

PHOTO OF THE DAY

RASHED SHUMON



With iron rods poking out of concrete bases, this unfinished structure stands next to the historic Amtala site, where the Language Movement heroes defied Section 144 to demand Bangla as state language in 1952. Many of them embraced martyrdom in police firing. Work on this structure, near the emergency gate of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, started around a decade ago with an aim to construct a memorial in their honour. Now, not only does it remain forgotten, but is also surrounded by shrubs and garbage. The photo was taken yesterday.

GAS EXPORT PROVISION

Activists to launch divisional rallies from Sylhet on Oct 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee for Protection of Oil-Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports will stage divisional rallies, starting on October 4 in Sylhet, protesting a provision introduced by the government in the Offshore Model PSC-2019 that allows international oil companies to export gas.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the committee, yesterday made the announcement while speaking at a demonstration in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

He said in the name of gas shortage, the government is constructing several coal-based power plants including the Rampal plant, and on the other hand, it has introduced such provision that allows drilling companies to export gas extracted from offshore blocks in the Bay of Bengal.

"Actually, the government itself is corrupt, as it is yet to take action against even more corrupted persons in other sectors including energy," said Anu Muhammad, also professor of Economics department of Jahangirnagar University, terming ongoing drive against casinos an "eyewash".

He further said the government blamed Petrobangla and other energy related institutions for their incapacity in gas extraction properly, only to serve self-interest.

"Rather, it should take initiative to enhance its [Petrobangla] capacity by abolishing corruption from there," he

added. Citing the PM's various remarks demanding financial support to address climate change, Prof Anu said Sheikh Hasina herself is bringing climate hazard in the name of so-called development activities.

"If government could ensure proper use of gas to produce electricity, there is no need to establish Rampal plant, destroying the ecological system of the Sundarbans," he said.

He urged all to participate in their rallies scheduled to be held at every division of the country stage by stage.

Later, over 50 leaders and activists of the committee defied rain to bring out a procession.

The government has reintroduced the provision in the offshore model PSC, which was approved by the cabinet committee on economic affairs recently.

The provision of the Offshore Model Production Sharing Contract (PSC)-2019 was reintroduced by the government, through an approval by the cabinet committee on economic affairs recently.

The government has a separate model PSC for onshore blocks, which still bars gas export. It had earlier included the export provision in the PSC in 2008, but it was discarded in the 2012 version, amid criticism.

Bangladesh has 26 blocks in the Bay. Contracts for 22 of them have not been awarded yet.

JNU STUDENTS' UNION POLLS Only regular students can participate: VC

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Students of Jagannath University's evening programmes cannot qualify as voters or candidates for the university's Central Students' Union election, authorities have said.

"Only regular students [of honours and masters courses] of the university will cast their votes and contest in the polls," JNU Vice Chancellor Mijanur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday, quoting law department's Prof Sarker Ali Akkas, who was the head of the committee to formulate the constitution of the students' union.

"The students of evening programmes of the university cannot participate in voting and competing in the polls," he said.

"We will present the draft constitution in the next syndicate meeting of the university for approval. If the syndicate approves it, then it will be open for everyone," the VC said, adding it can be modified in the syndicate meeting.

This correspondent spoke with two members of the committee. Preferring anonymity, one of the members said age restrictions will be imposed for the polls as well. "Only students who are aged 26 years or below can participate in the election," he said.

Contacted, JNU Proctor Mostofa Kamal told The Daily Star, "The university's first convocation will be held on January 11. Soon after the convocation, authorities will take steps for holding the polls."

"The next syndicate meeting is likely to be held in November," said JNU Registrar Md Ohiduzzaman.

On July 1, the university authorities formed a body led by Prof Sarker Ali Akkas to provide necessary recommendations for amendment of the university act, as there is no section or sub-section regarding student union polls in the JNU Act, 2005.

The committee was instructed to formulate the constitution within 45 days. It submitted their report to the JNU VC on September 22.

JNU officials said fourteen elections of the central students' union were held for the then Jagannath College between 1954 to 1987.

Since the college was turned into a full-fledged university in 2005, no students' union polls were held due to legal limitations, they said.

A small support to go a long way

DBBL awards scholarships to extraordinary students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After his secondary school certificate (SSC) exam, his poverty-stricken parents considered stopping his education or at best admit him to a local college in Joypurhaat.

