

Reduce fare in view of Eid, Durga Puja

Speakers urge transport owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the transport owners to reduce the fare of their vehicles in view of ensuing Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja.

The roundtable was organised by the Citizens Rights Movement in collaboration with BNO Lubricants at the National Press Club in the city.

In a keynote paper, General Secretary of the Citizens Rights Movement Tushar Rahman said the uncontrolled price hike of essential goods has already shattered the economic condition of the 90 percent people of the country.

So owing to increased fare of transports most of these people who will go to their homes on these

occasions will have to come back to their workplace borrowing from others, he added.

While presiding over the roundtable, Chief Adviser of the Movement and former secretary Syed Margub Morshed urged the citizens to be vocal against the fare increase by transport owners.

The speakers said in view of the fall of oil price in the international market, the transport owners should reduce the fare of their vehicles.

To facilitate the journeys of home-bound passengers on these occasions, the Citizens Rights Movement also placed 14-point demand at the roundtable.

These include punishment for the transport owners who will charge extra-fare from the passengers and introducing special ser-

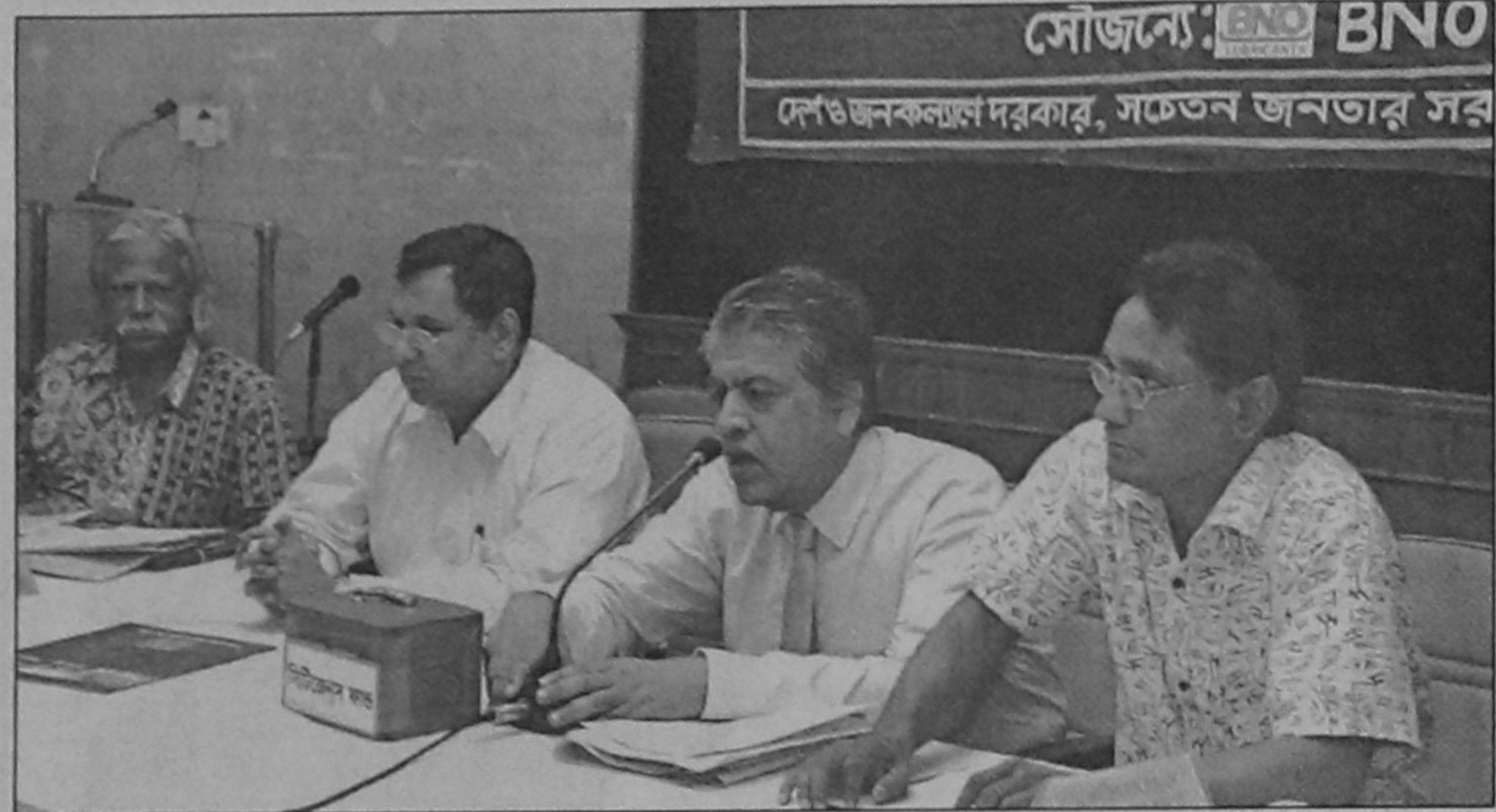
vices during Eid and Puja holidays.

