

To the relief of passengers

E-ticketing launched for buses on Mirpur route

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The much-awaited e-ticketing service for buses on Mirpur route finally began yesterday. In a press conference on Saturday, Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association General Secretary Khandkar Enayet Ullah announced e-ticketing services for all buses on the route from yesterday. Out of 30 bus companies, e-ticketing has not been introduced in the buses of at least five companies. Bus officials claim that they could not provide this service due to a shortage of human resources and a lack of ticketing machines. Passengers appreciated the initiative on the first day. Ashraf Hossain, a resident of Mirpur-2 and banker, said every day, many get into quarrels with helpers over bus fare. "Due to the introduction of e-ticketing, we will be able to pay the proper fare for a certain distance," he added. However, all the buses are yet to start the process due to a lack of POS ticketing machines. While visiting Farmgate area between 9:30am and 10:00am, this correspondent talked to the staffers of seven buses that ply Mirpur-Jatrabari and Mirpur-Sadarghat routes.

Five of them claimed that they could not go for the system as they are yet to receive the machines. Bus companies are acquiring these machines from private organisation Jatri. Three staffers of Shikar Paribahan said they have heard that a meeting was held in this regard, and they will get the devices soon. Rahman Mia, a passenger who travelled to Farmgate from Mirpur-10, said he did not get any e-ticket. "I had to pay the money to the bus conductor directly." Staffers of Bihanga Paribahan and Tanjil Paribahan said they did not take fares from passengers through ticketing machines. Al-Amin, a helper of Tanjil Paribahan, said, "We have the machine. But because of the lack of manpower, we could not use it. But we will start using it as soon as possible." In this regard, Enayet Ullah said, "We have just introduced the service. So problems will arise, but we are working on them." In the press conference on Saturday, he said 60 bus companies will operate in Dhaka from January 31, 2023, while 97 buses of Dhaka and its suburbs will run under e-ticketing from February 28. This implies that the operation of 5,650 buses in Dhaka and its suburbs will be brought under the system by February 28.



Passengers seemed happy with the launch of e-ticketing service for buses on Mirpur route. However, some bus companies are yet to receive the necessary devices to implement the system. Authorities have assured that the crisis will soon be resolved. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

‘Raise production of biofortified crops’ Experts say at seminar



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Production of biofortified crops in the country should be increased by making seeds available among farmers, since such crops can significantly mitigate zinc deficiency, participants at a roundtable discussion said yesterday. They called for a rigorous campaign to remove consumer's confusion about biofortified, high-yield crop varieties. Experts added that alongside growing biofortified cereals, focus should also be on production of non-cereal crops. HarvestPlus Bangladesh and International Food Policy Research Institute organised the roundtable on "Biofortified Crops: Connecting Value Chain Actors and Policymakers in Bangladesh" at the capital's Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (Barc). Biofortification is the process of increasing the density of micronutrients in widely consumed staple crops through conventional breeding techniques, agronomic practices, or genetic modification, as per the website of HarvestPlus. When consumed, they can provide essential micronutrients to improve nutrition and health, it reads. Biofortification focuses on increasing crops' content of iron, zinc, and vitamin A, to tackle deficiencies, it adds. According to the organisers, few biofortified rice varieties are grown at present in Bangladesh. Addressing the roundtable, former agriculture

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Coordinated speed limits for all major roads

Authorities take initiative to reduce road crashes

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Authorities have taken the initiative for setting coordinated speed limits for vehicles on all major roads to reduce road crashes, which has become a major concern for the country. Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has made the move at a time when different government agencies -- which are constructing roads -- are setting different speed limits for similar kinds of roads, confusing drivers. BRTA, which holds the mandate to set speed limits for vehicles, has called a meeting today with different government agencies, experts and road-safety activists, officials said. Representatives from the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), both city corporations of Dhaka, and highway police are expected to join the meeting. In August 2015, the government decided to fix the speed limit on highways across the country at 80 kilometres per hour to reduce frequent road accidents. Road Transport and Highways Division, in October 2017, directed to keep vehicles that are incapable of going 60 km per hour off the highways. As per section 44(l) of the Road Transport Act 2018, the authorities, in consultation with the bodies

involved in road construction and maintenance, can set or reset the speed limit on roads. One may face up to three months of jail time or a Tk 10,000 fine or both for over-speeding. Although BRTA holds the mandate for setting the speed limit, different agencies have been setting the limit after construction of different roads, said BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder. These bodies have not even consulted with BRTA before setting the limits. As a result, there are differences in the speed limit on similar kinds of roads, he told this correspondent yesterday. Besides, he said there are schools and markets by the highways, and speed limit for an entire road should not be the same. "So, we want to fix the speed limit of different roads following the engineering design and considering roadside establishments," he said.

The BRTA chair said they will make the speed-limit signs visible for all drivers, so that they can follow the rules. "We want to fix the speed limit for vehicles for reducing road crashes," he added. The move comes at a time when slow vehicles -- such as locally made three-wheelers -- have taken over the highways, ignoring a ban. However, simultaneous operation of slow and fast vehicles is

“There are schools and markets by highways, and speed limit for the entire road should not be the same. So, we want to fix the speed limit of different roads following the engineering design and by considering roadside establishments.”

Nur Mohammad Mazumder, BRTA Chairman

Caretaker govt now in museum: Quader



STAR REPORT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said, "Forget the caretaker government; it's now in a museum on the court's directive." He made these remarks while addressing the triennial council of the ruling party's Jhenaidah district unit at the grounds of Water Development Board. Warning BNP activists, Quader said, "We will not allow you to create chaos, do criminal activities and cause trouble... Awami League will not let them create chaos." He alleged, "Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir is sitting on sacks of money. He is taking money

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

‘Action plan for diabetes crucial’ Speakers call for measures to tackle the disease

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adopting a national plan of action to tackle diabetes is crucial, said speakers at a press conference yesterday. "Diabetes is linked with other non-communicable diseases. It's urgent to adopt a national plan of action to ensure coordination among all healthcare organisations," said Md Saif Uddin, secretary general of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (BADAS), at the event at Birdem hospital. Diabetes is one of the four major types of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that make the largest contribution to morbidity and mortality worldwide.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Despite the fact that plying of three-wheelers is illegal on highways, the vehicles are still seen being used rampantly, disobeying the law. As large vehicles tend to move at high speeds on the highways, these slow three-wheelers often fall into deadly accidents. This photo was taken on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Demra area recently. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SCHOOL ADMISSION Online process likely to begin November 16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The online application process for admission to government and non-government secondary schools for the coming academic session is likely to start on November 16 or 17. The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) sent proposals -- to start the process, along with suggested dates for the lottery -- to the education ministry for approval, DSHE Director (Secondary) Mohammad Belal Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday. DSHE proposed December 10 as the date for the lottery for admissions

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PRAYER
TIMING
NOVEMBER 14

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
5:05	12:45	3:45	5:22	7:00	
JAMAAT	5:35	1:15	4:00	5:25	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE

Mrs. Anita Chowdhury
(1932 - 2022)

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) is deeply saddened by the passing of Mrs. Anita Chowdhury, Square Matha, Square Group. She breathed her last at 1:06 pm at Square Hospital Dhaka on 13 November 2022.

Mrs. Chowdhury was the wife of former President of MCCI Late Samson H Chowdhury, and the mother of another former President Mr. Tapan Chowdhury.

MCCI expresses its deepest condolences to the bereaved family and humbly requests all to pray for Mrs. Chowdhury's departed soul. May God rests her soul in the best of heavens.

May God grant enough strength to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka