

‘An interference of bureaucracy’

Public univ teachers demand cancellation of ex-bureaucrat’s appointment at Jamalpur univ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public university teachers have demanded cancellation of the appointment of a former additional secretary as treasurer of Bangamata Sheikh Fojilatunnesa Mujib Science and Technology University in Jamalpur.

In separate press statements, Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers’ Association (FBUTA), Dhaka University Teachers’ Association (DUTA), Jahangirnagar University Teachers’ Association (JUTA) and Jagannath University Teachers’ Association (JnUTA) also demanded revision of the corresponding law that allows people other than teachers to be appointed as public university treasurers.

FBUTA secretary general Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan said they will hold a press conference on Tuesday noon and give the government a seven-day ultimatum to cancel the appointment.

He said FBUTA will also announce new programmes from the press conference.

Former additional secretary Abdul

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The space under Mayor Hanif Flyover near Bongo Bazar has turned into an illegal stable for horses, where carriages remain parked all day long, while the stench of horse faeces in the vicinity has become unbearable for passers-by. The area is under Dhaka South City Corporation authorities, who seem to have turned the other way as the encroachment continues.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ALLOCATIONS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

‘Every ministry should have dedicated budget’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the national budget is allocated among ministries, every ministry should have a dedicated budget for indigenous people, said rights activists and members of a parliamentary caucus on indigenous and ethnic minority in an virtual discussion yesterday.

They also suggested forming a national commission for indigenous people living in hills and plains. Besides, they discussed increasing budgetary allocation, and proper incentive packages for indigenous people during the pandemic.

Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous and Ethnic Minority organised the event to discuss the inclusion of indigenous peoples’ demand in the upcoming budget of 2021-2022.

While presenting a keynote paper, Sanjeeb Drong, technocrat member of the caucus, said, “Budget allocation goes to ministries, and as there’s no separate ministry for plain land indigenous people, they don’t get proper support. If every ministry had a fixed budget for indigenous people, it would have been better.”

“In the last two to three years, the ministry of fisheries and livestock had a fixed budget for plain land indigenous peasants. It helped the community a lot.” He added.

He also said, “There is an allocation from the Prime minister’s office for indigenous people, particularly for scholarships. If there was also a committee composed of indigenous leaders, then it could actually help in finding indigenous students [who require support].”

Lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon said although there is a separate ministry and budget allocation for indigenous people of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), plain land indigenous people don’t have those. Besides, formation of a land commission or ministry for plainland indigenous

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Govt to set up rehabs in 7 divisions

Tk 833cr project undertaken to give drug addicts technical training

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The government has taken up a project to construct seven 200-bed drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centres in seven divisions, under the Department of Narcotics (DNC).

The aim of the project is to provide treatment to drug addicts and train them on technical work, said DNC sources.

The government-funded Tk 833.48 crore project of DNC was initiated last year, and is scheduled to be completed in 2023, said officials.

This is the first time DNC is incorporating rehabilitation facilities into its programmes, said a DNC official involved with the project’s implementation.

Apart from this, DNC has also undertaken another Tk 167 crore project to turn the 124-bed Central Treatment Centre in the capital’s Tejgaon into a 200-bed treatment

and rehabilitation centre.

Director General of DNC Muhammed Ahsanul Jabbar said the treatment and rehabilitation centres at divisional levels are the need of the hour to prevent the ever growing cases of drug abuse.

“Providing treatment through these specialised centres, we hope good health and welfare will be ensured for many,” he told The Daily Star recently.

“After treatment, our patients will be able to get back to normal, work-oriented life with the technical training they acquire from the centres,” he added.

The DG said DNC is also planning to initiate a project for rehabilitation of petty drug sellers in cooperation with the Department of Youth Development and the Department of Social Services, in order to help them reintegrate into society.

“We have seen that unemployment and the resulting frustration are major causes of drug relapse. This is why we will provide technical training so that chronic drug users can earn money with the knowledge,” another DNC official said, wishing anonymity.

