



The two waterbuses waiting to start their trial run on Karnaphuli yesterday. The service from Sadarghat terminal, inset, to Chattogram airport will start next week.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN, STAR

# Cruising thru’ Karnaphuli to beat traffic

## Waterbus service starts next week in port city

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Good news for port city residents and travellers! From now on, the journey to Chattogram Shah Amanat International Airport from Sadarghat will take less than 30 minutes -- an otherwise excruciating experience of around two hours due to perennial gridlocks. This travel experience will not only be traffic jam-free, but also on the river Karnaphuli. With an aim to reduce travel time of commuters, especially those who have to catch flights, this waterbus service will start next week. According to officials, the distance between New Market and Chattogram airport is 12km while GEC intersection and the airport is 18km. On a holiday or when the road is free of traffic congestion, one can reach the destinations within 30 minutes. But on weekdays, commuters remain stuck in gridlocks in at least eight spots. Sometimes, it takes more than two hours to reach the airport, said residents. Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) started constructing a terminal at Sadarghat in August

last year to this end, said CPA sources. A jetty was also built in Naval area of Karnaphuli Ghat-15, some 600 feet from the airport. “A private firm -- SS Trading -- will operate the service, said Omar Faruk, secretary of CPA. Chattogram Dry Dock will monitor it, he added. Visiting the spot in Sadarghat this week, it was seen that a two-storey terminal was constructed, which will be used as a ticket counter and waiting room for passengers. There are also parking facilities available for commuters while a walkway goes to the jetty in front of the building beside Karnaphuli. A similar walkway and jetty was seen in Karnaphuli Ghat-15 in Naval area near the airport. Nasir Uddin Chowdhury, former first vice president of BGMEA, said, “It’s a good initiative. While travelling to the airport, we always worry about reaching in time due to gridlocks.” “It often takes two to three hours to reach the destination of 12km,” he said, adding, “If waterbus service starts, we can reach the airport within half an hour.” Md Shabbab Hossain, managing director of SS Trading, said they have taken a lease of 15 years from CPA. “We will initially operate two waterbuses with a capacity of 25 passengers each,” he said. “We expect to start the service by next week.” Asked about the fare, he said initially the ticket price is set at Tk 399. “In addition, our bus will take a passenger from Naval jetty to the airport, a five-minute ride. Shabbab said two more waterbuses [30 seats] will be added by December. The distance between Sadarghat to Naval jetty is 8 nautical miles (16km); it will take 20 minutes to reach the destination. Contacted, town planner Subhash Barua said although it is a good initiative, the authorities have to ensure a hassle-free journey to Sadarghat jetty for commuters. “If passengers face traffic jam to go to Sadarghat, they will not be encouraged to avail the service,” said Subhash, also vice president of Forum for Planned Chattogram.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

# Police arrest 15 ‘Hizb-ut-Tahrir men’ in Ctg

## Claims city unit chief among them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police in Chattogram yesterday claimed that banned militant outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir is now recruiting members of Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) through conducting secret campaigns at different educational institutions of the port city. Changing their recruiting technique, the outfit’s leaders are now collecting operatives in guise of teaching profession to avoid suspicion of guardians and law enforcing agencies, said investigators. Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday came up with the information after arresting 15 suspected leaders and activists of the banned militant outfit, including its supposed port city unit chief and second-in-command, in possession of a huge amount of organisational leaflets, press releases, organisational constitution, training manual, two laptops and a motorbike on Friday night. Several teams of CMP’s South division led by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Shah Md Abdur Rauf conducted the drives and arrested the 15 from the city’s Andarkillah, Chandgaon, Bayezid and Panchlaish areas. “Hizb-ut Tahrir’s main targets are students of educational institutions who are

the members of BNCC, as BNCC men have training in both technical and operational side,” said Ameena Begum, additional commissioner (crime and operation) of CMP, while addressing a press conference. “Among the arrestees, three are teachers by profession. Leaders of the organisation used to hold meetings in different locations with the fresh recruits in the name of coaching or tuition,” she added. The arrestee are: Abul Mohammed Arshadul Alam (39), Abdullah Al Mahfuz (30), Md Imtiaz Ismail (25), Md Nashir Uddin Chowdhury (22), Md Nazmul Huda (27), Md Lokman Goni (29), Md Karim (27), Md Abdullah Al Munim (22), Md Kamrul Hasan Rana (20), Md Ariful Islam (20), Md Azim Uddin (31), Md Farhan Bin Rafi (23), Azimul Huda (24), Md Smrat (22) and a 15-year old HSC student. Arshadul is the Bangla teacher of Cantonment English School and College Chattogram and also the chief of Hizb-ut-Tahrir port city unit while Abdullah AL Mahfuz is the territory manager of Novartis pharmaceuticals of Chattogram and second-in-command of the organisation, Ameena said. Nazmul graduated as a civil engineer from Daffodil Institution while

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## SEWERAGE SYSTEM

# Ctg Wasa appoints Malaysian firm for design, supervision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram Wasa has appointed a Malaysian consulting firm ERINCO to design its sewerage system and supervise the construction work. To this end, they signed a contract in a ceremony at Radisson Blu Bay View in the port city yesterday. Wasa, for the first time, is going to construct its sewerage system for the port city, which has an estimated population of seven million, according to Chattogram City Corporation. Almost all the waste, no matter liquid or solid, end up in the rivers Karnaphuli and Halda, wreaking havoc on the two important waterbodies, said speakers at the ceremony. Tk 3,808 crore will be an expenditure in the first phase of the project and the lion’s share will come from the Bangladesh government, they said. The sewerage construction will begin in August next year and expected to be completed by June 2023.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# 7kg gold seized at Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials yesterday seized over seven kgs of gold and detained a Biman Bangladesh Airlines employee, in two separate drives at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. On information, the officials recovered 40 gold bars weighing 4.6kg from under the seat of a Biman flight that landed from Dubai around 6:10am, said Sazzad Hossain, assistant commissioner of customs. Customs officials detained Mehedi Hasan, an aircraft technical helper of Biman around 3:30pm, and found 22 gold bars wrapped in tape after searching his body, Sazzad said. The total value of the gold is around Tk 3.6 crore, he added.

