



**Packed launches anchor at Chandpur Ghat after arriving from Dhaka as home-bound rush ahead of Eid-ul-Azha began yesterday. However, like every year, there was no initiative to stop or reduce overcrowding, a major cause of naval accidents. According to the ghat staff, each medium-size three-storey vessel is able to carry around 700 people, but none of them is transporting less than 2,000 on this occasion.**

# Attorney general to give expert opinion on quota reform soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam will give expert opinion about the quota for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren in the civil service to the government by Monday.

"I have received a letter from the committee formed by the government to evaluate the quota system three or four days back. In the letter, the committee sought my opinion about the quota [for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren] in the civil service. I will give my opinion to the committee by Monday," the attorney general told The Daily Star yesterday.

Mahbubey Alam refused to disclose his opinion yesterday, saying he would speak about the issue after sending the opinion to the evaluation committee concerned.

Contacted, Supreme Court Registrar General Dr Md Zakir told this newspaper that the government has not yet sent any letter to the Supreme Court till yesterday for its opinion about the quota system in the public service.

Cabinet Secretary M Shafiqul Alam, who leads the seven-member committee formed to evaluate the quota system, on August 12 told reporters that the panel would seek the SC's opinion about the 30 percent quota for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren.

The evaluation committee suggested that almost all quotas in civil service should be abolished, and merit-based recruitment should be prioritised. In a verdict in 2015, the Appellate Division of the SC said, "The High Court Division observed that the reservation of 30 percent quota for the children of freedom fighters shall be followed strictly."

A large number of youths took to the streets in Shahbagh and a number of highways on April 8, demanding quota reform. After the demonstrations spiraled nationwide, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 11 spoke at parliament about scrapping the quota system, prompting students to suspend the movement.

Fresh demonstrations began in late April demanding publishing of a gazette notification, and continued across the country, including boycotting of classes and exams at educational institutions. A committee was formed by the prime minister on June 26 to review the quota system and its reformation.

On June 30 and July 1, BCL activists attacked the protesters at Dhaka University and Rajshahi University, leaving a number of students injured. Law enforcers in the coming days arrested and remanded a number of leaders of the movement, all of who are still in jail or remand.

## CU shuttle train takes

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Institute of Education and Research, said, "I frequently miss the train because it remains packed. During rush hours, even the roof is full."

Sometimes getting a space inside the train does not mean it is the end of sufferings, especially for female students.

Ayesha Mitu, a master's student of statistics, said, "It often becomes difficult to breathe freely as every corner of the train is full. Several times, I passed out in the train due to jostling, heat, sweat and body odour, and it happened to many other students as well."

Drishon Pradip Chakma, president of Chhatra Union's CU unit, said, "The university authorities take Tk 820 from each student during admission and Tk 579 annually from the second year to the end of the master's programme as transport fee. But, they seem least bothered about the accidents and students' plight."

After the accident of August 6, CU students demonstrated on the campus to press home their demand for 12 compartments for each of the shuttle trains.

When contacted, Proctor Ali Asgar Chowdhury said, "A double-track railway is needed to run a train with more than nine coaches because the locomotive cannot easily reverse directions if there is more. But the university station has a single-track line."

When approached, Firoj Iftakhar, divisional transport officer, Bangladesh Railway, admitted that according to the agreement between Bangladesh Railway and CU, each shuttle train is supposed to get nine compartments but due to shortage, most of the time they can provide up to seven.

About the rail track, Firoj said the single-track line can allow a train with up to 11 compartments. But the compartment crisis is the major problem now, he said, adding that inclusion of a new shuttle train can be a long-term solution.

When contacted, Vice Chancellor Prof Iftakhar Uddin Chowdhury said they informed the Bangladesh Railway authorities at least seven times but there was no response.

Finally, last week, he managed to meet the railways minister. The minister assured him of taking some fruitful measures after overall inspection soon, the VC added.

## Body reaches home after 43 days

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get higher education there, but he continued to torture her, Upama said, adding that Sajeda told her family members about the matter over telephone.

Shahjada fled his residence after the incident along with their daughter Mugdho, a first-grader, she said.

Later on July 16, Bangladesh police rescued Mugdho, 7, from Shahjada's village home in Andua village of Mirzaganj upazila in Patuakhali and handed her over to her

maternal grandparents, said Upama.

Malaysian police arrested Shahjada on July 25 and he was charged under Section 302 of the Penal Code which carries a mandatory death penalty in the court there, said Upama.

Shahjada married Sajeda on April 25 in 2004, said Upama, adding that he worked as a supervisor at a shopping mall.

Sajeda passed SSC examinations from Patuakhali Government Girls School and obtained LLB and LLM degrees from Prime University, Upama said.

## Hasina mourns Vajpayee's

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sympathy and condolences to the government and people of India, and to the bereaved family members. "We pray for the eternal peace of his soul."

FM ATTENDS FUNERAL  
Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali yesterday attended the funeral of Vajpayee in New Delhi.

