

EID TRIPS

Railway starts advance ticket sale today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway starts selling advance train tickets today to ensure hassle-free journey for Eid-ul-Fitr holidaymakers.

Tickets for July 13-17 will be sold on July 9-13 at Kamalapur in the capital and Chittagong railway stations, said railway officials.

Return tickets for July 20 and 21 will be available on July 16-17. Tickets for July 22-23 will go on sale on July 19, while the ones for July 24 on July 20.

The Eid is expected on July 18 and all the ticket outlets will remain closed that day.

Return tickets will be available at Rajshahi, Khulna, Rangpur, Dinaipur and Lalmonirhat railway stations.

A person will be able to buy maximum four tickets.

Of the total tickets, 25 percent will be sold online.

Around 40,000 tickets will be put up for sale daily in advance at Kamalapur Railway Station, said railway officials.

The authorities will include 169 additional passenger coaches in the service to cope with the Eid rush.

Besides, five additional special trains will be added daily to the existing 64 trains in Dhaka.

Railway ministry officials claimed that on average around 1.80 lakh people travel by train across the country every day. Because of the additional arrangement, the railway's daily capacity of carrying passengers will be increased to around 2.50 lakh.

3 youths

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several others had beaten up a stray dog with shovels on June 16. Based on the information, police arrested Imran.

Yesterday, the accused were produced before a Dhaka court which granted Johnny bail on condition that he would appear before the court every week, said a court source.

"The incident came to our notice when people from the [Rampura] neighborhood took pictures of the injured dog and posted them on Obhoyaronno's Facebook page," Rubaiya told The Daily Star.

Nadia Choudhury, who oversees the legal affairs of the animal welfare group, said: "The beatings left the dog unconscious and his right eye severely damaged. But he is now getting better as our volunteers are taking care of him."

"As far as we know, this is the first arrest in Bangladesh for perpetrating cruelty upon animals."

Section 4 of the Cruelty to Animal Act specifically prohibits animal cruelty including such acts as beating up an animal, riding over an animal with a vehicle, tying it up to cause unnecessary suffering, Nadia added.

Obhoyaronno in 2014 filed a writ petition with the High Court which later issued a rule banning dog culling, bullfight, cockfight and goat fight.

"Humanity is dependent on the lives of all animals that feel the way we do. Violence towards them naturally promotes violence in general and fails to create the compassionate society we all wish to see," said Nadia.

Tragic death

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came from nowhere and hit the boy hard, leaving him critically injured, said his relatives, quoting witnesses.

He was rushed to Anwer Khan Medical College Hospital, but doctors there declared him dead, witnesses added.

Later, the body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

During a visit there this correspondent saw the mother fainting several times in grief.

"Where have you gone? Please come back to your mom," she wept repeatedly.

Her relatives were trying to calm her down but failed every time.

Fahim's only brother Pavel, a salesman at a shopping mall in the capital, was lamenting the early death as well.

"I just got my salary a few days ago and wanted to buy him [Fahim] something in Eid. Whom should I buy that now?" asked Pavel, sobbing uncontrollably.

An emergency doctor at the private hospital in Dhanmondi said there was no major mark of injury on Fahim's body, but he had a severe internal bleeding after the accident.

Noor-a-Azam Mia, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station, quoting witnesses said angry people caught the bus that killed Fahim and set it on fire in protest.

Delwar, the driver, was also detained from the spot, he added.

FELANI KILLING

Amnesty India to challenge BSF verdict

A CORRESPONDENT, Kolkata

Amnesty India will move to the Indian Supreme Court challenging the acquittal of a BSF man in Bangladeshi girl Felani Khatun killing case.

The rights body has said it will file a petition as public interest litigation with the apex court on July 13.

"We are taking it to the honourable justice of the Supreme Court on humanitarian grounds. So hopefully, our efforts will be as fruitful," said Amnesty India Secretary Sushanto Sarker.

