



Thousands lined up at Kamalapur Railway Station as Bangladesh Railway started selling advance train tickets yesterday. Inset, a holidaymaker is seen posing gleefully with her ticket after standing in queue for a long time. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Advance train ticket sale for Eid begins

Online service fares better this time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway (BR) yesterday began selling advance train tickets for Eid-ul-Azha at five different spots in Dhaka, with services being relatively smoother than previous occasions.

Although there were allegations of hassles involving purchasing tickets online, the complaints were not severe.

As per earlier announcement, BR yesterday sold tickets for August 7. Selling of tickets from counter started at 9am, and online at 6am.

Tickets for intercity trips to the country's north-western districts were sold from Kamalapur while tickets for other destinations were sold from four other venues.

Prior to last Eid-ul-Fitr, railway, for the first time, sold 50 percent of the advance tickets online -- through app, SMS and railway website -- to ease the ticket purchasing process. Last year, 25 percent of tickets were sold online.

Last Eid, thousands tried to buy tickets online, clogging up the servers. But the situation seemed different yesterday.

A total of 8,209 tickets -- out of 10,670 allocated for online sale -- were sold till 1pm while 6,215 tickets were sold from counters at the five locations, BR documents show.

However, Md Masud, a madrasa student from Tejgaon, said he came to Kamalapur at 7am after failing to purchase his ticket online.

"I could log into the app but couldn't buy ticket," he said. Sarib Hossain, an online marketer, said he managed to log in to the app around 9am but found that tickets to the train he wanted were sold out.

"Last time, I could not even log into the app. I found the online service this time around to be relatively better," he said.

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Supriyo Chakravarty no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supriyo Chakravarty, a freedom fighter, prominent income tax lawyer of Sylhet and husband of eminent human rights activist Sultana Kamal, passed away around 7:40pm yesterday at Birdem hospital in the capital. He was 74.

He was admitted to the hospital on July 14, and was transferred to the ICU on July 21 after suffering a stroke. He was put on life support as his condition deteriorated, said his nephew Biswapriyo Chakravarty.

Supriyo was also a cultural activist and a sports organiser.

His body will not be cremated, as he donated his body to Kumudini Hospital. SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Dengue panic grips DU students

AASHIQ ABDULLAH APU

Fear of contracting dengue fever has gripped Dhaka University students, after several of them were diagnosed with it.

A total of 35 students diagnosed with dengue were admitted to the Dhaka University Medical Centre (DUMC) or took treatment from the centre between July 16 and 28, according to the facility's record book.

"The actual number of patients is way more than what our records show. We could not accommodate many patients due to lack of beds and referred some to other hospitals as we do not have proper apparatus to treat them," an office assistant of the medical centre, wishing anonymity, told The Daily Star.

Anxious students are rushing into the medical centre to get platelet count test done through the cell that was launched on Sunday, despite not being diagnosed with dengue.

"One has to get the complete blood count test (CBC) done if they are diagnosed with dengue in the first three tests -- NS1 antigen test (nonstructural protein 1), IgG and IgM. But students who do not even have fever are coming frequently to get the CBC test done.

In the first two days, at least 450 students were tested but only 11 were diagnosed with dengue," said DUMC's acting chief medical officer Dr Sarwar Jahan Muktafi.

During a visit, this correspondent witnessed long queues outside the medical centre.

"It has certainly caused panic among the students. Many are distraught after catching seasonal fever. Any mosquito I see, seems to be an Aedes mosquito," Jobayer Ahmed, a resident student of Bijoy Ekattor Hall said.

A number of students at a human chain on Sunday also demanded that the authorities keep the university closed till declaring the campus free of dengue.

Also, the poor condition of the medical centre -- with not having adequate apparatus -- aggravated the students' sufferings.

"There are only two ward boys, a peon and some staffers who also work as caretakers. The medical centre has only 24 beds and has no amenities except for some saline stands," a staffer said.

The medical centre has no dengue diagnosing kits and launched a cell counter for CBC tests recently.

Sajib Dutta, a fresher of Oriental Art department, said he had to get the tests

done at Birdem as the university medical centre does not have the testing kits.

"We don't have any resources here. We will have NS1, IgG and IgM test kits by Wednesday," Muktafi said.

To prevent dengue, dorm authorities conducted cleanliness drives and sprayed mosquito repellent on a regular basis.

Contacted, DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani said they are concerned about the issue and working with the city corporation to curb it.

DENGUE INFECTED STUDENT STAYING IN DORM'S VERANDA Shaheen Alam, a resident student of Salimullah Muslim Hall, is staying in the veranda despite being diagnosed with dengue.

Like other freshers, Shaheen, a student of Islamic History and Culture department, is forced to stay in the veranda due to acute shortage of seats in the dormitory.

"I went to the university medical centre six days ago, as I had fever. Two days later, I went to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as I wasn't getting better. Later, I got the NS1 antigen test done from Birdem hospital which showed I have dengue," Shaheen told The Daily Star.

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'Keep calm and see a doctor'

Experts urge city dwellers on dengue outbreak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 10 days when Sangita Rahman and her husband spent sleepless nights beside their five-year-old daughter Ruzaina, were the longest days of their lives.

Ruzaina was admitted to a hospital with dengue early this month, and has recovered.

The couple were so worried for their only child that they, even now, keep their doors and windows closed all day and use mosquito repellents almost once every hour.

"We now suffer from breathing problems at home," said Sangita, a housewife from Dhanmondi.

"We are yet to recover from the trauma we went through. Our situation has become such that we spend more money to kill mosquitoes than on food," she added.

Sangita shared the experiences at a roundtable on dengue prevention yesterday, organized by Bangla daily Prothom Alo in association with Labaid Group, at the newspaper's office in the capital.

