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PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Curfew for women,
freedom for men?

Female students say unequal rules cost them campus life, jobs and independence

ABDULLAH HEL BUBUN and MAHATHIR MOHAMMAD

Kasirah Sultana's* mother travelled more than 300 kilometres from Dinajpur to Dhaka University to surprise her daughter with her favourite meal. She reached Rukayyah Hall at 10:58pm – nearly an hour after the gates had closed – but was denied entry. Kasirah, a resident of the hall, was not allowed to go outside to meet her either.

Around the same time, a male student living in a nearby hall stepped out of his residence for a walk on campus. Male students at Dhaka University can enter and leave their halls at any hour.

This stark contrast reflects a broader pattern. Across public universities in Bangladesh, female students routinely face stricter restrictions than their male peers, limiting not only their movement but also their access to work, campus life, and social interactions.

While DU formally enforces a

essential sources of income. But strict curfews make it difficult for female students to continue such jobs.

Afrin, a student at KU, said most tutoring opportunities take place in the late afternoon or evening, after classes end around 4:00pm or 5:00pm. However, traffic congestion in the city often makes it impossible to return before the 8:00pm or 9:00pm deadlines.

"Some of my friends had to quit their tutoring jobs because they couldn't make it back in time," she said.

Students at MBSTU in Tangail described similar challenges. Liza, a resident of Fajilatunnesa Joha Hall, said travelling to town for tutoring is time-consuming, leaving little margin to meet the deadline.

"Students whose classes end in the afternoon often struggle to return before the deadline," she said.

Neha, another student, added that attempts to contact hall authorities for late entry approval often go unanswered,

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Female students face stricter curfews than their male peers

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Curfews force many to quit tutoring or miss job opportunities

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Rules limit campus life, activities, and social interaction

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Authorities cite safety reasons

10:00pm deadline to return to halls for female students, often extended informally to around 11:00pm, many other public universities impose tighter deadlines. At several institutions, female students must return by 8:00pm or 9:00pm, with penalties for late entry ranging from warnings to administrative action.

Interviews with more than 20 female students from DU, Khulna University, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), and Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU) suggest that these rules are both widely enforced and unevenly applied, compared to the unrestricted access granted to male students.

INCOME AT STAKE

For many students from middle- and lower-income backgrounds, private tutoring and part-time work are

leaving students stranded outside.

The restrictions have also cost students formal job opportunities. Kasirah said she had to decline a position at a fashion house because it required work until 9:30pm, making it impossible to return to her hall on time.

CAMPUS LIFE CURTAILED

Beyond income, students say the current system limits their participation in campus life.

Female students are often prohibited from entering other women's halls, even for routine visits. Nuzia Hasin Rasha, former president of Revolutionary Students Unity at DU, criticised the policy as discriminatory.

"Male students face no such restrictions," she said. "These rules isolate female students and restrict their social and academic engagement."

Extracurricular activities are also

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PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Street vendors indiscriminately occupy space in front of Bangladesh Medical University, designated for pedestrian movement, including patients needing urgent medical attention. Despite repeated eviction drives by authorities, the encroachment continues, as shoppers often stop to buy from vendors, exacerbating inconvenience and hindering smooth movement. The photos were taken in the capital's Shahbagh area yesterday.

Revisit Abdul Kadir's works

Speakers call for research into poet's literary, editorial legacy at Star Itihas Adda

PHOTO: STAR

Speakers at the 18th episode of Star Itihas Adda at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday called for a renewed evaluation of the long-overlooked literary works, editorial contributions, and life of poet and editor Abdul Kadir.

They made the remarks at the 18th episode of The Daily Star's "Itihas Adda" series, themed "Poet and Researcher: Why Abdul Kadir Matters".

The discussion featured researchers Prof Salimullah Khan and Masud Rahman. Abdul Kadir's daughter Rokshana Kadir delivered the welcome address, while Daily Star journalist Emran Mahfuz hosted the programme.

The session opened with a recitation of Kadir's poems by Mahinur Mumu.

Salimullah Khan said a proper

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Ordinance repeal stalls HC judge appointments

1

Process to appoint 20 new HC judges halted

2

HC has 101 judges against 6.6 lakh pending cases

3

Appellate Division has 5 judges

4

Around 38,000 cases pending before SC

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The process for appointing 20 new High Court judges has been halted following the repeal of the Supreme Court Judges Appointment Ordinance, even though the court, now with only 101 judges, is struggling with a backlog of 6.6 lakh pending cases.

The Supreme Judicial Appointment Council had initiated the process on November 26 last year to appoint 20 additional HC judges to increase the number of judges, expedite case disposal and improve the overall efficiency of the justice delivery system.

However, parliament repealed the ordinance on April 9 this year.

Earlier, the president had consented to a proposal for appointing 20 new judges, and the

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Guests attend the opening of "The Long Present", an exhibition featuring works by 15 distinguished artists, at Bengal Shilpalay yesterday. Finance and Planning Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury formally inaugurated the exhibition and attended the programme as the chief guest. Artists, cultural personalities, and guests were also present at the opening ceremony. The exhibition will remain open to visitors every day from 4:00pm to 8:00pm until Saturday, July 4.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Road crashes claim 622 lives last month
Says Jatri Kalyan Samity

UNB, Dhaka

At least 622 people were killed and 1,652 others injured in road accidents across Bangladesh in May, according to a report released yesterday by Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity (BJKS).

The passenger welfare organisation's Accident Monitoring Cell compiled the figures through media monitoring, noting that actual casualties could be significantly higher as many incidents go unreported.

Factoring in rail and waterway accidents, the combined toll for May stood at 671 deaths and 1,696 injuries across 676 incidents. Rail accidents numbered 42, leaving 34 dead and 29 hurt, while 21 waterway incidents claimed 15 lives, injured 15 and left seven missing.

Motorbikes emerged as the most dangerous vehicle category, with 221 accidents killing 231 and injuring 219, accounting for 36.05 percent of all road accidents and 37.13 percent of fatalities.

The report was made public through a statement signed by BJKS Secretary General Md Mozammel Haq Chowdhury.

Dhaka Division recorded the highest number of road accidents in May, 180 crashes killing 185 and injuring 558. Mymensingh Division reported the fewest, with 27 accidents, 38 deaths and 67 injuries.

Among those killed were 136 drivers, 110 pedestrians, 73 students, 69 women, 59 children, 49 transport workers, eight teachers, two police personnel, two BGB members, one physician, one freedom fighter and one lawyer.

Five more die from measles-like symptoms

UNB, Dhaka

Five more children died from measles-like symptoms in the 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday, raising Bangladesh's combined tally of confirmed and suspected measles-related deaths to 648.

According to the DGHS, the five latest deaths have been classified as suspected measles fatalities.

With the latest update, the number of suspected measles deaths has risen to 556, while the number of laboratory-confirmed measles deaths remains unchanged at 92.

A total of 733 new suspected measles cases were reported during the 24-hour period, taking the cumulative number of suspected cases nationwide to 84,899.

Meanwhile, 63 new confirmed measles cases were recorded, bringing the total number of laboratory-confirmed infections to 10,248.