

BR launches two new trains on two routes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Railway authorities yesterday launched operation of two new trains at the capital's Kamalapur Railway Station ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

BR Director General M Amjad Hossain in the morning inaugurated a new train which will ply Dhaka-Khulna route under the old name -- Sundarban Express.

Later in the afternoon, Railway Minister Mujibul Haque, secretary to the Ministry of Railways M Feroz Salah Uddin and senior railway officials inaugurated Mohanganj Express which will run on new Dhaka-Mohanganj route.

The new Sundarban Express has 12 coaches, including two AC chair coaches and two AC cabin coaches and a powered car, BR Director (Engineering and Estate) Mamunul Islam told The Daily Star.

Mohanganj Express has 14 coaches, including one AC chair coach and one AC cabin coach.

Earlier, BR inaugurated four new trains -- Teesta Express, Ekota Express, Dhruotang Express and Chitra Express -- and also new Dhaka-Jamalpur route.



FOR A FEW DAYS OF TOGETHERNESS

The day was full of long waits and frantic efforts to climb aboard vehicles. But it was still worth it as they were heading home for the holidays. Clockwise from top left, a mother and child await a launch at Sadarghat terminal. Homebound passengers wait patiently amid a long queue of vehicles on Dhaka-Tangail Highway near Gazipur Kaliakoir Bus Stand. Some, risking lives, try to board on top of a crammed train at Chittagong Railway Station. A child falls asleep on the shoulder of its mother at the capital's Kamalapur Railway Station. Two women wait for their bus in the afternoon at the capital's Gabtoli bus terminal, which was scheduled to arrive at 8:30AM. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN, ANURUP KANTI DAS

Teenage pregnancy slowly kills mother, children

White Ribbon Alliance-The Daily Star roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday at a discussion opined that both government and non-government organisations need to work together to purge the country of teenage pregnancy.

Termining teenage pregnancy a "slow killing process", they emphasised preventing child marriage to stop teenage pregnancy.

White Ribbon Alliance Bangladesh and The Daily Star jointly organised the roundtable discussion with the media on "Zero Tolerance to Child Pregnancy" at the capital's The Daily Star Centre.

"If child marriage cannot be stopped, teenage pregnancy won't be stopped," said White Ribbon's National Coordinator Dr Farhana Ahmad, adding that complications in pregnancy

and childbirth are among the top causes of death of girls aged 15-19.

Even if a girl manages to survive childbirth, she constantly remains under the risk of post pregnancy-related complexities, she said, mentioning that 65 percent of all cases of obstetric fistula occur in girls under 18.

Dr Malay Kanti Mridha, research associate of Public Health Sciences Division at ICDDR,B, said, "When a girl gives birth to a baby with low weight, not only the chance of its death is high, but also its mental and physical growth is hindered."

Demanding more budget allocation for stopping teenage pregnancy, he said now only two percent of national budget is allocated for the health sector.

Dr Ikhtiar Uddin Khandaker, head of health programme of Plan

International, said, "It is not possible for the government alone to stop teenage pregnancy. All stakeholders need to act from their respective positions to stop it." He also underscored massive campaign to popularise use of emergency contraceptive pills to stop unwanted pregnancy.

Gynaecologist Dr Samina Chowdhury suggested involving scouts, civil society, and cultural organisations in campaigns against teenage pregnancy.

Dr Baizid Khorshid Riaz of National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine also addressed the programme attended by Jamil Ahmed Ibrahim, chief executive officer of Journalism Training and Research Initiative, as moderator. Social Marketing Company General Manager Taslim Uddin Khan also spoke.

BRTA opening new control room today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) will open a control room at its headquarters in the capital's Tejgaon today to ensure a hassle-free journey for holidaymakers ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha.

The control room will operate round the clock till September 15, an official of the ministry of road transport and bridges division told The Daily Star.

The control room's contact numbers are: 029130662, 01966622019, and 01730782946.

Passengers can lodge complaints during their journey, and initiatives will be taken to solve their problems from the control room, added the official.

Year after year, nobody can stop overloading

PANKAG KARMAKAR

"When I saw my launch, the scene did not come as a relief."

This is what Ahasanul Kabir Shaon felt arriving 15 minutes past his departure time at the capital's Sadarghat Launch Terminal while travelling to his village home last Eid.

"The vessel was overcrowded with passengers and there was hardly any space on it," said the university student.

Among the information regarding the vessel written at the entrance was that its carrying capacity was around 900. But it seemed around 3,000 passengers were on board, he told The Daily Star.

"As I had no other alternative, I had to continue my journey. But I was fearful of an accident all throughout the way," Shaon recalled.

Thousands experience this when travelling to southern districts in the Eid rush risking their lives every year.

Almost all launch operators carry around three times their capacity during the Eid rush, posing the risk of dreadful accidents, said passengers and experts.

Government steps towards waterways safety largely remain on paper. Ahead of Eid every year, government officials, launch owners and workers hold meetings on smooth traffic management and passengers safety.

