transported by sea.

Last year, China became the world's second-largest ship-owning country, overtaking Japan and after Greece. Chinese companies have reportedly built 10 percent of very large crude carriers in the world.