

RU-RMCH CONFLICT Intern doctors on fresh strike

Univ registrar files complaint against them with police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

Intern doctors of Rajshahi Medical College yesterday began a fresh 72-hour strike, further escalating their conflict with students of Rajshahi University.

Meanwhile, RU authorities filed a complaint with police against the intern doctors.

Announcing the strike from a rally in front of the hospital yesterday, the interns made a three-point demand including the arrest of those who attacked the doctors and carried out vandalism.

After the rally, none of the staffers joined work.

Imran Hossain, convener of RMCH Intern Doctors' Council, said the two other demands include finding Shahriar's cause of the death and ensuring the safety of doctors in the hospital.

They also announced they will hold protests in front of the hospital every day if their demands are not met.

The interns also warned further action if hospital authorities cannot ensure the arrests of the attackers.

The strike was also joined by Fazle Hossain Badsha, lawmaker and president of RMCH governing body; Nawsher Ali, principle of RMCH and general secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association; Brig Gen Dr Shamim Yazdani, director of RMCH; and Khalilur Rahman, president of Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad and the hospital's head of medicine.

Badsha labelled the vandalism by RU students a criminal act and demanded exemplary punishment, and also asked law enforcers to unearth the cause of RU student MGM Shahriar's death.

On the other hand, RU Registrar Prof Abdus Salam filed a complaint with Rajpara Police Station against unnamed interns and hospital staffers, alleging their negligence in duty and reluctance in treating injured Shahriar, which led to his death.

The complaint also mentioned that some of the staffers attacked protesting RU students with sticks and sharp surgical equipment, leaving at least 100 of them injured, including 10 who are undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

Police, however, were yet to record the complaint as a regular case.

Earlier on Thursday, Anwar Hossain, acting administrative officer of RMCH, filed a complaint against some 300 RU students for attacking interns, staffers and vandalising property.

That complaint too remains unregistered by police.

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Garbage being dumped right next to the Dhaka-Tangail highway in Kashimpur area of Gazipur. Garbage is occupying the hard shoulder even. Apart from polluting the environment, such mindless dumping is also dangerous. There have been cases in which motorbikes slipped on the rubbish leading to casualties.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Leave Kherson 'immediately'

Pro-Russian authorities tell residents in face of looming assault

AFP, *Kyiv*

Pro-Russian authorities yesterday urged residents in the southern Kherson region, which Moscow claims to have annexed, to leave the main city "immediately" in the face of Kyiv's advancing counter-offensive.

It comes as President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia launched 36 rockets overnight in a "massive attack" on Ukraine, following reported strikes on energy infrastructure that resulted in power outages across the country.

Kyiv's forces have been advancing along the west bank of the Dnieper river, towards the Kherson region's eponymous main city.

The first major city to fall to Moscow's troops, retaking it would be a key prize in Ukraine's counter-offensive.

In recent days, Russia has been moving residents in the region - which Moscow claims to have annexed in September - in efforts described as "deportations" by Kyiv.

"Due to the tense situation on the front, the increased danger of mass shelling of the city and the threat of terrorist attacks, all civilians must immediately leave the city and cross to the left bank of the Dnieper river," the region's pro-Russian authorities said on social media.

A Moscow-installed official in Kherson, Kirill Stremousov, yesterday told Russian news agency Interfax that around 25,000

people had made the crossing.

At a train station in the town of Dzhankoy in the north of Crimea, a peninsula that Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014, Kherson residents were boarding a train for southern Russia, an AFP reporter saw Friday.

"We are leaving Kherson because heavy shelling started there, we are afraid for our lives," said Valentina Yelkina, a pensioner travelling with her daughter.

Another Kherson resident, 70-year-old Yelena Bekesheva, said she was going to Moscow.

"We didn't immediately make the decision (to leave) but then we were invited by our friends and relatives," she told AFP.

