

A tale of resilience and grit

55-year-old Balayet to sit for DU's 'D' unit exam today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Balayet Sheikh from Gazipur's Mawna had a long-held dream of roaming the corridors of Dhaka University (DU) as a student. But unfortunately for him, life had gotten in the way.

At the age of 55, Balayet is finally getting a chance to fight for his dream. He will be sitting for the admission exam today under the social sciences faculty (D unit).

In a Facebook post, Balayet sought prayers from his kin and expressed his gratitude to those involved in his journey, as his fate is set to get tested in room 802 of the mathematics department.

On May 22, US embassy in Dhaka wished Balayet ahead of the test.

In 1983, he first took preparation to sit for Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination but could not complete registration owing to financial insolvency. He tried again in 1988, but couldn't sit for the SSC exam due to floods across the country.

After months, he started his career as a photographer. At present, he is a correspondent for Daily Karatoa.

Balayet later decided to discontinue his education.

As a father of three, he had decided to set an example for his children and turn things around for himself.

In 2019, the indomitable Balayet finally passed the SSC exam and in 2021 completed his Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination.



Not being able to withstand the summer heat, a man takes a dip and leisurely swims in the Suhrawardy Udyan lake to cool off. This photo was taken in Dhaka University area yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Rabab Fatima

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cabinet, according to the UN.

The secretary general extended his appreciation and gratitude to Heidi Schroderus Fox of Finland, who is deputy to the high representative and director of UNOHRLLS, for her dedication and commitment for acting as high representative.

About her appointment, she said, "I am grateful to the prime minister. She gave me this opportunity. She appointed me as the

permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations with confidence and trust in me."

Ambassador Fatima brings to the position more than 30 years of experience in national and international civil service, encompassing bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, policymaking, advocacy, programme planning and implementation.

She is the current ambassador and permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York.

Nationwide protest

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a mass procession towards the Indian High Commission in Dhaka on June 16 around 11:00am.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Bangladesh and Islami Oikya Jote also brought out processions in the same area.

In a written statement, Hefajat-e-Islam Bangladesh Amir Mohibullah Babunagari condemned the remarks and urged the Indian government to take stern action against them.

He also urged the Bangladesh government to issue a strong statement like those of other Muslim countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait and Qatar.

During the protests, Mohammadpur Police Station OC Abul Kalam Azad and ASI Jahangir Alam were assaulted by protesters in Dhaka Udyan area, after the OC asked them to free the road.

The two police officers are currently undergoing treatment at National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital.

A police sub-inspector,

deployed in Adamji Bihari Camp area of Narayanganj, was beaten by protesters inside Adamji Jame Mosque around 1:30pm yesterday. A journalist was also assaulted while trying to save the officer.

The injured were identified as Syed Azizul Haque, SI of Siddhirganj Police Station, and Billal Hossain Robin, staff reporter of Daily Manabjamin. They were later rescued by Siddhirganj police.

Protests were also held in Savar, Manikganj, Khulna, Barishal, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Pabna and Joypurhat.

During a recent televised debate, BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma made some comments on the prophet, sparking a furore among Muslims.

BJP on June 5 said Nupur was suspended from the party's primary membership, while BJP's Delhi media head Naveen Jindal was expelled for disrupting communal harmony.

Nupur later withdrew her statement on social media.

Take prompt action

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Raskin, who represents Maryland's 8th Congressional District in the US House of Representatives, also asked his colleagues to join him in standing with the people

of Bangladesh, especially those bravest and most vulnerable.

He urged the Bangladesh government to take immediate action to respect civil rights and safety of Bangladeshis.

Croplands pushed

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111.29 hectares of land, he added.

According to Brick Manufacturing and Brick Kiln Establishment (Control) Act, brick kilns cannot be established in areas declared as a municipality, city corporation, reserve forest, or sanctuary.

The act also states that such establishments must be a kilometre away from city corporations and municipalities, and two kilometres away from reserve forests.

During a recent visit to Habiganj, this correspondent saw a layer of dust and smoke covering the town as soon as entering Vaidya Bazar area on the Dhuliakhil-Mirpur road.

Jasim Uddin, a farmer from Sughar village, said he was forced to sell his one bigha land recently as it became uncultivable due to the adverse effects of the brickfields.

Another local farmer Sajed Mia said brick traders bought land and built brickfields in their area due to low land prices.

Several brickfields, including Asia, Royal, Mamun, Modern, New Sujat, and Five Star, have been built within a kilometre of Mirpur and Abdullahpur areas of Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Bahubal upazila.

The chimneys, too, are sub-standard, many of which do not meet the 120 feet height requirement. The brick kilns do not even renew their approval regularly, said sources.

The authorities conduct

occasional raids and shut down some of the illegal fields at times, but they get reopened after a few days following lobbying by local influentials.

