

ADS COVERING BUS WINDOWS

BRTA fines two companies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid growing safety concerns -- especially for female passengers, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has started a drive against transport owners who are covering windows of their buses with advertisement, blocking inside and outside views.

A mobile court led by BRTA Executive Magistrate Mazharul Islam yesterday fined two bus companies Tk 10,000 each for violating Road Transport Act-2018 by covering windows with advertisements.

The two companies -- Dhaka Chaka and Green Dhaka -- averted further punishment by giving written bond that they would remove advertisements from all of their buses within next seven days. Another bus company -- Shatabdi Paribahan -- also gave similar promise.

BRTA decided to launch an investigation recently after receiving several allegations of uses of advertisement on bus windows, compromising passengers' security, especially of female passengers, the state transport regulator

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Constructed illegally, the BGMEA building in Hatirjheel still stands, as the demolition work continued at a snail's pace due to lack of power supply. Utility connection was finally restored yesterday and it will be dismantled within six months, said authorities concerned.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

KHALEDA'S RELEASE ON PAROLE

Fakhrul denies discussing it, Quader says there's evidence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday said party chairperson Khaleda Zia's family will decide about her release on parole.

"It's completely the issue of her family; they will take the decision," Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, told journalists in reply to a query on whether the party will seek release of Khaleda on parole if she does not get bail.

Fakhrul came up with the remark after placing floral wreaths at the party founder Ziaur Rahman's grave at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar to mark the 40th founding anniversary of Tanti Dal, an associate organisation of the party.

Asked whether he talked to Awami League (AL) General Secretary Obaidul Quader about the parole, Fakhrul said,

"You can ask him [Quader]. We, from the party, did not talk to him about the parole."

On Friday, speaking at a programme in the capital, Quader claimed that Fakhrul called him to convey a request to the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for the release of Khaleda from jail.

Speaking at another programme in the city yesterday, the AL general secretary claimed to have proof of the conversation between them and the request Fakhrul made.

"Why would I tell a lie? Mr Fakhrul requested me to talk to the PM about Khaleda Zia's release. I have already informed the PM about it," said Quader.

"Does he now want to prove that he didn't call? If so, I will prove it. Because conversations over phone

cannot be kept secret. There is record. But I don't want to let him down," he added.

The AL leader also said physical condition of Khaleda is "not deteriorating" as she is going through a situation any elderly woman is supposed to go through.

"She is in a physical condition she is supposed to be in. It is not deteriorating. Doctors are providing her with good treatment," Quader said.

Khaleda has been receiving treatment at the BSMMU since April 1 last year. She was convicted in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case and landed in jail on February 8, 2018.

She was convicted in another corruption case later in 2018. The BNP maintains that both cases are politically motivated.

PRICE HIKE OF COMMODITIES

Lax market forecasting to blame: economists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Economists have held the lax market forecasting system of the government responsible for the hike of daily commodity price. Farzeen Ferdous Alam, chairman of OGGRO Ventures, said though prices of commodities are rising, farmers are not getting its benefit, and as a result, are losing motivation for cultivation.

Had the government been able to predict the onion crisis ahead of time, and begun importing onion from alternative destinations immediately after the rain that damaged onion production in India, it could have averted the supply shortage of the bulb in the local market, they opined.

They said this at a debate on "Soaring Prices: Causes and Cures of the Price Hike Conundrum" jointly organised by Economics Study Center and the EMK Center, held on the latter's premises in Dhanmondi.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said the government had well-managed the salt price hike rumour, but failed to disseminate right information about onion to consumers, which created destabilisation in the market.

"A wrong message was given to the people that hoarding was responsible for the price hike, but it was actually not the reason," he said.

The noted economist gave a note of caution over the rise of production cost.

He said, "The price of daily commodities is rising because of increasing

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DHAKA WASA

Proposal to hike water tariff not acceptable: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming Dhaka Wasa's recent proposal of raising tariff for water "unjust and unacceptable", Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday demanded to set the tariff through public hearing with experts of the concerned sector.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman in a statement also said the move is contradictory to the 1996 Wasa Act. "Despite not improving the quality of tapwater, Wasa is imposing their decision on people with the excuse of development costs, which will be an extra burden for low-income people," said the statement.

With this proposal, Wasa is acting arbitrarily and in an oppressive manner, TIB said.

Amid allegations of poor quality tapwater in the megacity, Dhaka Water

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Utility bill fiasco wastes 22 days

Power restored at BGMEA building, demolition finally on in full swing

HELEMUL ALAM

Demolition of the much-talked-about BGMEA Bhaban -- constructed illegally over a decade ago -- began in full swing yesterday, after power connection was restored to the building.

After nearly a year-long delay, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) began demolition of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association building on January 22.

