

'Melodies should live on in every school'

Students, teachers protest scrapping of music, PE teacher posts

STAR REPORT

Students and teachers from four major public universities yesterday staged simultaneous demonstrations protesting the government's decision to scrap music and physical education (PE) teacher posts in government primary schools.

Demotions were held at Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, and Jagannath University (JNU), led mainly by students from the respective music departments.

Participants formed human chains, sang the national anthem, performed protest songs, and marched across their campuses.

They said music and physical education are essential for children's holistic development and that cultural education is integral to the nation's identity.

At DU, the programme began around 11:30am in front of the Aparajeyo Bangla sculpture.

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Protesting the decision to scrap music and physical education teacher posts in government primary schools, Dhaka University students and teachers demonstrate on campus yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Referendum must be held on election day: Fakhrul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the referendum must be held on the same day as the national parliamentary election.

"We are in agreement on this. No referendum will be allowed before the national election," Fakhrul said while speaking as chief guest at a meeting marking the seventh death anniversary of Tariqul Islam, BNP Standing Committee member and former minister, in Jashore.

"A few political parties are trying to create instability with various demands. They are trying to disrupt and delay the election. The people will not accept this. We achieved independence through the shedding of much blood, freeing ourselves from the hands of fascists. We now have an opportunity to return to a democratic system. We cannot allow any conspiracy to destroy this opportunity."

Accusing the Consensus Commission of bias, he said, "Now you're saying political parties should sit together and make decisions. Then what have you been doing all this time? You didn't do your job properly. We have always gone to the commission and given our opinions."

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and DIPAN NANDY

The Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) has begun constructing a ward office occupying the footpath and a part of the Pragati Sarani near Baridhara point without assessing its impact on traffic and pedestrian movement.

Experts warned that building such an establishment on one of the busiest roads in the Baridhara diplomatic zone will worsen traffic congestion and disrupt city life.

Initially, DNCC planned to set up a garbage depot at the site but changed the plan following protests from residents, who complained about the occupation of the footpath. Despite the objections, the DNCC later decided to turn the spot into an office for the city corporation's employees.

Adil Mohammed Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), said building an office on a busy road is "equivalent to committing a crime" as it will severely disrupt vehicular and pedestrian movement.

He said DNCC already has offices elsewhere or could easily rent one instead of occupying a public road. Khan also urged the government to stop such illogical constructions, saying the current city corporation administration seems to be repeating mistakes made by previous ones.

Contacted, DNCC Administrator Mohammad Azaz said he had decided in principle not to allow any establishment on the spot since it could create problems for vehicles and pedestrians.

He said he would visit the site soon and that he was not in favour of constructing any establishment there. He said DNCC is searching for an alternative location for both the garbage depot and the office.

The administrator, however, did not clarify whether the current project has been abandoned.

A visit to the site yesterday morning revealed that DNCC has already started construction of the Ward 18 office, occupying around 1,000 square feet of the footpath on the road from the US embassy

toward Kalachandpur.

Concrete has been poured and iron rods for pillars installed. A signboard at the site identifies it as a DNCC construction project, though no workers or officials were present at the time.

Locals have expressed their opposition by writing protest messages on the signboard with marker pens, such as "You can't build an office by blocking the road" and "Six trees have been cut down here."

Pedestrians also criticised the project. "If the city corporation itself grabs footpaths, where will ordinary citizens go for justice?" said Shamsul Alam, an office employee in the area.

His colleague, Tarknath Debnath, added, "Almost every road has encroachments. No major street has remained free from grabbers and hawkers. This construction should stop immediately so pedestrians can walk safely."

The De Mazenod Church and St Eugene's School are located



FILE PHOTO

opposite the site. Teachers and students of the school, on October 21, formed a human chain protesting the construction.

Md Shamsul Hoque, professor of civil engineering at Buet, said constructing establishments that obstruct roads and footpaths increases the risk of accidents.

"This project will not only disrupt traffic and pedestrian movement but also create safety risks in an important diplomatic zone," he said.

NCP seeks to unite BNP, Jamaat over referendum, reform issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party yesterday said it has taken an initiative to bring the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami to the same table to resolve disagreements over the referendum timing and the implementation process for the July charter.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary made the announcement at a press conference at the party's central office in Banglamotor. His remarks came shortly after the interim government on Monday urged political parties to bridge their differences, preferably within a week.

Addressing the parties, Nasiruddin said, "Through the call for seven days, the government has forwarded the ball into your court. If you fail to resolve the issues now, it would be a shameful matter for you."

"We will call on both political parties, BNP and Jamaat, to sit for a discussion," he added.