Referring to data disclosed at a programme by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), a DNC study in June 2018 said more than 7 million people suffer from drug addiction in Bangladesh, of whom 25 percent are below 15 years.

According to another baseline study on drug addiction in Bangladesh conducted by DNC in 2017, majority of drug users are either students (25.9 percent) or unemployed (25.2 percent).

DNC officials said the new drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centres will provide training on different technical subjects like

SUHWARDY UDYAN

Trees given names of freedom fighters



This tree, like many other ones at the capital’s Suhrawardy Udyan, received the name of a freedom fighter, as a symbolic message to not fell them in the name of development and beautification.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

DU CORRESPONDENT

Environmental activists yesterday put placards with the names of freedom fighters, including seven Bir Shreshthas, on trees at the capital’s Suhrawardy Udyan -- in a symbolic bid to save them.

Three environmental organisations -- Green Voice, Green Savers and Nongor Bangladesh -- jointly started the activities to save the trees at the historic park.

The move came as some trees were felled by the public works department at the Suhrawardy Udyan as part of the implementation of a mega project at the historic site.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nongor Bangladesh President Sumon Shams said they put placards with names of 50 freedom fighters, including seven Bir Shreshthas, on trees.

Each tree has been named after one heroic freedom fighter, he said.

“We will place placards in the same way on all the trees at the Suhrawardy Udyan in different phases so that authorities cannot cut down the trees,” said Sumon Shams, adding that they will put more placards containing names of freedom fighters today.

“We don’t want any infrastructure at the Udyan by cutting trees,” said Ahsan Rony, founder of Green Savers.

“This is the way we will guard the trees every day. We will fight hard to save the trees,” he added.

Sabuj Andolon Chhatra Parishad yesterday put oxygen masks on their faces at the Udyan to protest cutting down trees.

Speakers demanded that the felling of trees must be stopped by authorities. If it does not, they will announce tougher movement after Eid Ul Fitr.

“We have put the symbolic oxygen masks on our faces as part of protest for saving trees. Every day we are taking in huge oxygen from trees. But in the name of development, government authorities have felled many trees for development projects,” said HM Baki billah, Secretary General of Sobuj Andolon Chhatra Parishad.

Leaders and activists of Socialist Students Front (Marxism) also held a rally with the same demand.

Salman Siddiqui, DU unit president of Socialist Students’ Front said, we demand an immediate stop to cutting down of trees and protecting the life of the garden.

On Wednesday, the Liberation War Affairs ministry in a statement claimed that there was a misunderstanding among people due to various media reports that published partial news regarding the project implementation.

It, however, admitted that some trees were felled at the Suhrawardy Udyan as part of the implementation. But at the same time, around 1,000 new trees will be planted there, said the ministry, adding that it expects support from citizens in this regard.

The project titled “Shawdhinata Stambha Construction Project in Dhaka” began its third phase, worth Tk 265.44 crore, in January 2018.

26pc developed antibody without testing Covid-19 positive in Ctg: researchers

89pc of those who tested positive also developed it

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Around 89 percent of people who tested positive for Covid-19 in RT-PCR tests, and 26 percent who tested negative in Chattogram, developed antibodies against the virus, according to a study conducted by researchers in the port city.

Dr Abdur Rob, a senior consultant of medicine and head of Covid-19 ward in Chattogram General Hospital, was the principal investigator of the study.

The study was conducted on 1,530 people -- 941 tested positive for Covid-19 and 589 tested negative.

A total of 834 people among the 941 who tested positive developed antibodies, putting the rate at 88.6 percent while antibodies were found in 153 among 589 people who tested negative, putting the rate at 26 percent.

The samples were of those between the age group of 26 and 50 -- living in Chattogram region. The samples were collected between March and October last year.

