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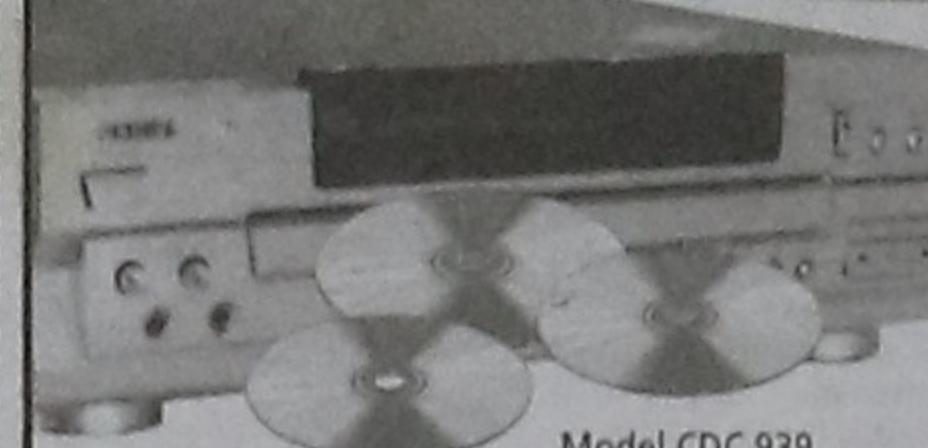
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Rail link with India from tomorrow

BENAPOLE, Sept 26: Rail communication between Bangladesh and India on Benapole-Petrapole route begins Thursday, reports UNB.

Officials said the train service between the two countries would be opened with a goods train entering Bangladesh on the inaugural day.

Senior railway officials of Bangladesh and India will attend the inaugural function at no man's land.

With commissioning of train service, transportation of more than 7 lakh metric tons of goods and commodities both-way will ease.

An agreement for operating goods train on the route was signed between Additional Director General of Bangladesh Railway SM Khurshid Anwar and Member of Indian Railway Board Arup Kumar Dutta in Dhaka on July 4 this year.

Meanwhile, another commuter train between Benapole and Khulna route under private management, will begin on October 1.

Another arrested in Mondal Murder Case

By Staff Correspondent

Another person was arrested in connection with the Advocate Habibur Rahman Mondal Murder Case yesterday.

Jewel Hossain, 24, was produced in the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate and the court granted him a two-day police remand.

The Sutrapur police arrested Jewel as a suspect in Mondal murder case.

Police told the court that Jewel was also a suspect in many other cases.

When contacted Sutrapur police refused to give details about Jewel.

Mondal, joint secretary of the city BNP, was gunned down on way to the court on August 20.

Police, however, could not trace Asad, clerk of the lawyer. Asad was driving the motorcycle on which Mondal was going to the court. They also could not trace Mondal's mobile phone that he was carrying during the

See page 11 col 2

Ctg customs employees' grand rally today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 26: Officials and employees of Chittagong Customs House will begin fresh agitation against government's move for inter-departmental transfer, sources said.

The Customs Officials and Employees Coordination Council decided to hold a grand rally on the Chittagong Customs House premises at 5 pm tomorrow.

Programmes of greater movement will be announced from the rally to force the government to stop the move for inter-departmental transfer. Council sources said.

The agitating customs officials might go for strike at Chittagong Customs House.

See page 11 col 2

Shajahan murder: Verdict today

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 26: Verdict in Shajahan Murder Case will be delivered tomorrow by the Judge of the Special Court trying all murder cases against Ershad Shikder and some of his armed cadres.

This will be the sixth murder case tried so far since arrest of Shikder on August 11 last year.

Victim's wife Laimoti filed a case with Khulna thana on September 3 last year. Ershad Shikder is one of the 14 charged accused in the case.

Thirty-five prosecution witnesses deposed in the court during cross examination. Six out of 14 accused are still absconding.

Acid thrown on teenage girl

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Sept 26: A teenage girl received serious burn injuries when miscreants threw acid on her at Hatcharia area in the district town today.

Local people said the miscreants, who could not be identified, threw acid on Jesmin Akhter, 15, a student of class ten of Mamtaj Majidunnesa Girls' High School of the town, while she was sleeping at her house at about 3-30 am.

Jesmin, daughter of local businessman Abdul Karim, was admitted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital today with burn injuries in her face and eyes. In the afternoon, she was shifted to Dhaka as her condition deteriorated, hospital sources said.

India to give technical support for construction of Ganges Barrage

India will provide technical support to Bangladesh for construction of the proposed Ganges Barrage, reports UNB.

Visiting Indian State Minister for Water Resources Bijoya Chakraborty said this at a meeting with Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak at the latter's office yesterday.

She supported the contention of Razzak who said construction of the Ganges Barrage is a must for Bangladesh to ensure optimum utilization of Ganges Water.

She mentioned that the next meeting of Bangladesh-India Joint River Commission would be held later this year.

The two ministers agreed to conduct a joint survey to overcome the arsenic problem of the two countries, said an official

handout.

They also discussed sharing of water of the river Teesta and six other common rivers - Monu, Khoat, Muhuri, Gumi, Dharala and Dudhkumar.

Razzak appraised the Indian State Minister of various steps taken by the government for the development and proper management of water resources.

Water Resources Secretary Azad Ruhul Amin, WDB Director General Golam Rabbani, member of the Joint River Commission Touhidul Anwar Khan, Chairman of the Indian Central Groundwater Board Dr D K Chaddha, member of Joint River Commission and commissioner of Indian water resources ministry MK Sharma were present.

The Indian state minister

handout.

