

Bonolota Express starts journey

Rajshahi-Dhaka nonstop train service launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

With an aim to boost rail connectivity with the northern district, a nonstop intercity train service on Dhaka-Rajshahi route began yesterday morning.

Decorated with wreaths and balloons, "Bonolota Express" started its test run from Rajshahi Railway Station at 10:10am. The train will be open to passengers from Saturday, said railway officials.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the service by flagging off the train through videoconference.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon and Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton attended the inauguration programme. Later, the minister boarded the train to partake in the first-ever nonstop journey on the route.

The train will run six days a week except for Fridays. Its fare will be 10 percent more than the current rate.

The 928-seat train will start at 7am from Rajshahi station and reach Dhaka

at 11:40am. It would start again from Dhaka at 1:30pm and reach Rajshahi at 6:10pm.

It has 12 coaches, imported from Indonesia recently, and two engines, imported from India in 2013. It was taken to Rajshahi from Ishwardi junction on April 23.

Bonolota Express will halt for a mandatory five-minute operational stoppage before Bangabandhu Bridge on Jamuna river and at Airport Station in Dhaka.

The new train will travel at an average speed of 85km per hour and slow down to 16kmph while crossing a station. The expected travel time through its 343km route is four hours and 40 minutes.

Three intercity trains -- Silk City, Padma and Dhumketu Express -- are currently operating daily on the Rajshahi-Dhaka route, having stoppages at 10-14 stations.

This would be the third nonstop train; currently two trains are plying the Dhaka-Chattogram route.



The nonstop intercity train headed towards the capital from Rajshahi yesterday morning. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Publish report of water tested at Wasa lab

Human chain demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of activists formed a human chain yesterday morning in front of Dhaka Wasa building in Karwan Bazar, demanding publishing of the water test report done at Dhaka Wasa's own laboratory.

Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) and several other groups organised it.

Criticising comments by Taqsem A Khan, managing director of Dhaka Wasa, protesters also expressed discontent over the organisation's operations.

Earlier on Tuesday, five protesters from Jurain with a jar of muddy liquid which they claimed was water supplied to their area, went to Wasa Bhaban.

They tried to serve "sherbet" made with the SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Apologise within 48hrs

Journos to Shomi Kaiser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three journalist bodies yesterday gave a 48-hour ultimatum to media personality Shomi Kaiser, to apologise for her actions.

Condemning her actions that implied journalists were "potential thieves", Dhaka Reporters Unity in a press statement said the journalist community would boycott her if she does not apologise.

In a joint statement, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and Dhaka Union of Journalists also demanded her apology.

On Wednesday, journalists were confined, while covering her programme at Jatiya Press Club, for nearly 30 minutes after she lost her mobile phones.

Witnesses said Kaiser, president of e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh, told organisers at the programme she addressed, that she had lost her phones. SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Russell returns home with prosthetic leg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Russell Sarkar, who lost a leg after a bus ran him over in April last year, returned home from the Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) with a prosthetic leg yesterday.

A Swiss-made artificial leg was attached to Russell's knee at CRP on April 17, said Mohammad Shafiq, head of CRP's prosthetic and orthotics department.

He was given a release from CRP as he is now fit to walk using the prosthetic leg, said Shafiq. CRP bore the entire cost of the procedure. SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



JS rejects bill to raise govt job age limit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliament last night turned down a proposal for raising the age limit to enter government jobs to 35 years from the current 30 years.

Independent lawmaker Rezaul Karim Bablu from Bogura-7 placed the private member bill.

The House, however, rejected the bill by voice vote, as Bablu refused to withdraw his bill.

In the bill, the lawmaker said age limit to enter government services is 35 years to 55 years in 155 countries out of 192 in the world.

Some 2.8 million educated youths still remain unemployed, becoming a "burden" to their families, he argued.

State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain said entry and retirement age limits are now at logical level.

He said if the maximum age for job entry is raised, it will invite problems regarding pension and other retirement benefits.

He said students now can complete their post graduation degrees at age 23, since there is no session jam at educational institutions. So, students can get six to seven years to prepare for jobs.

NEWS IN brief

Dr Mahbub Alam of IUB no more

CITY DESK

Dr Mahbub Alam, dean, School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), passed away on Wednesday, aged 50.

He died from cardiac arrest while attending an international conference in Birmingham, UK.

He left behind his mother, wife, four brothers and three sisters.

Dr Alam joined IUB on July 4, 2004 and he had worked as the dean since January 2016. He served as the head of the Social Sciences and Humanities Department from 2013 to 2015. He was also a renowned folk researcher.

The IUB family expressed deep shock at the death.



Touhid Imroze Khalidi passes away

CITY DESK

Touhid Imroze Khalidi, assistant vice president of Mutual Trust Bank, passed away at the capital's United Hospital on Wednesday at age 42.

He left behind his wife, a son and a daughter, says a press release.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at Gulshan (Bhola) Jame Mosque at 10:30am yesterday.

The second janaza was held at Banani DOHS Mosque after the Zohr prayers. Touhid was buried at Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur.



Noor-E-Gulshan's death anniversary today

CITY DESK

Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Noor-E-Gulshan Dolly Khan, says a press release.

