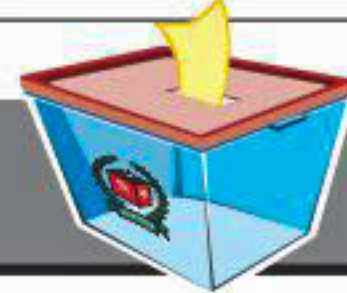


CITY CORPORATION

ELECTIONS 2018



An unpopular choice

Passengers dwindling on Khulna-Kolkata train service

MOHSIN MILON, Benapole

After eight months since its launch, the Khulna-Kolkata passenger train service has not caught on as a route of choice among India-bound passengers.

Bandhan Express, with 456 seats, was launched on November 16, 2017, the inaugural run to Kolkata carrying 253 passengers. Since then, the highest number of passengers it has had on a single journey so far was 184 the next day, November 17. The number has been on the decline since.

Nowadays, only some 130 passengers on an average travel by the eight-coach train, whereas some 5,000 Bangladeshi people use the Benapole border to enter India on a daily basis.

Passengers attribute poor show of the Bandhan Express service, long stops at Indian border station Chitpur for immigration and customs formalities, once-a-week only (Thursday) schedule, high ticket price, and hassles in ticket purchase both in Khulna and Kolkata to the situation.

Mahmudul Hassan, a businessman from Khulna who frequently travels to India, said the train runs only on Thursdays. So, those who have emergency have to take a bus or flight.

Moreover, train tickets are only available for spot purchase, that too only at Khulna Railway Station. There is no online purchase option which is another drawback, he added.

"Khulna is a small city. Logically, it will not have many passengers for India. And there is no railway stop between Khulna and Chitpur," said Riadul Hassan, a government employee and resident of Jessore.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BARISAL

Police deployed near Sarwar's residence

BNP alleges harassment from law enforcers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

BNP led 20-party alliance nominated mayoral candidate Mujibur Rahman Sarwar alleged that police were deployed in front of his house at Kawnia area of the city.

"How is a 'level playing field' ensured if we have to work under police harassment?" he said.

Barisal Metropolitan Police Commissioner (Acting) Mostafizur Rahman said, "Police have been deployed near the candidate's residence since we have information that arms would enter the city through this route."

"The intention is not to harass; we just set up a check post," he added.

Meanwhile, party leaders alleged that six activists were arrested by police yesterday.

Sarwar said arresting BNP and Jamaat men during election campaign will damage the level playing field needed for a free and fair election.

He made this comment while campaigning in Kalijira of Jagua area of the city. BNP leader Nazimuddin Alam was with him.

"Police have been deployed in front of the residence of the BNP candidate and they are searching everyone going to this house," said Abul Kalam Shahin, district BNP secretary.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

RAJSHAHI

Bulbul places his manifesto

Reducing holding tax, ensuring gas supply top electoral pledges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

With a promise to reduce holding tax and cooperate with the ongoing quota reform movement, BNP-backed mayoral candidate Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul yesterday announced his election manifesto.

He announced the manifesto at a community centre in Saheb Bazar area.

The pledge to reduce holding tax is on top of Bulbul's 18-point manifesto while it is at the bottom of Awami League candidate AHM Khairuzzaman Liton's 16-point electoral promises placed on July 10.

Bulbul said though the holding tax was raised during his tenure as the city mayor, it was done in his absence as he was suspended. "The government made Liton's relative the mayor and raised the tax," he alleged.

He said he would cooperate with the quota reform movement and work towards ensuring jobs for meritorious students.

He claimed that supply of natural gas has reached Rajshahi, but its supply to industries remained suspended following a conspiracy. Gas supply connections were available to only a handful of industries and CNG stations -- owned by ruling party men, he alleged.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

SYLHET

Don't arrest campaigners without specific charges

HC orders police, grants bail to 50 BNP, JCD men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The High Court yesterday ordered the police not to detain or arrest any activists and supporters of the candidates contesting the Sylhet City Corporation election during the election period, without specific allegations.

The bench of Justice Muhammad Abdul Hafiz and Justice Kashef Hussain passed the order following a writ petition seeking necessary order filed by Saleh Ahmed Khasru, vice president of Sylhet district BNP, the petitioner's lawyer Barrister Abdul Halim Kafi said.

He said the same HC bench yesterday also granted anticipatory bail to 50 leaders and activists of Sylhet BNP and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in two cases filed by police and Awami League on Sunday. The court granted them bail till August 8, the barrister said.