See page 11 col 7

Bijoya Chakraborty called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday.

While talking to her, the Prime Minister sought Indian cooperation for construction of the proposed Ganges Barrage in Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister also called for regional cooperation in harnessing water resources for their optimum use.

The Prime Minister said the regional cooperation is important for proper utilization of water resources. If India agrees, such cooperation would be possible, she pointed out.

Possible cooperation in combating arsenic contamination of ground water and development of information technology also came up for discussion during

See page 11 col 6

Rubel Murder Case 23rd prosecution witness cross-examined

By Court Correspondent

AKM Abdus Salam, a magistrate of the CMM's court, Dhaka and the 23rd prosecution witness in the Shamin Reza Rubel Murder Case was cross-examined in the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court Dhaka yesterday.

Judge Mollah Mostafa Kamal adjourned the proceedings of the case till October 15.

Salam in his statement said, he prepared inquest report of the victim Rubel in front of the Dhaka Medical College morgue on July 24, 1998. Victim's brothers Abu Reza Iftekhar adding, and Mohammad Shaded Reza alias Rashed were present during preparation of the report, he added.

He also told the court that he put his signature on the inquest report paper.

All the accused including AC Akram Hussain, the main accused in the case, were present.

Nikunja murder Proceedings adjourned till Oct 9

By Court Correspondent

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shamsur Rahman, the 14th prosecution witness in the Joint-Secretary Nikunja Bihari Debnath Murder Case was cross-examined in the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court Dhaka yesterday.

Judge Syed Aminul Islam adjourned the proceedings of the case till October 9.

Shamsur Rahman in his statement said, he recorded judicial statement of Shukur Ali, the main accused in the case under Section 164 of the criminal procedure code (CrPC) on January 15, this year. It took three hours, he added.

He also told the court that Shukur Ali put his signature on the paper on which his statement was recorded.

The seven accused -- Shukur Ali, Shahinor, Rana, Deen

See page 11 col 6

Deposition in Chhatak bomb blast case begins today

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Sept 26: Deposition in the case of bomb blast incident that took place in the residence of a ruling party MP will begin tomorrow in the Court of District & Sessions Judge, Sunamganj. The trial began on April 11 this year.

The incident took place when bombs were allegedly being made on the first floor of the residence of Awami League MP Muhibur Rahman Manik at Chhatak thana headquarters in Sunamganj district. Two persons were killed while six others sustained critical wounds.

He last television appearance, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed annoyance at the illogical rise in transport fare. She said that a relatively less increase in fuel price did not justify the 'huge enhancement' in transport fare.

In the city's Uttara-Motijheel route, air-conditioned Premium buses have raised the fare to Tk 25 from Tk 20.

The Communication Minister had said that Premium buses and Maxis were out of the purview of the government decision.

Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity General Secretary Khondaker Enayet Ullah said fare of air-conditioned buses is beyond government's control since long but that of Maxis

costs, he added.

When contacted, a BRTA director and head of the Expert Committee SK Chowdhury told The Daily Star that he would not comment on the issue.

Sources said, there are regional transport committees (RTCs) in districts to monitor and enforce government-fixed rates but those remain inactive, giving transport owners freedom to fix rates at their will.

Some officials of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), a government agency to regulate the road transport sector, also acknowledged that there was no monitoring whether transport owners increased fares beyond the government rate.

Against a 46 per cent enhancement, many transport owners are charging 65 to 80 per cent more than the previous fares.

Emerging from the meeting, Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju had said that the fare was raised on the basis of recommendation of an Expert Committee.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, some members of the Expert Committee acknowledged that people were suffering due to 'indiscriminate' increase in fare by transport owners in different routes in the country.

An unhealthy situation is prevailing in the road transport sector in absence of government monitoring following enhancement of bus and minibus fares, sources concerned said.

Almost every day, there are reports of incidents of violence between passengers and transport workers over fare rates and of transport strike.

The government, in a meeting with leaders of a pro-government transport owners association on September 10, raised bus and minibus fares by 46 per cent.

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See page 11 col 5

9 killed as bus, truck collide in Savar

By JU Correspondent

Nine people were killed and 20 injured, two of them critically, when a passenger bus and a truck collided at Twenty Miles Gate of Jahangirnagar University in Savar yesterday morning.

Of the dead, Savar police identified three as Shamsur Ali, Motin of Kushtia and Zakir Hossain of Rajshahi.

The accident occurred when Jatriseba, an Aricha-bound passenger bus, collided with a truck.

Witnesses said the truck loaded with rice was carrying empty drums on its top. The incident took place when a drum fell on the road.

A bus coming from the opposite direction collided with the truck when drivers of both the vehicles tried to save themselves from hitting the drum, said witnesses.

Five people died on the spot and two died on way to the hospital. The driver of the bus died at the Savar CMH while a

passenger died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The injured were admitted to the Savar CMH and Ganoaythya Hospital at Savar.

A case was filed with Savar police. Police seized both the vehicles.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: A garment factory employee was crushed under the wheels of a speeding bus near the Pallabi cinema hall under Pallabi police in Dhaka yesterday morning.

The accident occurred when the victim, identified as Ranu Bose, 38, wife of Subhas Ranjan made an attempt to cross the road.

Police sent the body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The driver, however, managed to escape.

UNB adds: A middle-aged woman was killed when a speeding truck knocked her at Baniajuri bus stand in Ghor upazila on Dhaka-Aricha high-

way.

The IO said that the gang had earlier made an attempt to kill Shamsur Rahman. Hirok

See page 11 col 5

Editor: Mahfuz Anam