

Yet another deadline missed

BR fails to reach 2nd target of train operation on Mawa-Bhanga section thru Padma Bridge



NURUL ISLAM SUJAN
Railways Minister

As per the new plan, we will try to start the operation [on Dhaka-Bhanga section] targeting March 26 next year, our Independence Day. In case we miss the deadline, we will start the operation by June next year.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The railways authorities aimed to start operating trains on Mawa-Bhanga section through Padma Bridge on the same day as the opening of the long-cherished bridge for the public.

However, when it was almost certain that they would not be able to meet the target, the authorities last year said they would try to start the operations on Dhaka-to-Bhanga section within December this year.

The authorities are now saying they would not be able to meet the revised target as well, mainly due to the pandemic and delay in shifting utilities from project areas.

"As per the new plan, we will try to start the operation [on Dhaka-Bhanga section] targeting March 26 next year, our Independence Day," said Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan yesterday.

"In case we miss the deadline, we will start the



operation by June next year," the minister told reporters while visiting the Padma Bridge Rail-link Project.

The entire route from Dhaka to Jashore would be opened by June 2024, he said, adding that installation of railway tracks on the lower section of the bridge is likely to start in July after the opening of the bridge, he said.

The bridge is expected to be inaugurated in late next month.

The double-decker Padma Bridge -- with roadway on top and railway on bottom -- is being constructed by Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) at the cost of around Tk 30,000 crore.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Railway (BR) is implementing the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project, building a 169km rail line to connect the capital with Jashore via the Padma Bridge at a cost of Tk 39,246.80 crore.

Although the revised deadline of the project is 2024, the authorities planned to operate trains on the Mawa-Bhanga section, terming it a priority, on the day of the bridge's opening.

Currently, Bhanga is connected with a railway network via Faridpur.

Rail tracks on the bridge would be installed by the railway contractor. However, BBA declined to hand over the structure to railways for installing the rail track until the bridge is opened to the public "on technical and engineering grounds".

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PRAYER
TIMING
MAY 16



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-36	8-00
Jamaat	4-45	1-15	5-15	6-40	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

'Ensure benefits for non-regularised govt employees'

SC releases full text of verdict on 5 civil review petitions

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The apex court has come forward to ensure welfare and benefits of the employees -- who are under the master roll after completion of their services -- so that they don't retire with empty hand.

In the full text of a verdict, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court underscored the need for formulation of a separate rules to protect the future interest of such work-charged employees.

"In a welfare state of a government by the people and for the people should not return the work-charged employees at the end of the day with empty hand."

"It is the obligation of the state to take steps so that their lives do not fall in total ruin. For that reason, separate rules are required to be framed for the persons who have been working as work-charged employees, if necessary, for protecting their future interest so that they do not fall in total deserts at the end of their work," the apex court observed in the full text of verdict.

The 14-page full text of the judgement was released

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Finding shade under a tree is quite rare in Dhaka due to its scarcity. However, Dhaka University campus has always been an exception in this regard. Its century-old Koro trees, with its lush leaves and extended branches, have safeguarded the campus area under its shade for years. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'An inside job'

DB says DSHE staffers involved in question leak

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Two employees of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) leaked the question paper of the recruitment exam for the post of "office assistant/computer operator".

On Friday, the test was held at 61 centres in Dhaka, aiming to fill 513 vacancies.

The question papers were distributed from DSHE to the exam centres around 11:00am on the exam day.

The staffers involved with the question leak took photographs of the papers during the time.

Police's Detective Branch (DB), the agency investigating the question paper leak, disclosed the information to this correspondent yesterday.

However, detectives did not disclose the names of the involved staffers as the investigation is ongoing.

DB started the investigation after an examinee was arrested during the test from the capital's Eden College centre on Friday.

The arrestee was identified as Md Sumon Jomadder (30) from Patuakhali.

The invigilator of room 2237 at the centre found him answering the MCQs by copying answers written behind his admit card.

Sumon was sent to jail yesterday after a day's remand in the case filed with Lalbagh Police Station regarding the question paper leak, said police.

A DB high official involved with the investigation said that the question paper was later sent to an organised syndicate in Patuakhali on the WhatsApp.

It was solved by three to four individuals. The answers were sent to the examinee who contacted the syndicate.

