

PUBLIC UNIV Dipu Moni for removing age bar on admission

BSS, Savar
Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said that the age barrier and time limit should be removed for admission to public universities in Bangladesh.

People of any age have the right to study in universities if they can pass the admission test. No obstacle can be placed in education, she said.

The minister made these remarks while speaking as chief guest at the golden jubilee celebration programme of Jahangirnagar University's Department of Physics.

She called upon all public universities to come under the cluster admission test system.

"The admission test process in the cluster system has reduced the sufferings of everyone including students and parents. Five to six universities in the country are not covered by it. Hope they would join the cluster admission test system soon," she said.

"We have to place our universities in the world ranking. So, we have to work on the criteria of ranking," said the education minister.

Addressing the programme, JU Vice Chancellor Prof Nurul Alam said, after he took charge, the first demand of the students was to organise the convocation. "I will arrange the convocation soon."

JU Pro-VC (Administration) Prof Sheikh Md Manzurul Huq, dean of JU Mathematical and Physical Sciences faculty Prof Farid Ahmed and Director of Wazed Miah science research centre and prominent scientist Prof AA Mamun were present as special guests, among others.



PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUI

Workers extract stones from the Dahuk river near Tentulia town in Panchagarh. Several thousand labourers make a living from this back-breaking work in the area. They earn Tk 500 to Tk 700 each every day. The photo was taken on Thursday.

UKRAINE'S KHERSON REGION Putin endorses evacuation

AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly endorsed the evacuation of civilians from parts of Ukraine's southern Kherson region yesterday, the latest sign of Russia's retreat in one of the most bitterly contested areas in Ukraine.

"Now, of course, those who live in Kherson should be removed from the zone of the most dangerous actions, because the civilian population should not suffer," Putin told pro-Kremlin activists as he marked Russia's Day of National Unity.

Moscow has already been ferrying people out of an area it controls in Kherson on the west bank of the Dnipro River, and this week announced that the evacuation zone would also include a 15 km buffer area on the east bank. But the comments appear to be the first time Putin has endorsed the

evacuations personally.

Russia says it has been taking residents to safety from the path of a Ukrainian advance. Kyiv says the measures have included forced deportations of civilians out of Russian-occupied territory, a war crime, which Russia denies.

Putin's comments come as signs are emerging that Russia could be preparing to abandon its military foothold on the west bank of the Dnipro River, including Kherson's regional capital - potentially one of the biggest Russian retreats of the war.

Pictures have circulated on the internet showing the main administration building in Kherson city with Russia's flag no longer flying atop it. Kyiv has been wary, saying such signs could be Russian deception to lure Ukrainian troops into a trap, reports Reuters.

2 toddlers found dead in lift pit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Two three-year-old children drowned in rainwater accumulated in the elevator pit of an under-construction building in Tangail's Mirzapur yesterday.

Abdullah, son of Lal Miah, and Khadiza, daughter of Fazlul Karim, were playing outside their homes in Sohagpara area in the afternoon, family members said.

The families didn't know something had happened to them until construction workers noticed their bodies floating in the water in the evening and informed them, said Abu Saleh Mohammad Masud Karim, officer-in-charge of Mirzapur Police Station.

3 schoolboys killed in motorcycle crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Three schoolboys were killed after the motorcycle they were on hit a tree and fell into a roadside ditch in Betagi upazila of Barguna early yesterday.

Yasin Arafat, 11, son of Kabir Hossain, Rabbi Mridha, 17, son of Rafiq Mridha, and Mohammad Siam, 17, son of Al Amin, were pronounced dead when police took them to Betagi Health Complex around 1:00am, around half an hour after the crash.

Yasin was a 5th grader while the other two were in 10th, said Shah Alam Hawladar, officer-in-charge Betagi Police Station.

It appears that the boys were probably speeding at the time of the crash in Khaner Haat area.

The locals rescued them from the ditch with serious injuries and called the police.

The bodies were sent to a morgue for autopsy, the OC said.

Teenage girl's body found in paddy field

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Locals found the body of a 15-year-old girl who had been missing since Thursday evening in a paddy field in Mohipur area of Kalapara in Patuakhali yesterday morning.

Police said there were scratch marks on Sakibun Nahar's face and it was likely that she was asphyxiated.

She used to sell fish at a village market, said Abul Khair, officer-in-charge of Mahipur Police Station, adding that the body was sent to a morgue for an autopsy.

Her mother Shahida Begum, a widow, said after her daughter went missing she and her neighbours looked for her in the area.

Tourism ban on 4 Bandarban upazilas till Nov 8

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The authorities yesterday extended the ban on tourists in Ruma, Rowangchhari, Thanchi, and Alikadam upazilas of Bandarban to November 8.

Police said the decision was made over security concerns arising from the presence of "underground criminals".

The ban on tourists was first enforced on Rowangchhari and Ruma on October 18. The two other upazilas were added five days later.

