

Shine taken off a noble initiative

Many students may not get full set of textbooks today



AT A GLANCE

69pc of 10cr primary books, 80pc of 24cr secondary books reached upazilas
In number of places, some students won't get full set of books on first day
All books will reach upazilas by Jan 10
Paper crisis, work order issues behind delay

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Even though festivals to distribute free textbooks will be celebrated at schools, many students will not get the full set of new books today, the first day of the latest academic year, thanks to the high price of paper and delays in placing work orders. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday officially inaugurated the distribution of free textbooks among students of pre-primary, primary and secondary levels for the 2023 academic year. She started the distribution programme at a ceremony at her office by handing over books to

primary and secondary students in the morning. National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) officials said the government will distribute 35.16 crore textbooks among 4.27 crore primary and secondary students. Until yesterday evening, 69 percent of 10 crore primary textbooks and 80 percent of about 24 crore books for secondary students reached the upazilas. As the distribution is set to begin, this situation raises the question of whether all students will get their books on time.

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Due to the dense morning fog, many trains were behind schedule yesterday. And so, scores of people were seen sitting at the same place for hours, with luggage by their side, at Kamalapur Railway Station, waiting to finally board their ride.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Abdus Sattar, BNP chief's adviser, quits

STAR REPORT

After resigning from his post as lawmaker, Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan quit being the BNP chairperson's adviser yesterday, as the party "was not giving him due importance".

Sattar submitted his resignation letter to the BNP chief's office on Thursday night, his son Mainul Hasan Tushar told The Daily Star yesterday.

Tushar said BNP is not giving his father much importance at present. He is not even consulted for taking important decisions for the party. "It seems to us that he is no longer needed for the party's activities."

"As a result, we think it is better for him to spend time with the family," he said.

On December 10, seven BNP lawmakers, including Sattar, announced their resignation from parliament at the party's Golapbagh rally in Dhaka. Later, they



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DORM FOR EXPATRIATE WORKERS

Good initiative that needs promotion



The Bangabandhu Wage Earners Center was established on 8,470 acres of land near Dhaka airport so that workers who are set to leave the country can have a place to stay for a few days before boarding their flight. However, due to a lack of promotion, many expatriate workers are unaware of the facility. These photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

DIPAN NANDY

Expatriate workers usually come to Dhaka one of two days ahead of their flight abroad from different districts of the country.

However, only a handful of them can afford to stay at hotels near the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. Most of these people come from poverty-ridden backgrounds and are in a way forced to reside on the airport premises under horrible circumstances as they do not have family members in the capital.

As a result, they often have to live amid mosquito bites and cold or humid weather, depending on the season.

Taking heed of their plights, the Wage Earners Welfare Board under the Expatriate Welfare Ministry established Bangabandhu Wage Earners Center on 8,470-acre land near the Dhaka airport on the occasion of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary. Workers going abroad can stay

at this residential facility before boarding their flight. Expatriate Welfare and Foreign Employment Minister Imran Ahmed inaugurated this centre on March 18, 2022.

Surprisingly, not many people know about this facility as it remains almost empty most of the time.

The place has been set up in a rural setting – surrounded by greenery. Right in the middle, stands the two-storied building for the workers.

One needs to pay Tk 200 for one night's stay there. It has accommodation for 40 men and 9 women. But to avail the service, the workers need to register first. They can apply from the website of the wage earners board, or directly from the spot for Tk 100. A single worker can apply for one seat at a time and can stay for a maximum of two nights.

Service seekers are currently staying at the ground floor of the building. There are 10 rooms on

this floor. Each room has four small-sized beds. The second floor is still out of service, as the number of applicants for the centre is yet not up to the mark, according to authorities.

Beside the building, there's a canteen, which has a big dining table. But the canteen still doesn't serve food. Rather, the authorities bring food from nearby hotels at a reasonable price for the guests.

In a recent visit, this correspondent only saw three people staying at the facility. The canteen was also closed.