On January 7, 2011, on her way home from New Delhi, 15-year-old Felani was shot while crossing into Bangladesh illegally as her clothes got stuck in the barbed-wire fence at Anantapur border point in Phulbari upazila, Kurigram.

The photo of her body hanging from the top of the fence triggered a fresh global outcry and renewed the call for an end to border killings.

Amid pressure from rights organisations, India opened investigations and the trial started at the Border Security Force (BSF) court in August 2013.

Felani's father Nurul Islam and



relatives had testified in the proceedings.

On September 6 that year, the court cleared the lone accused trooper Amiya Ghosh of the murder charge, drawing further anger from the victim's family and rights activists of both countries.

A retrial was ordered after Bangladesh expressed displeasure and took the matter to Indian border force top-brass in New Delhi.

On July 2 this year, a special West Bengal Court of BSF had upheld its previous verdict after hearing the revision trial.

Minister admits

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Now, the government has allowed the private recruiting agencies to send the migrants to Malaysia to speed up the recruitment process, he told reporters at his office in the capital's Probashi Kallyan Bhaban.

As the Malaysian government has demand for foreign workers, they will hire five lakh workers from Bangladesh for all sectors -- construction, manufacture, service and plantation -- in the next one year, the minister said.

The announcement of the recruitment of Bangladeshis through a new agreement called Business-to-Business (B-B) mechanism came after a bilateral meeting between Malaysian Home Minister Dato' Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Khandker Mosharraf in the Malaysian city of Putrajaya on June 25.

According to the new system, each worker will be recruited for a term of three years with provisions for extension by another year. Explaining the B-B mechanism, the minister said the Malaysian employers would bear all the expenditures while hiring workers from Bangladesh through the private recruiting agencies.

"Migration costs including airfare will not exceed Tk 40,000. The recruiting agencies cannot ask for any additional charges from the jobseekers," he said, adding that the recruitment process would start after Eid.

The minimum monthly salary of the workers will be RM (Malaysian Ringgit) 900 equivalent to Tk 18,000 each, the ministers said.

Replying to a query about the five lakh Bangladeshis' employment in a year, he said the Malaysian government said they want to hire 15 lakh workers from Bangladesh in the next three years.

JAPAN TO TRAIN 500 BANGLADESHIS

A Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU) was signed between the expatriates' welfare ministry and International Manpower Development Organisation of Japan (IM Japan) yesterday to train 500 Bangladeshis with technical skills on manufacturing and construction.

The deal was signed between Minister Khandker Mosharraf and Executive Chairman of IM Japan Kyoei Yanagisawa at Probashi Kallyan Bhaban.

Under the MoU, the Bangladeshis will receive a one-year training in Japan and get JPY (Japanese Yen) 80,000 equivalent to Tk 49,718 per month as training allowance.

Upon completion of the training, the trainees, who would do well, will be eligible to receive technical training for another two years.

The Bangladeshis, however, will have to return home after the end of the training.

Students

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to switch to their desired subjects.

When they move to their subject of choice after being selected through the second time test, many seats in the original departments remain vacant, he said. As a result, many first-timers do not get a chance in the university, which is a national loss, he added.

Petitioners' counsel Subrata Chowdhury said his clients would file an appeal with the Supreme Court, challenging the verdict.

On March 12, guardians of 26 admission seekers filed the petition with the HC. The petitioners said the DU authorities' decision, made on October 15 last year, was a violation of the fundamental principle of equal opportunity for education.

Articles 15, 17 and 19 of the constitution have ensured equal education opportunity for all, they said.

No college for over

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"We will publish the list on July 11, specifying their colleges for admission. The nominated students can get admitted on July 12 without any late fee," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He reiterated that all the students would be able to get admitted.

His assurance, however, could not appease the anxious students and the equally concerned guardians. Many of them went to the Dhaka Board office at Bakshibazar yesterday with various problems.

