

Sust student on solo protest against unkept promises

DWOHA CHOWDHURY,
Sylhet

Almost seven months have passed since the students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) suspended their movement for the removal of the vice chancellor and other demands.

However, the promises made to them by the authorities remain unfulfilled.

When all hopes turned grim, one student stood against the unfulfilled promises.

Sazal Kundu, an anthropology major at Sust, was critically injured in the police brutality that took place on the campus on January 16, during the movement. He survived with 80 splinters of shotgun bullets in his body.

Since September 4, Sajal has been standing in front of the university's central library from noon to the afternoon daily, with placards mentioning his three-point demand, including the withdrawal of cases filed against current and former students, fulfilment of promises made to the students, and charge of the cafeteria that was "unfairly" taken from him.

"I was managing the cafeteria of the ICT building before the protest. After the campus reopened and I returned from the hospital, the cafeteria was taken back from me. This was the last resort to support my family as the only earning member," said Sazal.

Contacted, Md Ishfaque Hussain, registrar of the university, and Prof Amina

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Three months have gone by but construction of a 400-metre drain pipe in Mymensingh city has still not been completed -- causing immense suffering to those who need to commute on the road. With SSC exams nearing, the worst sufferers are students of nearby educational institutions, who might be facing great difficulty to reach the exam halls.

PHOTO: STAR

Students suffer for unfinished roadwork

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Due to absolute negligence, construction of only a 400-metre drain pipe has not been completed in over three months in Mymensingh. The construction is going in an area where educational institutions are located, with over 3,000 enrolled students, many of whom are to sit for the upcoming SSC exams.

Three educational institutions -- Mymensingh Teachers Training College (Male), Government Laboratory High School and primary school "Shishu Kanon" -- are within this area.

Not only that, Higher Secondary Teachers Training Institute (HSTTI) is also located in this area where teachers from different institutions in Mymensingh get their training throughout the year. Besides, several other government offices are located there.

In this coming SSC session, Govt Laboratory High School has

been selected as an examination centre where around 1,100 students will be sitting for their exams on September 15, just five days away, school sources said.

Faridpur Jannat Construction, the company assigned for the job, started the construction, which is a part of a development project, in May this year.

"Even though the examination was rescheduled to be on September 15, only a fragment of the work has been completed so far," said Anjuman Ara Begum, headmaster of Govt Laboratory High School.

"Construction materials have been kept scattered, and holes have been dug up."

"We've tried contacting MCC Mayor Ekramul Haque Titu and MCC's assigned engineers, but no one bothered to respond. Meanwhile, the work's progressing at a snail's pace," alleged the headmaster.

Visiting the site recently, this correspondent saw a few workers

levelling sand and cutting the pipes to set them up there.

Locals alleged that due to price hike of construction materials, the firm is delaying its work.

"Our children are the greatest sufferers, as taking them to school on time and then bringing them back home has become a tumultuous task," said Arati Rani, a guardian.

Mohammad Azaharul Haque, MCC's assistant engineer, said they put regular pressure on the construction firm engineers so that the SSC examinees don't face any trouble.

Denying allegations of slow progress of work due to price hike of materials, Md Shafiqul Islam, the project's engineer, said they had to halt work due to the recent rains.

"We've already talked to MCC authorities to complete the road by filling sand by September 10 to ease movement. Hopefully, the rest of the work will be completed on an urgent basis," he added.

UPCOMING NAT'L POLLS Awami League, BNP face to face on the streets

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Both BNP and Awami League are trying to take control over the thoroughfares in Chattogram city ahead of the next parliamentary elections.

Centring BNP's programmes, several clashes occurred in the district between BNP and AL activists, and BNP activists and police recently.

BNP thinks that the ruling AL government are provoking them to get involved in violence.

BNP claimed that at least 20 of its activists were injured as AL activists attacked their rally in Bakalia on August 28.

In another incident, some 25 BNP activists were injured in police action during their procession in Banshkhali on August 26.

However, AL and police said BNP clashed with AL in Bakalia and with police in Banshkhali. In Bakalia, some 15 AL activists were injured and a ward councillor's house was vandalised.

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Police said seven of their members were also injured in BNP's attack in Banshkhali incident.

"We are organising peaceful programmes protesting price hike of essentials, fuel and transport fare," said Dr Shahadat Hossain, convener of the city unit of BNP.

"The government and ruling party are in fear as they have noticed that common people are participating in our programmes," he said.

BNP Chattogram south district unit convener Abu Sufian echoed him.

"Police and AL men are provoking us into clashes so that they can sue us. But we will not fall into the trap," he said.

AL sources said its central organising secretary (Chattogram division) Abu Sayeed Al Mahmud Swapan, during a meeting on September 3 with the leaders of 15 thana committees in the port city, instructed them on how to combat BNP's movement.

City AL Vice President Khorshed Alam Sujon said, "If BNP holds peaceful programmes, we have no problem. But if it wants to create anarchy, it is our duty as conscious citizens to cooperate with law enforcers to resist them."



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