Meanwhile more than a million households in Ukraine were left without electricity following Russian strikes on energy facilities across the country, the deputy head of the Ukrainian presidency Kyrylo Tymoshenko said yesterday.

Fresh Russian strikes targeted energy infrastructure in Ukraine's west, the national operator said earlier, with officials in several regions of the war-scarred country reporting power outages.

Russians "carried out another missile attack on energy facilities of the main networks of Ukraine's western regions", Ukraine's energy operator Ukrenergo said on social media.

Power outages were reported among

others in the northwestern Volyn region, parts of the southwestern Odessa region and the city of Khmelnytskyi in western Ukraine with local authorities reiterating calls to reduce energy use.

"Saturday in Ukraine starts with a barrage of Russian missiles aimed at critical civilian infrastructure," Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter, urging Kyiv's allies to hasten the delivery of air defence systems.

According to Ukraine's air force, Moscow's troops yesterday fired 17 cruise missiles by aircraft from southern Russia and at least 16 Kalibr cruise missiles from ships in the Black Sea.

Ukraine's authorities have called on residents to reduce power consumption amid the attacks with some parts of Ukraine reducing their electricity use by up to 20 percent, according to Ukrenergo.

"We see savings in different regions and on different days the level of voluntary consumption reduction ranges from five to 20 percent on average," Ukrenergo chief Volodymyr Kudrytskyi said in written comments to AFP.

He added that while these were "significant volumes" for Ukraine's energy system, they were not enough for regions where the infrastructure "suffered the most damage" and Ukrenergo must resort to "forced restrictions".

One dies from Covid, 124 more infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One person died from Covid-19 while 124 more were infected with the virus in the 24 hours until 08:00am yesterday, said a press release by the Directorate General of Health Services.

A total of 2,259 samples were tested across the country during this period.

The daily positivity rate decreased slightly to 5.49 percent from the previous day's 5.87 percent.

With the new numbers, the total number of cases rose to 20,34,002 and the number of deaths to 29,412.

Meanwhile, 499 patients have recovered from the injection with the recovery rate now standing at 97.22 percent. The deceased was a female aged between 51 and 60 years.

Rohingya arrestee escapes from prison van

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

An arrested Rohingya refugee accused in a drug case escaped from a prison van yesterday afternoon while he was being taken to a court in Cox's Bazar.

Mujibul Alam, a refugee from Ukhiya's Kutupalong camp, and 11 others were being taken to the court from Ukhiya Police Station.

The police had to stop the van near Ramu Cantonment as one of the accused started vomiting.

Mujibul, despite being handcuffed, escaped when the on-duty officer went to fetch a plastic bag from a nearby shop, leaving the inner door of the van unlocked, said Sheikh Mohammad Ali, the OC of the station.

"We are trying to locate and arrest him as soon as possible," he added.

Low over Southeast Bay may intensify into depression

BSS, *Dhaka*

A low-pressure area over the Andaman Sea and its adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal may further intensify into a depression, said a bulletin by the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary cloudy skies.

However, the day and night temperatures are expected to remain unchanged.

According to the bulletin, weather conditions over North Bay and its adjoining coastal areas may deteriorate in the next 72 hours.

On Friday, the highest temperature was recorded in Chattogram's Sandwip island with the mercury reaching 35.3 degree Celsius. The lowest temperature was 17.0 degree Celsius recorded in Tentulia.

Ensure gas supply

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If the production in the textile industry keeps getting disrupted, the financial sector will eventually suffer because most of the owners borrowed from banks to invest in production facilities.

Production facilities of the textile sector burn gas for boilers and to generate electricity to run their machinery.

Currently, the textile sector uses 169.1 billion cubic feet of gas a year paying the government Tk 500 crore.

The BTMA chief also said that the export target of \$60 billion by the end of this fiscal year might not be possible to achieve if the gas supply was not improved.