"I have got GPA-5 in the SSC exam and I gave five names of my preferred colleges. But I did not find my name in neither of the two lists," said Sohel, a student from Old Dhaka.

"I don't know where I would get admitted. Even I am not sure whether there is any seat left in second choice colleges... What is the benefit of good results if I can't get to study in a good college?" he said.

More than 52,000 students who did not make it to the second merit list published on Sunday are in a similar situation.

Their names did not come in the first merit list of 10.93 lakh students published June 28 either, and their guardians are more worried.

"My son is asking me where he would be admitted, but I can't answer him. I can't explain what kind of mental pressure I have been undergoing for the last few weeks," said Mohammad Jahangir, a parent.

His son's first choice was Adamjee

Cantonment Public School from where he took the SSC test, but his name was not published in any of the list.

"My son would apply tomorrow [today] but we are not sure what is going to happen," he added.

The government this year initiated the admission process for all colleges, madrasas and technical institutions centrally for the first time. It also decided that the education boards would publish a list of the students, specifying the colleges where they are to be enrolled.

But the entire system turned out to be a nightmare for more than 11 lakh admission seekers and their guardians due to inadequate preparations on the part of the government.

The Dhaka Board did not update the data about the seats and other admission-related information. On the other hand, Buet's Institute of Information and Communication Technology, which is responsible for preparing the database, could not make the list of so many students in such a short time.

As a result, the entire process marked by technical glitches delayed the publication of the first merit list by three days.

Though the ministry finally gave the list, the hassles of the students did not end. Many complained of various mistakes in the list and faced troubles in the admission process.

On the other hand, many colleges got only a few students for admission.

Hurdle goes

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Community Development Project funded jointly by the government and Unicef and currently executed by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board is trying to change the education scene.

Since its launch in 1996, 3,800 para centres, which work as service delivery points for information on community development, nutrition and education, have been built so far at different villages in 25 upazilas of the three hill districts.

The centres built on community-provided land are also used as the venues for pre-primary schools for children aged between three and six.

Out of the 1,000 para centres located in Bandarban, multilingual education programmes currently in three indigenous languages -- Marma, Tripura and Mro -- have started at 208 centres early this year on a pilot basis, informed the Unicef education officer.

At the para centre of Empu para, a Mro-majority village situated on a hill on the way to Nilgiri in Bandarban, students were seen learning rhymes and names of objects in Mro language.

As reporters visited their small wooden green classroom on the hill, they greeted them with chuckles and curiosity and then sang the national anthem of Bangladesh.

The usual shyness, which many indigenous children feel when they meet strangers, was absent among the kids.

"The main objective of these pre-primary classes is to make children ready for the formal education system and facilitate their social interaction," observed Banu.

Children learn the national anthem, rhymes and names of different objects and are acquainted with the mainstream alphabets in a congenial, playful environment.

"I sent my daughter here because it will be easier to get her admitted to the primary school later on," said Chinglao Kiang, father of four-and-a-half-year-old Belly Par, while waiting outside the centre for recess.

Chungkung Mro, a para worker who also works as a teacher at the centre, said the Empu para centre started in 2009 with 17 children and four of them had later gone for formal education.

Empowered with vocabulary and social skills, the indigenous children growing up in remote hills of Bandarban find it easy to start their journey in the apparently larger world outside and adapt themselves to a setting in which an alien language and culture rules.

Kishoreganj

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allegedly involved in crimes committed in Maheshkhal upazila in Cox's Bazar during the Liberation War. They were arrested in March and May this year.

As per the order, Salamat Ullah will be interrogated on July 26, Rashid Miah on July 27, Nulul Islam and Badsha Miah on July 28, and Osman Gani and Zinnat on July 29, said Prosecutor Rana Dasgupta.

The six are among 19 war crimes accused in the case. One accused died in jail, while the remaining 12 are on the run, according to the prosecution.

Postal delivery

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low box, bearing the postal service logo, is lodged in the middle.

