



Demonstrators in burn dressing distributed leaflets to passers-by in Dhankhondi, as part of Naripokkho's campaign against rape and sexual harassment.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CHILDREN

# Form nat'l committee to ensure implementation of law, speakers demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At first sight, it appeared that young women in burn dressing were roaming the street, handing out leaflets to pedestrians, rickshaw-pullers, CNG-run auto rickshaw and car drivers. It harked back to the tragic fate of Feni madrasa student Nusrat. The women were also wearing signs featuring Nusrat's statements made in her final days.

The demonstration was part of a human chain -- protesting sexual violence against women and children -- organised by Naripokkho in the capital's Dhankhondi yesterday.

Speaking from the human chain, Afsana Meem, movement secretary of the platform advocating women's rights, placed a 10-point demand including formation of a committee to prevent sexual harassment at all educational institutions and workplaces in line with a High Court directive.

Speakers also demanded formation of a national committee to monitor whether all laws regarding violence against women, sexual harassment and rape are being properly implemented.

Other demands included introduction of new laws in this regard, ensuring rule of law, finishing trials within certain period, and removal of content in textbook that can enable negative sentiments towards women. Leaders and activists of 50 organisations including ActionAid, Utsho Bangladesh and Concern Worldwide also expressed solidarity at the event.

Meanwhile, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), along with its 118 associated organisations, held a human chain in the capital's Banani, demanding a stop to abuse of children and women and ensuring justice for victims.

Speaking there, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam demanded formation of child protection committee in every neighbourhood across the country.

"All including parents, child rights activists, human rights organisations, schools and colleges as well as local youths have to come forward to stop these crimes," she said.

She alleged that violence against children and women is on the rise as perpetrators

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DU ADMISSION TEST

## 39 applicants for each seat

DU CORRESPONDENT

Some 39 admission seekers will compete for each seat in the first-year admission test under 2019-2020 academic session of Dhaka University (DU).

A total of 276,522 admission seekers have registered against 7,118 seats in four units of the admission tests. Last year, 272,512 aspirants applied for 7,128 seats, with 38 students vying for each seat.

Among the applicants, 88,976 will vie for 1,795 seats in "Ka" unit; 45,013 for 2,378 seats in "Kha"; 29,056 for 1,250 seats in "Ga"; 97,479 for 1,560 seats in "Gha".

Some 15,998 candidates will contest for 135 seats in "Cha" unit (fine arts faculty), said a DU press release yesterday.

The deadline for online applications, which started on August 5, ended on August 27.

Calculators, mobile phones and any kind of mobile communication device are prohibited in the exam hall and mobile courts will be on duty during the examinations.

Details can be found at admission.eis.du.ac.bd.

Admission test is going to start from September 13 with "Ga" unit's exam under the Business Studies faculty.

This year, admission tests will have 75 marks for multiple-choice questions (MCQ) and 45 for written exams.

Applicants will get 50 minutes to answer 60 MCQ, and 40 minutes for written tests. Each of the MCQ will contain 1.25 marks.

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## Baira mired in chaos?

### Internal feud resurfaces at meeting with journos

ABDULLAH AL NAYEEM

Fed among the top brass of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) has apparently turned toxic -- something that became obvious at a meeting yesterday.

Baira organised the views-exchange meeting with journalists on overseas employment at its office in the capital's Eskaton, where some of its executive committee members were not invited.

However, they attended the event and at one stage, when they tried to reply to journalists' queries, Baira President Benjir Ahmed restrained them saying that they were "not allowed to talk" at the meeting.

A heated argument ensued and repeated several times during the two-hour meeting, starting at 11am. At the end of the event, the "uninvited" committee members held a separate briefing.

There are two factions in Baira: one led by Benjir and Secretary General Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, while the other by Senior Vice President Shafiqul Alam Firoz and Vice President Monsur Ahmed Kalam.

Baira is a government-affiliated association of

recruiting agencies that export manpower.

In late November last year, about two months after the executive committee got elected, a section of the committee members including Shafiqul and Monsur expressed no-confidence in the secretary general, alleging him of irregularities.

"Shameem does not fit in this association. He violated many regulations and took several decisions without discussing with us. He was also involved in various financial scams," Shafiqul told The Daily Star yesterday. Shameem, however, denied the allegations.

The dispute went further. Last month, the president at a meeting announced to remove three executive committee members, including Monsur, from their posts.

"We came to the decision as they were involved in irregularities and corruption. We [he and Shameem] don't take any decision alone," said Benjir, also a member of the parliament.

Asked about the initiatives to solve the disputes, Shafiqul claimed to have had talks with the president more than five times. "But he didn't pay any heed," he said.

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## Numair Choudhury's novel shortlisted for Shakti Bhatt prize

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi writer and researcher Dr Numair Atif Choudhury's only novel "Babu Bangladesh!" has been shortlisted for this year's Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, which aims to celebrate literature from South Asia.

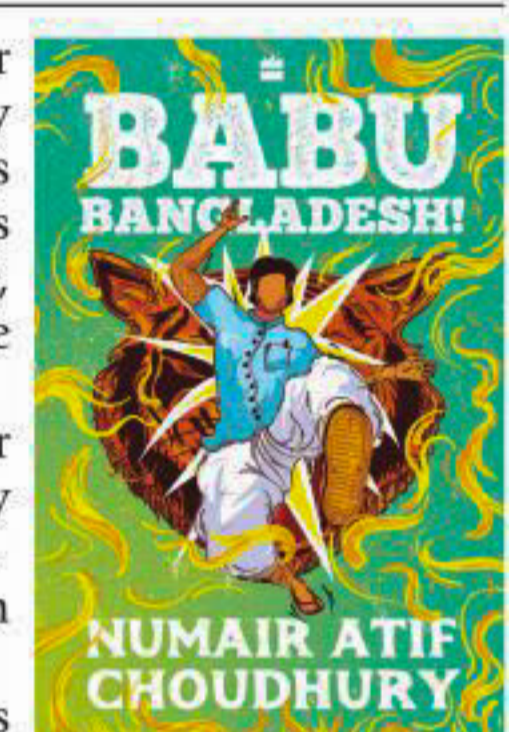
He is the first Bangladeshi author to be shortlisted for the literary award, according to a press release.

Numair passed away in Japan on September 9 last year.

"Babu Bangladesh!" was published on June 25 this year.

It presents a biography of a national superhero who has lived through both his country's bloody past and the threatening chaos of its imminent future. "Although surreal and psychedelic, this roller-coaster of a novel wears its thrumming political heart on its sleeve," says a press release from Shakti Bhatt Foundation.

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