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Court issues travel ban on customs official Enamul

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued a travel ban on Mohammed Enamul Haque, commissioner of Customs, Excise and VAT Commissionerate in Sylhet, in a case filed over acquiring wealth worth Tk 9.76 crore illegally.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after the Anti-Corruption Commission's Deputy Director Farzana Yasmin, also investigation officer of the case, appealed to the court, an official of the anti-graft watchdog told The Daily Star.

On June 4, the court ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate all immovable properties

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Hundreds of vehicles remain stuck on the Dhaka Elevated Expressway as anti-quota protestors block the Farmgate ramp. Many had to disembark from their vehicles and start walking. Inset, a mother, weary of walking under the sun, rests on the sidewalk with her child on her lap.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, RASHED SHUMON

BNP not fueling ongoing protests

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has no reason to be involved in the current teachers' and students' movements on university campuses, said the party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

He said this in response to Awami League's claim that BNP had been patronising these protests.

"A teachers and students are carrying out these movements independently based on their professional perspectives, why would BNP instigate those agitations?" said Fakhrul.

Fakhrul said his party believes the teachers' SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Quota protest intensifies, so does public suffering

MD ABBAS

From Shahbagh to Farmgate, with Banglamotor in between, major intersections of Dhaka were paralysed for several hours as protests against quota in government jobs swept through the capital yesterday.

The blockades enforced by students also extended to the Government Science Lab intersection, Chankharpool, areas adjacent to Dhaka University and in front of other educational institutions.

The ripple effect of these blockades created severe congestion at key locations such as Tantibazar, Ray Saheb Bazar, Bangshal, Gulistan, Purana Paltan, Shahbagh, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Agargaon, Kazipara, Sheorapara, Mirpur-10, New Market, and Science Lab.

By 6:00pm, the congestion spread to Mohakhali, Banani, Uttara, and other areas. There were long lines of private cars, buses, and CNG-run auto-rickshaws.

The students also blocked the railway at Karawan Bazar level crossing for half an hour.

Many inter-district passengers also had to suffer as the protesters blocked major railways and highways, disconnecting Dhaka from

different parts of the country.

The ordeal began at 3:30pm when hundreds of students demanding quota reforms started their "Bangla Blockade" programme from Shahbagh.

They even blocked the Farmgate ramp of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway leaving hundreds of vehicles stuck there.



The sufferings intensified after the office closure as many job holders were forced to walk to their destinations. Some bikers were seen quarrelling with the protesters.

The protestors blocked the railway at Karawan Bazar level crossing around

6:40pm, halting train movements, which they withdrew an hour later.

Vehicular movement resumed in Farmgate, Karawan Bazar and Bangla Motor areas around 7:45pm.

The protestors finally lifted the blockade at Shahbagh around 8:35pm, after almost four hours.

It took Pankaj Malakar, a private job holder, two and a half hours to reach Farmgate from Bailey Road on his bike. "I was stuck multiple times and had to take several detours," he said.

Mushfiq Alam, a private service holder, was seen waiting at Farmgate for public transport. "I have been waiting for 40 minutes but there's no sign of any transport," he said.

Rumana Jannat, a medical technologist, was stuck in a gridlock near Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel for over an hour. She eventually left the bus she was on and started walking.

College students Rafi Ahmed, Sujon Maiti, and Ishtiaq Hossain also expressed their dismay as they were stuck in the Bijoy Sarani area for over 40 minutes.

Meanwhile, the students demonstrating SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

45 died in 1,045 incidents

Says Oikya Parishad report from July 2023 to June 2024

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad has claimed that 45 people were killed in 1,045 incidents of communal violence between July 2023 and June 2024.

The organisation released these findings in its latest report at a press briefing, titled, "Report launching on torture and persecution of religious-ethnic minorities in Bangladesh in the past year," at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

While reading out the written statement, Advocate Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of the organisation, said from July 2023 to June 2024, ten people were targeted in attempted killings in various incidents of communal violence, 36 people were threatened with death, and 479 people were physically tortured.