They decide to check overloading, travelling on rooftops and boarding mid-river and ensuring a sufficient number of lifebuoys and other safety equipment.

But none of these are properly implemented due to an apparent profit-mongering mindset of launch owners and neglect by government authorities concerned.

Traffic inspectors of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) are responsible for checking overloading.

But they turn a blind eye during the Eid rush, said Ashish Kumar Dye, general secretary of the National Committee to Protect Shipping, Roads and Railways (NCPSSR).

Pinak-6 was coming from Kewrakandi of Madaripur when it sank in the Padma river at Mawa in Munshiganj on August 4, 2014. At least 48 passengers died and 62 others went missing. It was carrying over 200 pas-

sengers, though its capacity was 85.

Overloaded MV Coco-4 sank in the Tentulia river near the Nazirpur launch terminal in Lalmoohan of Bhola on November 27, 2009 with around 2,000 holidaymakers. At least 56 bodies were found while many others were unaccounted for.

Around 326 people died every year on an average in waterway accidents in the two decades since 1994, according to NCPSSR, a non-government body working for passenger safety.

However, the rate of accidents and death toll has sharply declined in the last two years

when around 50 passengers died annually, it adds.

A lack of lifebuoys and other safety equipment like fire extinguishers and oxygen cylinders also increase the death toll, say experts.

Rules say the lifebuoy to passenger ratio should be 1:4 but in most cases it is found to be 1:10, said several officials of the Department of Shipping.

The government has banned carrying passengers on rooftops but almost no owner follows it as hundreds of passengers are seen travelling in this manner ahead of Eid.

Such overloading may also cause accidents, said Capt Habibur Rahman, a former officer of Mercantile Marine Department.

Talking to The Daily Star on September 1, BIWTA acting chairman Bholanath Dey said they had already warned the launch owners of stern action for overloading.

"Besides, we have also asked them to keep a sufficient number of lifebuoys and other safety equipment on each launch," he said.

Badiuzzaman Badal, senior vice-chairman of Bangladesh Inland Waterways (passenger carriers) Association, said launch owners on many occasions have to overload due to excessive rush.

"We have a sufficient number of launches this year. So, there is no possibility of overloading," he claimed.

He also claimed that a sufficient number of lifebuoys and other safety equipment have been kept ready at every launch.

Around 15 lakh people leave the capital through Sadarghat during the Eid holidays, according to transport workers and rights activists.

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We hope you get well soon little fellow! Tied and tortured this porcupine was captured from Jangal Salimpur area of Chittagong yesterday by some miscreants, who brought it to the Buddha Mandir area for selling. A good Samaritan eventually rescued and sent the porcupine to the zoo where it is now under treatment.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Beaten-up porcupine rescued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, City

A porcupine was brought in at Chittagong Zoo yesterday, in a critical condition with one hind leg broken, a one-inch deep cut in the neck and most of its quills apparently pulled out.

One Nazrul who brought the animal claimed his neighbour caught it from a nearby hill. He said the captor and his sons beat it with sticks and kept it tied with a nylon rope for selling.

When one Suman Babu came forward and started inquiring, they panicked and fled. Suman paid Tk 100 to take it to the zoo, he said.

Third judge supports

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"On the other hand, the Article 96 involving the provision of removal of the [Supreme Court] judge through the parliament had been included in the original constitution by members of the constitution framing committee and 403 members of the National Assembly under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," he said.

The provision of the Supreme Judicial

Council formulated by the "military junta" is against the independence of the judiciary, unconstitutional and contrary to the basic structures of the constitution, the judge said.

Writ petitioners' lawyer Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star that the judgement given by Justice Moeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque will remain in force until the apex court passes any stay order on the HC verdict.

Eastern bypass: the same mistake again?

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"Our water management is still following those recommendations, but their cordoned approach is not suitable for the current time. An open approach is more fitting and environment friendly," said Taqsem.

He suggested making an elevated road or railway under the eastern bypass project to protect the water body.

"There is no need to go for the cordoned approach anymore, if we do, then the natural drainage system will be destroyed again,"

headed.

There are some people who think that cordons are needed for urbanisation and that the open approach will obstruct it, said Prof Nazrul.

In fact, cordons lead to a wrong kind of urbanisation by encouraging below-flood-level settlement that ultimately makes people more vulnerable to inundation from either rainfall inside or from any accidental breach in the cordons or overflow of river water from outside, he added.

সুখের অনুভবে শান্তির পরশে
ক্লাস্তি দেয় ভুলিয়ে...

রোহেছি মান করেছি জয়,
পেয়েছি সম্মান,
তাইতো যবে যবে গন্যাদৃত সোয়ান পণ্য...

সোয়ান গ্রুপের অন্যান্য সামগ্রী

SWAN FOAM

SWAN MATTRESS

SWAN CHEMICALS

SWAN P I L L O W

ফোন: ৮৮৭০৭৫৮ (হ্যাণ্ডিং) ইটলাইন: ০১৭৫৫৬০৪০৪