The title of the study is “Seroprevalence of SARS-2 Covid-19 Antibody in Chattogram: A Cross-sectional Study” -- conducted between October last year and April this year.

Six researchers conducted the study for six months, said Dr Abdur Rob.

“The significance of the study is that we have found antibody in people who tested negative in RT-PCR and the number was not nominal,” he said.

“We have found some other important things in the study such as many patients suffered from post-Covid symptoms. We have found that 23.8 percent patients suffered from cough and breathlessness days after recovery while 7.8 percent patients had heart attack or brain stroke,” he said.

“We also found that 28.7 percent

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Doubling of incentive on inward remittance proposed: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A proposal has been sent to the finance minister to double the existing two percent incentive for inward remittance, said Expatriates Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad yesterday.

Besides, a proposal was made for “forced savings” regarding social security of migrant workers for which the government do not have to invest, he said.

“We have proposed this. If accepted, it will be a strength for our workers,” he added.

The minister was addressing a virtual launching ceremony of the mobile-based application “Ami Probashi”.

The government introduced a 2 percent cash incentive for the remittances sent through legal channels in the last fiscal year. Soon, remittances started to increase.

In 2019-2020 fiscal, migrant workers sent home about US\$18.2 billion in remittance whereas it stood at about US\$ 20.66 billion as of April in the ongoing fiscal, showed Bangladesh Bank data.

Addressing the ceremony as chief guest, Imran Ahmad stressed the need for bringing recruiting agencies online under one platform to ensure transparency in the sector.

“Anything to do with the migrant workers, it should be online on one platform,” he said.

He also said they have discussed within the ministry to change the job title of labour welfare counsellor to “welfare counsellor” or “welfare officer” at different Bangladesh

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Four killed, 13 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and 13 others injured in road accidents in three districts during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents and a news agency.

UNB from Rajshahi reports, two people were killed and 13 others injured when a truck hit a motorbike and some pedestrians at Goadagari municipality area yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Israil Hossain (47), a line man of local power office; and Rony (25) from Mohishalbari Sagarpara area.

Khalilur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Godagari Police Station, said the truck carrying an excavator machines and workers hit a motorbike and some pedestrians around 10:30am, leaving two people dead on the spot and 13 others injured.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent the injured to local hospitals.

Police seized the truck but could not arrest its driver as he managed to flee the scene after parking it at a filling station.

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On the last weekend before Eid, those who are not making an arduous journey to their village homes are flocking to the markets and malls for last-minute shopping. Even on the day a new, dangerous strain of Covid-19 was detected in Bangladesh, many residents of the capital chose to head out. This photo was taken from Jurain area.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

‘Manabatar Bazar’ halted in Barishal

BSD alleges ‘political conspiracy’ as college authorities revoke permission

OUR CORRESPONDENT, BARISHAL

Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) yesterday alleged that a vested quarter is pressuring to close their relief activities in Barishal city, including their “Manabatar Bazar” initiative.

Alleging that they are being victim of a “political conspiracy”, BSD held a press conference at the party office at Fakir Bari.

Manisha Chakrabarty, member secretary of the party, read out a written statement that said since April 12 last year, the organisation has been conducting the Manabatar Bazar initiative, along with free oxygen bank and coronavirus ambulance services, free treatment for corona patients, agricultural initiatives, and running a school.

The Manabatar Bazar, an initiative to provide Covid-hit poor people with grocery free of charge, was set up at Matrichhaya Kindergarten at Fakir Bari, near the party office. It ran for a while until closing late last year.

This year, the organisation contacted Amrita Lal Dey College on Hospital Road to resume the initiative. However, despite getting permission from the college authorities, BSD says it was soon revoked.

“The authorities are now refusing to allow us at the college, where we have been running the Manabatar Bazar since May 6 (this year). We have come to know that the college authorities have been asked not to let their premises be used for our relief work by members of an influential political party,” she said.

“The college authorities told us they cannot disclose who told them to do so,” she added.

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