Nasiruddin said the NCP, along with Amar Bangladesh (AB) Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and six components of Ganotantra Mancha, held a meeting in this regard on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the NCP yesterday began selling nomination application forms for participation in the upcoming national election. The sale will continue until November 13.

Five more die of dengue

DSCC to form ward-based monitoring teams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With five more deaths reported yesterday, the total number of dengue fatalities this year rose to 307, indicating a concerning trend.

Alongside the deaths, at least 1,034 dengue patients were hospitalised in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the DGHS, three of the deaths were reported from Dhaka South City Corporation areas, while one each was from Dhaka North City Corporation and Mymensingh.

With the latest figures, the total number of reported dengue cases this year reached 76,026.

Against this backdrop, the DSCC yesterday at a meeting decided to form ward-based monitoring teams involving local residents to ensure the effective application of adulticide and larvicide in efforts to control the Aedes mosquito population.

The meeting also decided to identify area specific hotspots based on dengue infection rates and conduct intensive combing operations in those areas.

DSCC Administrator Md Mahmudul Hasan said, "Just as the responsibility of Aedes mosquito control lies with the city corporation, citizens also have certain responsibilities."

He said sudden and random mobile court drives would be conducted at the field level.

DSCC Chief Executive Officer Md Zahidul Islam said in addition to insecticide application and cleanliness drives, the corporation has been working to raise public awareness about dengue prevention.

During the meeting, citizens were urged to avail free dengue testing at three DSCC hospitals -- Dhaka Metropolitan General Hospital, Dhaka Metropolitan Children's Hospital, and Nazirabazar Maternity Centre -- if they suspect infection.

'Ban use of religion in campaign'

Jatiya Hindu Mohajote places 7-point demand to EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Mohajote yesterday urged the Election Commission to ban the use of religion in election campaigns and ensure a peaceful voting atmosphere along with the safety of minority communities during the upcoming 13th national election.

Leaders of the organisation placed a seven-point demand during a meeting with the Chief Election Commissioner at the EC headquarters in the capital.

Mohajote Executive Secretary Palash Kanti Dey told reporters after the meeting that the commission agreed with their proposals and informed them that it was already working on these matters.

"The CEC has assured us that this time no one will be able to harass... The commission will take strong measures to prevent any such acts," he said.

The Hindu Mohajote's seven-point demand includes strengthening security for minority homes, temples, and monasteries for 10 days before and after the election; deploying the army during the polls; banning campaigns and rallies at religious institutions; prohibiting the use of religion in electioneering; suspending voting and launching investigations in constituencies facing attacks; forming a central monitoring cell to ensure the safety of minority and women voters; and guaranteeing a safe and smooth environment for voters to travel to and from polling centres.



We're fighting for expatriates' right to vote

Says Jamaat amer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet



Jamaat-e-Islami Amer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said there are "systemic obstacles" preventing expatriates from casting their votes.

He said his party has submitted recommendations to the government to remove these barriers.

"We sent a delegation to the government yesterday (Wednesday) with recommendations to address the issue, and they assured us they would try," he said at a gathering in Sylhet city after returning from a 14-day foreign visit.

"I told expatriates that while many parties opposed their voting rights, saying they only needed to send remittances, we fought for their right to vote. If you take something, you must also give what is fair," he said.

He said Jamaat lawmakers would not seek personal benefits from public office. "Our MPs will not accept government plots or tax-free cars. We will live as we do now," he said. "The people will not vote for us to impose taxes on them, but to protect their rights. Our politics will succeed only if we can do that."



Even amid the hustle and bustle of Dhaka's streets, two workers are seen sleeping atop large rolls of fabric on the back of a truck. One bad bump or sudden brake could throw them off the vehicle and onto the street. The photo was taken in the Kakrail area of the capital yesterday.

Govt to act if parties fail to reach decision over July charter

Says CA's press secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although political parties have been tasked with resolving disputes over the July charter, the government has also begun internal preparations on the matter, said Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday.

"If the political parties fail to reach a decision, the interim government itself will take one -- the law adviser has already mentioned that. Several preparatory meetings are also being held in this regard," he said during a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka, following the 47th meeting of the Advisory Council.

"We hope the political parties will reach a decision on their own. The entire nation is now eagerly waiting for the election," he added.

Meanwhile, the Advisory Council approved the proposed list of 28 holidays for the 2026 calendar year, including general and executive holidays.

Of these, 11 fall on weekends (Fridays and Saturdays), meaning government employees will effectively enjoy 17 days off, said Shafiqul Alam.

The council also gave final approval to the National Logistics Policy 2025, aimed at modernising Bangladesh's transport

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