

Release Khaleda before Eid: BNP
UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday demanded release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia from jail before the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr on humanitarian grounds.

"The prime minister's target was to hang onto power through vote robbery by sending Khaleda Zia to jail. You [PM] have already completed your tasks. So, what's the necessity to keep her [Khaleda] in jail now?" he said.

He was addressing a discussion at Jatiya Press Club, marking the 38th death anniversary of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman.

Woman killed in Shahbagh road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was killed and her husband injured after a speeding bus hit their motorcycle from behind in Dhaka's Shahbagh area yesterday.

Nurun Nahar, 25, died on the spot and her husband Abdul Halim was given first aid, Inspector Bachchu Mia of Dhaka Medical College Hospital police camp told The Daily Star.

The incident took place while they were returning home after Eid shopping, the police official said.

The body was sent to DMC morgue for an autopsy, he added.

Relief for some, quick money for others

SHAEHEN MOLLAH

During Ramadan, all the eateries and food stalls on the streets are thronged by people right before iftar. This is the busiest hour for street vendors selling mouth-watering food. They call out to their potential customers, enticing them with the usual spicy, crispy and fried food items.

In this functional chaos, there are particular vendors offering an item that sells like hot cake, despite being cold in nature. These vendors do not need to shout out to draw customers' attention; instead, customers make disorderly queues for them.

This much-coveted item: chunks of ice. The customer-base mostly consists of lower-income people who find solace in ice during iftar in this sweltering Ramadan.

Rickshaw-pullers, truck drivers, construction workers and bus helpers are drawn to such street vendors.

"After a long day of fasting in this intensely hot weather, these pieces of ice give me indescribable relief," said Peyara Begum, 50, who sells "damaged" (shells somewhat broken) eggs at Begunbari Bazar in Tejgaon.

Same goes for Mostafizur, 40, a factory worker living in Kunipara of Tejgaon. "I live in a tin-shed house with my family. It gets excruciatingly hot during noon and afterwards, and we don't own a fridge. Ice from the street vendors is a lifesaver for us."

People like Peyara and Mostafizur buy a broken chunk of ice for Tk 5-20. They put it in their drinking water -- shared by the whole family. These families



Selling ice has become a way to make quick bucks for these children during Ramadan.

cannot afford refrigerators.

They do not care about the hygiene nor the source of the water used to make these ice bars. All they know is the ice gives them respite after a long summer day of dehydration.

There is much demand for ice in Dhaka's slum areas, including Saat Tola and Korail in Mohakhali, Bhasantek in Mirpur, and Sarulia Bazar in Demra.

The business of ice peaks during summer months, particularly in Ramadan -- for very obvious reasons.

The ice vendors are also from lower-income background. They

buy a huge ice bar from fish market or ice factory and break it into pieces before selling them. This is often a part-time trade.

Jahangir Hossain, a rickshaw-van puller, has been selling ice in Tejgaon area for about seven years during Ramadan. Every day, he spends Tk 700 to buy ice bars, and earns Tk 1,100-1,200.

"I buy ice bars from Karwan Bazar fish market and start selling chunks couple of hours before iftar. Within 2-3 hours, I run out of ice," he said.

According to him, ice bars come in different sizes. Usually, an ice bar contains 40kg of water and

