

PHOTO OF THE DAY

PRABIR DAS



Protesting the increasing number of rapes across the country, activists of rights organisation Naripokkho staged a demonstration near Dhaka City College yesterday, with banners referring to different cases of violence against women and children.

ASSAULT ON POLYTECH INSTITUTE PRINCIPAL
Police identify 12 BCL men who were 'directly involved'

ANWAR ALI and ARAFAAT RAHAMAN, Rajshahi

Police yesterday said around a hundred Chhatra League men were found involved in the assault of Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute Principal Farid Uddin Ahmed, while 12 of them directly pushed him into the pond on Saturday.

"The incident didn't occur without a plan," Sub-inspector Towhidur Rahman of Chandrima Police Station told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that police identified all those involved from video footage.

Law enforcers received two video footages from CCTV cameras of the institution, and gathered several other videos from unofficial sources that suggest the incident was pre-planned.

One of the clips shows around 100 men celebrating near the spot of the incident, hours later, he said.

All the involved persons are leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League, said Golam Mostafa, officer-in-charge of the police station, adding that they found some outsiders there as well.

The number of involved BCL men given by the police is higher than those accused by the principal.

In the case filed with the police station on Sunday, the principal had accused a total of 58 persons, among whom he named eight BCL men -- including the unit joint secretary Kamal Hossain Sourav.

Police arrested four more BCL activists yesterday, raising the total number of arrests to nine so far in connection with the case.

However, all of the 12 persons who police say were directly involved in pushing Ahmed into the pond, are still at large, including the eight named in the case.

The OC said several police teams and detectives have raided different areas in the city and outside to arrest the accused. "Tracing their phone numbers and other clues, we know they are outside Rajshahi. We are closing in on them; they will be caught soon," he added.

Meanwhile, students of the institute continued their demonstration on campus yesterday, demanding immediate arrest of the culprits.

They also demanded cancellation of studentship of the involved, politics-free campus, restriction on outsiders on campus, and safety of students, teachers and officials of the institute.

Some of the demonstrators alleged that many general students were scared to take part in the demonstrations, as BCL men have threatened them of consequences for taking part in demonstrations.

Abu Ahammad Al Mamun, deputy commissioner of Detective Branch of police in Rajshahi, said, "We talked to the students and heard their allegations. We will ensure their safety."

Meanwhile, a three-member committee formed by Directorate of Technical Education visited the campus for the second day yesterday.

Led by its director SM Ferdous Alam, the committee measured depth of the pond where the principal was pushed into, and

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No one chopped down those 26 trees!

All authorities concerned play the blame game



These trees at Sylhet Shahi Eidgah were felled on Saturday and Sunday. The photo was taken yesterday.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Twenty-six trees in Sylhet's Shahi Eidgah area were felled for "development work" recently, although no authority has taken responsibility for it.

A part of Sylhet Shahi Eidgah was included in a road expansion and drainage development project of the city corporation, for which fewer than ten trees were supposed to be cut down.

However, 26 trees, mostly fruit and timber trees, were felled last Saturday and Sunday.

Locals protested on Sunday while the timber was being transported. While visiting the site, this correspondent found that only a few trees were in the expansion area but other trees were felled too.

Rajon Ahmed, a local, said, "These were old trees which did not need to be cut down for development purpose, but someone felled these for monetary gains

without informing locals. We protested when the buyer arrived to carry the trees off the site."

Seeking anonymity, some people of the area claimed that the local councillor and some members of the Eidgah management committee felled these trees in the name of development, while the caretaker of the management committee is abroad.

Rezaul Islam Raju, a contractor who was taking the trees off the site, said, "I bought only eight trees and don't know who felled the others." However, he denied to mention the name of the person he purchased the trees from.

Local councillor Rashed Ahmed of Sylhet City Corporation's ward-17, said the Eidgah committee was informed by the city corporation that some trees needed to be felled for road expansion and drainage construction. But the corporation authorities denied the claim.

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Unrest continues at Pabna Univ of Science & Tech

Teachers demand restoration of academic activities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The atmosphere at Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST) is still volatile as students continue their protest over alleged corruption in the university.

Teachers of the university also staged a demonstration on campus yesterday, demanding restoration of academic activities. PUST Teachers' Association formed a human chain in front of the university's administrative building.

"Due to the agitation, academic activities are being hampered for the last few months," teachers said.

On October 24, a conversation allegedly between PUST vice chancellor (VC) and a job aspirant went viral, where the aspirant was heard asking back Tk 8 lakh from the VC as he did not pass the recruitment test.

Agitating students started demonstrating with a 12-point demand on October 28.

Their demands include: proper investigation into issuance of show-cause notices to some teachers for "raising their voice against corruption", and resolving longstanding problems of the university.

They later demanded removal of the vice chancellor, proctor and student adviser.

