

Admission seekers left stranded

JU hall authorities fail to accommodate candidates, fearing Covid-19

Md Asaduz Zaman, JU

Almost 3.07 lakh admission seekers, divided under 10 units, are likely to sit for the Jahangirnagar University (JU) admission tests, scheduled to be held in five shifts per day from November 9 - 21.

Preceding the Covid-19 outbreak, JU's halls welcomed thousands of admission seekers from all over the country, particularly students from low-income families. Presently, their futures hang on the balance due to the authority's decision to refuse accommodation to them.

Rubaiyat Jahan Monisha, a candidate for admission from Netrakona Government College, had applied to sit for four out of the 10 units.

Since the administration imposed a ban on any applicants residing in the campus to curb Covid infections among residential students, she couldn't manage any accommodation, even though she had a relative staying at the dormitories.

Due to lack of appropriate housing, she scrapped her plan to attend all four exams and settled for appearing in just one unit.

"It's uncertain if I can attend all the tests. I don't know what I should do now," she said, expressing her frustration.

Tanvir Shuvo, a candidate from the southern-most corner of Khulna district, said he too decided to attend only one unit, even though he had applied for three.

"I've managed a hotel room in Savar at a high price (Tk 1,200 per day) and my family cannot bear the cost of spending seven nights here," he added.

Nilufa Yesmin, the guardian of an admission seeker from

ADMISSIONS AT A GLANCE		
3,08,040 vying for 1,889 seats; 163 candidates for each seat		
APPLICANTS FOR EACH UNIT		
A	Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences	68,202
B	Faculty of Social Sciences	37,847
C	Faculty of Arts and Humanities	41,677
C-1	Only for drama and dramatics, and fine arts depts	10,268
D	Faculty of Biological Sciences	69,129
E	Faculty of Business Studies	18,033
F	Faculty of Law	24,073
G	Institute of Business Administration	8,861
H	Institute of Information Technology	23,240
I	Institute of Bangabandhu Comparative Literature and Culture	6,710

Joypurhat, told The Daily Star that she's yet to find suitable housing for her daughter.

"At this point, it's uncertain how we will manage," she added.

Another guardian from Kurigram complained, "I failed to rent a room near the university campus and I'm yet to find a way for my daughter to attend the admission test."

Rahima Kaneez, JU's acting registrar, said, "We've reduced the examination duration and broadened the inter-shift duration so that candidates can attend them maintaining adequate safety measures."

Admission seekers have been protesting the authorities' decision, stating that they should have made arrangements to reduce their sufferings.

JU houses eight residential halls for men and women respectively. All of them can accommodate a total of 8,000 students at regular

times.

Sagar Siddiki, Secretary of Kurigram Students' Welfare Association, said, "Around 70 students and guardians contacted me to arrange accommodations. I had nothing to say except 'I'm sorry'."

The majority of these students come from low-income families, some of whom will be unable to sit for the tests as a result.

General Secretary of JU Gopalganj District Students' Welfare Association, Bikash Mallik, echoed the same concern.

The central problem is that the number of private dorms or hotels in Savar region is inadequate.

Savar Municipality mayor, Abdul Gani said, "There are only two residential hotels in Savar and they lack the capacity to accommodate so many students."

"This is the result of authority's indifference. If they had the least concern in this regard, they would

seek other alternatives," said Professor of Economics at JU, Anu Muhammad.

The authorities could have followed in the footsteps of Dhaka University and decentralised the admission test or merged the 10 units into three or four units, he argued.

"The university could use the auditorium, hall room or gymnasium to accommodate the candidates ensuring proper hygiene. Otherwise, countless candidates, especially female students, will suffer," he added.

Meanwhile, the university unit of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and Chhatra Union in separate statements demanded proper management regarding the accommodation of admission seekers before holding any test.

Prof. Md Muzibur Rahman, president of the JU hall provost committee, said, "We can only provide additional transportation services to bring candidates from nearby areas to minimise their sufferings."

Earlier, education minister Dipu Moni warned that educational institutions will be shut down again, if the infection rate rises. Contamination rates have skyrocketed in India and it has triggered fear within the administration.

"We don't want to shut down the campus again," he added.

He informed that the administration only granted accommodation to regular students who've received at least one shot of vaccine. "Allowing unknown people to remain in the halls during the pandemic would be hazardous. We made the decision keeping the wellbeing of our students in mind," he said.

Transport strike takes toll on Ctg residents



STAFF CORRESPONDENTS

People suffered immensely in Chattogram yesterday, due to the unavailability of public transports and spiked fare of CNG-run auto rickshaws amidst the transport strike.

Moreover, an unusual rush of commuters at the port city's bus stops during the holiday also contributed to their woes.

Transport owners' associations enforced the strike, protesting the government's move on increasing the fuel price.

Tamalika Mitra and her younger brother Shyamal Mitra, who visited their aunt's residence from Hathazari to celebrate Dipabali, had to return home the same day.

