

Cultural centre in Jinjira vandalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many establishments were vandalised following the fall of Sheikh Hasina on August 5, one of which was the Hamidur Rahman Cultural Center in Jinjira area of Keraniganj.

Miscreants vandalised the establishment and looted valuables from its premises around 3:00pm on the day.

Wishing anonymity, an official of Hamidur Rahman Cultural Center yesterday told The Daily Star that the centre is a government establishment that they had leased for three years from Dhaka Zilla Parishad.

They invested around Tk 2.5 crore in overall decoration, furnishing, and interior work, he added.

The centre recently started its classes with 20 students, offering music, dance, and various forms of arts and culture.

It was preparing to enrol 400 more students. In the meantime, this attack occurred, said the official.

He also said the miscreants looted valuables, including furniture and electrical appliances.

Mentionable, the building of the Hamidur Rahman Cultural Center was designed by internationally acclaimed architect Marina Tabassum.

PHULPUR UPAZILA HEALTH COMPLEX

Healthcare limps on amid doctor shortage



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Phulpur Upazila Health Complex in Mymensingh is grappling with staff shortages and overcrowding, leaving medical services in disarray.

The 50-bed hospital, established in 1983 to serve rural communities, is now struggling to meet the growing demands of the 5 lakh residents in the area.

The hospital is understaffed, with nearly half of the positions for medical officers and consultants remaining vacant.

Out of the 130 sanctioned posts, the hospital currently operates with only seven medical officers and seven consultants, while one medical officer is on deputation in Dhaka.

This acute shortage has left several key departments, including ophthalmology, gastroenterology, and dermatology, without any consultants, forcing patients to seek costly treatment at private facilities.

The hospital faces a daily influx of at least 90 inpatients, far exceeding its capacity, with many patients having to share beds or wait in overcrowded conditions. Despite the overwhelming need, there has been no significant effort to upgrade the hospital's facilities or expand its capacity to 100 beds, as demanded by the local community.

Field-level health services have also been severely impacted due to the shortage of medical assistants, with 29 out of 60 positions lying vacant. This has disrupted essential healthcare services in the region,

leaving many without adequate care.

Additionally, the hospital is plagued by a shortage of essential medicines, forcing patients to purchase drugs from outside, often at a high cost.

Although Dr Md Humayun Kabir, the health and family planning officer in Phulpur, claims that around 90 percent of the required medicines are usually in stock, the growing number of patients often leads to shortages.

Dr Md Nazrul Islam, the civil surgeon of Mymensingh, said the authorities have been informed about the urgent need to fill the vacant posts and address the other challenges faced by the health complex. He said steps will be taken soon to improve the situation.

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

Smooth gas supply top priority: Adilur

BSS, Dhaka

The interim government will give utmost importance to ensuring gas supply to maintain normal production in the industries, said its Adviser to the Ministry of Industries Adilur Rahman Khan yesterday.

"The problems in fertiliser production would be addressed to reduce import dependency, which would significantly save foreign currency," he added.

The adviser said this while talking to the reporters after a meeting with senior officials of the Ministry of Industries at the secretariat in the capital.

Adilur also said they will work to improve the leather industry in Savar.

"At the same time, we ensure environmental compliance in the ship-breaking industry," he told reporters.

The adviser to the industries ministry said various institutions under the ministry are operating at a loss, and proper measures will be taken to identify the issues and make these institutions profitable.

"There is no choice but to be stringent against corruption. We have taken on this responsibility through much sacrifice. There is no question of allowing new scope for corruption," he added.



Adil wanted to join

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"We forced him to stay home on the previous day while protests raged outside. On July 19, we could not stop him. He did not return alive," said Adil's mother Ayesha Akter.

Adil was shot twice in his chest at the protest in front of the factory of SB Style Composite Ltd. Doctors rushed him to a nearby private hospital in Signboard area, where doctors declared him dead.

He was later buried in a local graveyard in Bhuighar area the same night.

"My Adil had a dream to join the army as an officer and serve the nation. He was inspired by his maternal uncle who is an army personnel. It is but an irony of fate that he was shot dead by law enforcers," Ayesha said.

Adil is a student of Tamirul Millat Mohila

Kamil Madrasa in Dhaka's Jatrabari area. He returned home from the madrasa's hostel on July 17 after attending pre-tests for upcoming SSC examinations next year.

"As the situation was turning worrisome in Dhaka, I brought him home from the hostel for fear that he would get into trouble if he remained in the capital. Yet I couldn't save my son," said his mother.

Ayesha also said Adil was a bright student, and was especially good in mathematics. He had participated in the Math Olympiad, she added, showing Adil's certificate of participation.

Adil was the youngest of his three siblings. His elder brother Abdullah Al Mamun is studying in Malaysia and another brother Bayejid Ahmed is a student of nursing at Dhaka Medical College.

Reform admin, police

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He said the spirit of Liberation War will remain the main priority in rebuilding the nation.

"It (the spirit of Liberation War) doesn't belong solely to Awami League. During its tenure, the party used it to shield their oppression and plunder, all of which are activities contrary to the aspiration of our independence," he added.

He blamed the system for making Hasina a dictator, and suggested revolutionary reformation to the state mechanism, which will require a change in people's mindset.

"Our MPs, ministers and high-ups never bothered about the environment or air pollution while remaining in their air-conditioned cars, homes and offices. For a starter, the government officials may begin to open their

car windows to inhale the air of Dhaka -- the most polluted air across the globe -- to get an idea of what common people have to suffer from," he said.

He also said the interim government should focus on reforming the country's constitution, adding that it may face obstacles from three forces -- the civil and military bureaucracy, the businesses who got unprecedented privileges from the Hasina-led government, and the external powers who have interests in the country.

