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DSCC TREE FELLING

‘Will continue our movement’

Say protesters, police bar them from going to Nagar Bhaban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 200 people, protesting Dhaka South City Corporation's move to cut down trees on the capital's Satmasjid Road, held a rally at Bangabazar intersection after police stopped them from marching to Nagar Bhaban yesterday.

Under the banner of Satmasjid Sarak Gach Rokkha Andolan (Movement to Save Trees on Satmasjid Road), they were marching towards DSCC headquarters.

But when they reached Bangabazar intersection, police barred them.

In response, protesters sat on the road and demanded that DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh come and address them. After about 45 minutes, DSCC officials including Chief Executive Officer Mizanur Rahman and Chief Property Officer Russell Sabrin arrived at the Bangabazar intersection to initiate a dialogue with the protesters.

Mizanur Rahman said, "You (the protesters) have come with demands, and I have come here to show you respect. Unfortunately, the mayor couldn't join us as he was engaged in a pre-scheduled

meeting. He sends his apologies."

Rahman emphasised that the DSCC has undertaken extensive tree-planting initiatives. Regarding the protesters' demands, he assured, "I will present them to the mayor."

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said, "The mayor's decision (to fell trees) has generated such public disapproval that he is unwilling to face the people and be held accountable. He lacks the preparedness to justify an unpopular decision."



With prices of essentials soaring, individuals from lower-income group have no option but to patiently wait in line behind OMS (open market sale) trucks, braving harsh weather conditions. This photo was taken in Mirpur Mazar road, around 11:00am yesterday.

Recognise the 1971 genocide

Speakers urge UN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday appealed to the United Nations to officially acknowledge the mass killings perpetrated by the Pakistani occupation army during the Liberation War in 1971 as an act of genocide.

Highlighting the significance of recognising this genocide, Mahbub Zaman, chairperson of Amra 71, an organisation dedicated to pursuing recognition of the 1971 genocide for the past two years, explained that the atrocities committed during the Liberation War unquestionably possessed the defining characteristics of genocide.

He made the call during a press conference held at the Jatiya Press Club, a day prior to the international seminar titled "International Conference for Bangladesh Genocide Recognition," scheduled to take place at Dhaka University.

When questioned about the timing of their pursuit for this recognition after 52 years, he responded by saying that they do not believe it is too late.

"The demand is not new. Various individuals and organisations have been making this demand after the Liberation War, and now the demand has gained momentum," he said.

According to him, they have been engaging in campaigns for the past two years to achieve this objective.

"We have been in contact with international communities, including some European countries, and have been organising seminars, discussions, and debates on this matter. Today's seminar is a part of our campaign," he said.

A delegation consisting of five members from Europe has arrived to participate in the seminar. They are expected to visit locations of the genocide, speak with witnesses and family members of the victims, and visit museums in the country.

During the briefing, Hary Van Bommel, a Dutch politician, and rights activist, expressed that there have

HIGH ACCIDENT FATALITY RATES

It will undermine the progress

Says WB country director on Bangladesh's economic growth, poverty reduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The high fatality and injury rates can undermine the progress Bangladesh has made in reducing poverty and boosting economic growth, said Abdoulaye Seck, World Bank country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, yesterday.

"Road safety has become a global crisis, and Bangladesh is no exception," he said at a programme at a city hotel in the capital.

WB, Brac and the government jointly organised the programme to promote use of standard motorcycle helmet in Bangladesh to mark the UN Road Safety Week, which is being observed in between May 15 and 21.

Abdoulaye said the annual road crash deaths per capita in Bangladesh are twice the average rate for high-income country.

More than 200 people are permanently disabled by road crashes every day, he said, adding that in Bangladesh, around 70 percent of all road crash victims are pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists.

Most of the motorcycle road fatalities are youths aged between 26 and 30, he said. "Economic losses from inaction could be substantial – World Bank estimates that costs

related to traffic crashes can be as high as 5 percent of GDP".

Research shows, he said, standardised helmets can prevent head injuries by up to 44 percent. But unfortunately, most helmets available in Bangladesh do not meet international standards when it comes to quality and protection, he added.