"We have been waiting here for an hour!" said Tamalika, spotted at the Muradpur bus stop, adding, "We have to head back as my brother, an eighth-grader, has to prepare for a final exam."

Tamalika said they reached the bus stop via CNG-run auto-rickshaw from Jamal Khan Road paying double the regular fare. "It's usually Tk 100 -120 but today, we had

to pay Tk 200," she said.

A similar scene was noticed at Bahaddarhat Intersection, GEC Intersection, Sholashahar Gate No. 2 Intersection, Tigerpass, Dewan Hat and Agrabad Badamtal intersections, and Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge area.

After failing to get a bus, Tanvir Ahmed was seen trying to hire a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge area. "The regular fare of CNG-run auto-rickshaw from here to Jaldi in Banshkhali is Tk 350 to Tk 400 but the drivers are demanding twice the fare, capitalising on the situation," he said.

When asked about the doubled fare, CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver Abdul Khalek responded that they've been incurring a loss since the onset of the pandemic and so they are trying to recover.

Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (traffic), north zone, said that strict legal action will be taken against the drivers.

RU female students protest hall rules

OUR CORRESPONDENT, RU

Hundreds of female students of Rajshahi University (RU) held a demonstration yesterday to protest some rules the authorities put in place for residential students.

Around 5:30pm, the residential students took position in front of Tapashi Rabeya Hall to protest.

In a notice released recently, the hall's authorities said students who have been staying in "gono rooms" cannot cook and must take food from hall dining. If any student disobeys the rules, their seats to the hall will be cancelled.

Sabina Binte Yasin, a student from the hall, said authorities closed the cooking facilities for students who are staying in gono rooms, and the quality of food at hall dining is below standard. "So why would we eat that food by paying more?"

Contacted, the hall's provost Prof

Ferdaws Mahal said, "Since cooking food in gono rooms creates an unhealthy environment and might lead to fires, we have taken the decision."

Another student, Mahmuda Islam, said students of all female halls must return to the dormitory by 7pm. "We cannot go out after this time, even if we have an emergency. If students can't return by 7pm, the guards and hall supervisors harass us. They even call our parents."

Later, around 7:30pm, students withdrew their movement, after the authorities assured them of relaxing the rules.

While talking to The Daily Star, Prof Ferdaws said, "We set up those rules for our students' safety. But as they demanded scrapping some rules, we will try to relax them."

The decision came after a discussion with university proctor Leakot Ali, student advisor M Tareq Nur and some of the demonstrators.

Savar cultural activists yet to get Shilpakala Academy

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

It's been a long-standing resolve of cultural activists in Savar to get a mandated cultural platform like Shilpakala Academy.

Starting from human chains to processions, numerous programmes were held by activists but their efforts came to a halt due to land crisis and other administrative issues.

In May 2017, their dreams were about to come true when the then local MP and present state minister for disaster management and relief, Dr Md Enamur Rahman, laid down the foundation stone for the construction of the academy with a piece of land next to the Bangshi river and Savar Model Police Station.

However, there has been little progress ever since due to a land dispute.

In 2017, the LGRD ministry approved Tk 1,88,97,975 for the academy, which was later cancelled and the land was returned due to the dispute.

Disappointed once again, the cultural activists started raising their demands anew, focusing on the selection of a new site. But their concerns were yet to be resolved.

Saran Kumar Saha, general secretary of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote in Savar, said there are around 300 cultural activists affiliated with various organisations in Savar, going through a rough time due to the lack of rehearsal spaces and an auditorium.

Savar UNO Majharul Islam said, "We're trying our best to allocate 40 decimals of government land in an area suitable for constructing the academy. Hopefully, we will be able to complete the project soon."

Bringing animals back from the edge

Locals form forum to save wildlife in Netrakona



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Susang, once a home for wild animals, has seen a massive displacement of wildlife, due to natural and man-made calamities. Local journalist Rifat Ahmed Rasel and his cohorts have formed a forum to rescue and protect these animals, and are working relentlessly for the cause.

Md AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Netrakona's Durgapur upazila is home to a forest area that stretches across both sides of the border with India. Also known as Susang Durgapur, it plays host to a diversity of wild animals.

As Susang is some five kilometres away from the Indian Border, the smaller of the forest animals and reptiles make frequent forays into different areas of Durgapur, such as Ranikhong, Chandigarh, Bagichapara, Char Muktarpara, Chak Lengura, Gopalpur, and Teribazar.

Once upon a time, Susang used to be a sanctuary for wild animals. But as deforestation set in and its forest area started to disappear, it has started to lose all sense of serenity it once provided to its inhabitants, said local journalist Rifat Ahmed Rasel.

Another reason behind their displacement and loss of habitat is flash floods, during which many animals have to flee from their shelters on the Indian side,

getting washed away through Durgapur's Someswari river.