"On behalf of our association we have decided to reduce bus fare by 10 percent and we are selling tickets according to this decision," said GM Siraj, president of the Bus Owners Association and former lawmaker.

He said if any bus owner is found selling bus ticket violating this decision, punitive measures would be taken against him.

Former BRTA chairman and DTCB Executive Director ABM Shahjahan, acting chairman of BRTA Colonel Mohammad Akhter Kamal, President of Launch Owners Association Badiuzzaman Badal, former secretary and columnist Mohiuddin Ahmed and Coordinator of Gonosasthya Kendra Dr Jafrullah Chowdhury also took part in the roundtable.

সৌজন্যে BNO



Former secretary Syed Margub Morshed speaks at a roundtable on transport fares at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Maj (ret) Md Mafizul Haq and Dr Jafrullah Chowdhury and on his right is Tushar Rahman. Citizens Rights Movement in collaboration with BNO Lubricants organised the roundtable.

BCSIR scientists produce petroleum from organic waste

BSS, Dhaka

Scientists of Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) have produced petroleum from degradable organic waste that ushered in a new hope among the people of the energy-starved country.

"We have developed petroleum products from organic municipal waste and are looking into its commercial viability," said Dr Md Yunus Miah, principal engineer of Institute of Fuel Research and Development of BCSIR, told BSS yesterday.

A five-member team headed by Dr Yunus, produced the petroleum at the BCSIR laboratory on an experimental basis in April last at a nominal cost. Other members of the team were Principal Scientific Officer Dr M Naimul Huq and Scientific Officers M Shah Jamal, Sujit Kumar Banik and Mohammad Ismail.

Dr Yunus said production of about 400 grams petroleum is

possible from one kilogram of municipal waste. Besides, he said, food waste, dried grass and leaf, husk of paddy and oil seeds could be used in producing bio-oil.

He said they first decompose the garbage and pour it into an air-empt tube furnace and produce bio-oil from the waste in 450-500 degree Celsius temperature.

Dr Yunus, who obtained PhD in petrochemical from former Soviet Union, said there will be no mentionable cost except electricity in producing the bio-oil from the waste. The standard of the bio-oil is equivalent to furnace oil, he claimed.

Yunus said Bangladesh imports a huge quantity of furnace oil annually to meet its demand. "The country would be able to save huge foreign currencies if we can go for commercial production of bio-oil, he said.

He said the waste, which remains after producing bio-oil, could be used as organic fertilisers.

As a result, he said, farmers' dependence on chemical fertilisers would be reduced to some extent.

Dr Yunus said a plan has been undertaken to produce bio-oil in a pilot plant. "We would be able to produce more bio-oil if the pilot plant is launched," he said.

Under the existing tube furnace, he said, production of 200 grams oil is possible using 500 grams waste.

Dr Yunus said Dhaka city produces about 15,000 tonnes of garbage and the cost of collecting it is nominal. "If we can make agreement with the city corporation to this end, our work would be easy,"

"We also have a plan to produce petrol from bio-oil using a device, and a design has already been prepared in this regard," he said.

Dr Yunus said production of petrol through upgradation of bio-oil, developed from waste, would also be cost-effective.

Bangladesh imports most of the petroleum products, about 3.7 million tonnes annually.

'Multi-stream edn system obstacle to development'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said the existing multi-stream education system is the main obstacle to national development and unity.

They also called for introduction of single-stream science-oriented education system with a view to building a society free from discrimination, corruption and fanaticism.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Sachetan Nagorik Committee (SNC) organised the discussion at Savar to mark the historic Education Day, says a press release.

SNC convener Joyanal Abedin Khan, a retired metropolitan magistrate and one of the organisers of '62 education movement, said the students along with the people launched the movement to protest the discriminatory education policy and demand a universal education system.

But the aspirations of the people still remain unfulfilled, he said, adding that various systems of education -- general, English medium, cadet and madrasa -- continue to create discriminations in society.

Rahela Khanam, headmistress of Savar Girls' High School, former student leader Rafiqul Islam Molla, freedom fighter Khondaker Md Hamid Ranju and engineer Abdul Khalek also spoke in the discussion moderated by TIB official Md Atiqur Rahman.