"The gang has around six members," the official told this correspondent, requesting anonymity.

The syndicate is led by Saiful Islam, a teacher of mathematics at Khepupara Girls Secondary School, he added.

Investigators said the gang distributed the answers to some 10-12 examinees via WhatsApp around 42 minutes before the exam started.

The two staffers involved are also from Patuakhali.

Shahadat Hossain Sumon, DB's additional deputy commissioner, mentioned that they have

found some names involved with the question paper leak.

"We have kept some of the suspects under close surveillance, including a school teacher. The gang members went into hiding after the examinee was arrested but we are conducting drives to catch them," he said.

According to officials, several networks have been detected behind the leaks.

"Some of the syndicate's activities were found in capital's Jatrabari, Kishoreganj, Patuakhali and Tangail," said another anonymous DB high official.

The question papers were distributed from DSHE to the exam centres around 11:00am on the exam day. The staffers involved with the question leak took photographs of the papers during the time.

The official also said they are yet to know about the actual dealings but have information about an amount of Tk one to two lakh handed over to the gang in advance for the answers.

Contacted, Prof Nehal Ahmed, director general (DG) of DSHE, said, "The exam started at 3:00pm and the papers were distributed to the 61 centres at 11:00am. There was a four-hour gap in between that."

"The Detective Branch will investigate whether anything happened during that time," he added.

Asked if they will investigate the matter themselves, he said, "We do not have that capacity. We are completely depending on the Detective Branch's report in this regard. Once they give us a report, we will take the next course of action."

Asked about the involvement of DSHE staffers in question leak, the DG said, "We have a zero tolerance policy in this regard."

"Since police have found a link, we hope they will be able to find out those involved with the question leak," he added.

"We will take stern action against the perpetrators, no matter who they are," Prof Nehal Ahmed told this correspondent last night.

Increase capacity of govt, private hospitals

Say speakers on treating patients paralysed in road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of patients paralysed in road accidents has increased at an alarming rate, putting hospitals at stretch for quality treatment, said speakers at an event yesterday.

For this reason, both government and private hospitals have to increase their capacity to provide quality treatment to patients, they said at the two-day workshop on thoracolumbar spinal surgery for surgeons held in Dhaka, organised by Bangladesh Spine and Orthopedic Hospital.

"Surgeons have no alternative to increasing skills in treating paralysis [due to accidents]," Dr Abdul Awal Rizvi, former director of National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) and president of Spine Society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhancing skills of physicians
- Training surgeons in thoracic surgery
- Increasing capacity at hospitals
- Providing quality treatment

Dr Shah Alam, coordinator of the workshop, said, "It will not be possible to treat the increasing number of patients in road accidents unless private hospitals increase their capacity and skills in parallel to the government ones."

Dr Abdul Gani, director of NITOR, said around 600 bike accidents were recorded at NITOR during the last Eid holidays. "The fatality rate is higher [in bike accidents] and around 5-6 percent of the patients have a spinal injury. But it is tough for government hospitals to provide treatment to all the patients. This is where private hospitals have to come forward," he said.

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Seven held for selling fake Covid certificates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A negative certificate of the coronavirus test is mandatory for travellers going abroad, especially in the Middle East. By capitalising on this, an unscrupulous group used to take hostage the travellers and embezzle huge sums of money.

The members of the fraudulent gang used to gain the trust of the expatriates by introducing themselves as doctors, staff and nurses of their Covid-19 hospital. Later, they used to take a hefty amount of money from the passengers in exchange for fake Covid-19 certificates.

Based on these allegations, the Rapid Action Battalion arrested seven members of a gang who cheated passengers travelling abroad with coronavirus test certificates, from Mohakhali area in the capital on Saturday night. Rab-1 Commanding Officer Lt Col Abdullah Al Momen told this at a press conference held at his office in Uttara yesterday.

The arrestees are -- Jasim Uddin (28), Tarekul Islam (26), Alamgir Hossain (20), Ripon Mia (28), Ariful Islam (20) and Ahmed Hossain Shahadat (18) and Shamim Hossain (30).

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Lychee -- the succulent, luscious fruit -- has finally started to arrive in the markets with summer's arrival. A crowd of customers was seen purchasing them from vendors in Gulistan area. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN