

Bike-sharing service Jobike to launch in parts of DNCC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bicycle-sharing service Jobike is set to launch in select areas of the capital, with the aim to ease the sufferings of commuters amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Facilitated by Dhaka North City Corporation and the government's ICT Division, the company will commercially launch the app-based service in the city's Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara areas.

The bicycles have a GPS-enabled chip that restrict movement outside of the designated operating areas.

"When Covid-19 grips the whole country and experts suggest strict maintenance social distance, the bike service will benefit people amid the crisis in mass transit," DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam told The Daily Star. "The fare is set by the minute at Tk 1," he said.

Atiqul said bicycles are good not only for health of riders, but also the environment. "Such a service will help build a smart, safe, clean and healthy city," he added.

The service takes on added significance during the pandemic as it reduces the risk of coronavirus transmission by helping riders avoid congested public transportation.

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Although parks in the capital are closed due to the pandemic, these youngsters were found climbing over the padlocked entrance of Suhrawardy Udyan with great dexterity, one of them achieving the feat while wearing a saree, to have the whole park to themselves. While one may empathise with the youths' need to get some fresh air, whether taking such risks is worth it amid a pandemic remains a question.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CHILDREN

Cases rising as govt bodies, NGO staff busy with pandemic

Speakers tell MJF webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many government departments, including law enforcement agencies, are focused on fighting the coronavirus outbreak, victims of domestic violence are not getting enough support, speakers at a webinar said yesterday.

The situation has become even worse as NGO frontliners have not been able to communicate with victims in person during the time of the pandemic, they said.

The webinar, titled "Behind the closed doors: Rise of domestic violence during lockdown" saw attendance of some 100 participants from different NGOs and government stakeholders. The event was organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

A telesurvey report by MJF shows that a total of 13,494 women and children experienced domestic and other violence during the countrywide shutdown in 53 districts of the country last month, of which 4,160 victims said they were abused for the first time in their life.

MJF observed that the number of incidents of violence against women and children increased in May by 31 percent compared to April.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said unequal power relations and lower status of women are at the root of the problem, exacerbated by the present crisis.

"Women, girls and other vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded

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'My boy made a mistake, please forgive him'

Pleads mother of 14-year-old held under DSA

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The arrest of the 14-year-old boy in Bhaluka upazila of Mymensingh under Digital Security Act has left his family distraught.

Md Emon (14) was arrested on June 20 allegedly for putting up a Facebook post "defaming" Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Emon is a ninth grader at Paragoan High School in the upazila, police said, adding that his father, Ismail Hossain, was a farmer from Kadighar Nayapara village.

Police produced him before a Mymensingh court on June 21, which sent him to a juvenile correction centre in Gazipur, said Bhaluka police.

Talking to this correspondent, Emon's mother Khodeja Akter said her son wrote the post from his Facebook account on Friday but hours later he wrote another post offering an apology for his previous post. "My boy made a mistake... please forgive him," she sobbed.

Nazrul Islam, last surviving MNA of '70 polls, no more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The former Member of National Assembly (MNA) and Member of Parliament (MP) ANM Nazrul Islam died of old age complications at his Humayun Road residence in Dhaka this morning. He was 80.

"Nazrul Islam was the last living MNA among the 167 elected in 1970's general election but he died today, on a day when AL is celebrating its 71 founding anniversary," said Prof Md Abdur Razzaq, a freedom fighter and senior vice-president of Awami League's Phulbaria upazila unit.

He left behind his wife, a son and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death. He had been suffering from lung cancer along with other old age complications, family sources said.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Langolshimul village in Phulbaria upazila of Mymensingh. His namaj-e-

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PHOTO: SHEIKH NASTIR

A step back in Sylhet city's removal of overhead cables

BPDB installing electric poles as an 'alternative' to underground power line



BPDB is installing electric poles in the middle of the roads from Amberkhana to Bandarabazar, for streetlights and a backup for the underground power lines.

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

This January, Sylhet city was praised for having a street with no cobweb of overhead cables as the first phase of underground power line project of Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) was progressing.

Implementation of the project was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic and resumed recently.

But before it is finished, BPDB initiated an 'alternative' plan considering the probability of power cut off due to any malfunction of underground system.

Following this 'alternative' plan, BPDB is installing electric poles in the middle of the roads from Amberkhana to Bandarabazar, which is the city's most important road.

Seeing the work in progress, which requires digging holes in the middle of the road, concerned citizens from all walks are criticising BPDB and Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) for the double standard stand.

Ziaul Haque, executive engineer of Power Distribution System Development Project of BPDB, said, "This installation of electric poles will be completed in

a week. It's under the same project of underground power lines."

"We had to decide on the alternative plan considering if the underground power line malfunctions at any point of time. The poles will be used as a backup if we face some problem with the underground system," he said.

Contacted, Ruhul Alam, executive engineer of SCC, said, "The decision was made in a joint meeting of BPDB and SCC, and both parties agreed on keeping an alternative option if the underground systems malfunction."

"We will be constructing a road divider and the poles will be inside the dividers. We will use the poles to install street lights," he said.

Abdul Karim Kim, coordinator of Sanghoboddho Nagorik Andolon in Sylhet, said, "This is ridiculous and the plan is basically a move to facilitate cable operators and broadband providers."

"Beautification was never a priority, rather business is. They will unofficially let the businesses use the poles to tangle cables, like they always do. And moreover, there will be signboards in the poles to be rented for advertisement," he said.

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BANGLADESH-CHINA RELATIONS Anandabazar seeks apology for using derogatory word

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian daily Anandabazar Patrika yesterday sought unconditional apology for using a derogatory word in a recent news that described how China is attracting Bangladesh after the Indo-China clashes in Ladakh.

Many readers, after publication of the news on June 20, complained that they were hurt by the word "khairati", which refers to "charity".

It also created uproar on social media. "We are sorry and seek unconditional apology for this unintentional error," said the vernacular newspaper from Kolkata.

The report said it is nothing new that China has been trying to attract Bangladesh, a close ally of India. However, after the clashes in Ladakh valley that left at least 20 Indian soldiers dead and dozens injured, China has started afresh its efforts to draw Bangladesh to its side.

Rapist paid Tk 90,000 to settle outside court: PBI

With help of lawyer, village leader took money to arbitrate rape of an autistic teen in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) yesterday solved a seven-month-old rape case that took place in Rajshahi's Durgapur upazila, revealing involvement of a village leader and a lawyer in arbitrating the non-compoundable offence of the rape of an autistic girl.

The rapist, Shahidul Islam, (50), confessed to committing the crime while he was placed before the court of judicial magistrate Uzzal Mahmud in Rajshahi in the afternoon, said Sub-inspector Mohidul Islam of PBI.

In his confession, Shahidul revealed the name of the village leader -- Abdul Khaleque -- who took Tk 90,000 from him to "settle" the case, without taking it to police or court, he said.

The PBI obtained an affidavit that shows a lawyer signed the arbitration document.

According to Shahidul's confessional statement, he took the 15-year girl to a betel-leaf orchard and raped her on December 12 last year when her mother went out to work, leaving her and her 10-year-old brother home.

When the girl's brother saw Shahidul forcing himself

onto her, he cried out for help. Shahidul then fled the scene.

After learning about the incident, the girl's mother informed village leaders. Shahidul asked her to remain silent while Khaleque assured her of justice.

Denied of justice for three months, she then went to a Rajshahi court and filed a rape case on February 11. The judicial magistrate court of Rajshahi took the case into cognisance and asked Durgapur Police Station to record it.

The court also asked PBI to investigate.

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A rickshaw-puller and a youth drink mango juice at a roadside stall in Dhaka's Azimpur area. With source of water unknown, such drinks are prepared and served in unhygienic conditions. The vendor sells per glass for Tk 20, which oblivious to health hazard, many parched commuters consume. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABER DAS

Bill placed at JS seeking higher compensation for air accident victims

RASHIDUL HASAN

The "Air Transport (Montreal Convention 1999) Bill 2020" was placed in parliament yesterday, paving the way for the family of an air passenger to get some US \$160,000 as compensation in case of death in airplane accident.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mahub Ali placed the bill in the House, which was sent to the respective parliamentary standing committee for further scrutiny.

The parliamentary watchdog was asked to submit its report within a month.

Once the bill is transformed into a law, it will also help ensure proper compensation for the injuries of air passengers, damages of baggage or cargo goods in the line with the Montreal Convention 1999.

Bangladesh is a signatory to the Montreal Convention which deals with the passengers' rights and compensation.

Since there is no law over the convention, Bangladesh does not get the benefits as prescribed in the convention.

According to the bill, the punishment for violation of any provision by any airline would be maximum 10 years' jail or Tk 100 crore fine.

Earlier in August 26, 2019, the cabinet approved in principle the draft that would make airlines pay over Tk 1.35 crore to the family of any Bangladeshi killed in a crash.

Currently, the families receive about Tk 21.12 lakh or \$25,000 in compensation under the Warsaw Convention 1955, of which Bangladesh is a signatory.

Meanwhile, another bill titled "Use of Information Technology by Court Bill 2020" was placed at Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, to empower the country's courts to run trial proceedings through videoconferences and other digital means.

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POLICE BRUTALITY HC seeks health, inquiry reports on Jashore's Imran

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know the health condition of Imran Hossain, a student of Kazi Nazrul Islam Degree College in Jashore who was reportedly mercilessly tortured by police on June 3 without any specific allegation.

The civil surgeon of Jashore was asked to submit the report on the health condition of Imran, who received treatment at Queens Hospital in the district, to the HC through the attorney general's office by June 28.

The HC also asked the superintendent of police of Jashore to submit the inquiry report on the torture of Imran to the court by June 28, if the three-member committee formed by the SP has completed the probe.

The bench of Justice JBM Hassan passed the order after virtually hearing on a writ petition seeking necessary orders.

Imran Hossain, 23, was reportedly tortured by plainclothes cops as he tried to flee from a battery-run rickshaw that they had stopped for checking on June 3.

He had to undergo dialysis for his kidneys to function following the assault.

Based on newspaper reports on the incident, Supreme Court lawyers Humayun Kabir Pallob and Kausar Ahmed submitted the writ petition to the HC on June 18, seeking its directives.