Due to unavoidable circumstances, we are unable to run the preannounced interview of eminent jurist Shahdeen Malik.

BCL nat'l council

FROM PAGE 1
BCL held its last council in May 2018, Mohila Awami League in March 2017, and Jubo Mohila League in March 2017.

On October 28, Awami League Central Working Committee, in a meeting, decided to hold its 22nd national council on December 24 at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital.

In that meeting, AL President Sheikh Hasina also stressed holding the conferences of the associate bodies and pro-AL organisations whose tenures expired.

According to the party sources, the AL is now planning to hold large gatherings at the conferences of associate and pro-party organisations before and after the BNP's last divisional mass rally scheduled to be held on December 10.

AL chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to attend these conferences.

The national conferences of other affiliated organisations - Bangladesh Awami Ainjibi Parishad and Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad - are likely to be held by December 24.

Apart from this, the conference of Dhaka metropolitan unit AL (north and south) will also be held in December.

Meanwhile, a section of BCL central leaders brought out a joy procession at Madhur Canteen on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, after hearing the news of the council.

In its last council, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chose Rezwanul Haque Chowdhury Shovon and Golam Rabbani as BCL president and BCL general secretary respectively.

On September 14, 2019, Joy and Lekhak, who were then vice-president and joint general secretary respectively of that committee, were made its acting president and acting general secretary after Shovon and Rabbani were removed from their posts for their controversial activities.

On January 4 of next year, Hasina gave the duo the full responsibility of BCL at a programme marking its 72nd founding anniversary.

As many as 29 BCL councils were held in the last 74 years since the organisation's inception in 1948, whereas only eight were held in the last 34 years in place of 17 if held regularly as per its constitution.

Thousands flock to Barishal defying strike Laxity at the beginning

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protest the price hike of essentials and fuel, recent killings of five party men in police firings, and also demanding "release" of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The party has so far held four rallies in Chattogram, Mymensingh, Khulna and Rangpur. Transport strikes were called ahead of those rallies except the first rally held in Chattogram.

Yesterday afternoon, Chhatra League brought out processions in Barishal city to mark the Jail Killing Day. Many leaders and activists of the pro-AL student body took part in processions riding several hundred motorcycles.

Law enforcers were seen checking vehicles and enquiring about the identities of passengers at different check points in the city.

Several thousand BNP leaders and activists reached the city a couple of days before the rally. Many of them were staying on roofs of residential buildings, launches and trawlers.

Visiting the Charmari Kheya Ghat yesterday, the correspondents found that more than 2,000 people were staying on board the MV Bhola, which reached the city on Thursday night.

"Some 2,500 people are on board. Party leaders and activists from Bhola came on around 20 trawlers to join the rally. We will leave the city after the rally ends," Mahmud Ali, a Jubo Dal leader from Bhola, told The Daily Star.

Party men were seen either sleeping or resting on decks and cabins. Food

was being prepared for them in the galley.

Some 100 BNP men from Barishal's Wazirpur upazila were staying on the roofs of three residential buildings in Barishal Brown Compound area. Food was prepared for them on the roofs.

Habib Un Nabi Khan Sohel, joint secretary general and also the team leader of the Barishal rally, said many BNP leaders and activists were intercepted on their way to Barishal. "Overcoming all obstacles, thousands of party men will join the rally. No obstacles can bar them from taking part in the meeting."

BNP leader Mogbul Ahmed came from Pirojpur's Mathbaria, about 80km away from Barishal city. He said he had to change vehicles several times to get to the city.

"When our bus reached Gabkhan bridge area on Thursday midnight, Awami League men threw brick chunks at the vehicle, leaving a few of our party activists injured. Then we took a trawler from there to travel to Barishal city."

The Bangabandhu Udyan, the meeting venue, was seen partly filled yesterday evening as several thousand BNP leaders and activists had been gathering there since Thursday night.

They appeared upbeat and in a festive mood having been able to reach the venue overcoming all the obstacles.

The BNP was not given the whole park. The Barishal district administration was given another part

of the park for hosting a programme on November 7.

BNP men along with some senior party leaders offered Juma prayers at the ground yesterday.

Party activist Wahidul Islam said, "The government wants to bar us from joining the rally. We came here two days ahead of the rally. We will leave the ground after the meeting ends."

BNP leaders and activists brought out processions near the party office adjacent to Sadar Road yesterday.

Billboards, banners, posters and placards have been put up in different areas of the city marking the rally.

PASSENGERS SUFFER

Md Hanif from Nazirpur in Pirojpur reached the Kheyaghat in Barishal city around 8:30am yesterday, but could not find any vessel to travel to Pirojpur until 11:45am.

"We all are suffering due to the suspension of launch services," he said.

At Bheduria Launch Terminal of Bhola, Billal Hossain with his wife and daughter waited for about two hours to catch a vessel to Barishal, but in vain. The family was to see Billal's ailing nephew who was to undergo a surgery.