But the boy had a bigger dream -- to study at a top college in the country. In June, he left home without telling his parents, after securing GPA-5 in his SSC.

"Without informing my parents, I started pulling rickshaw with the intention to save some money for my college admission," the shy teenage boy -- preferring not to disclose his name -- told The Daily Star yesterday at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC) yesterday.

Later, with help of a kind-hearted patron in the city, the boy has taken his first step towards fulfilling his dream -- starting his 11th grade (science) at Notre Dame College.

Like him, some 2,038 disadvantaged but extraordinary students -- including 38 visually impaired ones -- who passed SSC this year and are currently enrolled in college education, were awarded scholarships at a programme organised by Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd.

Each of the students will get Tk 2,000 per month for the next two years, along with Tk 3,500 as annual grant for reading materials and clothing.

"Although it is a small amount, it would help me a lot. Besides, there is chance for extension of the scholarship if I can do well in HSC," Mitu, a visually-impaired girl who has enrolled into Badrunnesa College in the capital, told this newspaper.

She says her dream is to study in Jahangirnagar University. At the beginning of the programme, three



Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir hands over a Dutch-Bangla Bank scholarship to a visually impaired student at Bangabandhu International Conference Center yesterday. From left, DBBL Managing Director Abul Kashem Md Shirin, Law Minister Anisul Huq and Chairman of the bank's board of directors Sayem Ahmed.

PHOTO: STAR

previous scholarship-holders shared their stories of struggle, and expressed gratitude to DBBL for lending a helping hand in their journey.

Helal Uddin, a lecturer of the department of fisheries management at Bangladesh Agricultural University -- who received the DBBL scholarship in 2010, spoke at the programme. "After HSC, my father sold our cow and gave me Tk 17,000. DBBL's scholarship was a big support for me."

Speaking as chief guest, Law Minister Anisul Huq said, "The stories of the students prove no hardship can stop them."

The minister also spoke of the ongoing anti-corruption drive by the government.

"The most concerning fact is that the crimes are being committed by educated people, and there is no such crime which is not being committed by educated people. It is high time to think about the reason," the minister said.

Speaking as special guest, Fazle Kabir, governor of Bangladesh Bank praised the students who received scholarships. "It's not a kindness to you; it's a recognition of your merit."

Sayem Ahmed, chairman of the board of directors of DBBL, presided over the programme while Abul Kashem Md Shirin, managing director and chief executive officer of DBBL, delivered the vote of thanks at the programme.

'Awami League won't take responsibility of a few wrongdoers'

Says Obaidul Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said his party will not take responsibility of wrongdoings of a few party men.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina started taking action against the corrupt, tender manipulators and drug peddlers. Awami League will not take responsibility of few wrongdoers," he said while addressing a discussion marking the birthday of Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Krishibid Institution in the capital.

The AL general secretary said action will also be taken against those who brought Freedom Party and BNP men in AL, or extended cooperation for their intrusion into the party.

Extending greetings to Sheikh Hasina on her birthday, Quader said politicians are usually seen to ponder over the next election, but Sheikh Hasina thinks for the betterment of next generation.

Chaired by AL Advisory Council Member Amir Hossain Amu, the meeting was also addressed by Advisory Council Member Tofail Ahmed, PM's Political Adviser HT Imam, AL presidium members Matia Chowdhury and Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, Joint General Secretary Mahbulul Alam Hanif, Dr Dipu Moni, Advocate Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Abdur Rahman, Organising Secretary Ahmed Hossain, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury and Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel, and Awami League Publicity and Publication Secretary and Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud.

Speaking at the event, Amir Hossain Amu said none will be spared for wrongdoings. "We cannot accept that a few wrongdoers would tarnish the image of the government which has a lot of achievements," he added.

The AL leader said Sheikh Hasina has established herself as a successful statesperson by her own skills and competence.

Tofail Ahmed said Sheikh Hasina is not only a powerful statesperson but also one of the ten best statespersons in the world.