UNDP-DFID project worth Tk 140cr for 13 Sidr-hit districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has undertaken a relief and rehabilitation project in 13 Sidr-hit districts with the financial assistance of the Department for International Development (DFID).

DFID has allocated Tk 140 crore for implementing the project, says a press release.

The release said that the fund was spent for distributing relief among 1,68,000 families, reconstructing damaged houses for 25,015 families and constructing new houses for 9,145 families.

Besides, 80,000 families of these Sidr-hit districts were provided with jobs for 10-15 days under this programme, the release added.

The reliefs distributed among the Sidr-hit families include dry food, water purification tablets, oral saline and clothes.

The release added that UNDP through four NGOs has also distributed relief among 10,000 Sidr-hit families and provided jobs to more than 10,000 Sidr-hit men and women under cash-for-work programme in Bagerhat district.

Besides, A sum of Tk 24 crore was allocated for implementation of relief and rehabilitation project in Bagerhat through these four non-government organisations.

About 2,500 houses were constructed at 12 unions under Mongla and Moreganj upazilas for

families worst hit by Sidr. Each of the houses had cost Tk 70,000.

The four NGOs that helped implement the relief and rehabilitation programme are Shariatpur Development Society, Shushilon, Islamic Relief Bangladesh and Dhaka Community Hospital, added the release.

Navy chief inaugurates school building in Khulna

METRO DESK

Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam inaugurated a newly built five storied building of Bangladesh Navy School and College at Boyra in Khulna on Tuesday, says an ISPR press release.

The school building was constructed under the financial support and supervision of the Ministry of Mass Education and Works.

On the occasion the navy chief emphasised on spread of educational activities to build up an educated nation. Commodore commanding Khulna, senior naval officials, officials of the Ministry of Mass Education and Works, and teachers and students of the college were present at the ceremony.

Hasina meets WB official

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina held a meeting with the World Bank Vice President for South Asia Isabel Guerrero at the bank's headquarters in Washington DC, USA yesterday.

Former vice-president for South Asia Pratul C Patel and Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy were present during the meeting, said an AL press release.

They discussed in the meeting on economic situation, development works and future development plans of Bangladesh.

Gayeshwar enters party office room after breaking open lock

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP joint secretary general Gayeshwar Chandra Roy entered the room for office-bearers at the party office in the city after breaking open the lock on the door.

His supporters also ransacked the party office at that time, witnesses said.

Hearing the news of the incident, BNP Secretary General Khandakar Delwar Hossain expressed resentment, sources said.

Party leaders and workers said Delwar came to the party office at around 1:00pm. Before leaving the office at around 2:00pm, he told the office staff to lock his room and other rooms.

Gayeshwar came to the office soon afterwards only to find the room for office-bearers locked. He then broke open the lock and stayed there for some time.

Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has decided that her family will bear all expenses for the treatment of her son Tarique Rahman.

Khaleda took the decision so that no-one can resort to extortion at home and abroad in the name of Tarique's treatment, sources said.

Tarique along with his family is now in the UK for treatment.

Sale of advance rail tickets begin today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

To facilitate the journey of homebound people ahead of Eid, Bangladesh Railway starts selling advance tickets of inter-city trains today.

Rail authorities will also introduce seven special trains, including two on Chittagong-Chandpur route from Thursday next.

The advance ticket sale that starts today would continue till September 24 and every day tickets would be sold from 8:00am to 4:00pm for journeying on the same day of the next week.

The advance tickets would be available today for train journey of September 25. In the same way advance tickets for September 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and October 1 would be available on September 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24, said the sources in Bangladesh Railway in Chittagong.

Current tickets for everyday trains would also be available during the sale of advance tickets. Intended passengers would have to stand in queue to collect tickets from the counters at the railway stations of Chittagong, Dhaka, Dhaka Airport, Joydevpur and Sylhet. One would be able to collect a maximum of four tickets, said the sources.

Of the seven additional special trains, two would operate on Chittagong-Chandpur route and one each on Chittagong-Corilla, Dhaka-Dewanganj Bazar, Dhaka-Mymensingh, Dhaka-Cantonment-Rajshahi and Ishwardi-Sirajganj route.

The additional trains are likely to operate from September 25. However, the schedule for their departure and arrival are yet to be confirmed.

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Newly elected president of Lions Club of Dhaka Green District 315 A1 Zinat Nahar Luna takes charge from outgoing president Lion Advocate Md Shamsul Alam at a programme marking its 8th founding anniversary recently. Charter President of the Club Dr MA Halim Patwari, Secretary Alhaj Md Nazrul Islam and Treasurer ATM Shahidullah Tapan were also present on the occasion.