Police filed a case accusing 39 BNP and JCD leaders of obstructing the law enforcers from carrying out their duty, days after the accused staged a sit-in in front of a deputy commissioner's office of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

In another case, 34 BNP-JCD men were accused by Farid Uddin, election management committee member of AL, for arson on an electoral camp of AL candidate Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Olama League leader, 2 others arrested with Phensedyl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Police yesterday arrested the central joint secretary of Olama League's Helali-led faction and two of his associates with 26 bottles of Phensedyl near Meghna toll plaza on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Sonargaon.

The Olama League leader, Mosharraf Hossain Nayeem, 40, also the president of the party's Rupganj thana unit, was arrested after a patrol team of police stopped and searched a Rupganj-bound car carrying him early yesterday morning and found the Phensedyl bottles in a bag, said Sub-inspector (SI) Faisal Hawlader of Sonargaon Police Station.

The other passenger of the car, Jamal Uddin, 40, son of Abul Kashem from Noapara in Rupganj, and the driver of the car, Rana, 27, from the same area, were also arrested.

Mosharraf during primary interrogation admitted that they collected the Phensedyl from Comilla for personal consumption and sale, SI Faisal said.

A case was filed against the three under Narcotics Control Act, the SI added.

Jaasim Uddin, inspector (investigation) of Sonargaon Police Station, said the arrestees were sent to the court. The inspector said they sought for a seven-day remand prayer.



FORCED ONTO FLYOVER: With rains sending the roads under water in Chittagong city, pedestrians take Akhtaruzzaman flyover to walk to their destinations intensifying the traffic chaos yesterday. *Inset*, a half-sunken car is just one example of how waterlogging takes its toll on the port city residents. The photos were taken in Muradpur area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Man accused of killing daughter

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A two-year-old girl was allegedly poisoned to death by her father in Tongi of Gazipur city yesterday.

The child's mother, Sufia Khatun, claimed that her husband, Dulal Hossain from Gopalpur of Tongi, killed their daughter Fatema with poison-induced fruit drink.

She said another child of her husband, with a different wife, had died of poisoning before.

Mohammad Shahin, sub-inspector (SI) of Tongi Police Station, said there was no injury marks when they recovered the body from Dulal's house. The body was later sent to Gazipur Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College for an autopsy.

The SI confirmed to have received a verbal complaint of poisoning from Sufia, Dulal's fourth wife. He said a case is under trial over death of another child Dulal had with a different wife.

Obey the laws

FROM PAGE 3

The state minister said they updated the existing labour law, which will be passed during the next parliament session.

Israfil Alam, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on labour and employment, said child domestic workers face various physical and sexual violence, but most of those do not come to light.

A legal framework is a must to stop these, he said. "It is very difficult to eliminate child labour for good. But we can minimise it," said Israfil.

ILO Bangladesh Country Director Tuomo Poutainen, Dhaka University Professor Mohammad Nazmuzzaman Bhuian, BSAF Chairman Emranul Huq Chowdhury and its Director Abdus Shahid Mahmood also spoke at the programme.

DEATH OF RAIFA

Doctors skip BMDC hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Despite being notified in advance to be present before a probe committee formed by Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC), four doctors sued for their alleged negligence in treatment of Rafida Khan Raifa remained absent during the committee's visit yesterday.

The four-member committee headed by Prof Dr Nurul Amin visited Max Hospital in Chittagong city as part of their investigation.

BMDC formed the committee on July 18 to investigate into the death of Raifa. The three-year-old died at the hospital on June 29.

Raifa's father Rubel Khan, a senior reporter of Bangla daily Samakal, filed a complaint on July 18 accusing four doctors. Police took two days to record the case as they needed to take permission from higher

authorities, said a police official, but did not explain why they needed the permission for filing a case.

The accused doctors are hospital director Liakot Ali, child specialist Bidhan Roy Chowdhury, medical officer Debasish Sengupta, and Shuvro Deb.

Soon after forming the committee, BMDC issued a notice to Dr Bidhan Roy, Debasish Sengupta and Shuvro Deb, asking them to be present before the committee by 9:00am yesterday.

While talking to journalists at the hospital, Dr Nurul Amin said, "The four accused doctors informed the committee that they could not be present due to personal reasons."

