

# Change of plans for building a new TSC

PM rejects high-rise idea, directs DU authorities to redesign it with open spaces

HELEMUL ALAM and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Dhaka University's Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) is set to be built anew, in line with directives provided by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"The prime minister gave the directive when Dhaka University (DU) authorities placed three designs of the plan on May 24 before her," said pro-vice chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Samad.

The premier asked the DU administration to construct buildings with modern facilities, recasting the existing one based on the number of existing students and teachers and protecting its ancient structures, he said, adding that they were also asked to increase green open spaces of TSC, expand open spaces in front of it and to construct a modern auditorium.

If the existing TSC building is renovated, it will last only about 25 years and it will have to be demolished after that, for which the premier directed to build the TSC newly, he said.

Three designs by the government's Department of Architecture were presented before the prime minister, but those were scrapped as she disliked those, he said.

"A new design will be prepared based on the suggestions of the prime minister. If she gives approval, then it will be finalised," Samad said.

The prime minister also rejected a 10-storey highrise at the site of the



One of the designs, featuring a 10-storied building, was eventually scrapped.

swimming pool at TSC, sources said.

Contacted, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Md Akhtaruzzaman said the premier asked to construct a modern, environment- and student-teacher friendly TSC ensuring all kinds of facilities.

Asked about it, chief architect of Department of Architecture Mir Manzurur Rahman told The Daily Star they will not be able to make a remark at this point, and that they will do their work when DU administration provides details of their demand.

Sources said separate rooms for socio-cultural organisations of TSC, cafeteria, teachers' lounges, separate prayer rooms and gyms for male and female students, washrooms and car parking facilities will be kept in the new design.

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Pinched hard by the pandemic, the floating population of the capital have been struggling more than usual for the last year-and-a-half. But their sufferings compounded on a day like yesterday, when heavy rain leaked into and threatened to sweep away their makeshift residences made of polythene, banners, and water bottles. This photo was taken from outside the Kamalapur Railway Station.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Administration of Pfizer shots begins in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate General of Health Services yesterday started administering Pfizer Covid-19 vaccines at three centres in Dhaka. Around 9:30am, the campaign was inaugurated at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

The other centres are Kurmitola General Hospital and Sheikh Russel Gastro Liver Institute and Hospital.

A total of 120 people were administered the shots at each centre yesterday, according to health directorate officials.

The recipients will be observed for 10 days and if there is no adverse effect, the vaccine will be administered at mass level.

On May 31, Bangladesh received 106,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine. The jabs are being administered at three vaccination centres in Dhaka as they need to be kept at a very low temperature -- which is only available at storage facilities inside the capital.

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## SUPPLYING FAKE N95 MASKS

# It was 'factual error'; no evidence found

Police say about case against suspended DU assistant registrar Sharmin Jahan

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

The forgery case filed against Aparajita International proprietor Sharmin Jahan was a matter of factual error, a police probe report has found.

In the report, investigators have prayed to the court to relieve Sharmin -- member of Awami League's central sub-committee on women and children and a currently suspended assistant registrar of Dhaka University -- from charges of the case filed against her by BSMMU authorities over supplying fake N95 masks.

Investigation Officer (IO) Mohammad Morshed Hossain Khan, inspector of Detective Branch (DB), on April 28 filed the final report in the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

The report terms the case a "matter of factual error", as no evidence was found against the lone accused during a nine-month investigation.

The case's allegation of breach of trust through forgery was not proved, the investigator said in the report.

In addition, the complainant did not provide right information to investigators during the probe, the report said.

The case appeared to be a matter of purchase with government funds following the Public Procurement Act, 2006 and the Public Procurement Rules, 2008, the report added.

According to the laws and agreement between Aparajita International and BSMMU, the N95 masks supplied to BSMMU were up to standard, the IO said in his probe report.

"The final report has been submitted to the court. No evidence was found against the accused during investigation," IO Morshed told The Daily Star on Thursday.