Rajuk said the 16-storey building would be demolished in six months. The capital's development authority hired Messrs Four Star Enterprise, a local company, which began the work on January 27 due to some legal bindings.

However, demolition work had been continuing at a snail's pace until yesterday, as the company did not get any power connection at the building to use heavy machinery -- due to a pending electricity bill of BGMEA with Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC).

Four Star had to depend on two generators, which slowed down the entire process. "Finally, the issue has been resolved with intervention of the authorities concerned," said Nasrullah Khan Rashed, its director.

He said they have got a 440-volt power line and will continue working to complete the demolition within six months.

Contacted, Md Sayeed Noor Alam, chairman of Rajuk, told The Daily Star yesterday that the chief engineer discussed the issue with DPDC

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Books for the underprivileged

SAYED MOHMUD ULLAH

While thousands of people visit the Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela every year and buy books of their choice, there are still many who have just the same hunger for reading, but cannot afford to do so.

Obhizatrik Foundation, a nonprofit working for underprivileged children, has joined hands with mobile financial service bKash, to collect new or old books from visitors of the book fair, and reach them to those who are deprived of the joy of buying books.

"We have installed a booth on Bangla Academy premises and four others on Suhrawardy Uddyan premises to collect books," said Tipu Hossen, supervisor of a bKash stall near the entrance of the Suhrawardy Uddyan part of the fair.

Talking to The Daily Star, Tipu said after collecting books, bKash has planned to donate some five thousand books through Obhizatrik Foundation to various institutions including underprivileged children's schools, primary schools, libraries and old homes.

This correspondent found Farhana Nahreen, an eighth-grader at Viharunniha Noon School and College, donating a total of 30 books to the booth yesterday evening.

"After reading these books, I have donated them for deprived children. The

books may be old but valuable to read," said a smiling Farhana.

Her mother, Dr Rebeka Sultana, said she had been inspiring her daughter to read books since childhood. "After hearing about the initiative, my daughter came today and donated books here," she said.

Stall attendants of bKash said they had distributed some books to a number of children from the Mirpur branch of an underprivileged children's school run by Obhizatrik this week.

"We would continue it in the coming days," he added. The donated books at the bookshelf of the booth include novels, rhymes, poetry, and biographies.

"There's no alternative to reading books for enlightenment. It's more important for children to build a future. We'll be able to provide more books to readers, including underprivileged children, if we can collect a good number of books from people visiting the fair," said Chief Marketing Officer of bKash Mir Nawbut Ali, according to a bKash press release.

Ahmed Imtiaz Jami, founder of Obhizatrik Foundation, said their school for underprivileged children lacks a well-equipped library, noting that it would be really helpful if people came forward and took part in their initiative.

Elderly man 'kills' wife in Arambagh

He told cops he murdered his paralysed spouse as no one will take care of her after his death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly woman was murdered allegedly by her husband at their own flat in Arambagh area of the capital's Motijheel yesterday.

Gopal Chandra Kuri (73) allegedly killed his wife Chhabi Kuri (60) by stabbing her on the head, said Jahidul Islam Shohag, assistant commissioner of Motijheel Division Police.

Based on information from relatives, police recovered the body around 9am, he told The Daily Star.

Chhabi was found on the bed with stab wounds. A knife was also recovered from near her body, said the assistant commissioner. Gopal was found unconscious on the floor, he said.

Police later sent Gopal to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

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AMAR EKUSHEY BOOK FAIR

Daily Star Books Stall # 491-92
Suhrawardy Uddyan

Home Delivery Service
www.rokomari.com
016297



Law enforcers setting up CCTV cameras on the Central Shaheed Minar premises yesterday. Security has been beefed up in the area ahead of International Mother Language Day, to be observed on February 21.

NARAYANGANJ FIRE

Another victim dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

One more victim of Monday's fire in Narayanganj succumbed to his injuries yesterday at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Kiron Miya (45), who was admitted to the hospital with 70 percent burns, died at 10am, said DMCH police outpost in-charge Bacchu Mia, quoting the doctors.

Six other victims of the deadly blaze from the gas explosion were undergoing treatment at the burn unit of the hospital, three of whom are in critical condition, the official added.

Abul Hossain (25) sustained 45 percent burns, Hiron Miya (25) 22 percent, Kawser Miya (16) 25 percent, Mukta Aktar (20) 15 percent, three-year-old Elma Aktar 14 percent burns, while 10-year-old Apon sustained 20 percent burn injuries.

Abdullah al Arefin, deputy director of Narayanganj Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star that family members fell asleep without turning off the gas stove on the day.

As a result, gas accumulated overnight, causing the explosion after fire was lit in the kitchen, the deputy director added.

অমর একুশে গ্রন্থমেলা-২০২০

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