DHAKA TODAY

REPORT LAUNCHING

Transparency in the relief activities during flood crisis  
Organiser: Transparency International Bangladesh  
Venue: Midas Center, Dhanmondi  
Time: 11am

Venue: Shilpakala Academy  
Time: 4pm

SEMINAR

Role of Youth in Making Dhaka a Better City  
Organiser: UIU Business Club  
Venue: United International University, Satarkul  
Time: 12pm

WORKSHOP

Digital Image Processing  
Venue: AUST Innovation and Design Club, Love Road  
Time: 3:30pm

ACADEMIC SESSION

English practice  
Organiser: U.S. Embassy  
Venue: American Center, Baridhara  
Time: 2pm

WORKSHOP

Facebook Developer Technologies  
Venue: Dhaka International University, Green Road  
Time: 2pm

FILM SCREENING

German-Bangla Film Screening  
Venue: Goethe Institut Bangladesh  
Time: 4pm

PROTEST

To save the rivers of the country from sabbers  
Organiser: Bangladesh Nodi Bachao Andolon  
Venue: Jatiya Press Club  
Time: 10am

LECTURE

Memorial Speech on Bangabandhu

'They tried to destroy communal harmony'

Says Prof Arefin Siddique, marking 7th anniversary of Ramu attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Those who attack minority communities and spread communalism in the country are inhuman and unpatriotic, said former Dhaka University vice-chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique yesterday.

He made the remark while speaking at a discussion, organised on the occasion of seventh anniversary of the Ramu attack.

Fanatics attacked Buddhist homes and temples in Ramu, Ukhia, Teknaf and Sadar upazila of Cox's Bazar on September 29 in 2012, following a fake Facebook post about demeaning the Quran.

Yesterday, Ramu Samity in Dhaka -- a civic platform -- organised the discussion at Jatiya Press Club to mark the anniversary.

Speaking at the event, Prof Arefin said it is unthinkable that such an attack can take place in 21st century. "Those who love Bangladesh cannot be involved in such mindless communal attack," he said.

Culprits tried to destroy the country's communal harmony, which is disgraceful, Prof Arefin added. He urged people who believe in communal ideologies to correct themselves and follow the path of self-purification.

Fanibhushan Sharma, founding president of the Samity, said people of various communities lived in harmony in Ramu for years.

"Ramu was a symbol of communal harmony, but the attack put a stain on that," he said.

"We want to forget the incident and bring back peace. If we remember it frequently, it will just ruin our inner peace," Fanibhushan added.

Poet Mohammad Nurul Huda, Ramu Samity Senior Vice-President Mafraha Sultana and Bangladesh Buddhist Federation General Secretary Bhikkhu Sunandapriya also spoke at the programme.

Dhaka's first bike lane in the offing

DNCC constructing 9km stretch exclusively for bicycle movement

MATHEWS CHIRAN

Despite the growing popularity of cycling as means of commuting, exercise and a recreational activity, even the most optimistic would not rank Dhaka as a cyclist-friendly city.

Erratic traffic movement, reckless drivers and motorbikers and callous pedestrians make cycling a highly stressful and risky activity in the capital, and cyclist communities have long wished for dedicated bicycle lanes, a common feature of many cities' traffic system across the globe.

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) is now making that long-cherished dream come true for many commuters. Work of a nine-kilometre bike lane is currently underway in Agargaon, the early results of which are now visible.

The route goes through the north side of Islamic Foundation, LGED Road and University Grants Commission.

According to DNCC officials, 285 metres out of nine kilometres of the road have been completed so far. There are three lanes on both sides of the median -- one for bicycles, one used as a street car parking facility, and one main lane for vehicular movement.

Width of the bicycle lanes -- which are being constructed on both sides of the road -- are six feet each.

Visiting progress work of the project on Thursday, DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam said, "There is no such



A part of the nine-kilometre bike lane in Agargaon. DNCC is constructing the road, to be completed before March 2020.

PHOTO: STAR

road in Dhaka.. it [bicycle lane] is probably the first in Dhaka city. It's a good news for bicycle lovers."

"We have planted trees of different kinds and hopefully, the trees will add aesthetic value to this place within two years," he added.

DNCC Additional Chief Engineer Sharif Uddin said, "The bicycle lane has been constructed keeping international standards in mind. Usually a bicycle lane is supposed to be five feet as per international standards, and but we have allowed six feet."

"If we allow more width than this,

other vehicles might try to get in the lane," he reasoned.

The road is being constructed under a project funded by the government. However, the 285-metre stretch has been constructed by the direct funding of DNCC, informed the additional chief engineer.

There are three types of roads by width in the area -- 150 feet, 100 feet and 60 feet, of which the roads having the highest width will be under the three-lane system.

The work has been going on for