Rubel Mia, owner of Asia Brick, said building brickfields on agricultural land is the most convenient way of doing business.

However, he admitted that he was breaching the rules while doing so.

Mizanur Rahman, deputy director of the District Environment office in Habiganj, told this correspondent that no brick kilns are allowed on agricultural land.

"Brickfields can only be established on nonarable land outside residential areas. It also requires clearance from the Department of Agriculture," he added.

Tofazzal Sobel, Habiganj district general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA), said, "There are no rules for setting up brickfields on agricultural land. But we do not see any application of this law in Habiganj. How does the Department of Agricultural Extension and the Department of Environment issue brick kiln clearance on agricultural land?"

Deputy Commissioner of Habiganj Ishrat Jahan, Habiganj deputy commissioner, said mobile courts are always active under her jurisdiction for surveilling the brickfields.

She said action would be taken following investigation if the approval process was manipulated for building brick kilns on crop fields.

Will the budget

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participation rate is 80.5 percent.

According to the global report, females share 24.4 percent of professional and technical work in Bangladesh, which is 30 percent in Nepal, 32.8 percent in Bhutan, 47.9 percent in Sri Lanka, 52.2 percent in Maldives, and 50.4 percent in Laos.

Besides, in Laos, females' share in "firms with majority ownership" is 36.5 percent and "firms with female top managers" 43.1 percent.

They are 12.7 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively, in Bangladesh.

Prof Tania Haque of women and gender studies department at Dhaka University said although there has been much improvement in terms of closing the gender gap, girls in Bangladesh still get less priority in getting support for higher education.

In terms of women's employment opportunities in correlation to skill, there are areas for improvement,

since women face different challenges in attaining skills, as they're the only ones having to look after household activities, she said.

Prof Tania said besides urban settings, employment opportunities for young women should be extended to rural areas with infrastructural developments to increase their economic participation.

Also, adequate daycare centres are required to support working mothers to thrive in their workplaces, she told this newspaper over the phone.

Prof Tania said a mindset still persists in society that males are more efficient than their female counterparts in managerial positions.

"If the national budget only focuses on urban areas, then [gender] gap will exist," she added.

In terms of creating better opportunities for women in entrepreneurship roles, she suggested ensuring "flexibility" in loan schemes

Budget offers no

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essential commodities, which will help common people deal with the price shock.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the think tank, said the government could give some relief to the lower-income people by increasing allocation in its social safety net programmes.

The government in the proposed budget has set aside Tk 113,576 crore for the social safety net schemes, up 1.89 per cent year-on-year.

But the government has included pension fund for retired employees to its social safety net allocation. If the pension fund is excluded from the outlay, the social safety net allocation as percentage of the proposed budget will stand at 12.62 per cent, way lower than 14.9 per cent in the revised budget of the outgoing fiscal year.

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the CPD, said allowing money launderers to legalise their ill-gotten assets was completely unacceptable and illogical from the economic, political and ethical perspectives.

People who laundered money abroad will be allowed to legalise their immovable assets by giving 15 per cent tax and whiten money by paying 10 per cent tax, according to the budget proposal.

They will be able to bring back their money to the country if 7 per cent of the total amount is paid as tax to the government.

But Mustafizur said such tax privileges given to dishonest people in the past had not yielded any positive results for the economy, rather such policies of the government will only encourage capital flight from the country.

As wealth inequality has widened during the pandemic, the government

should raise the personal income tax for the rich to 30 per cent from the existing 25 per cent, he said, adding that increasing the rate would result in tax justice as well.

The CPD also proposed the government lift the tax-free income limit to Tk 350,000 from Tk 300,000 now. "If this was done in the budget, people would get some respite from the inflationary pressure," Mustafizur said.

"The core philosophy of the budget is to mobilise assets from the rich and distribute those to the poor such that basic rights of the common people can be protected," he said. But the philosophy was largely absent in the proposed budget, he added.

The government has set a lower inflation target for the next fiscal year as it thinks that the US dollar will depreciate to Tk 86.2 against the local currency in the upcoming financial year, he said.

But it would be difficult to strengthen the taka as export and remittance will not be buoyant enough to offset the dollar shortage, Mustafizur said.

Towfiqul Islam Khan, senior research fellow of the CPD, said the budget was able to "diagnose the symptoms of the ailment, but it failed to prescribe the required medications."

The middle- and lower-income groups have largely been neglected while the rich and money launderers were offered incentives, he said.

The government has proposed imposing 15 per cent value-added tax on the import of laptop, which is now considered an essential piece of equipment for all, Towfiqul said.

Imposing such a tax on laptop, which saw price hike in recent time, proves that policymakers do not have any knowledge about the market.

2 teams inspect

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The doctor also urged the people to rush to local health complexes, if they face any illness.

