

73 noted citizens slate attack

Protests held countrywide; 500 citizens demand reinstatement of word 'Adivasi' in textbooks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seventy three prominent citizens yesterday condemned the attack on indigenous students and supporters, stating that it contradicts the principles of building an inclusive state and tarnishes the image of the state and government.

In separate statements, they said the attack selectively targeted activists vocal about establishing the rights of indigenous communities.

In a statement, 27 noted personalities said they believe that police inaction in such crimes reflects the insensitivity of the state, further exposing the systemic oppression faced by indigenous communities.

The statement pointed out that the acceptance of demands to remove the term "indigenous" from textbooks, along with the violent attacks on protest programmes that left indigenous students and citizens bloodied and injured, indicates an effort to establish a communal state, undermining the multicultural essence of Bangladesh.

The signatories include former

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



People in various parts of the country yesterday protested the attack on an indigenous group and its supporters in front of the NCTB office in Motijheel on Wednesday. They demanded the arrest and trial of those involved in the attack. The photos were taken in Dhaka and Mymensingh.

PHOTO: STAR

PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

57pc graduates struggle to get jobs: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 57 percent graduates in Public Health discipline face significant challenges in finding jobs in relevant fields, according to a new study by Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW).

Their barriers to employment include limited job and research opportunities in public health sector, lack of curricula designed to develop job-ready skills, and a shortage of qualified educators, according to the report, titled "State of Professional Public Health Education in Bangladesh (2023-2024)," launched at an event held at BRAC Tower in Dhaka's Mohakhali yesterday.

It was the ninth report published by BHW, a civil-society platform that has been publishing reports on various health issues since 2006.

Highlighting key findings of the study, Mahruha Khanam, coordinator (research) of BHW, said non-medical graduates face more challenges than their medical counterparts, and public university graduates encounter more difficulties compared to those from private institutions.

The study, conducted in November 2023, involving 300 undergraduates of different institutions, revealed that graduates from public institutions such as Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and Jahangirnagar University face the highest challenges, while those from North South University face the least.

Respondents from BSMMU reported the most employment challenges (82pc), followed by JU (over 64pc),

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



MBBS entry test today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The MBBS admission test for the 2024-25 academic year in the country's public and private medical colleges is scheduled to be held today.

The one-hour exam will begin at 10:00am and continue till 11:00am at 19 test centres.

This year, a total of 1,35,261 applicants are vying for 5,380 available seats in the 110 medical colleges in the country, according to the Directorate General of Medical Education.

As such, 25 candidates will compete for each seat this year, six more than it was for the 2023-24 academic year.

At present, there are 37 public medical colleges, 67 private medical colleges, one Armed Forces Medical College, and five private Army medical colleges in the country.

The Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) admission test is scheduled for February 28.

Family refuses Eye Hospital's explanation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of Bangladesh Eye Hospital & Institute issued a statement regarding the alleged incident of "wrong treatment" in the case of an 18-month-old child.

The treatment provided to the child was a "recognised and standard procedure, not a surgical operation", they claimed yesterday in a statement.

However, family members of the child disagreed with this explanation, asserting that the doctor verbally admitted to the mistake. They said the hospital's statement, which mentions the doctor's error, contradicts their denial of wrongdoing.

Signed by Kazi Mezbahul Alam, chief operating officer of the hospital, the statement said the 18-month-old child, Irtiza Ariz Hasan, was brought to Dr Shahedara Begum, a consultant pediatric ophthalmologist and strabismus surgeon, for eye treatment. The treatment involved no surgery.

Due to the child's young age, the procedure was conducted in the operation theatre under anesthesia instead of in the outpatient department, according to the statement.

The doctor initially examined both eyes and then removed a foreign body (eyelash) from the right eye. Later, after speaking with the parents, she returned to operation room to remove another eyelash from the left eye, the statement said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Cut bureaucracy, boost autonomy

Recommends ACC reform commission in its report

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission Reform Commission has recommended comprehensive changes to reduce bureaucratic influence and strengthen the ACC's autonomy.

In a report submitted to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on Wednesday, the commission proposed 47 recommendations focusing on institutional, financial, and operational reforms to enhance the ACC's effectiveness and independence.

The recommendations are divided into three categories. In the institutional and financial management category, the report stressed relying on the ACC's own human resources.

