

Home-bound passengers rush for ticket

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With holy Eid-ul-Azha round the corner, thousands of city dwellers have started buying tickets of bus, train and launch to celebrate one of the greatest religious festivals of the Muslims with their near and dear ones at their village homes.

Although Bangladesh Railway started selling advance tickets at Kamalapur station yesterday, the tickets of bus and launch are rarely found in the counters as the brokers are selling the tickets in black markets.

While visiting Sadar Ghat Launch Terminal yesterday this correspondent found few hundred passengers returning in empty hands as no ticket for cabin was available at the counters.

Meanwhile, the fare of the cabin

has been doubled as the brokers have grabbed the tickets, said terminal sources.

Mamun, a cabin boy of MV Shariatpur-3, said a ticket for double cabin on Dhaka to Amtoli route, is being sold now at Tk 1200 which was Tk 600 in last week.

While visiting the Kamalapur station, this correspondent found a long queue of passengers who were buying tickets from the counters.

The Bangladesh Railway will sell advance tickets till December 26 from 8:00am to 4:00pm daily under the supervision of specially assigned officials, said Ashok Kumar Dey, station manager of Kamalapur station, adding that the passengers can buy tickets for December 27 to 31.

"As today is the first day of

selling advance tickets, there is less rush of passengers. But there will be heavy rush of passengers soon," Ashok told The Daily Star.

He said a total of 41 trains including 20 intercity and 21 mail, local and commuter trains will ply between Dhaka and Chittagong, Sylhet, Kishoreganj, Noakhali, Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat, Rajshahi and Khulna routes.

Besides a special train will ply between Dhaka and Dewanganj in which at least 500 passengers can travel, he said.

Meanwhile, sale of advance tickets for buses on different routes has also started.

Sources at Sayadabad, Gabtoli and Mohakhali bus terminal said they are yet to start selling advance tickets.

Practice of masculinities leads to violence

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a regional seminar yesterday said the prevalent notions and practices of masculinities lead the community to violence and intolerance.

The seminar styled 'Exploring Masculinities' was jointly organised by the Department of Women and Gender Studies of Dhaka University (DU) and AAKAR-India at the Senate Building of DU and was funded by Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Dhaka.

In the first session, Shailla Parvin Luna of Save the Children during her presentation gave recommendations to reduce inequality in the society while Shaikh Imtiaz, lecturer at the Department of Women and Gender Studies, presented a paper on 'Learning by doing: Masculinities, Healthy Behaviour and Young Men's Sexual Practices in Dhaka.'

Imtiaz explained that how false ideas and misconceptions about the notion of masculinities in Bangladesh could lead towards major health risks and danger for men.

He also said there exists a close relation between the masculinity and sexual practices and most of the adolescent men do not have access to proper sexual knowledge.

Because of the dominant forms of masculinity, the adolescent men adopt different strategies that risk their own lives and their sexual partners as well, said Imtiaz, also a PhD researcher of Amsterdam University, Netherlands.

Child Brigade, a child rights organisation of Save the Children, staged a drama on present social construction and sense of masculinity that leads to repression on children.

In another session, Deeptha Achar of University of Baroda, India presented a paper on 'Attaining Majority: With Gandhi In South Africa' while Subhashim Goswami, an independent researcher from India talked on 'Being and Becoming: Men in a Matrilineal Society.'

Dr Mangesh Kulkarni of University of Pune also discussed on 'Teaching Men's Studies: A Global Perspective.'

Chairperson of the Department Ayesha Banu and Dr Shankar Ramaswamy of University of Michigan presided over the two separate sessions in the seminar on the concluding day of the three-day seminar curtailed to two-day for unavoidable reasons.

Nap restarts its activities after 27 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After 27 years, National Awami Party (Nap) starts its activities again with the commitment to establish a transparent and accountable political environment.

Shafiqul Ghani Swapan has been elected chairman while Iqbal Hossain Forkan secretary general of the re-constituted party.

At a press conference at a city hotel, Swapan said Nap restarts its activities considering the present political situation in the country.

However, the party is not prepared to contest the upcoming election, he said, adding that the ad-hoc committee is still incomplete and there is only two days left to submit the nomination papers.

Swapan said a free and fair election is a must to help establish true democracy.

But the present situation indicates that a credible election is not possible as the President as well as the Chief Adviser has failed to prove his neutrality, he added.

Swapan said Nap demands a neutral Chief Adviser, an independent Election Commission and transparent ballot boxes for holding an election acceptable to all.

While reading out a written statement, Forkan said the present political situation is grave, but it is the politicians who are supposed to play the key role to lead the country towards a stable situation.

He also highlighted the principles of the reconstituted party.

It was Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani who founded Nap in 1957 and the party postponed its activities in 1978 when late Moshir Rahman Jadu Miah held the post of the president.