Currently, the local spinners can supply up to 90 percent raw materials to the export-oriented knitwear sector and 40 percent to the export-oriented woven sector. Any disruption in gas supply in the primary textile sector means that the export will also be severely affected.

As of October 21, Petrobangla supplied 2,639 million cubic feet of gas a day to the national grid against a demand for 3,760 mmcf. The average deficit in gas supply has been around 1,000 mmcf per day over the last few months.

NZ stun Aussies

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international and New Zealand's first win in any format against their neighbours in Australia since a test win in Hobart 11 years ago.

Later in Perth, Sam Curran's breathtaking five-wicket haul and some spectacular fielding led England to a five-wicket win over Afghanistan.

England skipper Jos Buttler won the toss and elected to field and his seam bowlers did the trick for the team billed as one of the tournament favourites.

Curran, a left-arm quick, returned figures of 5-10 - the first England bowler to take five wickets in a T20 - to send Afghanistan packing for 112 in 19.4 overs. England, who crashed out in the semifinals at the World Cup last year in the United Arab Emirates, achieved their target in 18.1 overs - but only after the Afghanistans bowlers proved a point by picking five wickets.

Obstacles defied, BNP rally peaceful

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The event was chaired by Shafiqul Alam, convener of Khulna City BNP. An empty chair was kept on the stage for BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

After the arson at the BNP office around 4:00pm, burnt furniture, a TV set, several chairs, tables, and documents were seen there.

Local AL leader and Panel Mayor Aminul Islam Munna said the arson attack was conducted by "attention-seeking BNP men playing the victim".

"All of us were home today," he told The Daily Star.

After local AL leaders publicly vowed on Friday to take action if the BNP tried to create chaos, many supporters of the opposition party expressed fear of attacks.

And in Goalkhali, Boyra, Fulbari Gate and Daulatpur areas BNP supporters were allegedly attacked by AL men yesterday, said the party leaders.

Ashlam Sheikh, an activist, said at least 10 men swooped on him and

other BNP men in the Goalkhali area.

Around noon, police and a group of BNP leaders and activists clashed near Khulna Railway Station.

Witnesses said the clash happened when police tried to disperse a crowd of BNP leaders and activists.

Manik Sarkar, manager of the station, said glass doors, windows and the main gate of the station were broken during the clash that lasted for about half an hour.

Many BNP activists, who said they were prevented by ruling party activists from reaching the rally venue, spent the day roaming around the city.

The event started around 11:30am and ended in the evening.

The BNP activists started gathering at the venue the night before and spent the time chanting slogans and singing protest songs.

Several roads were decorated with banners and placards of the opposition party.

The main streets were filled with

Govt trying to remove room for abuse

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Rights," he said at a debate organised by the Editors' Guild in the capital's Dhaka Gallery.

"The home minister and I have decided that journalists [sued under the DSA] will not be arrested immediately. Instead, when a complaint is filed, a cell will decide whether or not there is prima facie proof of an offence made under the law."

The case will be sent to court only if proof against the accused is found.

"We are trying to solve the problem ... We are aware of how the law has been abused," the law minister said.

Advocate ZI Khan Panna, human rights expert, said the law is being misused as a tool by religious radicals to oppress minorities.

Responding to the comment, Anisul said, "We will take steps to find out why those who are abusing the law are doing so."

He added, "I was shocked by writer Mushtaq Ahmed's death. I also had to

answer to the world and so, I spoke to every agency concerned and found that it was an ordinary death ... I am not defending or accusing anyone.

"If anyone files a complaint about being tortured, we will of course take all necessary steps," he said.

Mushtaq's companion Ahmed Kishore, who was also arrested at the same time, had filed a case alleging custodial torture by unidentified forces.

Syed Ishiaque Reza, editor-in-chief of Gazi TV, pointed out that Bangladesh ranks the lowest on the world press freedom index in South Asia because of this law. He added that self-censorship has led to the demise of investigative journalism.