"The government took numerous illogical and costly projects, which only benefited the local and foreign businesses. Local businesses like Beximco, S Alam, Bashundhara, United, and Summit groups may create problems with their huge capital," he

added.

Kazi Maruful Islam, a professor at Development Studies department of Dhaka University, said, "We need to reform the state's system keeping in mind the Liberation War, anti-discriminatory society, secular democracy, exploitation-free economy, participation of the citizens, the government's responsibility to the citizens, and diversity of the state."

The teachers' network will act as an observer to the government, said Prof Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan of DU's International Relations department.

"If they do wrong, we will act as we did earlier. Besides, a students' network will be formed among the students of private universities, who were a vital force in the recent mass uprising," he added.

We got married only

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without him?" said Marzina while talking to this correspondent.

She was taken by her parents to their house in Bipanchashi village of neighbouring Ishwarganj upazila, two days of Jobayer's death, where she has been staying since then.

Jobayer had a mobile accessories shop at Shambhuganj Bazar of Mymensingh city. His father, Md Anwar Uddin, is a retired madrasa teacher from Kaurat village in Gouripur upazila.

"On July 20 morning, I had my last words with my son. I asked him where he was going. Jobayer said he would go to his shop as it had been closed for several days and many customers had called him for delivering their orders. He said he would return soon. He returned... dead,"

said Anwar Uddin.

He came in the line of fire on his way to the shop at Kaltapara Bazar area on Mymensingh-Kishoreganj road in the upazila, and was hit by bullets in his back. He was rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to the injuries. He was buried at the family graveyard.

"Jobayer was neither involved in politics, nor did he join any protest. He did not deserve this fate," his father said.

Jobayer's younger brother Mohammad Kawser, an HSC student, said, "Uncertainty now looms over my education as well as of my elder sister. My elder brother was the only financial support of our six-member family."

He called for a proper investigation into Jobayer's death, and demanded justice.

Canada eager

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government to pursue accountability and an investigation into the deaths and violence that have occurred. Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has welcomed the interim government led by Prof Yunus.

Sharing a brief message on "X" yesterday, he said the US supports Dr Yunus' call for calm and peace.

Blinken said the US remains committed to working with Bangladesh as it charts a democratic and prosperous future for the people in Bangladesh.

Also, in a media briefing in New York, Florencia Soto Niño, associate spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said there seems to be an inclusive process for forming a government.

"We hope that it continues," he added.

How will we survive now?

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village under Patuakhali Sadar upazila, used to work as a cutting master at a tailor shop in Lalkuthi area of Dhaka's Mirpur. He lived in a rented house with his wife, son and two daughters.

On August 5, Bachchu, also general secretary of Bangladesh Poshak Sramik Dal, a BNP-affiliated organisation in Lalkuthi, was demonstrating with party men in front of

Adabor Police Station when a bullet hit his chest.

Locals took Bachchu to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital where doctors declared him dead. The family members later took his body to the village home the next day and buried him in the family graveyard.

Bachchu's son is a college-goer, while his elder daughter is a degree student and younger daughter is an 8th-grader, said cousin

Delwar Howladar.

"Bachchu was a good-hearted man, and a hard worker. He did not leave behind much for his family except a small portion of ancestral land. We are concerned about how his family will manage now," said his uncle Abdul Jalil Howladar.

"I demand justice for my husband's murder, and urge the government for providing us with financial support," Kohinoor said.

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He also mentioned that a waste-to-energy project to generate electricity from waste has been pending approval for two years.

Deepak Mazumder, MCC's food and sanitary inspector, informed that since 2019, a private enterprise, Nobo Waste Management Service Ltd, has been collecting medical waste from private hospitals, clinics, and diagnostic centres in the city for a fee of Tk 500-2,000 per month.

The waste is disposed of through incinerators, burial pits, sharp pits, and recycling units.

Dr HA Golandaj Tara, secretary of Bangladesh Private Hospital, Clinic and Diagnostic Owners Association, confirmed efforts to engage all private hospitals in partnering with Nobo Waste Management Service Ltd for proper medical waste disposal.

Regarding the medical waste produced at public hospitals, Mohabbat Ali said the private enterprise lacks the capacity to handle all of it.

Dr Md Nazrul Islam, civil surgeon of Mymensingh, noted that the renewal of licences for private hospitals and clinics is contingent on certificates from the Department of Environment, which mandates the separation of waste into designated bins.

Md Mesbabul Alam, deputy director of the DoE in Mymensingh, assured that regular monitoring of waste disposal practices is being conducted to ensure compliance with environmental guidelines.

Shakil was vocal against injustice

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Institute of Neurosciences and Hospital in Dhaka's Agargaon.

Later, Shakil's friends and family took his coffin to the Shaheed Minar premises to pay respect to him, before his body was taken to his village home in Bhola for burial. Shakil's father died in 2008.

"My brother used to look after us. I work at a factory but I hardly earn enough to bear the house rent and fulfill the family's needs alone. With him no longer

there, now we are looking at a grim and uncertain future. We are devastated," said his younger brother Sumon Hossain, 18.

Rajib Sikhdar, Shakil's childhood friend, said, "We were trying to shield ourselves from bullets with roadside benches and chairs. But it was not enough. So, I told Shakil to run as fast as he can. We began running, but I lost him in the crowd. I thought he managed to escape, but later came to know that he got shot."

He was always vocal

against injustice, said family and friends.

Mim Akhter, 19, a neighbour of Shakil, said he always worked for local students and youths, and actively participated in the recent protests.

"Shakil bhaia used to teach children at a local school whenever he had time. He encouraged to be vocal against anything that is wrong, and would sometimes gather us all to sing and paint together. I did not expect him to leave us like this," she said.

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