Party Presidium Member M Shamsul Haque, Dhaka Mahanagar Convenor Nazir Ahmed, Central leader Azad Milky and former district judge MA Matin were also present at the press conference.



BanglaScot Foundation organises Poush Mela on British Council premises in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Delivery of imported food grains from Ctg port stopped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The contractors and commission agents stopped taking delivery of imported food grains from Chittagong port after a mobile court found the godowns unsuitable and unhygienic for storage of consumers' goods.

It caused a huge quantity of imported consumers' goods, including wheat, rice and sugar to get stuck in different ships and lighter vessels now berthing at jetties and outer anchorage of Chittagong port.

The suspension of delivery of such food grains created a grave concern among the importers while it is feared that it would have a negative impact on the market.

A mobile court in separate drives seized around 100 tons of totally damaged wheat and rotten sugar preserved in godowns of shut down jute mills on Monday and Tuesday.

The court reportedly found the godowns, which were originally made for storing jute, infested with rats, insects and cockroaches and quite unfit for preserving food grains.

Meanwhile, though the drives are being lauded by Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, it created resentment among the contractors and commission agents concerned.

When contacted the contractors and commission agents who rented the godowns of closed down jute and textile mills for storing food grains denied enforcement of any strike to suspend taking delivery of such goods.

"We are not on strike neither do we have any complaint or allegation against anybody," said M Rahman, vice-president of Chittagong Contractors and Commission Agents Association.

"As we do not have any godowns of such standard required by the mobile court, we are forced to stop taking delivery of food grains for lack of storage space," he defended.

"A lot of space is required to store the huge quantity of food grains imported here regularly," said Abdul Mannan, joint-secretary of the association.

"When most of the private

godowns had storage space of some 20 thousand Sq-ft to 30 thousand Sq-ft, we were bound to rent the godowns with storage space measuring one lakh Sq-ft to two lakh Sq-ft," he argued.

The association leaders called for allowing them time for improving the condition of the godowns.

JU authorities hold syndicate meeting today

BSS, Dhaka

The authorities of Jahangirnagar University (JU) will hold an emergency syndicate meeting today to discuss the allegation of sexual harassment against a teacher of Bangla department.

The primary probe committee, which was formed to investigate the immoral act by Dr Golam Mostafa Mannan, joint-secretary of the Bangla department, already submitted its report in this regard.

Imdad-Sitara Khan Kidney Centers launched

The first two of five kidney centers sponsored by Imdad-Sitara Khan Foundation (ISKF) were inaugurated at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday by Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, former chief adviser to the caretaker government, says a press release.

The Khan Family Foundation, established in the USA in 2003 by expatriate Bangladeshi Dr Imdad H Khan and his wife Sitara A Khan, has been donating funds to many philanthropic organisations worldwide. In Bangladesh it has been funding a large number of scholarships to meritorious but needy students for studying engineering, medicine and science.

Under the patronage of Khan Family Foundation, a trust named Imdad-Sitara Khan Foundation (ISKF) will establish kidney centers in district towns throughout Bangladesh. Inspired by this noble cause, the Independent Dialysis Foundations Inc, Maryland, USA, has donated 39 dialysis machines to Old Rajshahi Cadets Association-USA Chapter for utilising them in the Imdad-Sitara Khan Kidney Centers in Bangladesh.

As per the project proposal ISKF is initially planning to set up five kidney dialysis centers in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Bogra and Kushtia. As its first venture, it has established two kidney centers in Dhaka and Rajshahi to serve the downtrodden kidney patients.

The ceremony was attended and addressed by National Professor and renowned cardiologist Brig Gen (Retd) MA Malik and renowned nephrologist Prof Harun Ur Rashid. It was also attended by a large number of reputed doctors, philanthropists and eminent personalities.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Karuna Barua, wife of DP Barua, former managing director and chief editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), passed away yesterday morning at her residence after a prolonged illness at the age of 70, family sources said.

Karuna left behind her husband, three sons, daughter-in-law, two grand sons and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

In her professional life, Karuna was the chief guide teacher of Society for Welfare of the Disabled Students.

Ethiopian tanks roll to Somali battlefield

REUTERS, Baidoa

Ethiopian tanks rolled to the battlefield on Friday as Somali Islamists and pro-government troops pounded each other with artillery and rockets in a fourth day of clashes edging closer to all-out war.

The Islamists said they would send ground troops to attack en masse on Saturday, as opposed to fighting from a distance with heavy weapons as they have been doing so far.

"Our troops have not started to attack. From tomorrow the attack will start," Islamist deputy spokesman Ibrahim Shukri told a news conference.

Witnesses near the fighting on two fronts near the government's encircled stronghold of Baidoa said they heard the rumble of armor before dawn.