Tainted milk may have been imported from China

AGENCIES

Asian countries including Bangladesh may have imported the tainted milk formula that has claimed the lives of 3 babies in China so far.

China's Guangdong-based Yashili and Qingdao-based Suncare recalled their tainted milk powder, which is exported to five countries in Africa and Asia: Bangladesh, Yemen, Gabon, Burundi and Myanmar.

So far, all the sick infants in China were found to have consumed milk powder produced by the company at the heart of the crisis, Sanlu Group Co.

Most babies developed urinary problems, including kidney stones, after consuming Sanlu milk powder for three to six months, a

Chinese minister said.

Chinese authorities waited to see if tainted products turned up overseas. Li of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, gave no indication if the exports from China were contaminated but said the companies involved were recalling their products.

An AFP report quoted a Bangladesh government official as saying that food and commerce officials would meet this weekend to determine whether the tainted products had entered Bangladesh.

China's Health Minister Chen Zhu confirmed that three babies have died and more than 6,200 babies have fallen sick after drinking the formula, while dozens of infants are suffering from acute kidney failure.

He said he expected the numbers of affected babies to increase as "more and more parents take kids to the hospital."

The Chinese government has labelled the poisonings a "level one" food safety incident and formed an emergency team to grapple with the fallout.

Tests have so far revealed that 69 batches of formula made by 22 companies were contaminated with the banned substance, officials say.

A Chinese official confirmed melamine was found in a yogurt ice-bar made by Yili, one of China's two biggest dairy producers, which was sold in the southern territory of Hong Kong.

Four milk suppliers have been arrested in China so far. Source: AP, AFP, BBC Online

DEATH OF MANNA

Six doctors, directors of United Hospital sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A case was filed with a Dhaka court yesterday against six physicians of the United Hospital and its board of directors for the death of popular actor SM Aslam Takulder Manna.

Manna's brother-in-law Reza Kader filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka under section 304 (ka) and 34/192 of the Penal Code.

The accused are Dr Zahiruddin Mahmud Elias, Dr Mohammad Enayet Hossain Sheikh, Dr Momenuzzaman, Dr Khandaker Mahub Hussain, Dr Fathima and Dr Maimul Islam Majumder and all members of the board of directors of the hospital.

Metropolitan Magistrate Saifur Rahman Siddiqui recorded the statement of the complainant, but did not pass any order to end.

In the case the complainant mentioned that on February 17 Manna went to the hospital with chest pain at 4:15am and died at 2:00pm. He alleged that Manna was in the hospital without treatment for over five hours.

Cop closed for attacking DC office staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The staffers of Dhaka district deputy commissioner (DC) yesterday staged a sit-in in front of the office for hours and held the DC and senior officials hostage to protest the assault on a staff by officer-in-charge (OC) of South Keraniganj Police Station.

A constable of Kotwali Police Station was closed for attacking the agitating staffers.

Sources said OC Salaudinn Khan slapped staff Faruq Hossain who, along with several employees, went to display a noticeboard on a disputed land at Telghat at Aganagar of Kaliganj in the morning.

The claimers of the land tried to protest and resist the employees to put the noticeboard. At one stage, the OC slapped Faruq.

After the incident, the staffers returned to the office and staged a demonstration in protest against the assault on the staff and also held the DC and other officials in hostage for about three hours.

Constable of Kotwali Police Station Abdul Hanna police used batons to disperse the agitating staffers.

Later, the DC called the OC and Kotwali police Abdul Hanna at his office where OC Salaudinn sought unconditional pardon from the staffers for the assault and Hannan was closed for baton charge.

When contacted, Assistant Commissioner of Kotwali zone police Syed Nurul Islam said, "The problem was solved by the DC."

RCC mayor pledges to ensure civic amenities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton yesterday called on the residents of the metropolitan city to be ready for spending additional money to pay taxes and water bills for additional use to ensure civic amenities to all.

He also asked all staffs of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) to submit their wealth statements for transparency and support his attempts to free the institute from corruption.

"The rates of taxes and water bills will not be increased as I promised earlier, but those who, for example, have expanded their houses from one room to more rooms and single-storey building to multi-storey one will have to pay additional taxes," he added.

He further said, "The use of water by five people against that of 50 people is not the same and so additional water users will have to pay additional taxes, but the rates would be the same."

Liton said this at a reception accorded to him at the Rajshahi Zila Parishad auditorium by Rajshahi Citizens' Committee.

Some 8000 new holdings would pave the way for fresh incomes, said the newly elected mayor, adding that the territory of the city

areas would be increased for creating income sources.