There were 102 incidents of attacks, vandalism, looting, and arson on the houses and businesses of minority communities, he said, adding that there were 47 incidents of encroachment on houses and lands.

Additionally, 45 incidents of grabbing houses and lands, attempted evictions, and threats were reported.

There were also 11 cases of threats or attempts to force people to leave the country, 15 cases of grabbing or attempting to grab the properties

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PROTEST OVER PENSION

Univ teachers vow to continue strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public university teachers yesterday vowed to continue their work abstention movement until their demand to reinstate the previous pension scheme is met.

Teachers and staff members boycotted all classes, examinations, and administrative activities to press home their demands.

At Dhaka University, officials and staff members held a protest rally in front of the administrative building after a campus procession. A separate rally in front of the Arts Building was also held.

Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) and president of the Dhaka University Teachers Association, told the media that they have been in contact with the government, but no formal meeting has been scheduled yet.

"Since our demands were not addressed, we started with a half day strike, then escalated to a full-day strike. We have now initiated this full-day work abstention movement. We will not return to classes until our demands are fulfilled," he said.

Teachers at other public universities, including Buet, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Ruet, BSMRSTU, and Comilla University, among others, continued the movement to demand the reinstatement of the previous pension system.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Flood situation unchanged in the north

Over 1.60 lakh marooned in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat; 400 families stranded in Rangpur

STAR REPORT

The flood in the north remains unchanged. In Kurigram, the Brahmaputra, Dharla, and Dudhkumar rivers continue to flow above the danger level, while the water of Teesta and other rivers are rising.

The flood situation also remains unchanged in three unions along the Dharla river shoal in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

The Kurigram District Relief and Rehabilitation Office reports that all nine upazilas of the district have been affected, impacting 1,35,939 people from 40,000 families.

Only 2,395 people have taken shelter in 404 flood shelters.



Local administration has distributed 397 tonnes of rice, Tk 21.85 lakh in cash, and 21,330 packets of dry food to affected individuals.

An additional 1,079 tonnes of rice and Tk 23.5 lakh in cash are reserved for future needs. In Lalmonirhat, 25,000 people from 7,000 families are affected.

Tk 5 lakh, 100 tonnes of rice, and 500

packets of dry food have been provided as relief.

Water Development Board officials said the Brahmaputra at Chilmari point is flowing 56cm above the danger level, Dudhkumar at Pateshwari 39cm, and Dharla at Bridge Point in Kurigram 32cm above the danger level.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



6,500 hectares of agri land under water

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Farmers have suffered significant losses due to the ongoing flood in Kurigram, as around 6,500 hectares of agricultural land – including Aman seedbeds and vegetable fields – have been under water over the past week.

Officials of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) said out of the 6,500 hectares, various vegetables were being grown on 2,000 hectares, 500 hectares were used as Aman seedbeds, and 4,000 hectares were used for jute and other crops. While jute cultivation has not suffered much damage yet, there is a concern that prolonged flooding might also impact these crops.

Meanwhile, farmers in the affected areas claimed that the damage was much higher than the DAE estimates.

Surjamal Mia, a farmer of Char Madhya Kadamtala village in Kurigram Sadar, said his three-bigha land where he

was growing pepper and pointed gourd (potol) has gone underwater.

He also feared that the jute he is growing in four bighas of land will also be damaged if the flood gets prolonged.

Farmer Nazrul Islam of Kalatipara village in Ulipur upazila said he cultivated pepper on five bighas of land, planning to sell Tk 4 lakh worth of peppers.

"But now the flood has damaged everything. This year's flood has affected farmers the worst," he said.

Sudhir Chandra Das, 70, a farmer of Jorgach village in Chilmari upazila, said his Aman seedbed on 40 decimals of land was completely damaged.

"I'll have to prepare the seedbeds again once the water recedes, but I don't know when that will happen," he added.

Contacted, Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy director of DAE in Kurigram, said vegetables and Aman seedbeds submerged under the floodwater are completely destroyed.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1