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## TEA WORKERS' WAGE

# 'Repeal draft gazette, reform wage board'

Speakers tell consultation meeting

STAR REPORT

The gazette notification of minimum wage for the workers involved in tea garden sector should be repealed, demanded speakers at a consultation meeting yesterday.

They said the wage board failed to serve its purpose and urged for its reformation for the betterment of tea workers.

The consultation meeting on the newly-circulated draft gazette notification was organised by Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous Peoples and Minorities and Bangladesh Tea Labour Union.

Moderated by Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Adivasi Forum, it was held virtually.

Speakers said for decades, tea workers have been struggling for fare wage and the government formed a minimum wage board for the sector in 2019.

After two years of its formation, the six-member wage board chaired by a senior district judge circulated the draft gazette notification on June 3. The board will also take into consideration recommendations and complaints regarding the draft over the next 14 days and then finalise it.

Board member and Bangladesh Tea

Labour Union's general secretary Rambhajan Kairi refrained from signing it.

In the draft gazette, tea gardens were separated into three categories, and minimum wage for permanent workers under these categories is set at Tk 117, Tk 118 and Tk 120 per day respectively, speakers said.

In the consultation meeting, Rambhajan Kairi said, "Our demand was Tk 300 per day, which was denied by the board."

The wage board has been set as per the contracted rate between the owners and workers implemented in 2019, which expired in December last year, Kairi added.

He said the gazette also created many provisions to deprive workers. It includes setting a three-year contract between owners and workers, defining new position of trainee workers, nominating only son or daughter as successor of workers and reducing festival allowances, he said.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said, "Comparing to the tea sector in all other countries, Bangladeshi workers are paid the minimum. It's even less comparing to country's other neglected sectors."

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## 16 members of two teen gangs held in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion claimed to have detained 16 members of "teen gangs" from different parts of Hazaribagh and Darus Salam areas of the capital on Sunday.

All the detainees are members of two local gangs -- Don Sagar Group and Munna Group, said Lt Col Khandaker Saiful Alam, commanding officer of Rab-2, at a press briefing at its headquarters in Basila yesterday.

Among them, 15 are aged between 13 and 20 while one is 32.

"They have long been involved in many criminal activities including robbery, mugging, drug abuse, harassing women and extortion," he said.

These teen gangs often engage in clashes, creating panic in the areas, he added.

Rab recovered various sharp weapons including 11 knives and a machete from them.

In the last one month, Rab-2 conducted drives in various parts of the capital and detained 62 members of 11 teen gangs, the Rab official informed.

Meanwhile in another drive on Sunday, Rab-2 detained six youths from the city's Lalmatia area while they were peddling and consuming cannabis in front of a private university campus.

Separate cases will be filed in these connections, the Rab official said.

## 15mm rain submerges parts of Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Torrential monsoon rain swamped many parts of the capital yesterday, disrupting public movement and triggering traffic chaos.

According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), 12mm of rain was recorded in the last 24 hours in Dhaka until 6am yesterday.

Besides, 3mm rain was recorded from 6am till 3pm in the afternoon.

As usual, this was enough to shatter the tall claims of monsoon preparedness made by the city's municipal corporations, as several

areas faced waterlogging problems.

The sorry state of Mirpur, Rampura and Badda remained the same as they were hit the hardest by waterlogging. People in those areas were seen wading through ankle-deep water to reach their destinations.

The other affected areas were Sewrapara, Kazipara, parts of Begum Rokeya Sarani, Agargaon crossing, Bijoy Sarani crossing, Kalabagan, Farmgate, Shegunbagicha, Bijoy Nagari, Matsya Bhaban and Fakirerpool areas.

A number of vehicles remained stranded at different city streets due to waterlogging since morning.

BMD could not provide any relieving information as they predicted that the rainfall is likely to continue across the country including Dhaka.

According to the Met Office website, light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions and at many places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy to very heavy falls at isolated places over the southern part of the country.



Even the secretariat area was not spared from yesterday's rainfall, as the capital's Abdul Gani Road was submerged as well, forcing vehicles to wade through the muddy rainwater.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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