

Rangpur to get two new intercity trains

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two new intercity trains will ply Dhaka-Rangpur and Kurigram-Dhaka routes to enhance the country's railway services, said Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon on Friday in Rangpur.

One train -- Rangpur Express -- is plying on Rangpur-Dhaka route but it is not enough to meet the increasing demand, the minister said while visiting Rangpur Railway Station.

One train will operate on Dhaka-Parbatipur-Rangpur route while another on Kurigram-Rangpur-Dhaka, he said.

If everything goes well, the ministry will launch the trains within September, he said.

Sujan also assured that they will beautify Rangpur as it is a divisional headquarter.

Earlier in the day, he visited Badiakhali and Trimohani villages in Gaibandha Sadar upazila where rail tracks were damaged badly due to the recent flood. He assured that rail communication will be restored before Eid, if the area is not further affected by flood.



Portraying the relationship between water and plants, this boat shaped tree is on display at Barishal's tree fair, being held at the city's Bangabandhu Udyan. The seller is asking Tk 1.25 lakh for his creativity and hard work.

New patients keep coming to hospitals

Dengue tally rising across districts

STAR REPORT

The spread of dengue virus continues in many districts of the country, as the number of infected patients are rising day by day.

Local health officials claimed that they are working hard to provide medicare services to patients and to check spread of the virus.

However, health professionals in some districts said they are yet to be equipped to provide the service properly, as they have not got dengue detection kits.

Patients in some districts also alleged that some private clinics were overcharging in diagnosing dengue.

Our correspondents from districts reported on the situation.

In Chattogram, 33 new dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals of the port city yesterday, taking the number of patients identified with dengue fever to 303 in the district.

Some 28 dengue patients were admitted yesterday to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), said Akhterul Islam, deputy director of the hospital. A total of 99 dengue patients were undergoing treatment in the hospital currently, he said, adding that none of them developed complications from the fever.

In Barishal division, a total of 67 new patients infected with dengue were recorded in 24 hours till yesterday noon, raising the total number to 385 in six districts, said Dr Shyamal Krishna Mandal, divisional assistant director of Directorate General of Health Services in Barishal.

However, doctors there are facing trouble as no dengue detection kit -- which are supposed to be provided by the government -- has so far arrived in the division, said Dr Abdur Rahim, divisional health director.

Talking to The Daily Star, many patients alleged that some private clinics in Barishal city were overcharging from patients for dengue tests.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Schoolteacher among two killed in road crashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two people were killed in road accidents in Chattogram during the last two days.

A primary schoolteacher was killed and three were injured as a truck hit a human hauler carrying them in the city's Baddarhat area yesterday. The deceased -- Amena Begum Lovely, 42 -- was a teacher of Dakkhin Noagaon Primary School, said Jahurul Haque, inspector at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) police outpost.

The injured -- Pranay Pual, Soma Ghosh and Jobaida Khanam -- were undergoing treatment at CMCH, said the police officer.

Of them, Soma and Jobaida are Amena's colleagues, he added.

Abul Kashem Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Panchlaish Police Station, said the accident occurred as the truck driver lost control over the vehicle.

In another accident, an elderly man was killed as a pickup hit him while he was crossing a road in the city's Jalalabad area on Friday night. Md Malek, 60, from Daudkandi in Cumilla, was declared dead at CMCH, said Assistant Sub-Inspector Shilbrata Barua of CMCH police outpost.

One dead, three injured in oil tanker explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A worker was killed and three of his co-workers were injured in an oil tanker blast at a shipyard in Narayanganj yesterday. Sabbir Ahmed, 15, died on the spot, said police.

The injured -- Robin Ahmed, 22, elder brother of Sabbir; Sohail, 18, and Nazir, 22 -- were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Md Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Sonargaon Police Station.

The explosion took place at the tank barge docked at "Ananda Shipyard & Slipways Limited" while workers were working with blowtorch, said the OC.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Narayanganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Robin Ahmed, who sustained 95 percent burns, is undergoing treatment at DMCH, said Bachchu Mia, inspector of DMCH Police Outpost, adding that the other injured were released after treatment.

In connection with the incident, an officer of the shipyard was detained for interrogation, said OC Moniruzzaman. A case will be lodged in this regard, he added.

CMP to use drones to monitor cattle markets ahead of Eid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday announced of using drones to monitor cattle markets in the city ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

During a meeting at Dampara Police Lines conference hall, CMP Commissioner Md Mahubur Rahman said besides using drones to ensure security at the markets, they would refrain from searching vehicles carrying cattle.

"Every year we receive complaints about extortion from vehicles, so we decided not to check any vehicles this time and no one would be allowed to do so," he said, adding that 5,000 police personnel would be deployed across the city for ensuring security at the cattle markets and elsewhere.

