

How many more Nadias will it take?

Students take to streets demanding safe road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of Northern University took to the streets in Kawla area on the capital's Airport Road yesterday to protest the death of their peer Nadia Sultana, who met her demise on Sunday after a bus of Victor Paribahan hit the motorbike she was on.

After staging a demonstration at the university campus, near Dhaka airport, they blocked the roads around 12:15pm to press home their four-point demand – arresting the driver and helper, cancelling the bus company's route permit, compensating the victim's family, and stopping all buses at Kawla bus-stand area.

One of their demands have already been met, as Bhatara police yesterday morning arrested the driver Md Liton, 38, and his helper Abul Khair, 22.

Nadia, 19, a first-semester student of pharmacy department, was the pillion rider on her friend's motorbike. The Malibagh-bound bus hit the bike near Jamuna Future Park around 12:45pm on Sunday. Police seized the bus after the incident.

During the blockade, the students allowed vehicles carrying air passengers and ambulances with patients to pass by. They were seen checking licences of vehicles. The students made police fine a bus for not having a driving

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After the tragic death of 19-year-old Nadia Sultana, who had just gotten admitted to Northern University, her peers started to demand for justice right away. Yesterday, they occupied Airport Road with their four-point demand, in hopes that no other student meets the same fate because of unsafe roads.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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‘Those responsible never face consequences’

JP lawmaker Firoz Rashid on road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saying that the owners of the buses involved in different road accidents are the police, politicians and powerful people, a Jatiya Party lawmaker yesterday in parliament said they face no consequences of such accidents.

Speaking on a point of order, the opposition MP Kazi Firoz Rashid came down heavily on the government for not taking any punitive actions against those involved in road accidents.

“I don’t know if so many people die in road accidents anywhere else in the world,” he added.

Highlighting the news published in the newspapers about the recent accident, he said, “Who are these bus owners?”

‘Hold direct election for reserved seats’ Demand politicians, political analysts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians and political analysts demanded that direct elections be held for the reserved seats for women in the National Parliament and 10 percent of the general seats for women.

They placed the demand during a discussion arranged by Narigrantha Prabartana at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) auditorium in the capital yesterday.

Former BNP lawmaker Rumeen Farhana, political analyst Prof Dilara Chowdhury, Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque and GanoAdhikar Parishad's Senior Joint Convener Faruk Hasan were present at the meeting, presided over by Narigrantha Prabartana President Farida Akhter.

Farida Akhter said neither the mainstream opposition parties nor the progressive parties and coalitions are making any noise against the undemocratic system of women's seats in the constitution.

She placed three demands – direct elections for the reserved seats for women, reserved seats for all 64 districts and 10 percent of general seats for women.

“The reserved seats have become a comfort zone or rehabilitation centre for parties participating in the polls,” said Rumeen

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Under the dirty water, there’s a ward

The plight of DNCC wards 39, 40 and 43 under zone-9

In July 2017, Dhaka North City Corporation took 18 wards under its wing, which were previously under the union parishad system. It divided the newly added wards into 5 zones. While this move came with a promise of development for these wards, the reality after five years is way far from that. They remain as backward as they used to be, if not more. The Daily Star explored the plight of these neglected wards in a five-story series, the first of which starts today with zone-9.

DIPAN NANDY and ARAFAT RAHMAN

Some of the places remain under stagnant water for years, while some lack basic civic amenities, including proper roads or pure drinking water. None of these neighbourhoods has a single playground. Such are the states of the three wards in zone-9 of Dhaka North City Corporation.

In July 2017, DNCC took 18 new wards under its wings. However, even after five years, people in many of these wards are still bereft of developmental activities. The condition of wards 39, 40 and 43 is perhaps the worst. So



much so, the residents said they were better off under the union parishad system.

WATERLOGGING, A CONSTANT

Monsoon or not, the entire stretch of the road from Nururchala Bazar to Sayeednagar in ward-39 remains under stagnant water, thanks to the poor drainage system. Residents said they have been complaining to the local councillor for over two years but to no avail.

This newspaper found that the road was

under ankle-to-knee-deep black water, with a horrible stench. Locals said the condition deteriorates whenever it rains and their sufferings cross every limit during the monsoon.

Two rickshaws were seen stuck in the muddy water, while pedestrians were walking by covering their noses and mouth. What's worse is that when it rains, the dirty water enters households and local shops.

Jahangir Alam, a homoeopathy doctor, said it has been four years since the road remained under water.

“Every monsoon, my chamber in a ground floor room remains submerged for two months,” he said.

