



There’s a book for everyone

DIPAN NANDY

Boi Mela is an open invitation to all. It’s not just a mere book fair, rather it’s a cultural phenomenon – where people of all ages spend the day with their loved ones, hopping from one book stall to another.

It’s a festivity where children are introduced to their parent’s favourite reads amidst their own preferences and adults get to reminisce their yesteryears, when they too visited the fair to get their hands on books written by their beloved writers.

And this year’s congregation of book-lovers is no different.

Rabbi Hossain, who came to the fair from Bakshibazar, said, “I thought this time the fair will not take place. But I’m glad it did. I’m collecting catalogues of different publications for now, and I’ll buy books later.” Shakib and Rasna were buying books while standing in front of Seba Prakashani. They like Masud Rana and Tin Goyenda series.

Rasna said, “Coming to the fair, for me means buying books from Seba. I’ve bought three volumes of Masud Rana and Tin Goyenda.”

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Hailing from Tejgaon, when hawkers like Milon couldn’t afford a space to set up shop, he didn’t lose hope. For earning a living, he chose an innovative alternative -- a mobile shop for household items on a bicycle. For six years, Milon has been running his business, travelling from place to place on his trusty steed, and making sales worth Tk 2,000-2,500 -- on which his family of five survive. This photo was taken from Hatirjheel area.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

GANG-RAPE OF TEENAGER 3 including prime accused held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers yesterday detained three youths, including the prime accused, in a case filed over abduction and gang rape of a teenager in Dhaka’s Lalbagh area.

Based on the victim’s complaint, a Rab team first detained prime accused Monir Hossain Shuvo (22), a third-year BBA student, from Lalbagh, said Khandaker Al Moin, Rab’s media wing director, during a press briefing.

The other accused -- Al-Amin alias Billal and Sabuj -- were detained by police from Mugda, said Inspector (operations) Enamul Haque of Hazaribagh Police Station.

Quoting Shuvo, the Rab media director said he was introduced to the girl a month ago through a friend.

They met several times afterwards. They met on February 12 and stayed together till February 16, he said.

Shuvo denied the abduction and rape allegations.

During primary investigation, police got to know from the other two accused that Shuvo and Al-Amin raped the girl after sedating her, while Sabuj tortured her.

On Wednesday afternoon, she was dumped near Raju memorial sculpture at Dhaka University. A pedestrian rescued and took her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the evening.

She is being treated at the hospital’s one-stop crisis centre. Her medical test was conducted yesterday.

According to the victim, Shuvo used to make advances on her. When she refused his advances, Shuvo and Al-Amin picked her up on February 12 morning when she went out.

She was then taken to an unknown place where they, with two others, drugged and raped her in phases for four days, police told this correspondent, said quoting the victim.

Quoting her mother, Moktaruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Hazaribagh Police Station, said the girl came to Sadarghat from Patuakhali on February 12 when Shuvo received and took her to a friend’s house, where they raped her.

The OC also mentioned that the family could not confirm whether the girl, aged around 18, was a school or college student.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER
TIMING
FEB 18



	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5:20	12:30	4:30	6:03	7:30
Jamaat	5:55	1:15	4:45	6:07	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Youth held for blackmailing over 100 women: Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab claimed to have arrested a youth on charge of blackmailing over 100 women by secretly recording videos of them in name of virtual medical tests for employment.

Al Fahad (19) was arrested from Dhaka’s Norda area on Wednesday night after several victims complained to Rab, said Khandaker Al Moin, Rab’s Legal and Media wing director.

During primary interrogation, Fahad admitted to the crime, he told a press briefing at Rab media centre yesterday.

He said Fahad ran advertisements for “lucrative jobs” on social media and charged

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Traffic gridlocks are so common in Dhaka, that they have become a characteristic of the city. Although roads are busier on Thursday, the last working day of the week, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani was completely blocked for hours yesterday as the construction of a U-loop, meant to ease vehicular movement, narrowed the width of the busy road.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

1 in 5 adult Rohingyas infected with hepatitis C

Finds study on refugees in Cox’s Bazar

NILIMA JAHAN

A recent study on the prevalence of Hepatitis B and C virus among the Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar has found that more than one in five Rohingya adults have hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection.

The study titled, “High Prevalence of Hepatitis B and C Virus Infections Among Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: A Growing Concern for the Refugees and the Host Communities”, was published on the last week of January in Clinical Liver Disease, the journal of the American

“There is an immediate need for well-organised studies to assess the causes and risk for viral transmission and the capacity of health systems in the camps to deliver preventive, care, and treatment services.”