"The drone has an extremely light construction and is capable of transporting loads of up to one kilo over more than 10 kilometres with a single battery charge," Swiss Post said in a statement.

The drone "flies autonomously, following clearly defined, secure flight paths, which are drawn up by cloud software developed by Matternet (the drone's US manufacturer)", Swiss Post added.

Swiss Post, which is cooperating on the project with Swiss WorldCargo -- the air freight division of Swiss International Air Lines --, stressed that the drones would be thoroughly tested before being put to wide-scale use.

"Until the time of their realistic commercial use in around five years, there are various requirements which need to be clarified," the statement said.

This includes exploring the regulatory framework that would apply when sending the unmanned aircraft out across the Alpine country, which is dotted with numerous remote and isolated villages where drone deliveries could be useful.

Swiss Post also said extensive tests would be carried out to explore the technical restrictions of the drones, including limited battery life.

For now, Swiss Post said it expects to mainly use the drones in emergency situations, which could "involve bringing supplies to an area that has been cut off from the outside world following a storm."

"Another realistic possibility is the urgent transport of consignments with the highest priority, such as laboratory tests," it added.

Greek PM vows to grab

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summit of EU leaders on Sunday was the final chance for a deal to avoid a "Grexit", an exit from the single currency that would have global repercussions.

"This is really and truly the final wake-up call for Greece and for us, our last chance," said Tusk, warning that failure "may lead to the bankruptcy of Greece" and cause geopolitical problems for Europe.

Greece's banks remain closed for a second week, amid a cash crisis which saw the country last month become the first developed economy to default on an International Monetary Fund loan payment.

Eurozone leaders lost patience at a crisis meeting in Brussels on Tuesday after Tsipras and his new Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos turned up without any concrete plans on paper.

They ordered Athens to file a complete reform plan by midnight (2200

GMT) on Thursday, with Tusk saying the "final deadline" for a deal would then be Sunday's summit of all 28 European Union leaders.

The Greek government yesterday promised it would start pension and tax reforms next week, as demanded by creditors, in return for a three-year loan to drag its financial system back from the brink of collapse.

In a formal letter to the European Stability Mechanism, the lender of last resort set up during the eurozone debt crisis, Tsakalotos said Greece would "immediately implement a set of measures as early as the beginning of next week".

The ESM confirmed that it had "received the Greek request", the first step demanded by the eurozone leaders towards reaching a deal that many countries remain sceptical about.

Greece has had two previous international bailouts worth 240 billion euros, the last of which expired on June 30.

Take back wheat

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writ petition on June 29, seeking an order on the Anti-Corruption Commission to launch an inquiry into the wheat import.

According to media reports, the DGF early this year bought 2 lakh tonnes of substandard Brazilian wheat.

The HC in its observation said the newspaper reports on the wheat were based on their own findings.

Sources said the food office has already distributed over 1.5 lakh tonnes of the wheat for the government's safety net schemes -- including Food for Work, Test Relief -- and also as ration for the police.

Police complained of low quality grains, prompting the food ministry to collect samples from district warehouses for testing, said ministry officials.

After testing some samples of wheat in its own laboratories last month, the food ministry claimed that the grain was fit for human consumption and its quality "conforms to the contract specifications."

However, Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) on June 28 said all the samples supplied to it "contained higher amount of shrunken and broken kernels than the limit stated in the specification."

It also found presence of shrunken and damaged kernels between 9.93 percent and 21.11 percent, which is above the quality parameter set by the government for import of wheat through tenders. As per government rules, any supply of wheat should be rejected if it contains more than eight percent of shrunken and damaged kernels.

The damage percentage is also higher in all samples, except in those collected from Kurigram, Gaibandha

and Sirajganj, said the BCSIR test report.

The food ministry's labs also detected presence of insects in wheat samples sent from Bogra, Joypurhat, Magura, Patuakhali, Sirajganj and Sherpur.