Awami League leader Mohammad Nasim speaks at a rally at Hazaribagh in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Five killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed in separate road accidents in different parts of the country yesterday and on Thursday night.

Our Correspondent in Gaibandha reports: A man was killed and two others were injured in a road accident near the Brac office on Polashbari-Gaibandha road yesterday morning.

Police said a goods-laden tractor first hit a bicycle on the road, killing its rider Palash Sarkar, 20, on the spot. The tractor also hit two pedestrians nearby, leaving them seriously injured. They were rushed to Gaibandha Hospital.

Police seized the tractor, but its driver managed to escape.

UNB adds: A teenage boy was killed and five people were injured in a tragic road accident on

Baligaon-Louhajang road at Beigaon in Munshiganj in the morning.

Witnesses said a speeding bus hit a Baligaon-bound autorickshaw at around 10:00am, leaving Kausar, 17, dead on the spot.

The injured people were admitted to a local health centre. Receiving information, police rushed to the spot and seized the bus, but the driver managed to escape.

In Bagerhat, a youth was killed when a speeding bus ran over him at Sundarghona on Bagerhat-Khulna highway yesterday afternoon.

The dead was identified as

Russel, 20, son of Khalilur Rahman of Muniganj area in the town.

Abul Kalam, 25, who was injured in the accident, was taken to Khulna Medical College in a critical condition.

Police seized the bus, but its driver escaped.

In Savar, a speeding microbus of the information ministry hit two workers at Ulail on Dhaka-Aricha highway at 11:30pm on Thursday, killing them on the spot.

The dead were identified as Dulal, 48, a worker of Pride Garment, and Firoz, 18, a worker of Madhumati Tiles Factory.

Police seized the microbus, but its driver managed to flee.



Memorial lecture

Samaj-Rupantar Addhayan Kendra organises 2nd Litterateur M Ibrahim Memorial Lecture to be delivered by Justice Mohammad Golam Rabhani. Venue: Business Studies auditorium, Dhaka University. Time: 4:00pm.

Workshop

Bangladesh NGO Foundation organises a workshop on the success, potentials and problems of the NGOs. Venue: Conference room of the Foundation. Time: 10:00am.

Seminar

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) organises a seminar on 'Strategy for combating terrorism in Bangladesh'. Venue: BEI conference room. Time: 9:00am.

Cake festival

Dhakabashi organises a cake (pitha) festival. Venue: Shishu Academy. Time: 11:30am.

Human chain

Drishtipat will form a human chain urging the government to take necessary initiatives to solve the water logging at Vabadaha in Jessore. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 1:00pm.

Workshop

A workshop titled 'Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) administration and enforcement' will be held. Venue: Engineers' Institute. Time: 9:00am.

Discussion

Bangladesh MuktiJiddha Sangsad will hold a discussion marking the victory day. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Reminiscence meeting

Nabean Projonma 2006 will hold a reminiscence meeting by seven valiant freedom fighters. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 4:00pm.

Convention

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) organises the 1st National River Convention 2006. Venue: Planning and Development Academy auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Launching ceremony

Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) will launch its 'Handbook on election reporting'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Memorial meeting

Bangladesh Dalit's Human Rights will hold a memorial meeting to pay tribute to its founding president BG Muri. Venue: WVA auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Roundtable

Bangladesh Sammilita Peshajibi Parishad will hold a roundtable titled 'Democracy and development'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Bangladesh Manabdhikar Bastobayan Sangstha will organise an experience sharing workshop titled 'The role of human rights activists in preventing women, child repression and acid violence'. Venue: LGED Bhaban auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Rotary Dhaka Central

Regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.

Human chain

Citizens' Rights Movement will form a human chain demanding a free and fair election and reduction of prices of essentials. Venue: In front of National Museum. Time: 10:30am.

Launching

Launching of 'Centre for Bangladesh Liberation War Studies' will be held. Venue: Banani DOHS Association Club. Time: 10:30am.

Textile, jute workers demand bonus, arrears by Dec 23

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Jute, Yarn and Textile Workers' Action Council yesterday urged the government and the authorities concerned to pay Eid bonus and other arrears to all workers by December 23, says a press release.

They threatened to enforce a countrywide blockade and lay siege to BJMC office at Motijheel on December 24 and will enforce an indefinite strike from December 26 if their demands are not met by December 23.

The leaders of the association called upon all the workers to make the blockade a success.

40 injured in Habiganj clash

UNB, Habiganj

At least 40 people were injured in a clash between two groups of villagers at Protappur village in Baniachong upazila yesterday.

Police said the clash erupted as the supporters of Sardar group prevented the supporters of Nawab Ali from catching fish in a water body called 'Fering Chagaya Beel' in the morning.

Both the groups used lethal weapons during two-hour clash.

Eleven of the injured were admitted to Sadar Hospital in critical condition. Later, two of them were shifted to Osmani Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated.