

60,000 Rohingyas to get free eye care from Orbis
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Orbis International, Bangladesh will provide free eye care services to some 60,000 Rohingyas and host communities in Cox's Bazar.

Orbis yesterday signed an agreement to this effect with Cox's Bazar Baitush Sharaf Hospital (CBSH).

Dr Munir Ahmed, Orbis country director; and MM Sirajul Islam, general secretary of CBSH signed the agreement at the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner's (RRRC) office in Cox's Bazar.

Funded by Qatar Fund for Development, the eye care services will be provided under a project titled "Qatar Creating Vision Expanding Eye Care," says an Orbis press release.

The services will include free eye screenings for 50,000 people, supply of medicines and spectacles to 8,000 people and surgical treatment to 20 children and 850 adults at two Rohingya camps, in Ukhia and Teknaf, as well as to the host population at Maheshkhali and Chakoria, said the release.

Skills development trainings will also be provided to around 250 frontline health workers and ophthalmic personnel in the first year of the project.

Orbis will set up "Vision Centers" outside the camps for the host community. A mobile unit will work in the camp areas to conduct primary screening of children and adults, according to the release.

Bob Ranck, president and chief executive officer of Orbis International, who is visiting Bangladesh, said many in the refugee camps and the host communities have been suffering from various eye diseases such as glaucoma and cataract.

He urged all concerned to come forward and address the situation.



The month-long Ekushey book fair is gaining momentum with book enthusiasts of all ages thronging the fair. The photo was taken at Suhrawardy Udyan around 4:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Where memories come alive

MATHEWS CHIRAN



There is something magical about revisiting old books. It is a journey filled with nostalgia and above all else, love.

No matter how old one gets, the books they bonded with, fought with friends for reading those first or even had to lie to parents to buy would never forget.

Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela remains a perfect opportunity for bookworms to rekindle their love for books, especially the ones they fell in love with in the first place.

And, this year's book fair is no different.

Yesterday, visitors were seen thronging the stalls at Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan looking for books for family, friends and of course for themselves. Visitors were seen revisiting novels, poetry books, world literature, autobiographies and many more.

Many of the publishing houses were showcasing the timeless pieces. One such publication is "Seba Prokashoni". It has been almost fifty years, yet the appeal of its books has not diminished. The stall was swarmed with enthusiasts of translated classics, mystery, crime, thriller, spy and suspense novels.

Seba's evergreen series -- Tin Goyenda and Masud Rana -- are still in demand among the readers as they keep on looking for those to enrich their collections.

This correspondent met Zerin Tasnim, an expatriate in China, at the book fair yesterday, browsing through "Tin Goyenda" volumes at the stall. "Not a day went by when I didn't read Tin Goyenda. Later, I started reading Masud Rana. I used to come to the Seba stall at the fair every year," she said.

"Since I live abroad now, it isn't possible for me to visit

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Trade licence on the spot

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Ctg

For many in the port city, getting a trade licence from the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) used to be time consuming and difficult.

Not just the allegations of harassment and bribery ran rife, many also had to wait for almost a month for their licences.

But not any longer.

With the inception of a new method called "Spot Trade Licence", now businesses are getting their licences within hours as the revenue officials are setting up booths at markets and providing necessary services to the businesses directly.

The corporation kicked off the new service on January 14 in the Baizid area aiming to continue it till the middle of this month.

Before, in order to obtain a trade

licence, a businessman had to fill up an application first. Then the revenue officials would go through it and also visit the establishment for verification.

Afterwards, they would file a report based on their inspection. Then the report had to be approved by the high-ups. The process usually took more than a month, said many of the business owners.

Contacted, Dr Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, CCC chief revenue officer, said, "The old method was time-consuming and there was a scope for corruption. I thought of a new method that would reduce corruption to zero and expedite the process."

"Under the new process, a business owner can get the licence right away after paying a fee. One can also renew his or her trade licence on the spot," he added.

Ali Nur, a business owner at Shah Amanat Market, said he got the licence without any complications.

Mansur Chowdhury, general secretary of Shah Amanat Business Association, said, "The CCC brought the service to our doorsteps. It's a great relief for businesses... Earlier, getting a licence was hectic. A business owner had to go to CCC at least three times..."

There are 99,100 businesses in the port city while 68,000 already got their trade licenses, according to a recent CCC survey.

This year, the city corporation is planning to issue trade licences to the rest of the businesses with an aim to realise Tk 27 crore from licence fees.

"If needed, we'll continue the Spot Trade Licence process," said CCC chief revenue officer.

WAR CRIMES IN NOAKHALI

Verdict on four 'Razakars' any day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 will deliver verdict any day in a case filed against four men from Noakhali for their alleged involvement in crimes committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Md Shahinur Islam kept the verdict waiting for delivery after the prosecution and the defence counsels completed placing their closing arguments yesterday.

Prosecutor Zahid Imam sought capital punishment for all four accused saying that the prosecution has been able to prove all three charges brought against the four.

On the other hand, defence counsels Tariqul Islam, Gazi MH Tamim and Masud Rana sought acquittal of their clients saying

that prosecution utterly failed to prove the charges.

The accused -- Amir Ali, 70; Md Joynal Abedin, 73; Abul Kalam alias AKM Mansur, 67; and Md Abdul Kuddus, 84 -- hail from Sudharmar upazila in the district. Of them, Abul Kalam is on the run while the rest are in jail.

On June 20, 2016, the tribunal framed three charges against the four who were allegedly involved with Razakar Bahini, an auxiliary force of Pakistani occupation army, and the killing of at least 111 people in three incidents.

The prosecution on October 5, 2015, pressed charges against five men from Noakhali, including the four. But Mohammad Yusuf later died of old age.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Community health care providers continue their hunger strike for the sixth day yesterday in front of Jatiya Press Club, demanding nationalisation of their jobs.

PHOTO: STAR

Birth at health centres must for lowering infant mortality

Prothom Alo-Unicef roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Child births have to be administered at health centres to prevent birth-related problems of newborns and reduce the country's infant mortality rate, experts said yesterday.

If any family cannot afford health centres for child birth, they need to engage skilled attendants such as midwives during the birth, they said at a roundtable discussion.

The parents must be extra cautious during the first 24 hours. After a child is born, the infant should be given intensive care, kept in skin-to-skin contact with the mother and given breast milk within an hour of its birth, they added.

Bangla daily Prothom Alo in association with Unicef Bangladesh organised the roundtable titled "every infant should be alive" at its office in the capital.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A family appears to be moving to a new place. Moving is undoubtedly a painstaking task. But the way these people including a child are sitting dangerously in the back of the running truck, a fatality can occur in a fraction of a second. The photo was taken at Bangla Motor in the capital yesterday.

AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK Defence seeks acquittal of Huji's Uzzal

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Defence counsel of Huji leader Uzzal alias Ratan yesterday concluded arguments and sought acquittal for his client from all charges in the cases filed over August 21 grenade attack.

Advocate Mohammad Ali argued for over two hours and cited contradictions between the confessional statements given by Uzzal and those by four other Huji leaders, including Mufti Abdul Hannan.

The lawyer said his client was falsely implicated in the cases and he should be acquitted of the charges.

Judge Shahed Nuruddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka heard the arguments and later adjourned the hearing till today.

Today, defence lawyer for another Huji leader Arif Hassan Sumon will start arguments in the cases.

Earlier, defence lawyers for 19 others including BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman, former BNP lawmaker Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad and Hanif Paribahan owner Mohammad Hanif concluded their closing arguments in the cases.

Twenty-four leaders and activists of the AL and its associate bodies were killed and over 300 others suffered splinter injuries in the August 21 attack. Ivy Rahman, the then Mohila AL president and also the wife of late president Zillur Rahman, was among the deceased.

Of the 49 accused, eight, including three former inspectors general of police, are now on bail, while 18, including Tariq Rahman, are absconding.

Twenty-three accused, including former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar and ex-deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu who are now behind bars, were produced before the court yesterday.

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