The wheat was supplied by two contractors -- the Netherlands-based Glencore Grain and Singapore-based Olam International. The import cost the government around Tk 355 crore, and 90 percent of the payment has already been made, according to ministry officials.

The grains are smaller and thinner and give less amount of flour after grinding, they said.

Most of the sample tests carried out by the BCSIR and the food ministry found that the test weight of the grains did not conform to the contract specification but was above the rejection mark.

Food Minister Qamrul Islam earlier admitted that the quality of the Brazilian wheat was lower than that of Ukraine's.

During the hearing on the writ petition yesterday, petitioner's lawyer AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon told the court that the DGF director general made "contradictory and fraudulent" statements in his report submitted to the High Court.

Although several laboratory tests found that there were living insects in the wheat, the DG's report said the grains were fit for human consumption, argued Mahbub.

He prayed to the HC to punish the official for placing such a report before the court.

Opposing the petition, Deputy Attorney General Taposh Kumar Biswas said there is no report that the wheat has caused any human illness or casualties.

Couldn't traffic

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traffic management can save the fast-moving commuters all the trouble.

It was no different yesterday when the Crescent Lake Road that connects Bijoy Sarani with Mirpur Road, was kept off limits to vehicles for about two-and-a-half hours before iftar. The road that links Mirpur Road to Rokeya Sarani near Bangabandhu conference centre was also closed beside Gono Bhaban, disrupting traffic movement even more.

The flow of traffic on Mirpur Road in front of Gono Bhaban was divided into two with a bamboo fence. One part was reserved for the party guests.

All these resulted in a veritable traffic chaos, leaving many on the streets when it was time to break the fast.

Minutes before iftar time yesterday, a passenger of a bus stuck in stand-still traffic was heard saying, "Had they told us about this before, I would have taken a different route and probably be home for iftar by now."

It was the same situation on Monday as well.

The police department was diverting vehicles and keeping roads closed without any prior announcements. City dwellers were caught off guard

during the rush hours.

Many, including government officials, who use the roads were seen locked in heated conversations with law enforcers on Monday and yesterday.

Desperate to get home and have iftar with their families, they wanted to know the reason behind diversions.

When asked about diversions and no prior announcements, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Tejgaon Division) Biplob Sarker skirted round the question and said they always tried their best to ease congestion and minimise people's suffering.

Restrictions on vehicular movement when VVIPs are using the streets have become a regular phenomenon. Those using Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue suffer the most.

Often, part of the avenue is kept closed for 10-15 minutes due to VVIP movement, causing congestion on all roads around. Even pedestrians are not allowed to walk on the pavements or use foot bridges.

The government follows "the diversion and closing off streets" method and is yet to take any effective measure that could ease congestion or reduce the sufferings of people when VVIPs use the streets.

Pran founder passes away

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business in Bangladesh, had long been suffering from cardiac complications and diabetes, according to Kamruzzaman Kamal, director (marketing) of the group.

Born in Natore in 1940, Amjad Khan Chowdhury studied in Dhaka before joining Pakistan army in 1956.

After the liberation of Bangladesh, he was repatriated in 1973.

In Bangladesh army, he held many important positions including that of general officer commanding (GOC) at Comilla and Bogra cantonments. He served as the quarter master general of Bangladesh army before retiring in 1981.

In 1982, he started his business career and made his first major breakthrough in 1991 when he launched his agro-processing business -- PRAN.

It soon became a household name

in Bangladesh and went on to make a foray into the export market in 1996. PRAN products are now exported to more than 106 countries.

It currently employs around 60,000 people and works with around one lakh farmers countrywide.

Amjad Khan was elected president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Dhaka twice in a row -- in 2011 and 2012.

He also was the founder-president of Real Estate & Housing Association of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association and a former president of Underprivileged Children's Education Programme - UCEP.

In 2011, Amjad was recognised as the Business Person of the Year at The Daily Star-DHL Bangladesh Business Awards. His PRAN Group won HSBC Export Excellence Awards in 2012.