



The Daily Star



REGD. No. DA 781 | VOL. XXIX No. 270 | KARTIK 4, 1426 BS | **Your Right to Know** | PLUS 4 PAGES BUSINESS JACKET ON SMART AND AFFORDABLE LIVING | SAFAR 20, 1441 HIJRI | 20 PAGES PRICE : Tk 12.00

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Your Right to Know

"It is our misfortune that many of our brilliant minds were trampled on by state powers."
PROF. SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY SAID AT A DISCUSSION.



"This drive is not bringing any good for party, it is rather damaging the party."
AL PRESIDUM MEMBER MOHAMMED NASIM, ABOUT ONGOING DRIVE, AT NATORE



"You, the queen of warmongers, embodiment of corruption, and personification of the rot that has sickened the Democratic Party for so long, have finally come out from behind the curtain."
US DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TULSI GABBARD HITS BACK AT HILLARY CLINTON OVER RUSSIA REMARKS



Toiling away CHILDHOOD

Boys working at silverware factories look completely grey due to their exposure to metal dust for hours every day. They make only TK 150-200 daily and complain of chronic breathing difficulties and coughing. The photos were taken recently in the capital's Shyampur.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



More trains, longer delays

Schedule problems worsen as trains added on low-capacity tracks in northwestern, southern zones without proper assessment

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

Though most of the trains running in the country's northwestern and southern regions face delay mainly due to inadequate capacity of railway tracks, Bangladesh Railway is adding new trains in the regions without proper assessment, worsening the situation further.

The BR now operates 42 trains in Joydebpur-Ishwardi section with a 174-km single track that connects the capital with the western zone via Bangabandhu Bridge.

The Joydebpur-Ishwardi section has a capacity of operating a maximum of 22 trains a day smoothly. And to operate trains more than that, it requires "block system" that allows only one train to run at a time from one station to the next one, forcing other trains to wait, said BR officials.

The BR introduced four intercity trains in the western zone in the last

six months with the latest one starting operation from Dhaka to Kurigram on October 16.

Experts say the authorities often select routes under pressure and lobbying from influential people without any assessment of whether these routes would be financially viable or the train schedules would be convenient for passengers.

BR officials said two of the four trains, launched in the last six months, failed to draw enough response from passengers mainly due to ill-suited schedule and delays.

Acknowledging the schedule problems, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan on several occasions said more trains would result in more delay in the western zone.

He, however, said that they had to introduce trains in the face of public demand.

The BR operates 360 passenger

trains through its 3,000km network across the country divided into eastern and western zones.

The number of railway passengers has increased over the years. It was 90.05 million in fiscal 2017-18, up from 77.80 million in the previous fiscal year. But the BR incurs a loss of Tk 1,432 crore in fiscal 2017-18.

INADEQUATE CAPACITY

The delay in the schedules of trains, except for a few, which connect the capital with the north-western and southern regions has been a common phenomenon for the last few years.

Abdullah Al Mamun, divisional transportation officer (Pakshi) of the BR, mentioned three major reasons behind the delay in train schedules.

He said 22 trains can run smoothly in Joydebpur-Ishwardi section per day but 42 trains now run in the section.

"Most of the trains, except for a few, have to wait at nearby stations to

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BSF showed 'hegemony'

Foreign minister tells Deutsche Welle

UNB, Dhaka

Terming the recent exchange of fire between the border forces of Bangladesh and India an "accidental incident", Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the members of the Border Security Force (BSF) demonstrated their "hegemony" intruding into Bangladesh's territory.

"This is one incident. This happened due to a misunderstanding," he said, adding that the members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) opened fire as the last resort amid BSF's demonstration of "hegemony".

In an interview with Deutsche Welle's Bengali service in Berlin, Momen also brushed aside the reports of a section of Indian media. "The information that Indian media carried was not correct," he said.

The minister described the current Bangladesh-India relations as very friendly and said the key purpose of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to India was to further strengthen the "warm relationship".

