



## DU, 7 colleges part ways at last

### College students still uncertain about their future

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight years after their re-affiliation, Dhaka University and its seven affiliated colleges have decided to sever ties.

No new students of the seven colleges would be admitted to the 2024-25 session under DU.

The existing students of the colleges would continue studies under the DU administration, according to the decisions made yesterday.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan made the announcement after an emergency meeting with the principals of the affiliated colleges at his office.

"The DU administration will ensure that the education of students currently enrolled in the university's ongoing academic programmes is



Encroachers filling up the flood-flow zone of the Turag near Birulia Bridge on the outskirts of the capital. They even uprooted the guard pillars of the Birulia-Akran Road so that it is easier to dump dirt. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## BNP, IAB agree on reforms, polls

### Reach a 10-point decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP and Islami Andolan Bangladesh yesterday agreed on holding a credible election as soon as possible after completing minimal reforms as part of the broader agreement, which include nine other key issues.

They include refraining from making any decisions that contradict Islamic Shariah, a national consensus to protect voting rights and all fundamental human rights, said leaders of the parties.

The decisions were made at a meeting between top leaders of BNP and IAB at the

**The parties agreed to refrain from making any decisions that contradict Islamic Shariah.**

latter's central office in the capital's Paltan area.

The BNP delegation was led by its Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, while IAB was led by its Ameer Syed Md Rezaul Karim, who is also known as the Charmonai Pir.

The meeting was held around a week after Jamaat-e-Islami chief Shafiqur Rahman met Rezaul Karim.

The BNP and IAB agreed on several issues. They decided to refrain from attacking each other; work together for the reconstruction of the country; and remain politically united to ensure that no fascist regime like the Awami League can come to power in the future.

They also agreed to control the rising cost of essentials and improve law and order.

Fakhrul was accompanied by BNP Vice Chairman Barkat Ullah Bulu during the two-hour meeting that began around 12:15pm.

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- Existing college students to continue studies under Dhaka University
- New students to study under an expert committee
- College students issue 24hr ultimatum demanding resignation of DU Pro-VC
- Govt mulling separate university/institution for the colleges

not adversely affected," said the VC after the meeting.

The meeting decided that an expert committee, formed by the education ministry on December 29 last year, will manage the activities of the academic year starting from 2024-2025, according to a press release of the DU.

The release said the committee would decide on the number of seats, admission fees, and other relevant issues from the 2024-2025 session in line with the demands of the students.

The decisions came in the face of a 24-hour ultimatum given by students of the seven colleges yesterday demanding the separation of academic and administrative ties between DU and the colleges. They issued the ultimatum after clashes broke out between students of DU and seven colleges late Sunday and early yesterday.

Hours after the announcement of the decisions, some students of the seven colleges told this newspaper that they see the decision positively

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## Rail communications suspended nationwide

### Train drivers, staffers go on strike demanding benefits for extra work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Train drivers and their support staff began a nationwide indefinite work abstention from early today for special allowance after retirement and other demands.

A meeting between the railway authorities and the leaders of the drivers' association ended unsuccessfully last night.

After the meeting, Additional Director General Ahmed Mahub Chowdhury, who led Bangladesh Railway at the meeting, told The Daily Star that the association leaders are "adamant" about their programme and left the meeting

**Bangladesh Railway operates more than 350 passenger trains, including over 100 intercity trains, every day. Besides, it operates over three dozen freight trains daily.**

midway.

Saidur Rahman, acting president of the Bangladesh Railway Running Staff and Sramik Karmachari Union, at 12:02am today said, "Our nationwide indefinite work

abstention has begun since there was no fruitful negotiation with the authorities. All types of trains, including freight and oil tankers, will be under the purview of the work abstention."

He said no train would begin a journey after midnight, but those on their way to destinations would not be affected by the strike.

Bangladesh Railway operates more than 350 passenger trains, including over 100 intercity trains, every day. Besides, it operates over three dozen freight trains daily.

Due to manpower shortage, train drivers and their assistants

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Teachers of Swatantra Ebtedayee madrasas -- primary level educational institutions under the madrasa board, stage a sit-in on the street in front of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Dhaka University yesterday, demanding the nationalisation of all such registered institutions. Police charged truncheons on the demonstrating teachers in the Shahbagh area on Sunday. Story on page 3. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Workers bear the brunt of political fallout

### Factory closures since August leave 1 lakh workers jobless, says a labour leader

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Tens of thousands of workers and officials have lost their jobs over the last six months following the closure of dozens of mills and factories mainly because of the owners' political affiliations.

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) recorded 501 incidents related to layoffs, closures, and protests for wage hikes or back pay in 25 industrial and manufacturing sectors last year.

These incidents, most of which took place after the political changeover in August, include 305 incidents in the garment sector at Ashulia, Savar, Rupganj and Gazipur. Of the garment sector incidents, 85 were related to layoffs, 95 were closures of factories without prior notice, and 125 were protests over back pay.

The layoffs in 16 textile and garment units of Beximco Group in Gazipur in December affected the



largest number of workers—40,000. The company cited insufficient orders from international clothing retailers as a reason behind the decision to shut the factories. The Beximco's textile and garment factories exported \$339 million worth of garment items last year.

The company, however, couldn't secure a bailout. Banks curbed finances owing to a huge amount of default loans, alleged to have been taken by the group using the influence of its Vice Chairman Salman F Rahman, who was an adviser to deposed prime minister

Sheikh Hasina. Salman is now behind bars.

Another major incident was the burning and looting of Gazi Group's tyre factory and warehouse in Narayanganj's Rupganj last August. Its owner Golam Dastagir Gazi was a minister in Hasina's cabinet.

Three more Gazi Group factories in Rupganj were also looted. All these firms were profitable and made regular payments to the workers. The closures of the Gazi Group factories led to the sudden joblessness of around 8,000 workers, according to officials of the company.

Muhammad Fakhrul Islam, executive director (finance) of Gazi Group, claimed the burning of the tyre factory and warehouse caused the company a damage of Tk 1,100 crore while attacks on Gazi Tank and Gazi Pipe factories led to a Tk 1,000 crore loss.

"We are trying to run our factories and have written to the government

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### We Mourn

With deep sorrow, we mourn the passing of Mr. Mostafa Golam Quddus, Chairman of Rupali Insurance and former Chairman & visionary leader of Sonali Life Insurance, the founder of Dragon Group, former President of BGMEA, brave Freedom Fighter and philanthropist - our guardian.



## Mr. Mostafa Golam Quddus

BORN: MARCH 4, 1949 - DEPARTED: JANUARY 25, 2025

He breathed his last on January 25th, 2025 at 6:40 AM at Evercare Hospital, Dhaka (Innalillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajiun)

His wisdom, integrity, and compassion shaped our companies and the lives of countless employees, agents, and clients. His legacy will forever guide us.

May Allah grant him Jannatul Firdaus. He will be deeply missed.



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