Eminent litterateur Hasan Azizul Haque, former Rajshahi University vice chancellor Dr Saidur Rahman Khan, lawyer Golam Arif Tipu, Prof Fazlul Haque, Mujibul Haque, NAP district unit President MH Akhunjee, CPB district unit President AK Azad, Shafiqur Rahman, Abida Raihan, M Ali Sarker and Dr Sayed Shafikul Alam took part in the reception with language movement veteran Abul Hossain in the chair.

"As I have already passed two days in office of mayor, I found the corporation is dipped into corruption at its deepest level," he said.

The salary of one temporary employee had been shared by three political leaders, some 20 staffs enjoyed bills for cleaning a small drain and a lower-clerk was seen to have been possessing four buildings in the city, much beyond his limit of income, described the mayor vowing for uprooting the corruptions.

"I want to bring a revolutionary change in the city... I will soon submit my wealth statement and then I will ask all staffs to submit their statements within seven days. I will free my office from politicisation of previous mayor and then other departments."

Six business units fined Tk 1.5 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court led by the Metropolitan Magistrate Mahbubur Rahman yesterday fined six business establishments Tk 1.50 lakh.

The establishments include restaurant, fast food shop, petrol pump, jewellery shop and sweet shop.

The magistrate also filed two criminal charges against New Wage Filling Station on the Mirpur Road for running the petrol pump without taking permission from the authorities concerned, as the pump was sealed off earlier by another magistrate for cheating in weight.

The court also fined the station Tk 25,000 for manipulation in weight yesterday, too. The court raided Mohon Chad and Jadav Ghosh, two sweet shops, and fined them Tk 50,000 and 30,000 respectively for selling

sweets without the approval of Bangladesh Standards Testing Institution (BSTI).

In a raid at Hiroki Jewellery Shop at Chadnichak Super Market the court fined Tk 15,000 for cheating in weight.

The court also fined Fresh Bachanak, a fast food shop at the same market, Tk 20,000 for selling rotten and substandard foods and for doing business without BSTI approval.

Later the court raided Ashta Banjan at Kataban and fined it Tk 20,000 for keeping ripe papaya with uncooked chicken and fish in a same refrigerator.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mahbubur Rahman said the main target of the drive is to resist selling of adulterated food items.

He said 20 mobile courts and four other special courts are now functioning in the field at 28 Police Stations.

Training on basic journalism for ethnic youths begins

METRO DESK

A three-day training on basic journalism for ethnic youths began in Rangamati yesterday with an aim to ensure their representation in the mainstream media and facilitate better coverage of the ethnic groups.

Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) organised the programme under a project titled 'Bridging Media and Ethnicity' supported by the Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh, says a press release.

A total of 20 youths from different ethnic groups in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban districts are taking part in the training conducted by Qurratul-Ain Tahmina, freelance journalist, Sharier Khan, deputy editor, The Daily Star, Shahana Huda, manager, Media and Communications, Manusher Jonno Foundation, and Hari Kishore Chakma, staff reporter of the daily Prothom Alo.

Following the training, four participants will be selected for a 6-month journalism internship in two local newspapers, the daily Suprobhat Bangladesh and the daily Purbokone.

The project has been undertaken after a study showed that representation of ethnic people in the media houses stands at a minimum level.

The findings also revealed that the media tend to portray merely cultural activities of the ethnic people rather than focusing on the state of their human rights.

At the inaugural session, Hasibur Rahman, executive director, MRDI, said that if ethnic youths are trained, it will create opportunities for them to work in the media and they will take greater interest of their own community in the media.

The overall goal of the project is to mainstream ethnic communities through nurturing a culture of human rights and promoting equality, tolerance and peace.

To achieve the goal MRDI has taken comprehensive initiative to reduce the gap between the media and ethnic people. The project already completed in-house training for journalists in five local media houses, and will arrange training for journalists of the national print and electronic media.

SAARC SCHOOL DEBATE Amjad, Anam to compete in regional round

DU CORRESPONDENT

The national round of the first Saarc School Debate Championship 2008 ended at Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.

A total of 24 schools across the country participated at the competition held at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium of the university.

Manarat Dhaka International School and College secured the championship in the competition. Saad Bin Amjad and Anam Hossain of the champion team will compete with the national champions of the member states of the Saarc at the regional round to be held at New Delhi next month.

DU Vice-Chancellor of Prof SMA Faiz spoke as the chief guest at the prize giving ceremony and distributed crests to the champions.

DU Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman spoke as special guests on the occasion.

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RAJUK Approved : RAJUK/NU AU AU-23C-4436/03/2100 STHA, dated: 20/06/07.

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