

Work for free, fair polls

Swedish, Norwegian ambassadors urge EC
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Swedish and Norwegian ambassadors in Dhaka yesterday urged Election Commission to work for the next parliamentary polls in a free and fair manner.

Johan Frisell of Sweden and Sidsel Bleken of Norway made the call at a meeting with the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) KM Nurul Huda at the latter's office.

"In the around one-hour meeting, the ambassadors and the CEC discussed about different election related issues. They also discussed how to hold a free and fair national election and how participation of all can be ensured," EC Secretary Muhammad Abdullah, who was present in the meeting, told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Johan said, "It was a courtesy visit to get a general understanding of the work of the EC, in particular, in view of the 11th parliamentary election."

RAJON MURDER

HC verdict on April 11

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed April 11 for delivering verdict on the death reference and appeals in the sensational 13-year-old Sheikh Md Samiul Alam Rajon killing case.

The HC bench of Justice Zahangir Hossain and Justice Zahangir Hossain set the date after concluding hearing arguments from the counsels on the death reference and appeals.

On July 8, 2015, Rajon was beaten to death by a group of brutes in Kumargaon Bus Stand area of Sylhet Sadar allegedly for trying to steal a rickshaw van.

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POST-CAFE ATTACK GULSHAN-BANANI



Failing to find any transport to reach their destinations, people walk on a street near the Kakoli intersection in the capital. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Commuters in a tight spot

Businesses also incurring losses

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

It was midday; lost in thoughts, Mizanur Rahman was sitting inside his electronics store.

When this correspondent walked inside, considering him a potential customer, the owner of Elahi Electronics got up.

But soon he flinched. After an initial hesitation, Mizanur said, "Our business is declining due to a poor presence of customers after the transport restriction in the Gulshan area."

"I have been doing business here for the last 12 years. Before, we hardly got time for lunch," the 45-year-old looked around and sighed.

Since the terror attack at a Gulshan eatery last July, the law enforcement agency imposed a restriction on the movement of buses that once operated between Kakoli and Natun Bazar.

"On top of the increased transportation cost, a buyer will have to change a bus or rickshaw at least twice to buy goods from here. Why would they come here?" Mizanur said. He said his monthly profit dropped to Tk 10,000 from Tk 40,000.

Meanwhile, commuters are the worst sufferers of the restriction in Gulshan, which encompasses residential, commercial and diplomatic zones. Not only local businesses, transport owners are also incurring losses.

Local societies, which have been trying to launch a new bus service for a long time, introduced Dhaka Chaka, an air-conditioned (AC) bus service under the coordination of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), which operates



Passengers compete for a CNG-run auto-rickshaw.

within Gulshan, Banani and Niketon areas.

The bus operates from Gulshan-2 to Niketon and Kakoli to Natun Bazar.

One has to change buses twice -- get off at Gulshan-2, then get on another one -- while travelling from Gulshan-1 to Kakoli, which is 3km, and for the entire trip a commuter has to pay Tk 30. Earlier, it took Tk 10 to travel the distance.

"People from the nearby locality used to come here for services like photocopy or printing. Now, you tell me, who will come for that spending Tk 30?" said KM Nuruzzaman, manager of a stationary shop on Madani Avenue.

Meanwhile, MA Malak, senior vice-president of DNCC

Gulshan-2 Kitchen Market, alleged they have raised the issue before the mayor several times, but got no response.

Sohel Rana, an undergraduate student of a private university, lives in Kachukhet, and uses the 36-seater AC bus regularly. "I go through a bizarre experience of cold and hot temperature every day as I am forced to change buses twice. I don't see any benefit; only it increased my transportation cost."

"If I use the bus, I will have to pay Tk 30 every day," said Mamun Mia, a security guard at Labaid Hospital in Gulshan-2, adding, "If I have to pay Tk 900 for transportation every month, how can I run my family with my Tk 6,000 salary?"

The Natun Bazar resident said earlier his monthly transportation expenditure was about Tk 300.

Due to the restriction and transportation crisis, students, office-goers and day labourers walking towards their destinations has become a regular phenomenon in Gulshan and Banani areas.

Md Shahadat, a salesperson at United Pharma, said now he walks to work at Gulshan-2 from Natun Bazar. "It takes half the time since I do not have to wait for a bus or get stuck in a traffic jam," he said.

Though the authorities have taken the initiative over security concerns, the restriction also paved way for illegal auto-rickshaws making a quick buck. Most of these CNG-run auto-rickshaws do not have meters but are carrying passengers under the nose of the on-duty police officers.

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PM opens water treatment plant

UNB, Ctg

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday formally inaugurated a water treatment plant in Chittagong, aiming to end the water crisis in the port city.

She opened the plant "Sheikh Hasina Water Treatment Plant", having a daily production capacity of 9.30 crore litres of water, from a function held at Chittagong Boat Club.

Chittagong Water Supply Sewerage Authority (Wasa) took the project in 2006 to meet the growing demand of water for the city dwellers. Financed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), the work on the project began in 2010 and it went into operation in November last.

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Two 'neo-JMB' men remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Mirsharai police yesterday placed two "neo-JMB" (Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh) members, who were arrested in Comilla on March 7 after an attack on police, on a 10-day remand each in a case filed under anti-terrorism act.

A Chittagong court fixed March 20 for hearing. The case was filed on Wednesday after a hideout of neo-JMB militants was discovered, following their information, in two-storey Redwan Manzil in Mirsharai upazila, from where police recovered 29 hand-made grenades and bomb-making materials.

The two are now on remand in another case in Comilla, said court inspector.

Meanwhile, Chittagong district police during its anti-terrorism raid arrested 129 people in different cases. But none of them is involved in militancy, said police.



Without any proper safety measures, workers of Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited work on a roadside electric pole in the capital's Tejgaon area. Workers involved in high-risk jobs often fall victim to fatal accidents for a lack of protective equipment. The photo was taken on Saturday. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

WAR CRIMES CASE

Witness testifies on killing, torture in Moulvibazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness yesterday testified how five war crimes accused along with Pakistan army men tortured him and killed his brother during the Liberation War in 1971.

Abdul Kader of Dakkhin Khalagram (Nayatila) of Rajnagar upazila in Moulvibazar, and also the eighth prosecution witness in the case against five Moulvibazar men, broke into tears as he completed his testimony before the International Crimes Tribunal-1 and prayed for justice.

The accused are Yunus Ahmed, Ujer Ahmed Chowdhury, Samsul Hossain Tarafder, Nesar Ali, and Mobarak Mia. They are facing five charges. Of them, Yunus and Ujer are now in jail while the rest are on the run.

Kader, 70, said on November 29, 1971, some 100 to 150 Pakistan army men and Razakars including Nesar, Shamsur, Ujer, Yunus, and Mobarak, laid siege to their houses and picked up his brother Abdul Basit alias Badsha, a freedom fighter, and him.

They tortured them and looted their houses before setting those on fire, said the witness. The attackers also picked up their neighbour Najabat Ali and burnt down his house.

The Razakars and army men then handed them over to local Razakars who locked them inside Rajnagar Police Station and continued torturing them. In the evening, the accused and Pakistan army decided to take the detainees to a local army camp.

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2nd from the left side Prof. Dr. AKM Fazlul Haque & 6th Prof. Antonio Longo

Prof. Dr. AKM FAZLUL HAQUE honoured in India for his contribution to Colorectal Surgery

Prof. Dr. AKM Fazlul Haque (Pioneer colorectal surgeon of Bangladesh & Subcontinent, Founder, colorectal surgery dept. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University) was recently (22.02.2017 to 26.02.2017) invited to the world conference of International Society of Coloproctology (Surgery of large intestine, rectum and anus) in Gujarat, India, as chief guest/International faculty. In this conference more than 600 specialist surgeons from across the world including 10 from Bangladesh took part. Prof. Dr. AKM Fazlul Haque was one of the 12 internationally reputed specialist colorectal surgeons who were invited as international faculty. Also invited was the world-renowned Italian surgeon & inventor of Longo Operation, Prof. Dr. Antonio Longo. Other international faculties were Dr. R. Sherer from Germany, Prof. Scott Melvin & Prof. Kamacho Diego from USA, Prof. Alexie Karachun & Prof. Sergei Petrov from Russia, Prof. Kotato Myeda from Japan, Prof. Jain David & Prof. Ali Shafiq from UK, Prof. Ronan O'Connell from Ireland & Prof. Adam Dziki from Poland. The conference authority selected Prof. Antonio Longo & Prof. Fazlul Haque for live MIPH or Longo operation. Prof. Longo was the inventor & Prof. Haque has the worldwide highest record of successful operation for piles, fissure and fistula. Prof. Longo, the inventor himself, was present as moderator during Prof. Haque's operation. He & the 600 colorectal surgeons keenly observed and asked questions about the procedure. Dr. Asif Almas Haque, the eldest son of Prof. Haque, assisted during the operation. Prof. Haque successfully performed the procedure on a 4th degree piles without any blood loss or external surgery, which was greatly appreciated by everyone. Later Prof. Haque performed a complex fistula operation and displayed his skill how to use seton to cure fistula. After Prof. Haque, Prof. Longo performed another Longo Operation. Out of 12 international faculties, only 2 were given the honor of performing live surgery in this conference. Later Prof. Haque was invited to chair the prestigious Dr. Shivalingam oration symposium.

On 25th February the conference authority honored 12 international faculties with memento and a short description on their experience and contribution to colorectal surgery was read out. Prof. Briz B. Agarwal, the chairman of the program, described Prof. Haque as the pioneer colorectal surgeon of the subcontinent, who has performed the highest number (more than 50000) of successful colorectal surgery in the world.

On 26th February Prof. Haque was invited as a specialist panel speaker in another international conference in Mumbai. Chairman of the meeting Prof. Roy Patankar described Prof. Haque as the most experienced surgeon with highest number colorectal patients worldwide and requested him to share his vast experience with the audience.

This unprecedented success is a pride for Bangladesh. We wish him more success, good health & long life.

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