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TACKLING UNREST Students to observe solidarity week from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students Against Discrimination and 18 other student organisations will observe the National Solidarity Week from today to resolve the unrest at educational institutions and prevent the resurgence of the Awami League.

Leaders of the organisations met at the anti-discrimination platform's office in the capital's Bangla Motor last night.

"Conflicts among various educational institutions have emerged... In almost every incident, we are seeing the involvement of the Chhatra League and Jubo League. They're seeking an opportunity to create division by inciting violence," Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the platform, told reporters following the meeting last night.

"In this situation, the entire student community of Bangladesh, as we were united before August 5, must now come together again,"

During the solidarity week, all student organisations that stood up against the AL, will visit various institutions to spread the message of unity and solidarity, he said.

"The message for the upcoming week will emphasise that there is no alternative to standing together. We will observe this programme and ensure its success.

"All the organisations agree that no opportunity will be given for [the AL's] rehabilitation in any form."

Hasnat further said that the student organisation will also place the demand to confiscate the assets of AL

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A mother and father try to shield their terrified baby from protesting battery-run rickshaw pullers in the capital's Agargaon yesterday afternoon. The group of protesters stopped the rickshaw they were on and began harassing the puller, who was taking the family to the pharmacy to buy medicine for the child.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SC allows battery rickshaws on Dhaka streets for a month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday directed the authorities concerned to maintain the status quo for a month on the issue of plying of battery-powered rickshaws on the Dhaka streets.

Justice Md Rezaul Haque, the chamber judge, said the battery-run rickshaws and auto-rickshaws can operate in the capital during this period as livelihoods of their owners and drivers depend on the vehicles.

The apex court judge also asked the High Court to dispose of the rule issued over this matter in one month.

Yesterday's SC order brought joy to the drivers of the vehicles who have been protesting the HC order since November 19.

The chamber judge passed the order after a petition was filed by the government seeking a stay on the HC order that directed the government authorities concerned to take necessary steps to stop operation of the battery-run rickshaws and auto-rickshaws in the city.

"We are thankful to the government and the court, as the livelihoods of 60

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ELECTORAL REFORM PROPOSALS

Parties want caretaker govt, 2-term limit for PM

Jamaat, CPB, Gono Odhikar for introduction of proportional representation system of voting

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Gono Odhikar Parishad (GOP) proposed a proportional representation electoral system and the restoration of the caretaker government to oversee the national polls.

In separate proposals to the electoral reform commission, Jamaat and the 10-party alliance Jatiyotabadi Somomona Jote sought to limit the tenure of the president and the prime minister to two terms.

Jamaat, which lost its registration as a political party with the EC in 2018 following a court order, also called for repealing the law under which political parties get their registration.

Khelafat Majlis and the GOP want a provision to disqualify the Awami League and its allies from the election. The Somomona Jote and GOP sought bicameral legislation.

"Political parties are making the proposals as we sought proposals from them," Badiul Alam Majumdar, chair of the electoral reform commission, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The interim government constituted the electoral reform commission on October 3 and sought its report within 90 days.

Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday placed a 22-point electoral reform proposal

including legalising the caretaker government system by incorporating it in the constitution.

It proposed six election commissioners in place of four at present. The party is in favour of the selection of candidates by the grassroots leaders, non-partisan local elections and CCTV cameras in all polling centres.

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The party recommended giving magistracy power to the armed forces during the election. It suggested the decision to deploy the troops should come from the president.

The EC officials should get priority when appointing returning and assistant returning officers.

The party is against the use of the electronic voting machine in the polls.

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ANTIGUA TEST

Taskin's 6-for fuels Tigers' fight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh continued to garner momentum in their favour after Lunch on the fourth day of the first Test against the West Indies in Antigua yesterday, with pacer Taskin Ahmed claiming his maiden five-wicket haul in the format.

Playing his 15th Test, Taskin spearheaded the attack as the hosts were bowled out for 152 in 46.1 overs, leaving the visitors a 334-run target with four sessions left at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

Starting the day by declaring their first innings at the overnight score of 269 for nine, the Tigers focused on leveraging the early morning conditions — a decision that paid dividends.