At Nathullabad Bus Stand in Barishal city, a young man was seen desperately looking for a transport to go to Swarupkathi in Pirojpur. He received the news of his mother's death yesterday morning.

"I have to go home by any means. If necessary, I will walk 30 miles to get a last glimpse of my mother's body," he said.

comment. He was abroad.

Taqsem went to Denmark to attend a conference on September 18 for six days. He then took another six-week leave for medical treatment and visiting family members.

During this period, Shahid was made acting MD of Wasa.

Despite repeated attempts, Energy and Mineral Resource Secretary Mahubb Hossain, who was additional secretary to the LGD and a member of the Wasa board during the duo's appointment as directors, could not be reached for comments.

The Anti-Corruption Commission has recently begun an enquiry into various financial anomalies at Wasa during which the matter came to the fore.

An ACC deputy director also quizzed the duo on October 20.

On October 11, the Supreme Court upheld a High Court order that sought a report on the salaries, allowances, and others facilities provided to Taqsem over the last 13 years.

It's Taqsem's territory

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board appointed them as "directors", with each drawing Tk 1.5 lakh monthly salary, even though the post does not exist in the organisation, several board members told The Daily Star.

Taqsem told the board that the activities of Wasa would be hampered if they were not appointed. That's why the board approved it, said Prof Habibur Rahman, then chairman of Wasa.

The board approved them to be directors for two years at its 252nd meeting on March 29, 2018.

In August that year, Local Government Division (LGD), Wasa's supervising authority, asked Wasa to cancel the appointments and stop paying them salaries and allowances since their appointments were "in violation of Dhaka Wasa Act-1996 and Dhaka Wasa Service Rule 2010".

In the Wasa organogram, there are four deputy managing directors under the managing director. Chief

engineer, additional chief engineer and commercial managers work under the deputy managing directors while the 13-member board oversees from the top. It has no directors.

Not only was the LGD letter ignored, Taqsem extended Kashem and Shahid's contractual appointments several times since their first appointment as directors.

Even on March 31 this year, an order stated that Shahid's tenure as director (technical) has been extended for six months from April 4, 2022, as the appointment of managing director (operation and maintenance) was yet to be made.

Five months later, Shahid was made deputy managing director (operation and maintenance).

Former chief engineer Kashem was again made adviser to the MD.

Shahid said as he is competent, he got the appointment. "I was involved in mega projects while in Wasa, so Wasa needs my expertise."

Kashem could not be reached for

and mosquitoes also needed, he added.

Local Government Division Additional Secretary Mustakim Billah Faruqi in August said officials were working to finalise a vector management policy.

About the allegations that the authorities had not done enough earlier in the year, Brig Gen Md Zobaidur Rahman, chief health officer at Dhaka North City Corporation, said, "We took all measures to control Aedes mosquitoes."

The dengue cases would come down this month if there is no rain, he said.

His counterpart at Dhaka South City Corporation, Fazle Shamsul Kabir, said, "We launched extensive drives near the houses of dengue patients from June. A control room was also opened at that time."

Asked why these were not done in January, he said there were plans to start these activities in January next year.

"The people have to play a vital role as the mosquitoes breed in stagnant clear water," he said.

Movement of BNP

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Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, yesterday.

AL leaders and activists do not believe in fleeing the country like BNP leaders do, said Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister.

He praised the party members' loyalty and said AL men would rather die or be imprisoned for the sake of the nation than flee the country.

The BNP leader has fled to London after signing a bond stating that he will no longer be in politics, said Quader, indirectly referring to BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

Mentioning that the incumbent government has transformed the country into "Digital Bangladesh", the senior AL leader pledged to build a "Smart Bangladesh" in future.

‘Pak PM, two others involved’

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captain as he showed the stitches on his calf, seated in a wheelchair, dressed in a blue hospital gown, a drip attached to his arm and a cast on his leg, with the national flag in the background.

He said there were two shooters. The police have so far arrested one man who fired a pistol and two other "suspects". Imran also announced he will resume the march to Islamabad after he recovers.

The arrested attacker has told the police on camera that he was acting alone - "I was upset as he's misleading people and weaning them away from Islam's tenets" - but Imran has blamed three leaders specifically: PM Shehbaz Sharif, internal security minister Rana Sanaullah and Major General Faisal Naseer, who leads the intelligence agency ISI.

The government has denied any role and promised a fair probe, reports NDTV.

Meanwhile, supporters of Imran staged nationwide protests yesterday, blocking key roads in major cities and sometimes clashing with security forces.

Imran's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party called for the protests to continue until its demand for political change in Pakistan is met, a close Imran aide said.

In the eastern city of Lahore, where Imran is undergoing treatment, groups of protesters numbering hundreds in each of 10 separate locations burnt tyres and blocked major roads.

They also gathered outside the fortified office of the Punjab provincial governor and pelted the gate with stones, destroying security cameras and barriers, witnesses said.