To check activities of muggers, control rooms and watch towers will be set up and all reported miscreants including those who are out on bail would be kept under surveillance, the commissioner said.

To keep the traffic condition in the city stable, CMP will remove all unauthorised cattle stalls from roadsides, he added.

The commissioner also informed that they would provide counterfeit currency-detecting machines at cattle markets, and would offer police escort for those carrying large sums of money.

Meanwhile, CMP officials said that despite their request to the city mayor, Chattogram City Corporation leased out Saltgola and Steelmill markets on Airport road for cattle markets this year.

"The road is very important and it will create a huge hassle for the commuters on the road. If co-operation does not come from others, it is impossible only for CMP to maintain the traffic condition," the commissioner said.

Habitable

FROM PAGE 14

Multiple exoplanets -- planets orbiting stars outside our solar system -- were discovered orbiting an M-dwarf star, called GJ 357 in the Hydra constellation. The star is 40% cooler than our sun and only about a third of the sun's mass and size. A study describing the three planets was published this week in the journal *Astronomy & Astrophysics*.

The first exoplanet discovered around the star was GJ 357 b.

The exoplanet is 22% larger and 80% more massive than Earth, making it a super-Earth. It's 11 times closer to its star than Mercury is to our sun and the researchers estimate that it has an average temperature of 490 degrees Fahrenheit. This does not account for any potential warming effects of an atmosphere if it has one. It completes one orbit around the star every 3.9 days.

"We describe GJ 357 b as a 'hot Earth,'" said Enric Pallé, study co-author and astrophysicist at the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands.

Reserve forest being razed in Rangamati

FROM PAGE 14

Multiple exoplanets and Russel's viper. The forest also comprises at least 25 species of trees and shrubs.

Abul Hashem, beat officer of Sita Pahar area, claimed that about five acres of the forest land were affected.

However, it was evident from the leftover tree stumps that forest on hundreds of acres of land was burnt.

Around 20 youths were seen having their lunch inside the forest with sharp tools by their side. Asked who assigned them to cut trees or set those on fire, they kept mum.

Later, they were seen preparing forest land for banana cultivation.

SM Mahabu-UI-Alam, range officer of Kaptai, admitted that such a practice has been going on for long.

"This is a vast forest, sprawling over 1,000 acres. To stop such practices, we need more manpower. We filed two cases already and are in contact with the authorities concerned to find ways to stop setting the forest on fire," he told The Daily Star.

Md Toufikul Islam, divisional officer of forest (south) of Rangamati, told this newspaper that there was no scope for cultivation in the country's oldest reserve forest.

"There was a fire inside the forest around March-April. Upon getting information, we rushed to the spot and doused the fire with the help of the Fire Brigade and Bangladesh Army."

"We are monitoring the situation round the clock as the reserve forest is of great importance to us. We started the Assisted Natural Regeneration programme to revive part of the forest that was burnt down," he added.

Ministry decides

FROM PAGE 14

told The Daily Star last week.

On June 26, the ministry ordered the transfer of Dr AKM Rezaul Karim, professor of Paediatric Haematology & Oncology, from CMCH to RmMC for commenting on a Facebook public post critical of lawmaker and Bangladesh cricket team captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

Asked about the transfer at the time, the health minister said, "I will not term it a punishment; rather it was a warning to thwart this sort of incident in future," adding that making such a comment about a lawmaker was indecent.

Following news of the transfer, more than 100 cancer patients and their relatives formed a human chain in front of Chattogram Press Club on July 4, demanding the withdrawal of the order.

Leaders of different platforms of doctors too denounced the move, saying that the doctor would have nothing to do at Rangamati hospital as there was no cancer treatment facility there.

Contacted, Karim, who is still at CMCH, told The Daily Star that he was yet to receive any instruction from the ministry regarding the reinstatement.

"On July 14, I sent a review petition saying that if I was transferred, I would not be able to use my expertise, as there is no facility to treat cancer patients in Rangamati," he said.

Meanwhile, the ministry's decision to reinstate Karim at CMCH has brought relief to patients and their relatives.

Nizamuddin, who has to come to CMCH from Feni with his 11-year-old son, told The Daily Star that the reinstatement meant that his son's treatment would not be hampered.

Asma Begum, mother of Mohammed Shohel, 13, told The Daily Star that Dr Karim used to arrange donors for patients who couldn't afford expensive medicines. News of his transfers, however, had stoked fears that the practice might stop.

"We were finding no way to arrange the money after his transfer order. Now we are happy as the decision has been changed and the treatment of my son will continue properly," she added.