Liton Miah was one of the guests. He had a flight to Dubai on December 31. He had been staying at this centre for two days as he didn't have any close relatives in Dhaka.

He said, "It's a good initiative for the expatriate workers. But initially I was unaware of the place. I came to know about it from a friend after I reached Dhaka."

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Dhaka Int'l Trade Fair starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 27th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) will begin today at its new venue at Purbachal in Dhaka.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi announced the month-long DITF at a press briefing at the fair venue yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the fair at the venue.

Some 331 stalls and pavilions have been installed to exhibit the products at the fair, Munshi said at the briefing.

Besides, there will be stalls allocated for the foreign companies.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation has introduced 50 shuttle buses to carry passengers between Kuril and the venue of the trade fair.



The new venue of the Dhaka International Trade Fair at Purbachal.

PHOTO: STAR

The bus fare has been fixed at Tk 35 per passenger and the passengers will get 50 per cent discount if the fare is paid through bKash, said organisers.

This year's trade fair will take place at Bangabandhu Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre (BBCFEC) at Purbachal in Dhaka, AHM Ahsan, vice chairman and chief executive officer of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), told The Daily Star.

The entry fee of the trade fair will be Tk 40 for the adults and Tk 20 for the minors, he further said.

The Export Promotion Bureau in collaboration with the commerce ministry so far organised 26 DITFs since 1995.

The venue of the DITF has been relocated to Purbachal from Dhaka's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar to ease traffic congestion during the fair.

JATIYA PRESS CLUB

Farida, Shyamal elected president, general secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Farida Yasmin of Daily Ittefaq and Shyamal Dutta of Daily Bhorer Kagoj have been elected president and general secretary of the Jatiya Press Club for the 2022-23 tenure yesterday.

Farida bagged 567 votes while her rival candidate Kamal Uddin Sabuj got 401 votes.


Farida was elected the first ever female president of the press club in the last election held on December 2020.

Meanwhile, Shyamal got 496 votes while Ilias Khan secured 474 votes for the general secretary post.

Hasan Hafiz was elected senior vice president (559 votes)

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Dengue death toll **281**

Total number of patients **62,382**

338 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients **61,763**

47 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

PRAYER TIMING

JANUARY 1

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
5:30	12:45	4:00	5:27	7:00	
JAMAAT	6:05	1:15	4:15	5:30	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



This brand new public toilet on the capital's Elephant Road was inaugurated on November 30, but due to complications centring the leasing process, according to officials, the facility has remained closed to the public. Those visiting the area are still resorting to using toilets at nearby markets and mosques, which are usually not suitable for use.

PHOTO: STAR

What good is a public toilet if it can't be used?

Inaugurated a month ago, DSCC's new toilet remains closed

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

On the capital's Elephant Road stands a brand new public toilet, but not a single person has been able to use it since its inauguration on November 30. And so, pedestrians, shoppers, and local traders are still suffering amid the dearth of such facilities.

Over a few thousand people visit markets in the area regularly. Because there are no public toilets in sight, many resort to using toilets in mosques, while some use the ones inside markets, which are usually unhygienic.

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) inaugurated the toilet, constructed at a cost of Tk 50 lakh in the presence of the DSCC mayor, local lawmakers, and councillors.

Adnan Hossain, a clothes seller at Elephant Road Market, said customers are having a hard time because the market

toilets are not suitable for use.

Echoing Adnan, shopkeeper Rasel Mollah, said some people are suffering from health problems due to the toilet crisis.

Sulfiya Begum, an employee at the market, said that men are using toilets at the market and nearby mosques, but those are unsafe and unhygienic for women. "The public toilet crisis is a big problem for us women."

Talking to this newspaper, Ferdous Alam, ward-18 councillor under DSCC, said the public toilet has not yet been opened due to delays centring the leasing process.

"DSCC's public toilets are usually operated through a tender and lease process, but the lease has not yet been finalised for this toilet," he said. "I don't know when the toilet will be opened for all."

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