In response, the minister said, "You all [the journalists] are responsible for bringing down the score on the index. What steps can be taken to assure you and eradicate this fear [of self-censorship]?"

He also told senior journalists to make sure that nobody abuses their

designation as a newsperson.

Anisul also addressed the sections of the law that allow prosecution for hurting the spirit of the Liberation War and the national anthem, among others.

"Was it necessary to protect such sentiments? Yes, I believe so because of what we have seen in the past. For a country to function, some things must be considered sacrosanct."

He also defended the section that allows the police to make an arrest without a warrant, saying this was necessary for circumstances when warrants could not be procured in time.

Panna pointed out that lower courts rarely grant bail in DSA cases, since a majority of the provisions are non-bailable.

"Non-bailable does not mean a person cannot ever get bail," said Anisul.

"When a law is bailable it means that bail can be gotten from the police station. When a law is non-bailable,

haplessly at Jailkhana Ghat on the river, waiting for a way to travel across the river.

"I need to visit my sick daughter on the other side of the river. But the ferries and boats are not moving today," said Mizanur Rahman of Dumuria upazila.

This correspondent also met 10 construction workers stranded at Rupsa Ghat after arriving in Khulna by train from Panchagarh.

"We are requesting our contractor to help us out," said Mostafizur Rahman, one of the workers.

Sources at multiple mobile phone companies said the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission directed them to suspend 3G and 4G services in Khulna city.

Contacted, BTRC Vice Chairman Subrata Roy Maitra said he was not aware of any such instruction given by the BTRC.

Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar said a technical glitch might have caused the internet disruption.

It means police cannot make that decision to grant bail, and the person must seek it from a court. But it does not mean the person has to stay in jail till the verdict."

However, if that is not the reality, then it must be changed, he added.

Harun Ur Rashid, additional inspector general of police, said, "I have to strike a balance between individual liberty and public safety and security. In such situations, the state security gets priority."

He said the DSA was the "best piece of legislation" in this regard.

Sohrab Hossain, senior journalist of the daily Prothom Alo, said no civilised country can have a law like this.

Nasiruddin Yousuff Bachchu, acclaimed film director and theatre activist; Faruq Faisal, regional director of South Asian chapter of Article 19; and Kamar Ahmad Simon, filmmaker, also spoke at the event moderated by Muzammel Babu, president of the Editor's Guild.

Biden 'intends' to run for US president in 2024

Says would 'make sense' for Trump to comply with subpoena to testify before Capitol riot committee

AFP, *Washington*

Joe Biden, the oldest person ever in the US presidency, said Friday it's his "intention" to run again in 2024 and that his wife Jill thinks he should not "walk away."

Biden's comments in an interview with MSNBC addressed a question fascinating Washington watchers as Biden approaches his 80th birthday next month.

Record 922 patients

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rose to 30,029. Of them, 8,605 patients are outside Dhaka.

Among the new admission, 520 were in Dhaka and 402 outside.

Of the total 30,029 cases, about half were recorded this October, while 57 out of the 112 deaths were witnessed during the same period.

Experts have called upon city corporations to take immediate measures to kill Aedes mosquitoes, the carrier of dengue.

According to DGHS, dengue infections are the highest among people aged over 20 years while the death toll is high among people aged between 40 and 80 years.

The findings also showed that among the deaths most died within three days of bringing a patient to a hospital.

A DGHS monsoon survey, conducted between August 11 and 23, found the presence of Aedes mosquitoes in 13.4 percent of houses under DNCC and 11.75 percent of homes under DSCC.

According to the survey, Aedes mosquitoes were present in 45.2 percent of multi-storey buildings and 24.8 percent of under-construction buildings under DNCC.

In DSCC areas, the mosquitoes were found in 33.0 percent of multi-storey buildings, 27 percent of independent houses, 12.1 percent of slums, and 5.1 percent of vacant plots.