The probe committee also asked hospital Chairman Dr Shib Shankar Shaha, General Manager Ranjan Prashadgupta, nurses and staff members (who were on-duty during the

incident) and Raifa's parents to be present.

"We spoke to Raifa's father, he said he won't come to Max Hospital," said Dr Nurul Amin, adding, "After recording statements from both sides, we will reach a conclusion."

Other members of the committee are Prof Dr Abul Hasnat Joardar, an ENT specialist of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Prof Dr Narayan, a neurosurgeon, and the deputy registrar of BMDC.

PROBE COMMITTEE'S ROLE QUESTIONED

While talking to journalists, Rubel Khan, Raifa's father, said, "The committee came to Chittagong to investigate but they didn't record my statement; how will they find out the truth then?"

"They asked me to meet them at Max Hospital, but I refused. How could I go

there?" said Rubel.

He said the committee members later asked him to meet at a restaurant. "I told them I can meet them at press club or Chittagong Circuit House or at my home."

Raifa died on June 29 at the hospital after she was admitted there with pain in her throat.

A government investigation led by the Chittagong civil surgeon found negligence of doctors in treating her. The committee also recommended punitive actions against three Max Hospital doctors -- Liakot Ali, Debasish Sengupta and Shuvro Deb.

A week after Raifa's death, Rab raided the hospital and fined it for various irregularities. In response, owners of private clinics, hospitals and diagnostic centres enforced a 20-hour strike in Chittagong.

CU teacher Maidul sued under Section 57

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University's (CU) Assistant Professor Maidul Islam, who has left the campus due to threats issued by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) men, has now been sued under ICT act yesterday for his alleged remarks defaming Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Md Iftekar Uddin Ayaz, a former executive member of CU unit BCL, filed the case under section 57 of ICT Act on Monday night with Hathazari Police Station, said Belal Mohammad Jahangir, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station.

In the case statement, the complainant said Maidul has defamed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a Facebook post, spelling her name as "Hashi Na" on July 13.

Maidul also defamed the PM by posting a superimposed picture where several students were seen sleeping in a small room, and a bowl of distasteful-looking lentil soup, the complainant said.

According to the case statement Maidul gave a caption of the photo which reads "So which of the favours of your mother would you deny?"

Meanwhile, a group of teachers and employees under the banner of Bangabandhu Parishad formed a human chain yesterday on the campus demanding punishment for the teacher, for his alleged defamatory remarks against the PM and distorting a verse of the Holy Quran.

However, Maidul maintains that he never wrote derogatory remarks against the premier.

Maidul, a teacher of sociology department, left the campus along with his family on July 15 after BCL men issued public threats to him and his family. He later notified the matter to university authorities and sought security from the university administration.

Earlier, BCL men lodged a complaint against Maidul to the department chairperson, and submitted a memorandum to the vice-chancellor against two teachers including him.

Later, the university formed a three member probe committee to investigate into these allegations, against Maidul and Khandakar Ali Ar Raji, an assistant professor of mass communication and journalism department.

The BCL men have also announced the teachers "unwelcome" on the campus.

NGO official, son arrested with yaba

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detectives of Chittagong Metropolitan Police yesterday arrested three persons including a father and son along with 5,400 yaba pills in Chittagong city's Firingi Bazar area.

The arrestees are Aftab Mia alias Arif Babu, 59, his son Alamin, 32, of Gazipur and Nihar Ranjan Mallik, 35, of Khulna.

Aftab works as an NGO official at a Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar, said Assistant Commissioner Moinul Islam of DB (west). On information, a DB team intercepted the trio in Bridge Ghat area, he added.

"After searching the bag Aftab was carrying, police recovered 4,000 yaba pills concealed inside. An additional 1,400 pills were recovered frisking Alamin and Nihar," said AC Moinul.

DB officials said Aftab, in guise of an NGO official, had been collecting consignments of yaba tablets from another female NGO worker for a long time.

"He used to peddle yaba from Cox's Bazar to other parts of the country. Police were trying to bust the racket," said the AC.

Govt medicines

FROM PAGE 3

India, and medicines given to physicians as samples by pharmaceutical companies.

The shops were fined Tk 56 lakh, while the court sentenced the six shop owners to six months to one year's jail terms for their involvement in the illegal activities.



A mangled metal road divider on Chouhatta Ambarkhana Road in Sylhet city's Dargah Gate area. Left unrepaired for days, the damaged divider is not only slowing down traffic movement on this narrow road, but also posing a serious safety hazard for road users. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR