

# Sylhet's Nuzhat sets national record

Her letter now sent to 45th int'l writing competition to be held in Switzerland

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet  
After Nuzhat Anjum Rahman won the national championship in the Letter Writing Competition, arranged by Bangladesh Post Office (BPO), her letter has now been sent to the 45th International Writing Competition to be held in Switzerland.

Nuzhat is an eighth-grader of Sylhet Grammar School and the daughter of ABM Jillur Rahman Uzzal, councillor of ward no-8 of Sylhet City Corporation.

A BPO letter, sent to her parents and school, confirmed her victory and participation in the international competition.

In the letter, Md Jamal Pasha, director (Universal Postal Union affairs) of BPO, congratulated Nuzhat on her securing the first place in the national competition.



**These vast fallow lands in Jumarpara area of Badhair union of Tanore upazila in Rajshahi are a grim reminder of the blistering heat that has been sweeping across the country and also the indifference of authorities concerned failing to provide sufficient water to the farmers as the deep tube-wells are not being able to extract enough groundwater for irrigation. Contacted, Enamul Kadir, executive engineer of Barind Multipurpose Development Authority, said their attempts to provide water through re-excavation of ponds and canals were underway, but the reality paints a starkly different picture. In contrast, inset, many are expecting a bumper production as Boro rice harvest continues in full swing in all five districts under Rangpur agriculture region with excellent yield rates as a result of smooth supply of water, electricity, diesel, other inputs and facilities.**

PHOTOS: ANWAR ALI AND BSS



# PM takes responsibility to treat journo Nurjahan Begum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has taken responsibilities of the treatment of Nurjahan Begum, the pioneer of females in journalism in Bangladesh who has been on life support at the Square Hospital for the last few days.



PM's Special Assistant Mahbul Hoque Shakil said the premier also inquired about the health and treatment of the journalist.

Admitted to the hospital with respiratory problems on May 4, the 91-year-old was moved to the ICU on May 7.

Nurjahan, the editor of the weekly Begum magazine, began her career in the 1940s and has been the editor for nearly six decades. She received Ekushey Padak in 2011.

# 'Artificial crisis' of buses holds Ctg-Patiya commuters hostage

Passengers also complain of being charged fares arbitrarily

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Julekha Begum along with her five-year-old son came to the temporary bus terminal in Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge area of the city to go to her village in Patiya upazila.

But she could not find a single bus bound for Patiya, 28km away from the city. However, buses for other upazilas in south Chittagong - Anwara, Banskhali, Satkania, Lohagara and Chandanaish -- were readily available.

Her son Shoeb was becoming restless as the mother and child were standing under the scorching heat for around half-an-hour.

Like Julekha, several hundred people bound for Patiya go through this ordeal on a regular basis. Passengers alleged that a "syndicate" of transport owners and staff created this artificial crisis of buses to realise arbitrary fare.

"Everyday we face the same situation," said Ashiquzzaman, a private job holder who commutes on the Patiya-Chittagong city route regularly.

The usual fare from Shah Amanat Bridge to Patiya is Tk 20 but they increase fare according to their whim, said another commuter Probal Mitra, adding, "In the afternoon, when people return home from work, the fare increases up to Tk40."

The Daily Star correspondent found truth in the allegation after a while. A Patiya-bound bus appeared all of a sudden and passengers were seen shoving each others to board the bus.

But some of them stopped as they heard the bus helper screaming, "Direct service to Patiya...the fare is Tk40."

When a passenger asked why the fare is doubled, the helper replied, "It's a direct service." Yet some passengers were seen hurriedly boarding the bus.

"What can we do?" said a frustrated Sagar Sen, a commuter, adding, "The transport association cooperates with them and there is no one to look into our misery."

Abdus Sattar Rony, general secretary of South Chittagong Passengers' Welfare Association, said around one lakh people of six upazilas commute through this route and of them, around 25,000 people commute through Patiya route.

"As Patiya is the nearest upazila, many people commute to and from their home everyday and bus owners capitalise the situation," he said.

"The bus owners' association, especially, its leader Abul Kalam Azad is responsible for the suffering of passengers," he alleged, adding, the situation escalates on every Thursday afternoon and on holidays when people go to their village home.

Contacted, Abul Kalam Azad, secretary general of Chattagram Zila Sarak Paribahan Malik Group, said "It's true that there is a crisis for buses but neither the association nor I are responsible for this."

"We always try to keep buses available for the passengers but when the rush is high it gets hard to provide them as per demand," he added.

Around 700 buses ply south Chittagong routes. Of them, around

90 buses ply the Patiya-Chittagong city route, which means there is only one bus for 278 passengers, he added.

"Owners are not interested to engage more buses in this route as they incur losses and face problems regarding registration and other issues," Azad said.

When asked about the losses, Azad said, the maintenance cost of the buses are comparatively higher in this route as most of the times the bus returns almost empty after dropping off passengers.

He also claimed the buses on Chittagong-Patiya route were not overcharging the passengers and when this correspondent informed that he had witnessed such incident, Azad did not answer.

Contacted, Mohammad Shahidullah, deputy director of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Chittagong, said the BRTA has no restriction on the registration of buses and route permits.

"If any owner applies for registration, we provide it after verifying documents," he added.

# 174 OMS points to be run countrywide during Ramadan

UNB, Dhaka

State-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) has planned to sell essential items during Ramadan in 174 open trucks across the country for the convenience of Muslim devotees.

Of the total trucks, 25 will be deployed in Dhaka, 10 in Chittagong, five each in every divisional headquarters, except for Dhaka and Chittagong, a TCB official told the news agency.

Two trucks will be engaged in every district of the remaining 57, he said, adding that the commodities will be sold simultaneously through 3,054 dealers.

According to an official document, TCB or its appointed dealers through these trucks will sell sugar, soybean oil, lentil, chick peas and dates at fair prices.

The first installment of the commodities to the dealers are likely to be released on Shab-e-Barat day (May 22), while the second installment in the first week of Ramadan and the third installment will be in the middle of Ramadan, according to TCB sources.

The prices are yet to be set, the official said, adding that TCB will do the job soon in consultation with the commerce ministry.

"We're going to do so to keep the market stable during the month of fasting," said the official seeking anonymity.

Besides, the government has taken a number of steps to make sure that the prices of essentials remain stable during the Ramadan.

The official document stated that a cell titled "commodity price review and forecast" has been formed at the ministry to monitor the prices and take proper steps as per the review.

This cell is collecting information about the essential items' supply, import and price situation from the Bangladesh Bank, the National Board of Revenue, Bangladesh Tariff Commission, TCB and the Department of Agricultural Marketing, to give necessary advice and directives.

Besides, the ministry also continuously reviews the international market situation, demand, local production, overall stock and import situation of the daily commodities and provide necessary directives to this end, he added.

The market monitoring and mobile court operation, led by deputy commissioners and upazila nirbahi officers are also ongoing. Meanwhile, 14 mobile courts are regularly monitoring the commodity markets in the capital, he said.

# Existence of ethnic minorities being denied

Prof Mesbah Kamal tells

launch of Priscilla's book 'Chakma Jatir Itihas Bichar Ebong Ashok Kumar Dewan'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

By terming ethnic minority people "tribal", their existence is being denied in the country, said Mesbah Kamal, a professor of history, yesterday.

"Different races have been living in the country over the years. Extinction of a race begins when it is termed tribal," he added.

Kamal was addressing the launch of a book titled "Chakma Jatir Itihas Bichar Ebong Ashok Kumar Dewan" by Priscilla Raj, held at TSC cafeteria of Dhaka University.

Noted columnist Syed Abul Maksud inaugurated the ceremony.

Referring to history, Kamal said the existence of Chakma in the country is found in the Mughal history.

Pointing out different sources, Priscilla mentioned in the book that the ethnic minorities, including Chakma, have their political rights over the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

"Land grabbers and those believing in communalism would not recognise these races as indigenous people," she added.



**A laudable gesture indeed! A jovial Abdul Jabbar of Fulgachh village in Lalmonirhat sadar upazila shows a rare bird he bought from a poacher in the area yesterday for Tk 400, minutes before he released it. This is not a random act of kindness, Jabbar, a newspaper hawker, who earns Tk 300 a day, has freed birds after purchasing them from poachers on numerous occasions and is an example for all of us to stand against illegal poaching.**

PHOTO: STAR

# Siblings among four killed in road crashes

FROM PAGE 3  
blocked the highway for half an hour.  
In Patuakhali, three people were killed when a bus hit their motorcycle on Patuakhali-Kuakata road in Faridganj area of Kalapara upazila on Thursday afternoon.  
The deceased were Mohammad Sany, 17, of Nilganj village, Humayun Kabir, 17, of

Majidpur village and Shakil, 15, of Goiwatala village. Of them Sany passed SSC examination this year from Khepupara Model High School.  
In Satkhira, Subod Biswas, 50, of Jhargacha village was killed when a truck rammed his bicycle on Satkhira-Khulna highway in Binerpota area yesterday.

# Promode Mankin laid to rest

FROM PAGE 4  
Haluaghat-Dhubaura constituency (Mymensingh-1). He was elected an Awami League lawmaker from the constituency for four times.  
Born in 1939 in Netrakona, he was the state minister for cultural affairs from July

2009 to September 2012.  
A member of Mymensingh Bar Association and former regional director of Caritas Mymensingh region, Mankin was also the chairman of central Tribal Welfare Association.



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**Episode 20**  
Q. What kind of food item is suitable for Thai Sweet and Sour sauce?  
a) Rice  
b) Any Protein Item  
c) Fresh Fruit

**Episode 21**  
Q. Who won the best dish title in today's episode of replicating Chef Fred's dish?  
a) Hasina  
b) Runa  
c) Sabrina

Send your answer by 9 pm, May 21, 2016, using the following format:  
Write SC<space>A/B/C/D & send to 6969