INSTITUTIONAL, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

It recommended increasing the number of directors general from 8 to 12, while dividing their responsibilities into sub-divisions – Administration, Finance and HR, Prevention and Public Relations, IT, Training, Research and Development, Legal and Prosecution, Investigation, Special Investigation, Secret Investigation, Money Laundering, and Internal Discipline.

The reform commission also recommended introducing competitive, open processes for appointing secretaries through advertisements, allowing government employees to apply on a contractual basis, subject to getting leave from their original organisations.



KEY PROPOSALS

- Increase number of DGs
- Appoint secys thru open, competitive process
- Enhance internal recruitment, reduce deputation
- Set up separate salary structure for ACC staff
- Create independent ACC fund

We (the commission) want the ACC to be independent and effective, but its independence is not limitless. The ACC must be accountable, with recognition for successes and accountability for failures.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman
Head of the Reform Commission

Similarly, for DG and director positions, except for those appointed through deputation, the commission has recommended

competitive and open processes.

However, the commission suggested reserving 60 percent of DG posts and 75 percent of director posts for internal candidates, provided they meet eligibility criteria.

It proposed to fill a maximum of 10 percent of positions through deputation at each level. But deputation for judicial or law enforcement roles will not count toward this limit.

The commission advised abolishing Rule 54(2) of the ACC (Employee) Service Regulations, 2008 – which allows dismissing employees with a 90-day notice and salary but without any justification – to ensure independence and security for ACC employees.

It also recommended establishing a separate salary structure for the ACC, with salaries at least double the national structure, along with risk allowances for officials involved in investigations, secret inquiries, and related tasks.

The commission suggested creating the ACC's own fund, sourced from the government-approved annual budget and 10 percent of fines or confiscated assets collected through ACC cases.

It also suggested introducing annual salary increments and performance bonuses for officials and employees from the ACC's own fund, under specific policies.

OPERATIONAL REFORMS

The reform commission has advised immediately forming a permanent prosecution unit as per the ACC

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

JULY UPRISING

Tribunal orders data preservation

DU CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday ordered the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC) and the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to ensure that no information related to the mass uprising in July and August is deleted and that all digital data is preserved.

The order was passed by a three-member bench of the tribunal, led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Majumdar, following the filing of a petition.

Chief Prosecutor Muhammad Tajul Islam briefed journalists after court proceedings.

He said, "The data detailing incidents during the mass uprising, stored with NTMC and BTRC, is automatically deleted after a certain period."

"The court has instructed the relevant authorities to ensure that this crucial data is preserved separately, as it may be needed for judicial purposes in the future," he added.

"The court has also instructed telecom operators and internet service providers to assist the ICT investigation agency in conducting a comprehensive investigation," he further said.

A prosecutor of the tribunal told The Daily Star that data is typically stored on NTMC and BTRC servers for six months. After that, if the data is not preserved, it is automatically deleted.

A request is made to the court to preserve the data within six months, and the court, upon considering the matter, directs the relevant authorities to preserve the data.

3rd terminal set to open by year-end Says CAAB chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The much-anticipated third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport will open for passengers by the end of this year as 99 percent works of the structure has already been completed.

"Some minor works of the terminal building need to be done and we are hopeful that the remaining works will be completed by March," Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) Chairman Air Vice Marshal Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan said yesterday at a press conference at the CAAB headquarters in the capital.

He said they are determined to start operation of the third terminal by this year at any cost. Aircraft will be able to use new apron area of the third terminal within a week.



The third terminal project, costing Tk 21,300 crore, commenced on December 28, 2019. The government contributed Tk 5,000 crore, while the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) provided the remaining funds.

Upon full-fledged operation of the third terminal, HSIA's annual passenger and cargo handling capacity is expected to triple.

The annual passenger handling capacity of the HSIA would be 24 million (including the old terminals). At present, the Dhaka airport can handle eight million passengers and 5,00,000 tonnes of cargo each year.

During the press conference, the CAAB chairman also discussed the ongoing projects at various airports, including Sylhet, Cox's Bazar, Jashore and Saidpur airports.

Addressing a query about the third terminal's

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Encroachers operate their illegal coal and sand business on a portion of land that is part of the Turag river. Despite Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority marking the land that belongs to the river with the triangle-shaped pillars seen between the two trucks at the bottom left, encroachers have continued to operate their businesses here with little regards. The photo was taken in the Amin Bazar area yesterday.