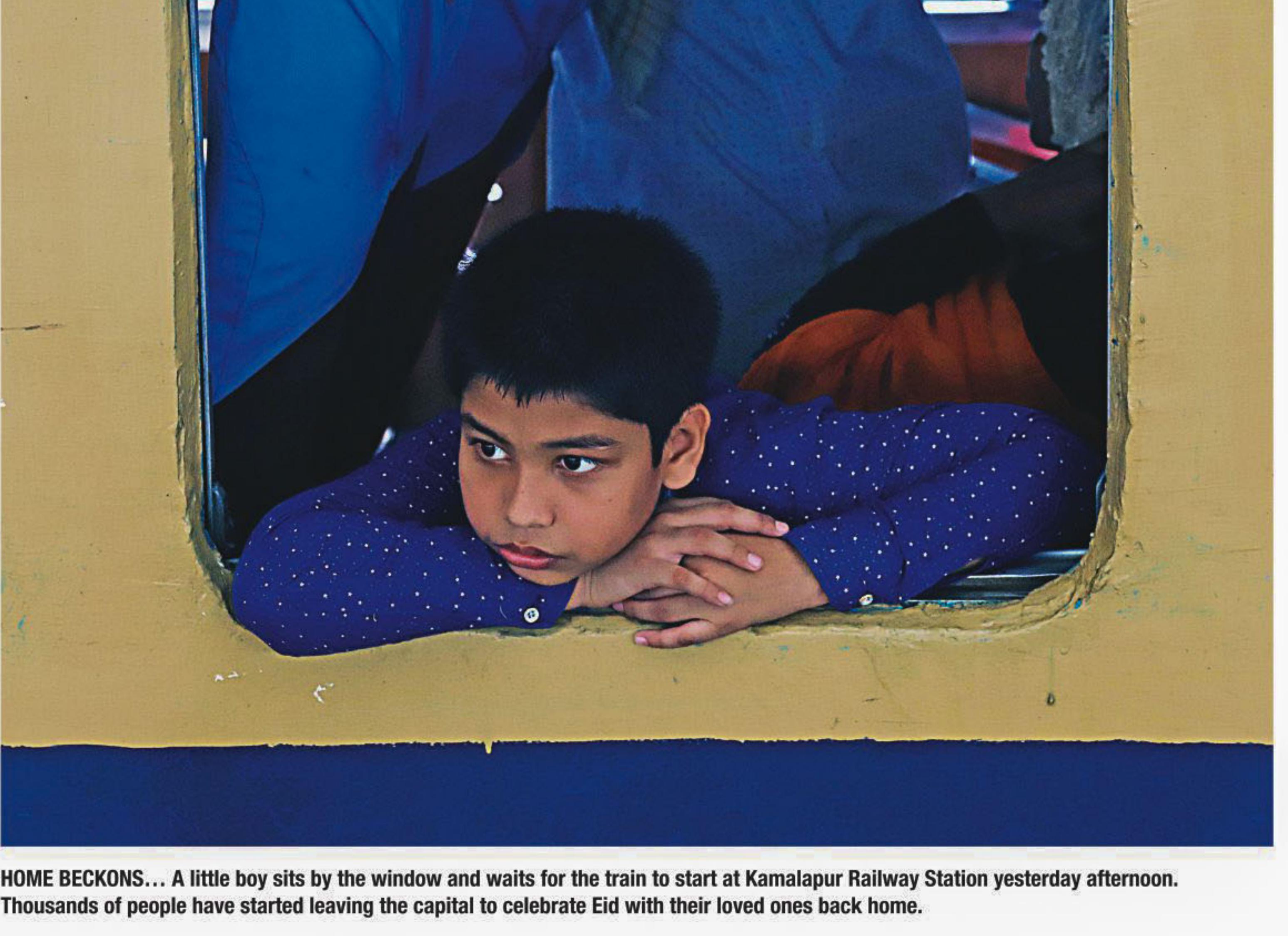
costs Tk 120-150. When a customer comes, he breaks a piece as per his demand.

The tricky part is keeping the ice intact and slowing their melting process. An experienced vendor like Jahangir uses insulators like sacks, sawdust and Styrofoam to prevent the ice from melting away.

Children and teenagers, also sell ice to make some quick cash. "We make Tk 50-60 per day and divide it amongst friends. Profit is less if the ice melts too fast," said Russel, 12, who along with his two friends started selling ice this Ramadan after being inspired by other vendors.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PHOTO OF THE DAY



HOME BECKONS... A little boy sits by the window and waits for the train to start at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday afternoon. Thousands of people have started leaving the capital to celebrate Eid with their loved ones back home.

DHAKA TODAY

CRAFTS FAIR

Desher Kabya Kotha
Venue: Drik Gallery,
Dhanmondi
Time: 11am

CHARITY

Distributing New Clothes among
Street Children ahead of Eid
Organiser: Bangladesh Chhatra
Union (Dhaka College Unit)
Venue: Dhaka College, Mirpur Road
Time: 3pm



168 murdered last month: BHRC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 168 people were murdered for various reasons including social and political violence across the country last month, according to Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC).

The rights body yesterday revealed the information in their monthly report based on data from its district, upazila, and municipality branches and national newspapers, in cooperation with International Human Rights Commission.

BHRC, in a press statement, also said around 221 people were killed in road, train and waterway accidents.

Among the 168 murder victims, two were killed for dowry; 20 in family, 42 in social, and four in political violence in May this year. "Around 29 people were killed in the hands of members of different law enforcement agencies while seven were killed by members of Indian Border Security Force (BSF)," it said.