However, adoption of the national safety standard for helmets in October last year is commendable, he added.

Economic losses from inaction could be substantial -- World Bank estimates that costs related to traffic crashes can be as high as 5 percent of GDP.

ABDOULAYE SECK
WB country director for Bangladesh, Bhutan

Abdus Sabur, director general of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), said BSTI is now capable for testing standards of helmets. Most of the helmets are imported and no local manufacturers received BSTI certificate yet, he said.

He recommended to raise education and awareness among stakeholders

2,000 hajj pilgrims leave Dhaka for Saudi Arabia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 2,000 hajj pilgrims left Dhaka for Saudi Arabia on the first day of hajj flight operation yesterday.

The flight took off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 3:20am and landed at Jeddah airport at 7:20am (Saudi Arabia time) yesterday.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Md Mahbub Ali, State Minister for Religion Md Faridul Haque Khan, lawmaker Habib Hasan, Biman Governing Council Chairman Mustafa Kamal Uddin, and KSA Ambassador to Bangladesh Issa Bin Youssef Al-Dahilan, among others, saw off the hajj pilgrims in Dhaka.

The second flight reached there around 11:30am carrying 415 pilgrims.

All these pilgrims were welcomed at Jeddah airport by Ambassador of Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia Mohammad Javed Patwary and Saudi Deputy Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr Abdullattah bin Sulaiman Mashat.

Allocate more for children

Unicef recommends ahead of budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh made significant progress in various indicators regarding the well-being of children, however, many areas remain that require attention, said Unicef Bangladesh yesterday.

Unicef Bangladesh held a media briefing at its office in the capital where it shared various activities and focused on the need for public financing for children ahead of the national budget.

While considering allocation for children in the upcoming national budget, the government should put focus on areas like education, universal health coverage, nutrition, child protection, water sanitation, and social protection.

ASHIQ IQBAL
Social, economic analysis specialist at Unicef Bangladesh

It said over the years, Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in areas like access to drinking water, birth registration, stunting, under five mortality, primary education enrolment, and vaccination by age of 12 months.

On the other hand, 51 percent girls are married before their 18th birthday.

Sheldon Yett, Unicef representative to Bangladesh, said, "Violence against children is a huge issue... 89 percent children [1-14 years] experience violence. That's extremely high. Child marriage is another huge issue."

According to Sheldon's presentation, access

DENGUE

One dead, 33 hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least one dengue patient died while 33 were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of deaths this year rose to 13, according to DGHS.

The total number of dengue cases this year rose to 1,447.

Some 151 patients are still undergoing treatment while 1,283 have been released from hospitals.

PRAYER TIMING

MAY 22

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
4:05	12:45	5:00	6:40	8:00
JAMAAT	4:40	1:15	5:15	6:45
8:30				

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



People from all strata of life take part in a meditation programme at Jatiya Press Club yesterday, in observance of World Meditation Day.

Meditation Day observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Like elsewhere, World Meditation Day was observed in the country yesterday.

The celebration's main event was held at the Jatiya Press Club by Quantum Foundation.

The programme began at 6:00am with a breathing exercise and autosuggestion.

According to a press release, distinguished guests from various regions of the country attended the event and spoke about meditation's physical and psychological benefits.

Nahar Al Bukhari, director general of Quantum Foundation, said in an audio message, "Regular meditation is not difficult... if we meditate regularly, our brain will become more active."

Deregister nursing colleges that breached protocol

Demands nurses' association

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Nurses' Association yesterday demanded immediate cancellation of the registration of nursing colleges that had violated the registration protocol.

Hossain Ahmed Shipon, legal adviser to the association, stated during a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, "A syndicate of a few officials at the council [Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council] has been involved in granting registrations in exchange for money."

According to the association, a group of individuals has been engaged in the business of selling certificates by exploiting these colleges.

The activists also presented four other demands, which included an increase in stipends for intern nursing students to Tk 20,000 per month, recognising three-year diploma courses as an honours programme and introduction of a special cadre service for nurses.

They urged to address their demands by May 30. If their demands are not met, they threatened to organise human chains across the country.