Taskin struck a double blow early, while Shoriful Islam complemented his efforts by dismissing skipper Kraigg Brathwaite before the Lunch interval as the West Indies reached 61 for three at session's close.

Post-Lunch, Taskin picked up four more, including the first-innings centurion Justin Greaves, ending up with career-best figures of 6-64 in 14.1 overs.

CHATTOGRAM CITY

Multidrug-resistant organisms found in drinking water

Reveals study on samples from households, restaurants, food carts, hospitals

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

A recent study has confirmed the presence of multidrug resistant organisms (MDRO) in the drinking water at various restaurants, tea stalls, food carts, and diagnostic centres across Chattogram city, posing serious public health concerns.

The study titled "Screening and identification of multiple antibiotic-resistant genes containing Salmonella Typhi from drinking water: A severe public health concern in Bangladesh" was conducted by Professor AM Masudul Azad Chowdhury of Chittagong University's genetic engineering and biotechnology department, its assistant professor Sohana Akter Mina, and three students—Pabitra Debnath, AKM Zakir Hossain, and Md Zahid Hasan.

Set for publication in the UK-based journal Heliyon's 10th volume on November 30, the research article is currently available online.

Around 150 drinking water samples—39 from restaurants and tea stalls; 31 from hospitals and diagnostic centres; 50 from various households; and 30 from vendor shops—were analysed during the study.

Salmonella Typhi, a bacterium that causes typhoid fever, was found present in eight (5.33 percent) of the total samples. Of them, over 87 percent were multidrug resistant, posing a serious threat to locals and visitors, said Masudul Azad, who led the study.

Although important antibiotics such as co-trimoxazole and ciprofloxacin (used to treat pneumonia, bronchitis, and infections of the urinary tract, ears,

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Ex-ISKCON leader arrested at HSIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former ISKCON leader Chandan Kumar Dhar, alias Chinmoy Krishna

Das Brahmachari, was arrested from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport area in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

Rezaul Karim Mallick, additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police and chief of the Detective Branch, said a team of detectives arrested him in connection with a case filed in Chattogram.

Earlier on October 31, a case was filed with Kotwali Police Station in Chattogram, accusing Chinmoy, spokesperson of Sammilita Sanatani Jagaran Jote, and 18 others.

Firoz Khan, the then general secretary of Mohora ward BNP, filed the case on charges of disrespecting Bangladesh's national flag in Chattogram's New Market area during a rally of the Hindu community on October 25.

Firoz, however, was expelled from the party over "anti-party" activities

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No option but to hold 'good' national polls

Says new election commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commissioner Brig Gen Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah yesterday said they have no choice but to conduct a "good" national election as the country is passing a transitional period.

Sanaullah

Speaking to reporters after a meeting with the EC officials at the Election Commission Secretariat, he described the new EC's role as an opportunity to serve the nation.

"More than a challenge, we see this as an opportunity. We are here to face this challenge."

He underscored the importance of holding a fair election, saying, "We believe we are entrusted with this responsibility by Allah (SWT). We are confident that we will fulfil people's hopes and aspirations."

Sanaullah mentioned that it is their primary task to ensure a credible election.

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Rescue workers clear debris at the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted Tayouneh area in Beirut's suburbs, Lebanon yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Lebanon truce deal 'close'

Says US as Israel cabinet set to vote on proposal

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's security cabinet was preparing to decide whether to accept a proposed ceasefire in its war with Hezbollah, an official said yesterday, as the White House announced it believed a deal to end the fighting in Lebanon was "close".

The United States, European Union and United Nations have all been actively pushing in recent days for a truce in the long-running hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, which flared into all-out war in late September.

Lebanon says at least 3,768 people have been killed in the country since October 2023, most of them in the past few weeks.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, an Israeli official told AFP that the country's security cabinet "will decide on Tuesday evening on the ceasefire deal".

US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby expressed optimism over the prospects for a truce but said talks were ongoing.

"We believe we've reached this point where we're close," Kirby told reporters, adding "we're not there yet".