# Age no barrier to learning

## 45-yr-old councillor enrolls in ninth grade to serve people better

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

While serving as a municipality councillor, 45-year-old Dolhar Hossain realised that a certain level of education is essential for effective involvement in public service, so he enrolled at a secondary school in Rajshahi in his mid-forties. Dolhar, a father of two, is a councillor of Bhabaniganj municipality under Bagmara upazila. He got admitted in the ninth grade of Bhabaniganj Model Technical and Business Management College in 2018-19 session. He has been appearing at the final examinations for this year from November 2. If he comes out successful, he is likely to take part in SSC examination (vocational) in the year after next. Talking to The Daily Star, Dolhar Hossain said he dropped out of school in his boyhood following a family problem. “As my career in politics was progressing and I was meeting various people from all walks of life, I realised that education is a must,” he said. The aim is to become a university

graduate, he added. In the mid-eighties, Dolhar Hossain finished sixth grade at Bhabaniganj High School. Angry about his father’s second marriage, Dolhar left his home at Dangachhi village and went to Patnitola of Naogaon, where he completed seventh grade at a local school. He returned home a year later, and studied in eighth grade, after which he dropped out. “As I was living on my own, I began working as an assistant to a mason at that time,” he said, adding that he later became a mason himself. Gradually he began getting involved with local politics and was elected president of ward-4 unit of Awami League in 2013-14. He was elected councillor of the ward in the 2015 municipal elections. He was made panel mayor (who works as the acting mayor in absence of the officeholder) of Bhabaniganj municipality. Once he was selected panel mayor, Dolhar Hossain realised the value of education.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# AIR POLLUTION ‘foodpanda’ distributes masks among people

CITY DESK

Air pollution in Dhaka is getting worse every day, as is evident from the city being ranked worst in terms of Air Quality Index (AQI). With an aim to helping citizens battle this pollution, the on-demand food delivery service foodpanda distributed masks among people, said a press release. Earlier this year, it started a green initiative where customers could opt in or out of using plastic cutlery while ordering food, to minimise plastic wastage. foodpanda is dedicated to bringing food lovers around the world their favourite meals from curated local restaurants. It is available in over 120 cities across Asia and Central Europe.



PHOTO: TITU DAS

Farmers threshing aman paddy at a yard in Barishal Sadar yesterday. The photo was taken in Lakutia area.



Survivors, family members of Tazreen inferno victims and several worker organisations held a candlelight vigil in front of the factory at Nischintapur in Ashulia yesterday in memory of those killed in the tragedy. On November 24 in 2012, a devastating fire took place in the factory, leaving at least 112 people dead.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# GONO BISHWABIDYALAY Film society to republish magazine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Bishwabidyalay Film Society is going to republish their film magazine titled 16MM, marking its 20th founding anniversary. Former members of the Gono Bishwabidyalay Film Society decided at a meeting on Friday that from now on they would organise workshops on films. Founding general secretary of film society Shaheen Bin Hai and its former leaders Gokul Chand Kundu, Shariful Haq, Masum Al Ghani, Parveen Akter, Chandan Shaha, Syed Sazzad Hossain and others attended the meeting. The campus-based film society was established in 1999.

## DEMANDING ARREARS

# Jute mill workers in Khulna demonstrate

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Workers of the nine state-owned jute mills in Khulna yesterday staged a demonstration to press home their 11-point demand, including payment of due salary and implementation of the wage commission. They also announced a seven-day agitation programme under the banner of “State-owned Jute Mill Collective Bargaining Association (CBA) and Non-CBA Sangram Parishad”. The programme was announced at a separate meeting and demonstration rally at the jute mills in Khulna-Jashore region yesterday. The announced programmes include hunger procession on November 25, hunger strike at different mill gates from 8am to 5pm on November 27, protest rally on December 2, and strike on December 5. They threatened a tougher movement if their demands are not met immediately. The demands include cancellation of public-private ownership, payment of provident fund gratuity for retired workers, regularising weekly wages and implementation of the wage commission, payment of outstanding bills etc. They also demanded that the government buy jute products for other sectors. Murad Hossain, president of Crescent Jute Mill CBA, told The Daily Star that wages of 11 weeks are outstanding. “Jute workers are in a dire state. Many families are suffering from financial crisis while the wage commission is yet to be implemented,” he said, demanding immediate payment of arrears.

# Arshad Mansoor named president of US nonprofit

CITY DESK

Dr Arshad Mansoor has been appointed to the post of president at Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI). The board of directors of EPRI announced on Friday the promotion of Dr Mansoor, senior vice president of research and development, to the position of president, effective January 1, 2020, said a press release. Mansoor will continue to lead the execution of EPRI’s research strategy, while expanding his role in leading corporate functions. Mansoor was selected after an extensive national search. He continues to report to EPRI’s

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4