'My son is trapped in collapsed building'

Mother of missing boy says



Fire service rescuers think Iftakar Ahmed Wazid, inset, might be trapped in the building corridor that has gone under water and mud.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanaganj

Ten-year-old Iftakar Ahmed Wazid is still missing after a three-storey building collapsed in Narayanaganj on Sunday afternoon.

Fire service rescuers were conducting a search operation, but could not locate the boy till this report was filed at 7pm last evening.

"We have searched all the rooms of the ground floor. There's no sign of the boy. We think he might be trapped in the building corridor," said Abdullah Arefin, deputy assistant director of Narayanaganj Fire Service and Civil Defence.

"But the corridor has gone under water and mud. That's why we are facing difficulties to enter the corridor. We are trying to remove the water and mud, using a special machine," he added.

Two units of fire service, five divers

and 40 volunteers were conducting the search operation, said the fire service official.

A three-storey building collapsed in Narayanaganj city's Baburail area on Sunday afternoon, leaving a 10-year-old boy dead and five injured.

Fire service officials said the building might have collapsed due to faulty underground piling, as it was built occupying a part of a canal.

Grief has engulfed the family and relatives of the missing boy. His mother remains inconsolable.

"Wazid used to go to the building to his private tutor. On that day, his lessons were complete and he left the building. But he went back in when he realised that he had left his Quran in his private tutor's room. After he went into the building, it collapsed and Wazid has been missing since then," said his mother Kakoli Begum.

"I strongly believe, my son is

trapped in the ground floor," she said.

Meanwhile, fire service officials have asked residents of adjacent buildings to evacuate, fearing further casualties.

Many residents of neighboring buildings were seen leaving their homes.

"The adjacent buildings, underground pillars of which were set up by filling up parts of a canal, are also vulnerable. That is why, we have asked them to evacuate the buildings," said fire service official Abdullah Arefin.

Police said the owners went into hiding after the building collapsed. Drives were on to catch them.

"Rescue operation is on. After that, investigation will be conducted into the incident. Legal action will be taken after investigation," said Aslam Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Fatullah Police Station.



PHOTO: STAR

Teenager killed with screwdriver in port city

Police arrest youth from Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested a youth from Dhaka on charge of killing a 19-year-old with a screwdriver in Chattogram city's Ambagan area, under Khulshi Police Station, on Sunday night.

The arrestee -- Md Sohel (22) -- is a mechanic of CNG-run auto-rickshaw, said police.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Pranab Chowdhury, of Khulshi Police Station, said Sohel resides and works in Ambagan area and was friends with the deceased, Nahid.

Md Nahid was stabbed with a screwdriver when he went to Ambagan to meet Sohel over a personal dispute, said police. The incident happened in front of the office of ward-13 councillor at around 8:30pm on Sunday.

Nahid was a CCTV mechanic in Ambagan area.

OC Pranab said after the incident, Sohel fled to Dhaka on Sunday night to avoid arrest. Police arrested him from the capital's Malibagh area yesterday morning.

Nahid and a few of his friends went to port city's Jhautala area to beat up a youth on Saturday but Sohel didn't go with them despite the former's request. Nahid and two others met Sohel on Sunday night and asked why he did not go there (Jhautala) with them -- triggering a brawl," said the OC.

The police official said at one point, Nahid started beating up Sohel and the latter stabbed Nahid in the chest with a screwdriver -- leaving Nahid critically injured.

Nahid succumbed to his injuries at Agrabad Ma O Shishu Hospital.

The OC said police collected CCTV footage of the councillor's office where Nahid was seen beating up Sohel. The victim's father Abdullah filed a case accusing Sohel in this connection, said the OC.



BOTTOMLESS BASKET ... The initiative by the two Dhaka city corporations to put up waste bins on the roadsides was welcomed by all, but with passing time and lack of maintenance, only their skeletons remain. Meanwhile, solid waste continues to be dumped on the streets. The photo was taken from Shahbagh recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Bus-bike collision leaves student dead in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student was killed in a head-on collision between a bus and a motorcycle on Mayor Hanif Flyover in Chankharpool area of Dhaka yesterday evening.



The victim, Manisha Barman (22), was a third-year student of marketing department at Mahanagar Mohila College in Laxmibazar area, Assistant Sub-Inspector Abdul Khan, in-charge of Dhaka Medical College Hospital's Police Outpost, told The Daily Star.

The incident happened just four days after Road Transport Act, 2018 came into effect.

A Chankharpool-bound bus of Thikana Paribahan collided head-on with the motorcycle carrying Manisha around 7pm, leaving her dead on the spot, the police official said.

Abdullah Al Galib, rider of the motorcycle, sustained injuries in the accident. Locals rushed both Manisha and Abdullah to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors confirmed Manisha's death. Abdullah is under treatment at DMCH.

Further details could not be known immediately.