On the occasion, food will be distributed among the destitute at Banani graveyard and orphanage. Her relatives and friends are requested to pray for the departed soul.

Noor-E-Gulshan is mother of Lutfe Rabbi Khan, former Brac and SEDF, IFC (The World Bank Group) staff and former executive committee member of Uttara Club Ltd, and grandmother of Anika Khan.



Rohingya youths at risk of radicalisation

International Crisis Group says

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A lack of formal education in the Rohingya refugee camps leave children and youths there susceptible to radicalisation, the International Crisis Group (ICG) has said.

The independent organisation working to prevent wars and shape policies to build a more peaceful world, said Bangladesh should also lift its ban on formal education in the camps, adding that informal private "tuitions" held in private dwellings and networks of madrasas that only teach the Quran do not adequately fill the formal education gap.

In its latest briefing titled "Building a Better Future for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh" released yesterday, ICG said no evidence has emerged of these madrasas promoting violence or intolerance among children, or of indoctrination or recruitment by local or transnational jihadists. However, a policy of denying young people formal education and leaving them reliant on unregulated madrasas almost certainly increases the risks of such SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Nusrat murder trial will finish in record time: law minister

STAR REPORT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said necessary action will be taken to complete the trial for Nusrat's murder in "record time".

He said this at a press briefing at his ministry marking National Legal Aid Day on April 28.

Anisul Huq said, "Along with our prime minister, most people of our country are angry over the incident and they are keen to see the case finished soon."

"The prosecution has taken initial preparations to finish the trial in due process. As soon as formal charges are formed, we will take necessary action to finish the trial in record time like the Rajon murder trial," the minister said.

On the same day, Mohiuddin Shakil, another accused of the Nusrat murder case, was arrested from East

Ukilpara area in Feni town in the evening.

PIB inspector Shah Alam, the investigation officer of the murder case confirmed his arrest.

Shakil's involvement came to light in the confessional statement of Shahadat Hossain Shamim and Nur Uddin, who were involved directly with the planning and murder of the madrasa student.

Shakil acted as a guard during the murder, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Jakir Hossain placed Shamim on a three-day remand after the investigation officer pleaded for five days.

PIB arrested Shamim from Bhaluka area in Mymensingh on April 13. He gave his confession on the same day.

So far 21 people have been arrested

and eight gave confessional statements in connection to the incident.

DEMO CONTINUES

Students and teachers of different educational institutions and local people at Sarishadi Bazar in Feni Sadar upazila yesterday formed a human chain demanding exemplary punishment of those involved in the murder.

On April 6, Nusrat Jahan Rafi was set afire at an examination centre of Alim examination allegedly by students loyal to Principal Siraj Ud Doula of Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fazil Madrasa after he was arrested and subsequently suspended as Nusrat had accused him of sexually harassing her.

After fighting for her life for five days, Nusrat succumbed to her injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on April 10.

JABBARER BOLLI KHELA

Shahjalal lifts title

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cg

In a 22-minute 26-second display of muscle and tactics, Shahjalal Boli yesterday won the title of the 110th edition of Jabbarer Boli Khela, an iconic traditional wrestling competition, held at Laldighi Maidan in Chattogram city.

This was Shahjalal's second title. He claimed the trophy from last year's champion Jibon Boli.

Shahjalal from Cumilla redeemed himself from last year's runner-up title, conceded to Jibon from Chakaria. "It was a good fight. Jibon gave his full effort but the result was inevitable," confidence boomed in the champion's voice.

The tournament began at 4pm with participation of 62 contestants out of 111 registered wrestlers. Hundreds of spectators cheered the contestants throughout.

The final match began at 5:40pm, as both contestants began shedding sweat to pin each other to the ground.

While Shahjalal's tactic was to turn Jibon upside down the whole time, Jibon played defensive throughout the fight, preferring to stay low to the ground and waiting to tire out Shahjalal.

As neither managed a pin-down after 18 minutes, referees decided to choose the champion based on points.

Though Shahjalal made the first point, his opponent equalised soon. The fight for the final point continued for five minutes, and Shahjalal managed to slam Jibon to the ground to claim the bragging rights.



The champion puts his opponent in a head lock. PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

AGA KHAN AWARD

2 Bangladeshi projects shortlisted

UNB, Dhaka

Two Bangladeshi architectural projects have been selected among 20 shortlisted projects for Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2019.

These are: Arcadia Education Project in South Kanarchor and Amber Denim Loom Shed in Gazipur, says a press release.

Arcadia Education Project is a modular amphibious structure, which incorporates spaces for a preschool, hostel, nursery and vocational training centre. It is situated on a riverine site that is often flooded five months a year.

Amber Denim Loom Shed is a structure integrating new designs that combine traditional Bangladeshi residential architecture with contemporary elements in a large open space accommodating a buyers' lounge, dining space, prayer area, machines and washrooms.

The shortlisted projects, announced yesterday, will compete for a \$1 million prize money.

PHOTO OF THE DAY

AMRAN HOSSAIN



IN FULL BLOOM... Amid sweltering heat, beauty of these red blooms of Krishnachura offers respite to the weary. The photo was taken in front of Crescent Lake on Wednesday.