Speaking on the occasion, doctors and health experts, however, urged city dwellers not to panic over the Aedes mosquito-borne disease. Instead, they suggested people to visit a doctor immediately and go through a dengue diagnosis

for any type of fever.

They also criticised authorities of both Dhaka city corporations for delay in starting mosquito control activities.

Prominent physician Prof ABM Abdullah said dengue is a common disease which occurs in the country every year, but people are panicked this year because an outbreak took place and the disease is spreading so quickly.

"Please don't be panicked. It is not a dangerous disease... not as fatal [like cancer and AIDS]," he said, addressing city dwellers.

About treatment, the former dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) said transfusion of blood and platelets are required only if the patient's condition is critical. Or else, transfusion may become harmful.

The professor also said chances of spreading dengue in rural areas through infected people during the upcoming Eid vacation is very low, as the presence of Aedes mosquitoes, the sole carrier of the disease, is almost nil there.

Prof Nazrul Islam, former vice-chancellor of BSMMU, said immediate diagnosis is a must, because symptoms of the disease don't appear in the conventional way nowadays.

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Siblings arrested for killing father

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatrabari police yesterday arrested two siblings on charge of killing their father in their house in the city's Konapara area early Sunday.

Shamim Hasan, 22, and Mohsina Afroz, 25, killed their father Mohibullah, 65, as a result of long-standing grudge. Ibrahim Khan, deputy commissioner (Ward Division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told reporters at his office.

To escape arrest, they branded it as a robbery, and put household goods in disorder to support their claim, he said. Ibrahim said a police team rushed to the house around 6am on Sunday on information of a murder. The head of the victim was found smashed.

His family members told police that a gang of robbers entered the house at midnight and killed him as he tried to resist them from looting valuables, the police officer said.

Police found their statements inconsistent, and after analysing evidence, picked them up. During interrogation, the duo admitted to killing their father, he said. A case was filed with Jatrabari police.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Most migration seekers ill-prepared: NHRC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is a need for combined efforts to prevent human trafficking and illegal migration, acting chairman of National Human Rights Commission Md Nazrul Islam said yesterday.

"Despite people's belief that there is no attempt from the government to prevent trafficking, I would say there is. However, there is a coordination gap," he said while speaking as chief guest at a consultation meeting at Brac Centre in Dhaka.

Shariful Hasan, head of Brac Migration presented a keynote paper where he mentioned approximately 4,668 cases have been filed since the anti-trafficking law was passed in 2012. Of those, 4,106 cases are still under trial.

On the effective application of the 2012 act, Md Nazrul Islam said, "NHRC will reevaluate the act, as many things have changed in last few years, which should be considered."

He added, "Most migration seekers are ill-prepared. A campaign is needed to provide them with information and tell them about countries with better job opportunities."

In his speech as special guest, Md Abu Bakar Siddique, additional secretary of the home ministry spoke about the tendency of going abroad illegally despite often "not being in a disadvantaged position in the country."

Referring to the recent deaths of Bangladeshi migrants in the

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South Dhaka Mayor Sayeed Khokon hands over a carton of mosquito spray to the head teacher of Suritola Model Government Primary School as he inaugurated distribution of the spray for free yesterday, following a dengue outbreak in the capital. He said 32 educational institutions got the repellent on that day. PHOTO: COLLECTED

DHAKA TODAY. FAIR: Eid Anondo Mela, Venue: Raowa Club, Mohakhali, DOHS, Time: 10am. FESTIVAL: Twenty Years of Oitijhya: Fortnight Book Festival, Venue: Central Public Library, Time: 9:30am-8:30pm. APPAREL EXHIBITION: Organiser: Festivity Events, Venue: White Hall, Uttara, Time: 10am. SESSION: How to Create an Impactful

RAMPAL COAL POWER PLANT

Govt had to take a difficult decision: planning minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government had to make a difficult decision regarding the construction of Rampal coal power plant, because the country needs more power to meet the national demand, said Planning Minister MA Mannan yesterday.

He said this at a ceremony organised by Bangladesh National Committee of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) members at a city hotel.

"There have been talks on Rampal [power plant]. We are aware of it. Isn't the Sundarbans our heritage, our asset?" he added.

The minister made the comments amid concerns from environmental groups that by moving ahead with the coal-based power plant project near the Sundarbans, the government is putting the forest's biodiversity at great risk.

Addressing the ceremony as chief guest, the minister said the government has a target of bringing electricity to 100 percent households within this year.

At present, the government can bring power to 92 percent homes, he said.

On conserving biodiversity, he said "being in nature through adaptation"

is one of the key policies of the present government.

"The government's priority is to maintain the pristine condition of the country's wetlands including haors, canals, ponds, and rivers," said the minister.

He also said the government has established its Green Climate Fund with its own money and is trying to address climate change related issues.

Lauding IUCN's activities in Bangladesh, the minister said the government would provide funding if any IUCN member comes up with a doable research-based project.

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FR TOWER IRREGULARITIES

SC clears way for arrest of 2 Rajuk officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court has cleared way for Anti-Corruption Commission to arrest two officials of Rajdhani Uন্নayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) in a case filed for forgery over the design of FR Tower in Dhaka's Banani.

The two officials are Rajuk inspector Aurangzeb Siddique Nannu and its authorised officer Md Nazrul Islam.

The apex court yesterday scrapped a High Court order that directed the two Rajuk officials to surrender before a lower court in six weeks in connection with the case.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC -- led by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain -- passed the order following two separate petitions filed by the ACC challenging the HC directive.

Following the SC order, there is no bar for the ACC to arrest the two Rajuk officials in the case, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

ACC had filed the corruption case against the two

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