

MEDICAL COLLEGE Academic activities at a standstill

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Barishal

Academic activities at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College in Barishal have come to a standstill after students announced a complete shutdown on February 17 protesting the ongoing crisis of teacher at the college.

The protesting students yesterday blocked the Band Road in front of the medical college for an hour from 12:00pm, disrupting vehicular movement and causing traffic gridlock.

They also burned a notification on the recruitment of six teachers in the college.

The students said SBMC is currently facing major challenges in providing quality education due to an acute shortage of teachers. Currently, academic activities at most departments of the college, including Medicine, Microbiology, SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Students of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College in Barishal blocked Band Road in front of the college yesterday, demanding a solution to their ongoing teacher shortage.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

A forgotten hero of the Language Movement

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The nation will observe International Mother Language Day today, and pay tributes to the heroes of our Language Movement.

Yet, question remains, do we remember all our language heroes? Have they all been recognised by the state for their valour and contributions?

Like Saleha Begum, a hero of the Language Movement in Mymensingh, who passed away on August 19, 2004, without receiving any state recognition for her contributions.

Even, her expulsion from Mymensingh Muslim Girls High School for her leadership and involvement in the movement was not revoked.

The incident of Saleha's expulsion from the school for joining a procession and hoisting black flag on February 21, 1952, has been mentioned in page 124 of "Ekusher Smriti", a book published by Prothoma Prokashon.

Saleha's daughter Syeda Farida Akther, and son Syed Shafeel Ahad, spoke to this correspondent about the life and struggles of her mother.

Born in Pirojpur sub-division on September 24, 1935, to AM Ashraf Ali, the then sub-registrar of the sub-division, and Monirunnesa Khatun, Saleha was the third of five siblings.

She continued her studies in Mymensingh under patronage of her maternal uncle, CA Mannan, who was an officer of Forest Department in the district.

In 1952, during the Language Movement, the Rashtrabhasha Chhatra Sangram Parishad organised protests against the killings of students in Dhaka.



Saleha Begum

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BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER Navigability crisis disrupts boat services



S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Boat travel on the Brahmaputra is being severely disrupted due to a navigability crisis, causing immense suffering for passengers travelling from Kurigram's Mogolbasa, Jatrapur, and Chilmari Ramna River Port to Roumari, Rajibpur, Jamalpur, and Gaibandha's Sundarganj.

According to locals and boatmen, the crisis has persisted for the past month, yet no initiative has been taken by the authorities to resolve the issue.

Chars have emerged across vast stretches of the Brahmaputra riverbed, narrowing the river's width and altering the navigation route, which has increased travel distances.

Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of the Kurigram Water Development Board, said the water level has dropped due to a lack of upstream flow.

"Resolving the crisis is not possible without planned dredging, a responsibility that falls under the jurisdiction of BIWTA authorities," he said.

As the water level continues to

decrease in the waterway north of Chilmari's Ramna River Port, submerged chars have caused significant navigation problems at Ramna River Ghat, as well as in several unions of Ulipur, Roumari, and Rajibpur upazilas, said locals.

Sabed Ali, a trader at Jorgach Haat in Chilmari upazila, said additional time and cost are making it difficult to transport goods to the market on time.

Boatman Javed Ali said in the Mantola Char area, south of Jorgach Haat, the river water has receded by nearly one kilometre. In that section, passengers are often forced to step into the water and push the boat by hand to continue their journey.

Around 50 passenger boats operate on these routes daily, all struggling with the same issue.

Contacted, BIWTA's Deputy Assistant Engineer Md Kamruzzaman said a survey on the river is currently underway to assess the navigability issue. He said once the survey is completed, dredging work will be carried out to restore navigability.

19 more fishers abducted by Arakan Army

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Cox's Bazar

The Myanmar based armed rebel group Arakan Army yesterday abducted 19 Bangladeshi fishermen along with their four fishing boats from Naf river estuary when they were returning to Teknaf in Cox's Bazar.

The incident took place near Shah Porir Dwip (island), Gholar Char (shoal), and Naikkhangdia areas.

Earlier on February 10, the Arakan Army abducted four fishermen, who have not been released yet.

Abdul Jalil, president of a local boat owners' association in Teknaf, said, "Two of our fishing trawlers with nine fishermen on board were taken away by Arakan Army while returning to Teknaf. We urge the government to intervene."

Abdur Gafur, general secretary of Majarpara Boat Terminal in Shah Porir Dwip, said 10 more fishermen on two other boats were also abducted by Arakan Army men.

Contacted, Teknaf upazila nirbahi officer Sheikh Ehsan Uddin said, "We received the news at noon. We heard that the fishermen had trespassed into Myanmar territory, from where the Arakan Army abducted them."

"We have informed the matter to the BGB and efforts are on to bring them back," he added.



'Stop creating chaos in name of reforms'

Fakhrul calls for immediate nat'l polls

STAR REPORT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday urged the interim government to hold the national election without delay, arguing that ordinary people do not understand reforms.

"Common people don't understand reforms. They care about two meals a day, basic clothing, and a roof over their heads. So stop creating chaos in the name of reforms. Hold the election immediately. Please give the people peace," Fakhrul said while addressing a rally at Laksam Stadium in Cumilla.

The rally was organised by BNP's Laksam upazila and municipality units, along with Monohorganj SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Cancel expulsion order: CU students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Expelled female students of Chittagong University yesterday placed a seven-point demand, including withdrawal of their two-year expulsion order and resignation of the proctor.

They announced the demands at a press conference in front of CU's administrative building around 3:00pm.

They also expressed concerns that the existing probe committee is not working impartially, and insisted that a new, neutral committee be formed.

On February 13, CU's Board of Residence, Health, and Discipline decided to expel these students over allegations of physically assaulting an assistant proctor and engaging in acts of religious defamation.

Rojatul Jannat Nisha, a Criminology Department student, demanded immediate resignation of the proctor and withdrawal of their expulsion orders.

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Man stabbed to death in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A man was stabbed to death in an attack by miscreants in Khulna's Sonadanga area yesterday morning.

The deceased, identified as 26-year-old Al Amin, of Hijla village in Chitalmari upazila of Bagerhat, was employed as a salesman for mobile operator Banglalink, said Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Sonadanga Police Station.

The incident occurred around 11:00am near Delta Building, where Al Amin was riding his motorcycle on his way to work.

Four individuals on two motorbikes attacked him from behind, stabbing him with sharp weapons, the OC said quoting witnesses.

After Al Amin fell from his motorcycle, locals rescued him and rushed him to Khulna Medical College Hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries while receiving treatment.

As of last evening, no case was filed in connection with the incident.



Two workers lay asleep atop this pile of bamboo which has been tied on top of a moving pickup truck. Such disregard for safety measures could lead to an accident at any moment. The photo was taken from Doyel Chattar yesterday.

Man dies two days before wedding

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

A groom and his friend were killed after a truck ran them over in Habiganj's Shayestaganj upazila on Wednesday night, just two days before his wedding.

The deceased are Tanvir Shoeb, 23, and his friend Shah Alam from Brahmandora village in Shayestaganj, said Dilip Kant Nath, officer-in-charge of Shayestaganj Highway Police Station.

The OC said Tanvir's wedding was scheduled for today.

He along with his friend was returning home from Nurpur area after giving marriage invitations on Wednesday evening.

When they reached Kathaltoni on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway, another motorcycle hit their bike from behind. As they fell on the road, a Sylhet-bound truck ran them over.

Tanvir died on the spot. Alam died on the way to the hospital, he said.