Md Kutub Uddin, a local shopkeeper said, “The condition worsened in the last two years. We got nothing but empty promises from the authorities in this regard.”

“Anything other than rickshaws or cycles cannot enter this road. Let alone conducting business, it's difficult to even breathe in this place,” said local contractor Shahidur Rahman.

OF DENGUE AND DISEASES

The stagnant water not only emits a foul smell but also poses a threat to water-borne diseases. Locals said people living in nearby areas often suffer from different skin diseases.

Besides, it's a breeding ground for mosquitoes, meaning dengue fever is a menace for dwellers of this ward.

Khairul Islam Liton, a local, said he has just recovered from dengue recently. Earlier, four out of five members of his family, including three children, suffered from the fever within a month.

Meanwhile, in the Vatara area under ward-40, there are some visible developments, which include wider roads and taller buildings, all through private corporations.

However, after strolling through the streets for an hour, these correspondents observed scenarios of poor civic amenities and despair of residents in Vatara Goli, Vatara High School, Solmaid Purbopara, Ali Market road and Noyanagar areas. Roads in these places are narrow and have poor drainage systems, which in turn causes gridlocks and waterlogging.

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11 CASES AGAINST KHALEDA Charge framing hearing on May 15

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set May 15 for hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in 11 cases.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court adjourned the hearing and fixed the new date, said Additional Public Prosecutor Tapash Kumar Pal.

The adjournment came following petitions submitted by defence citing different reasons.

Khaleda, who is out of jail following an executive order from the government, is now unwell and staying at her Gulshan residence.

Among the 11 cases, 10 were filed in the first three months of 2015 over arson attacks, while the other one was filed with a Dhaka court on charge of making seditious comments on freedom fighters and martyrs of the Liberation War.

Three corruption cases against Khaleda – Gatco, Niko and Boropukuria coalmine – are now pending with three other special courts in Dhaka.

Two more cases are pending with the Second Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

BNP-Jamaat clique conspiring ahead of polls: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-Jamaat and the far left and right quarters are conspiring as the election inches closer, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque told parliament yesterday.

Mozammel, who is in charge of parliamentary affairs for the Prime Minister's Office, said this in response to a question from Awami League MP M Abdul Latif.

In a scripted answer, the minister said a section of people are trying to create unrest. “Jamaat-BNP... the far left, far right, associated with it... have become active in conspiracy ahead of the election. They do not see the achievements of Awami League.”

The minister said the AL government wants to deal with all conspiracies with the support of people. Besides, he mentioned that social-harmony committees have been formed at union, upazila and district levels. The PM wanted to form these committees comprising people from all classes and professions.

Nursing bill passed in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The “Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (amendment) Bill 2023” was passed in parliament yesterday.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque placed the bill which was passed by voice vote. As per the objective of the bill, it proposes bringing an amendment to the act titled “Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council Bill-2016”.

According to the bill passed yesterday, any person willing to use his or her degrees in midwifery education and nursing like a nursing diploma and postgraduate in nursing received from any institution at home and abroad must be recognised by Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council.

As per the draft law, taking up the profession of nursing, midwifery and their related professions would be prohibited without registration with the council. According to the bill, anyone taking up the profession of nursing and midwifery without a valid registration will have to face a maximum of three years of imprisonment or a maximum Tk 1 lakh fine or both.

DENGUE FEVER 15 hospitalised in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 dengue patients were hospitalised across the country in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of them, nine are from outside of Dhaka.

With the new cases, the total number of dengue patients rose to 489, while total number of deaths this year remains at six, according to DGHS.

Some 53 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment, of whom, 26 are from outside the capital.

PRAYER
TIMING

JANUARY 24

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:15	5:43	7:15
JAMAAAT 6:05	1:15	4:30	5:47	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



The capital's Sher-e-Bangla area hosts a number of hospitals, and because of that, private ambulances remain parked on both sides of the main road, in front of the healthcare facilities, to receive patients at any moment. As a result, patients in-turn are the worst sufferers, as the road remains gridlocked most of the time, hampering their smooth entrance to the hospitals. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CHILD MARRIAGE US embassy, Brac launch ‘STAR’ project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To strengthen the leadership abilities of adolescent girls from climate-vulnerable groups, Brac and the US embassy in Dhaka yesterday partnered for a vocational training programme for girls prone to early and forced marriage.

The launching event of the project titled “Reducing Child Marriage – Skills Training for Advancing Resources (STAR)” was held at the Brac Centre Inn of the capital.

Tasmiah Rahman, associate director, Brac Skills Development Programme, said the project will provide a one-year long training.

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