DR MOHAMMAD ALI
NLFB founder who led the study

Association for the Study of Liver Diseases.

The study was conducted by the National Liver Foundation of Bangladesh (NLFB).

“The consequences of this high prevalence have been silently causing liver cirrhosis, liver cancer, and liver failure,” said Dr Mohammad Ali, a liver surgeon and NLFB founder who led the study.

According to the study, hepatitis C was found in 26 percent females and 18 percent males, while eight percent of pregnant female refugees were found to be HCV positive.

It also mentioned that HCV is 18 times higher among the Rohingya refugees than Bangladeshis.

NLFB conducted two studies on the prevalence of hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) among the Rohingya refugees.

PREVALENCE OF HCV, HBV AMONG ROHINGYA REFUGEES

HCV

26pc among females

18pc among males

8pc among pregnant women

HBV

5pc among females

9pc among males

3pc among pregnant women

The first one was conducted on pregnant women in 2017 and the second on general Rohingya refugees in 2019 in Cox’s Bazar.

A total of 300 pregnant refugees and 2,000 refugees in general in the camps, respectively, were tested during the study.

Apart from hepatitis C virus, hepatitis B was found in nine percent male, five percent female, and three percent pregnant female refugees.

Among all age groups, HCV was found in 11 percent of refugees, while the percentage of HBV was four percent.

According to Dr Ali, who is also the first liver transplant surgeon in Bangladesh, “HBV affected pregnant women unknowingly transmit the virus to their newborns, the most common mode of HBV transmission.”

“The masses suffer silently with HBV and HCV in addition to their other health problems. They are also potential threats for the host community,” he explained.

Dr Ali has been recognised as one of six hepatitis “elimination champions” last July by the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination, for making significant contributions toward ending the condition globally.

There is an immediate need for well-organised studies to assess the causes and risk for viral transmission and the capacity of health systems in the camps to deliver preventive, care, and treatment services, he stressed.

Enhancing people-to-people ties Bangladesh-India friendship dialogue begins in Shimla

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh-India Friendship Dialogue begins in Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh of India, today to improve the people-to-people connectivity and ignite the spirit of Liberation War as the two nations celebrate the 50 years of diplomatic relations.

Leading political figures, diplomats and civil society members from both the countries will participate in the 10th round of the dialogue aimed at deepening understanding of the bilateral relation, which was based on secularism, democracy and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Be completely transparent Shujan urges search committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizens’ platform Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) yesterday urged the search committee to work with full transparency by making public the names of the political parties and their proposed individuals for the roles of new chief election commissioners and other ECs respectively.

In a virtual press conference, Shujan came up with the call with a four-point demand to make the process of appointing the new election commissioners transparent. Shujan secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar read out a written statement in this regard.

“We thank the search committee for

“We thank the search committee for publishing the proposed names for CEC and other ECs by different political parties. However, half disclosure doesn’t ascertain full transparency.”

BADIUL ALAM MAJUMDAR
Shujan Secretary

publishing the proposed names for CEC and other ECs by different political parties. However, half disclosure doesn’t ascertain full transparency,” he said.

Eminent jurist Shahdin Malik said their key target is a fair election in the country, for which they want a competent EC, unlike previous ones.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said people’s constitutional rights were curbed during the previous two elections, underlining the necessity to constitute the EC with much caution this time.

M Hafiz Uddin Khan, president of Shujan, said he believes that there is a necessity for a caretaker government. “I don’t think the government would restore it but we can advance the mission to form an Election Commission with transparency.”

TAQI MURDER 5 accused appear before court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N’ganj



Five accused in the murder case of teenager Tanwir Muhammad Taqi appeared before a Narayanganj court yesterday.

But Rab, the case’s investigation agency, did not submit its probe report on the day. The accused are Rifat Bin Osman, Sultan Shawkat alias Bhromor, Yusuf Hossain Liton, Saleh Rahman Simanto and Tayebuddin Ahmed Jacki. They are currently on bail. Senior Magistrate Nushrat Sahara Bithi fixed March 22 for the next hearing.

Prosecution lawyer Pradeep Kumar Ghosh said, “The court did not set any deadline for completing the case’s investigation. That is why Rab keeps saying that it is still continuing the investigation.”

Seventeen-year-old Taqi went missing on March 6, 2013. His body was found floating in the Shitalakkhya on March 8 that year. Eight prime accused are still on the run, and the rest five were arrested. Even after eight years, Rab is yet to submit the case’s charge sheet.