Tragically, in many cases, locals capture the animals and either torture them -- sometimes to death -- or sell them, Rasel said.

Faced with their predicament, Rasel and a bunch of his cohorts started a forum called "Save the Animals of Susang" in August last year.

So far, they've rescued some 25 animals, including six pythons, four endangered slow loris monkeys (locally known Lojjaboti Banor), several wild cats and a fox, said sources.

Talking to this correspondent, Rasel, also president of the forum, said it all began with a view to protecting the wild animals that come over to Bangladesh crossing the adjacent Border at Meghalaya's Baghmara area.

"During the early stages of our operation, we faced tremendous opposition from catchers when we went to rescue the animals. But the scenario has changed somewhat now. People are more

aware of our efforts and the importance of it. These days, locals themselves inform us whenever they come across an animal in distress," said Masum Billah Ovi, secretary of the forum. Recalling a memory from August this year, Ovi, a school teacher by profession, said they rescued an injured Gangchil from Someswari river that got beat-up by locals. "We tended to it for three days, but it still succumbed to its wounds," he said despondently.

Afrin Jahan Beauty, a councillor of Durgapur Municipality and member of the forum, said she is impressed by the forum's work and finds it a necessity for a balanced ecosystem. She said they have been campaigning against the practice of catching and beating up these wild animals.

"We have good contacts with the local administration, police, forest and livestock officials. As a result, they respond to our calls whenever it's needed," she said.

The rescuers publicise their activities through a Facebook page. Concurrently, they distribute leaflets and put up banners to make people aware of the animals' plight.

Forum members said they do all this from their own coffers.

Though a stressful job, their efforts have started to make an impression on everyone. Md Saidul Islam, forest officer of Durgapur Range, said he appreciates the forum's work and has supported them in rescue and release operations.

Contacted, Rajib Ul Ahshan, upazila nirbahi officer of Durgapur, said when the wild animals come out of the Indian side of the forest and go into neighbouring localities, people catch or torture them, without knowing the necessity of these animals from an ecological standpoint.

"It's great that we now have forum members to come rescue such animals who find themselves in a tight spot," the UNO said.

Primates in peril

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come over from neighbouring areas, this is not nearly enough.

Bhabatosh Dey has been working for Sadhana for close to two decades. "There aren't as many monkeys here anymore," he told The Daily Star.

"As there isn't enough food for them, they fight among themselves a lot. Some of them have migrated to other areas as well," he added. These areas include Lakshmibazar, Ray Shaheb Bazar, Tipu Sultan Road, Narinda, Banogram, Tantibazar, and Sutrapur, where other monkey communities can be found.

"In the past, people used to come to visit in the afternoon and feed the monkeys. This place almost felt like a zoo every afternoon. But even this has become rare since the pandemic," said Nazrul Islam, an Ansar member posted at Sadhana.

Out of concern, various socio-cultural organisations started to act. Dhaka Youth Club International has been campaigning for the

conservation of Old Dhaka's monkeys for some time, with demands for their safe habitation and food ration from the city corporation.

"We've been calling for their rehabilitation for a long time. We're asking for this to be done at Sadhana as well. All that's needed is enough food. If they get that from here, they won't feel the need to go outside," said general secretary Sohag Mohajon. "There was a time when the government had planned to shift them to a zoo. But they later decided against it, as a cage would be no substitute for their free movement out in the open," he said.

During the lockdown last May, socio-cultural organisation Sammilita Sangskritik Jote stepped up with bread, bananas, carrots, and cucumbers for the area's monkeys for two weeks.

President of the Jote Ghulam Quddus told The Daily Star, "We came in and saw the monkeys in a tragic state of desperation over food. Scattered everywhere, they all swooped in every

time we brought in the food, showing how hungry they were."

"Amazingly, some locals stood by our side too, and what's best is that a lot of them took inspiration from this and kept up the practice long after we were done."

Jahangirnagar University's zoology department chair and wildlife researcher prof Monirul H Khan said most of Old Dhaka's monkeys are of the Rhesus Macaque species.

"Their numbers are on the decline mostly due to lack of food. In addition, people have started to become antagonistic towards them, which is why the instances of violence have increased. Electrocutation is another prime reason for their decline in the age of urbanisation," he said.

"We have to ensure they have enough to eat, there's simply no other alternative," he said. "This has to come from both government and private initiatives. Simultaneously, people have to be made aware so that they stop attacking the monkeys."



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Date: 7.11.2021

e-Tender Notice: 01/2021-2022

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & time
1.	626198	Procurement of Equipment and all Accessories for Digital Multipurpose Language cum ICT Lab with complete installation and Supply of Laptop for departments of Govt. Barisal College, Barishal	22 Nov, 2021 14.00 PM	22 Nov, 2021 16.00 PM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to 22 November, 2021 and time 14.00 PM. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



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