Safia Gazi, principal of Sunshine Grammar School and College, who has been manging donors to provide medicines to poor patients under the banner of Sunshine Charity for the past nine years, thanked the ministry for changing the decision.

"Dr Karim is one of only three such experts in the country and in his absence there was no other specialist to treat the patients," she said.

According to CMCH sources, earlier the paediatric cancer patients of greater Chattogram had to go to Dhaka or abroad for treatment. The establishment of the department by Karim in 2013, however, changed the scenario.

On average, 100 patients receive treatment at the ward, most of whom do not have the ability to go to Dhaka or abroad for treatment, sources said, adding that other than Karim, there was only one assistant professor to treat the patients.

Karim's criticism of Mashrafe came after the Bangladesh cricket captain's April 24 visit to Narail Sadar Hospital, where he found four doctors absent.

After a video of his visit went viral on social media, a number of doctors questioned the language Mashrafe used while talking to one of the absentees over phone. Many took to social media to voice their displeasure.

3 'robbers'

FROM PAGE 14

Meanwhile, another man was shot dead in the district's Marine Drive road around 2:00am.

The dead Imran Molla, 27, was a suspected drug peddler, said police.

According to OC Pradip, Imran was killed by his cohorts.

A patrolling team of police witnessed the incident, recovered Imran and sent him to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead, the OC claimed.

Police detained two men -- Saifuddin Shahin, 38, and Siddique, 27 -- in connection with the murder, he added.

The body was sent to the hospital's morgue for autopsy.

Man dies trying to collect

FROM PAGE 14

The dead was identified as Hafiz Uddin, 60, a day labourer from Phulpur upazila.

Of the injured, six were taken to Phulpur Upazila Health Complex from where Hafiz and Firoza Khatun, 65, another card seeker, were referred to Mymensingh Medical college Hospital. Hafiz died on the way.

Dr Pranesh Chandra Pandit, residential medical officer of Phulpur Upazila Health Complex, said observing Hafiz's condition critical, he was immediately referred to Mymensingh.

Hafiz might have suffered a massive heart attack in the incident as there was no injury mark over his body, said Dr Pranesh.

Police recovered the body and sent it to MMCH morgue for autopsy.

Another card seeker Khokon Mia, 32, was undergoing treatment at the health complex while three others, including a local correspondent of Daily Sangbad, who was at the scene on duty, were released after being given primary treatment.

Imarat Hossain Gazi, officer-in-charge of Phulpur Police Station, said the number of VGF card seekers was more than that in the prepared list. The huge crowd was jostling, pushing and shoving amongst themselves at the venue since 11:30am.

While the card distribution was taking place, the card seekers outside the gate at one point broke in and entered the venue around 2:00pm and chaos ensued. Around 10 people were injured in the incident, said the OC.

On information, a police team rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control and rescued the injured, said the OC.

5 held over rape

FROM PAGE 14

he said the incident took place around 8:00pm on Thursday near the Kanchon Bridge area.

She was picked up from there by Rasel, one of the accused, who then took her to an abandoned house in Pitalganj. There, the five assaulted and raped her.

The rapists dropped her beside a road the next night. She was rescued by locals and administered first-aid.

The victim is now undergoing treatment, said police.

US wants to deploy

FROM PAGE 14

But Esper stressed the US was not embarking on a new arms race.

"The traditional sense of an arms race has been in a nuclear context," he said.

"Right now, we don't have plans to build nuclear-tipped INF range weapons. It's the Russians who have developed non-compliant likely, possibly nuclear-tipped weapons," he said.

"So I don't see an arms race

happening. I do see us taking corrective measures to develop a capability that we need for both the European theatre and this theatre, the Indo-Pac-Com theatre."

The INF treaty was considered a cornerstone of the global arms control architecture but the United States said the bilateral pact had given other countries -- namely China -- free rein to develop their own long-range missiles.

The rise of a militarily more

Twenty-nine hajj pilgrims

FROM PAGE 14

in 2018, 162 in 2017 and 191 in 2016, he said.

Asked, Maqsudur said the elderly hajis, in most cases, died of different ailments and health complications.

This year, some 1,27,198 pilgrims from Bangladesh are set to perform hajj in the Kingdom.

Around 1.14 lakh Bangladeshi hajj aspirants have so far gone to Saudi Arabia for hajj, which will start on August 10.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Saudi

Arabian Airlines began carrying passengers for hajj from July 4.

This year for the first time, the immigration formalities of nearly half of Bangladeshi pilgrims will be completed in Dhaka. Earlier, all immigration formalities for Bangladeshi hajis would have to be completed in Saudi Arabia.

Biman will operate 365 flights till August 5 to fly hajj aspirants to Saudi Arabia.

Post hajj flights will start on August 17 and will continue till September 15, said a Biman official.