On Thursday, BGB said its members were forced to fire back in self-defense

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British MPs force Johnson to seek new Brexit delay



AFP, London

British MPs yesterday voted to force Prime Minister Boris Johnson to ask the European Union to delay Brexit yet again but he insisted Britain must leave on October 31.

In a day of high drama in the House of Commons, MPs declined to give their backing to the divorce agreement Johnson struck with the EU this week until accompanying legislation has been passed.

In doing so, MPs triggered a law requiring Johnson to write to EU leaders asking to delay Brexit to avoid a "no deal" departure in less than two weeks.

The result is a major blow to Johnson, who said he would rather be "dead in a ditch" than prolong the tortuous Brexit process that has left Britain in political turmoil since the 2016 EU referendum.

But in a typically defiant response, the Conservative leader refused, sparking outrage among opposition MPs -- and fresh uncertainty about what happens next.

"I will not negotiate a delay with the EU and neither does the law compel me to do so," he told MPs, who were sitting on a Saturday for the first time since the 1982 Falklands War.

He said he would tell EU leaders that "further delay would be bad for this country, bad for the European Union and bad for democracy".

The Tory party went further, writing in a tweet:

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People could not cast vote in last polls

Says Menon

STAR REPORT

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon yesterday said people could not cast their votes in the December 30 parliamentary polls. "Although I was elected in the election, I am testifying that people couldn't cast their votes in the election. They couldn't cast their votes in the union parishad and upazila parishad elections," said Menon.

He was addressing the inaugural session of Barishal district WPB conference in Barishal.

Menon said, "Why the people of the country couldn't vote again in the union parishad, upazila parishad, and Jatiya Sangsad elections when you [Sheikh Hasina] and I jointly waged a movement demanding cancellation of a fake voter list containing 1.10 crore false voters during the Aziz commission [former CEC MA Aziz]?"

Blasting the government, he said development does not necessarily mean snatching of democracy, and squeezing of dissenting voices.

Pointing to the recent drive against illegal casino

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3 murders shock the port city

Father-daughter, child specialist slain in separate incidents

STAR REPORT

Three people, including a child specialist and two of a family, were found murdered in separate incidents in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila and the port city's Nimtala-Biswa Road area over the last two days.

Police on Friday recovered the body of a child specialist from Kumari Ghat area in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila.

The dead was identified as Md Shah Alam, 61.

The victim had just returned to the country after serving in a hospital in Saudi Arabia for 30 years. He was the head of paediatric surgery in Madina Maternity and Children's hospital there.

He returned two years ago established a child clinic -- Baby Care Private Ltd -- in Sitakunda with an aim to serve the country.

Shamim Sheikh, inspector (investigation) of Sitakunda police station said Alam's body was recovered around

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Day of reckoning for Jubo League

PM meets leaders of the embattled outfit today

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The National Youth Policy, formulated by the Awami League government, defines any citizen between 18 and 35 as a youth.

But this definition does not seem applicable to the party's youth wing, Jubo League. None of the members of the organisation's 351-member central committee falls under this age group.

The youngest person in the committee is 44, and the oldest is none other than the organisation's current chief Omar Faruk Chowdhury, who turned 71 this year.

Faruk is the oldest chairman of Jubo League in its history of 47 years. When Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni, nephew of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, founded the outfit on November 11, 1972, he was 33.

All his six successors were older when they got the chairman post. Faruk became the chairman at the age of 64 in 2012.

According to insiders, only 10 to 12 leaders of Jubo League units across the country are below 44, while most others are in their late 40s and early 50s.

The Jubo League charter, however, does not mention any age limit, but says any employable youth is eligible to engage with the youth front.

The organisation was founded with an aim to alleviating poverty and establishing the rights of the young generation. But a group of Jubo League leaders deviated from the objectives and made their own fortune. And instead of working for establishing rights of the youths, they got engaged in numerous misdeeds and criminal activities -- starting from grabbing tenders to running illegal casino business in the sporting clubs, the insiders said.

All their misdeeds came to the fore after the law enforcement agencies

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