Around eight people died due to negligence of physicians at different health service centres including hospitals, five were killed after abduction, nine fell victim to secret killing, 35 deaths remain mysterious, and seven were killed after rape, according to BHRC.

The total number of the rape victims were 69 in the month while nine women faced sexual harassment, two were tortured for dowry and one burnt in acid attack. Two journalists were physically assaulted while on duty, it said.

The commission expressed concern over increasing number of such incidents and claimed incidents of killing occurred due to extreme deterioration of law and order.



Allocate Tk 1,000cr in budget to tackle climate change

TIB urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday demanded allocation of Tk 1,000 crore in the next budget to combat the adverse effects of climate change. The Bangladeshi chapter of Germany-based anti-graft watchdog issued a statement in this regard.

"During the first three years, the government allocated Tk 700 crore per year to Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund, but the budget has not increased compared to the increasing climate change-related risks," Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, said in the statement.

Since the 2009-10 fiscal, the government has been allocating funds to the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF).

Terming the existing trend of fund reduction "concerning", Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "The fund has not increased in accordance with the risks of loss due to climate change. Bangladesh's access to the international fund is also not satisfactory."

To make up for the deficit in BCCTF, the TIB executive director strongly urged the government to allocate the said amount of money for the fund in the next budget.

He also called for ensuring "transparency and accountability" in BCCTF management. "Otherwise, Bangladesh could face challenges in gaining access to the international fund for climate change," Dr Iftekharuzzaman said.

He also urged the government to adopt a set of "strategical directives" to ensure the right use of the fund.

Due to its geography, Bangladesh has always been vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. More than three-quarters or 13.4 crore of around 16.5 crore population of Bangladesh are at the risk of declining living standards as a result of rising temperature and erratic rainfall due to climate change, according to a World Bank report published in September last year.

Rising temperature could affect living standards in diverse ways. Top among them are fall in agricultural and labour productivity and rise in spread of vector-borne and other infectious diseases resulting in lost productivity and income, the report added.

Also, it can force people out of their traditional professions and cause migration.

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'I apologise to nation and Bangabandhu's departed soul'

AK Khandker regrets error in book

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air Vice-Marshal (retd) AK Khandker yesterday formally apologised for an "error" made in his book "1971: Bhitore Baire", saying that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his historic March 7 speech never said "Joy Pakistan".

Reading out a written statement at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity, Khandker said protests had been made across the country against a particular part on page 32 and "some other content" of the book after it was published in August 2014.

He said the particular segment on page 32 reads: "I don't think Bangabandhu's speech [historic March 7 speech] necessarily initiated the Liberation War. The last words of the speech were 'Joy Bangla, Joy Pakistan'. He called for war and said, 'Joy Pakistan'..." (Translated from Bangla.)

"I believe many patriotic citizens were shocked because of this particular part. However, this part was incorporated in my book, the responsibility of such misinformation is mine, and Bangabandhu in his March 7 speech never said the two words, 'Joy Pakistan,'" Khandker said in his statement.

"So, I am withdrawing that whole paragraph which includes the mentioned part from page 32 of my book, and simultaneously, I apologise to the entire nation and Bangabandhu's departed soul," he added.

"I am 90. I consider this to be a great mistake of my life... Hopefully, [the

publishing house] Prothoma will reprint my book after omitting the controversial segment from page 32," he further said.

After the book was published, Khandker, who was the deputy chief of staff of liberation forces during the Liberation War, faced widespread criticism from different quarters, including lawmakers, civil society members and freedom fighters, for some controversial claims he made in the book.

Twenty-one leaders of Sector Commanders' Forum criticised him, saying the views Khandker provided in his book are "misleading" and lack objectivity.

Khandker later resigned as chairman of the Sector Commanders' Forum on health ground.

He came under fire from lawmakers of treasury and opposition benches in 2014 for the controversial claims.

Senior MPs of Awami League and Jatiya Party back then demanded that the book be banned for "distorting historic facts".

Some even went on to say that Khandker who was a planning minister in Sheikh Hasina's cabinet during 2009 to 2014, might have been paid by "foreign agencies like Pakistan's ISI" to write the book.

A defamation case was filed against Khandker with the Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate in Brahmanbaria on September 10, 2014.

The case was filed for his statement in the book that Mujib Bahini, a special force formed by AL to fight against the Pakistan occupation army, was "involved in looting during the Liberation War and most of them were not found in the battle field."