Meanwhile, Chattogram's special superintendent of police Shahnewaj Khaled led the CID team.

"We will scrutinise the reasons of the fire and blast," he told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, the authorities are continuing to remove rubble from the depot.

"We are removing rubble to check whether anymore body remains here," said Maj (retd) Shamsul Haider Siddique, general manager of the depot.

"There were around 4,315 containers in the depot. Of those, some of them got completely damaged, some partially, and some other remains undamaged. We will be

able to get accurate figures tomorrow [Saturday]," he said.

Till yesterday, 98 people, who suffered injuries, were kept admitted to the burn and plastic surgery unit of Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Eighteen-year-old Anwar Hossain, who used to work as a container helper at the depot, suffered severe burns.

"He [Anwar] is undergoing treatment. But we are not sure whether he will be cured completely," said Anwar's uncle Abdul Mannan.

Another victim Aminul Islam (33), who works as a staff in the depot's jute yard, suffered burn injuries in the waist and hands.

"The patients, who are undergoing treatment are out of danger till now," said Liton Kumar Palit, assistant registrar of the unit.

Demand for int'l

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history of that horror has faded in the world today. The lack of accountability undermines human rights for all, especially for Bangladesh. Not only are they denied justice, but a central component of their history is being erased and ignored, making closure and more peaceful futures seem further out of reach, the statement said.

The 1971 genocide in Bangladesh, which was perpetrated by the Pakistan military, is one of the worst mass atrocities witnessed after the Second World War.

In nine months, the occupation army killed approximately 3 million people, violated over 2,00,000 women, and forced 10 million people to cross the border and take shelter in India.

The Pakistan army used organised, systematic rape as a weapon of war. Young girls and women were abducted and repeatedly gang raped in special camps run by Pakistani servicemen. The Pakistani army under a blueprint from high command, systematically killed intellectuals and professionals of Bangladesh, a spiteful and evil act.

The genocide is well documented and reported in the international media. Diplomatic correspondences and parliamentary reports during that period acknowledged what had taken place.

The Guinness Book of Records lists the Bangladesh genocide as one of the top five genocides in the 20th century, the statement added.

Gates electronic

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means is that it will now take 18 seconds more for immigration formalities than what it used to take, sources claimed.

GM Azizur Rahman, additional DIG (immigration) of Special Branch, said, "E-gates do not have the capacity to check visas, destinations, boarding times, and BMET cards."

"Visas can be fake and e-gates cannot identify that," he said, adding that there is no option to store - at the e-gates - information on passengers' destination or which airline they'll board," he said.

"E-gates now check whether the passport is valid and belongs to the right owner. It first checks the passenger's passport. If it's valid, the first barrier is crossed. The passenger's face and eyes will be scanned before the next gate," the officer added.

"Besides, this system is also assisting us identify whether any red notice is issued against the passport holder," he mentioned.

Asked if e-gates are helping immigration processes, Azizur said that earlier, they needed to verify passports and check passport holders' identification manually, but now, e-gates do those for them.

"Still, we have to be alert so that no one's able to leave the country with fake documents, especially to countries where no travel visa is required," said the official.

So far, 12 e-gates have been installed in the departure area, while three are at the arrival area of the airport.

Apart from Dhaka airport, six e-gates have been set up at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram and Osmani International Airport in Sylhet.

The government has a plan to set up 50 e-gates gradually at all airports and land ports under the "E.Passport and Automated Border Control Management Project".

around noon that day. They are yet to identify who threw the brickbat at him. Officials are unsure if the attempt was deliberate.

Police arrested BNP leader Mokbul Hossain, who owns two shops in the capital's New Market, for instigating the clashes.

Before his arrest, Mokbul told the media that police filed a politically motivated case against BNP leaders and its affiliated organisations.

According to witnesses, Morsalin was struck by a large brickbat in front of Chandrima Super Market

investigators suspect since he's from a border district, he might have fled to India.

According to witnesses, Morsalin was struck by a large brickbat in front of Chandrima Super Market

Police will find out whether the charges are false or not after investigation," he said when asked about the cases.

26 cases against

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"Imtiaz has been trying to occupy our land for a while now. That is why he has been filing these false cases one after another," she said.

Contacted, Emdadul Haque Masum, a lawyer based in Gazipur, said it requires prior investigation and permission from senior police officials to register an extortion case.

According to Shova, Kashimpur police did not investigate the matter before registering the case. However, the police

station's officer-in-charge Mahbub-e-Khoda said a pre-investigation is not necessary while filing these cases.

Contacted, Imtiaz Karim said he, along with three others, bought one acre and 80 decimals of land from Kafil Uddin's family.

"They are now refusing to give up the land they sold to me," said Imtiaz.

"Police will find out whether the charges are false or not after investigation," he said when asked about the cases.

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