While talking to the Indian media, the minister said Bangladesh remembers Vajpayee for his contribution to its Liberation War and strong support to its people. Vajpayee also had a great liking for Bangla music, he said.

His last rites were performed at Smriti Sthal with state honour. His mortal remains were taken to BJP's national headquarters at Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg in the morning. People from all walks of life paid homage to him.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader died on Thursday. He was 93.

## Mobile court busts fake beverage factory

Sentences owner to 6 months in jail  
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A mobile court in Biral upazila of Dinajpur yesterday sealed off a factory and sentenced its owner to six months in prison for manufacturing adulterated beverages including sexual stimulants.

The court, led by Executive Magistrate ABM Rawshan Kabir, also UNO of Biral, later confiscated and destroyed the chemicals that were used at the factory.

A large quantity of empty packages of brand-named consumable items including flour and mustard oil were also seized from the factory.

UNO Rawshan said the factory owner, Monzurul Islam, 28, of Nonagram village, was sent to Dinajpur prison.

## BCL man stabbed by fellow activist

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from him, which I lent him earlier. When Shiblu refused to pay me, we got into a scuffle," he said. JU BCL President Md Jewel Rana said it was a personal conflict;

BCL had nothing to do with it.

The hall provost, Shafi M Tareq, said, "It's a crime... Proper steps would be taken after investigation. We need time as the university is on vacation."

## Admission test of evening programme

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postponement, saying, "We will take the admission test in due time."

Chemistry students first started demonstrating against the launching of the evening

master's programme on August 5.

Later, when PCJ declared to resist the admission test, many of the general students of the department denounced the move.

## Dr Kamal pleads to PM

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will show such generosity."

He also said he wants to meet the premier demanding release of the students if Sheikh Hasina gives time, otherwise he will send a written request to the PM.

"We did not sit here to oppose you. You can govern the country following the constitution. It is not possible to do any good work defying the constitution. Issues of quota reform and road safety have created problems. It is very much possible to resolve those problems keeping in mind the national and public interests," he added.

Regarding the incident of attack on a student with a hammer in Rajshahi, Kamal said the attacker is psychologically ill and he requires treatment because a physically sound person cannot carry out such a brutal attack.

Speaking at the programme, Zafarullah Chowdhury, founder of Gonoshasthaya Kendra, also echoed him, saying the students should be released before the Eid.

He also expressed concerns over the arrest of renowned photographer Shahidul Alam.



**Locals block Post Office road in Habiganj town yesterday, protesting waterlogging (inset) in the area.** PHOTO: STAR

## HABIGANJ WATERLOGGING Locals block road in protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Locals blocked Post Office road in Habiganj town yesterday, demanding an end to waterlogging in the area.

As the major part of the road has remained under water due to downpour the night before, several hundred residents, including businesspersons, took to the street.

They stayed there for two hours, causing disruption of vehicular movement, said Jiaur Rahman, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Habiganj Police Station.

The businesspersons said even after a little rain the road gets waterlogged. At that time, the shops beside it have to be kept shut, they added.

Milu Das, a resident of Karmakar Potty area, said a lack of proper drainage system has been causing such a situation for a long time.

Monir Mia, a resident of Post Office area, alleged that drains overflow with garbage as the Habiganj municipality authorities do not clean those regularly.

Talking to The Daily Star, Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), Habiganj unit, also blamed poor drainage system for such a situation.

Besides, the canals flowing through the town cannot drain rainwater as those are being grabbed.

Around 25 percent area of the town goes under water even after a brief rain, he said.

Shafiqul Alam, deputy commissioner (acting) in Habiganj, said the residents withdrew the blockade after they had been assured of solving the problem.

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## Luma was arrested

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not for her role in the quota movement.

Luma's mother, who was also present at the press conference, claimed that police arrested Luma though she had not committed any offence.

"Ever since my daughter got involved with the quota reform protest, a faction is branding her as Mufti Hannan's niece, which is completely baseless," she said.

She claimed that Luma could not appear in three of her final exams and left Dhaka in last week of July to evade arrest, and since then had been staying at Gopalganj.

"On August 12, we came to know that an arrest warrant was issued against Luma and we sent her to Sirajganj [her grandparents' place] to stay on that day. But she was arrested on August 15," she said.

"How could she be arrested while she was not in Dhaka during the whole protest?" she questioned.

Another joint convener, Jalal Hossain, claimed that Luma was produced before court 26 hours after she was arrested, whereas an arrestee must be produced before court within 24 hours as per law.

"This is a clear violation of the constitution and human rights," he said.

The protestors also alleged that some Chhatra League leaders are distracting the law enforcers by posting false, edited and manipulated pictures and videos in some Facebook groups.

They reiterated their three-point demand, including unconditional release of the arrested leaders of the platform and exemplary punishment of the attackers of quota reformists and issued an ultimatum to the government to meet their demands by August 31.