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5 EDN INSTITUTIONS Academic life of 40,000 in disarray Classes, exams halted following series of clashes

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Academic activities in five major educational institutions in Dhaka remain suspended for the past week amid multiple incidents of clashes, affecting at least 40,000 students.

- Classes remain suspended in at least five colleges
- Multiple exams cancelled across 10 educational institutions
- DMRC suffered significant losses
- Authorities call for permanent solution
- Special assistant to education adviser says 'situation contained'

The absence of effective measures by the authorities concerned has added to uncertainty over when these institutions will return to normalcy.

The institutions are Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College and Kabi Nazrul Government College, which are among the seven institutions affiliated with Dhaka University, Dr Mahbubur Rahman Mollah College (DMRC), Dhaka National Medical Institute Hospital and St Gregory High School and College.

On Sunday and Monday, students of these institutions engaged in separate clashes, halting academic activities.

The clashes also prompted the DU authorities to postpone final examinations of first- and fourth-year students of all seven affiliated colleges. The five other affiliated colleges are Dhaka College, Eden Mohila College, Begum Badrunnesa Government Mohila College, Government Titumir College, and Mirpur Government Bangla College.

Principals of the colleges expressed concerns over the disruption of academic activities due to infrastructural damage, calling for prompt and permanent solutions to resume normal operations.

Ashraf Chowdhury, managing director of DMRC, which will remain closed until Saturday, said they might not be able to start academic activities even next week considering the amount of damage done to the institution.

"We'll try to resume official work next week. If we can repair the damages and get the classrooms ready for the students, we'll try to resume classes the week after," he told The Daily Star.

Prof Kakoli Mukhopadhyay, principal of Shaheed Suhrawardy College, said, "We've been trying to restart academic activities in our college, but we've been

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After having been waiting since 7:00am, these women from lower-income groups engage in a scuffle as desperation runs high for their share of kitchen essentials at subsidised prices from a TCB truck on the capital's Manik Mia Avenue. The truck arrived around 12:00pm.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

WHEN DIGITAL SPACE BECOMES A PARADISE FOR HARASSERS

In the era of technology, gender-based violence too has taken a new form. Cyberbullying and online harassment has become weapons of choice for perpetrators in the digital space -- from messaging apps to social media platforms. In our next column for 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, Mahiya Tabassum details how navigating cyberspace often becomes traumatic for women in Bangladesh.

STORY ON PAGE 9

Political parties strongly endorse press freedom

Call for an end to intimidation of
the media during talks with Noab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political parties yesterday expressed their unwavering support for press freedom, highlighting its vital role in strengthening democracy and securing the nation's future.

They blasted the recent attacks on the press and called for an immediate end to such activities. They also cautioned that if such activities go on, the aspirations of the July uprising would not be fulfilled.

Top leaders of 13 political parties made these remarks at a views-exchange meeting on "Independent Journalism and Media Institutions Under Threat".

The Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) organised the programme at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

Speaking at the event, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said it is quite unfortunate that he had to discuss press freedom in a free environment after the fall of a fascist regime.

"Over the last 15 years, people, including political

PHOTO ON PAGE 4

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\$14b lost to capital flight a year during AL years Finds committee preparing white paper

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and
ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh has lost around \$14 billion a year on average to capital flight during the Awami League's 15 year tenure, according to the draft report of the committee preparing a white paper on the economy.

The actual amount of capital flight could not be determined due to time constraints, The Daily Star has learnt from members of the 12-member committee. However, a separate chapter has been prepared on the topic using scientific methodology, government documents and global reports.

The committee, which was formed on August 28, was given three months

to prepare the report to inform on the true state of the economy, battered from years of mismanagement and data obfuscation.

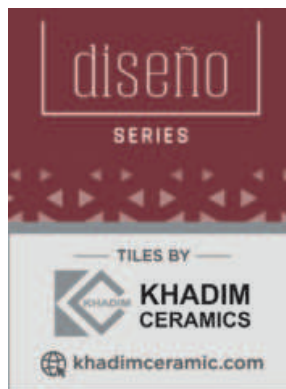
"We have incorporated the ways money laundering takes place and how it could be stopped," said one of the committee members asking not to be named.

Earlier on November 2, Transparency

International Bangladesh said \$12 to \$15 billion was siphoned out of the country in a year over the last 15 years.

Bangladesh lost approximately \$8.27 billion on average between 2009 and 2018 only from mis-invoicing of values of import-export goods by traders to evade taxes, according to the

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Liquid waste from chemical and dyeing factories being discharged into the Buriganga in the capital's Shyampur area. Several fish species in the river have all but disappeared. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Polls date after reforms Two advisers say at press briefing

BSS, Dhaka

The government will announce the date of the national election immediately after completing the reforms, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, environment, forest, and climate change adviser, reiterated yesterday.

She said six reform commissions are supposed to submit their reports by December 2024, but some commissions have informed them that they may need one or two more weeks to submit their reports.

"We are repeatedly saying that we will go for elections as soon as possible after completing the reforms. The primary work of holding the polls has been completed. The Election Commission has been formed," Rizwana told a press briefing at Foreign Service Academy in the capital.

Speaking at the briefing, Adviser Mahfuj Alam said the country's people sacrificed their lives to bring reforms to

the state and that is why the polls would be held after completing the reforms.

Responding to a query over assassination attempts on the coordinators of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, Rizwana said there is no scope to see it lightly.

The coordinators continue to make efforts to unite the nation, which hits the interest of many people, the environment adviser said, adding that the issue of the coordinators' security was raised at the meeting of advisory council yesterday.

"The government is not taking the issue lightly," she said, adding the relevant agencies of the government are conducting investigations into the incident.

About the security in courts, the adviser said all should remain calm to this end and refrain from destructive activities.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam was also present at the briefing.

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