

AMAR EKUSHEY BOI MELA

A sea of red and yellow

DIPAN NANDY

People were coming hand in hand, wearing yellow and red color dresses. Celebrations of Pahela Falgun and Valentine's Day were in the air everywhere yesterday, especially at the premises of Ekushey Boi Mela.

Many couples, friends and families chose the book fair to spend quality time with their loved ones. Some were even seen reading poetry to their partners, while checking out books at different stalls.

Many people visited the book fair to gift books to their loved ones on the occasion of Pahela Falgun and Valentine's Day.

Risat and Ananya came to the fair hand in hand yesterday afternoon. The two have been married for four years. Talking to this correspondent, Ananya said she buys Anisul Huq's books every year at the fair.

There were many arrangements at the book fair as well. The unveiling ceremony of Sumana Gupta's first poem book "Mayavhara Ayanginar Path" is one of them. Bangla Academy Sahitya Puroskar winner writer Masud Uzzaman, writers Swakrito Noman and Mojaffor Hossain were unveiling the book in front of the Shrabon Prokashani.

Besides, a discussion programme on the translation of Bangla literature and Bangla translation of foreign

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Writ seeks HC order to probe graft allegations against Zahangir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed with the High Court yesterday seeking its directive on the authorities concerned to conduct probe into the corruption allegations against suspended Gazipur City Corporation mayor Mohammad Zahangir Alam.

One Md Abdur Rahim Sarkar from Gazipur submitted the petition as a public interest litigation through lawyer Md Ekramul Haque Tutul, requesting the HC to order the Anti-Corruption Commission to conduct enquiry into the reported allegations against Zahangir and to submit a report to this court.

Ekramul told The Daily Star that his client has filed the petition following reports published on different newspapers including The Daily Star about the corruption allegedly committed by Zahangir.

The HC may hold hearing on the petition today, he said, without elaborating the contents of the petition.



Adorned in the colours of spring, a couple goes through a few books that piqued their interest at a stall at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday, perhaps as a yearly tradition they've had since they got together many years ago. Many individuals celebrating both Pahela Falgun and Valentine's Day were spotted at the book fair -- some of whom visited with the sole purpose of buying their significant other a book as a token to remember the special day.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Dream of better life ends in nightmare

5 of fake recruiting agency, who used to send people abroad only to become victims of torture, held

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Without any licence to run a recruiting agency, they used to send people abroad.

This "agency" mainly targeted unemployed women, alluring them with a false promise of providing a job in Saudi Arabia with a handsome salary.

If anyone fell into the trap, the gang charged Tk 3 lakh from each fortune-seeker for medical tests, visa, and air ticket expenses.

However, once they reached the Middle Eastern country, these migrants had to undergo tremendous torture. On some days,

they had to go by without any food. When their families contacted the recruiters, they would ask for Tk 3 lakh to bring them home.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-3) yesterday disclosed the activities of the unlicensed recruiting agency, which has been trafficking women to Saudi Arabia for the last four years.

Based on the complaints of at least four to five victims, a team of Rab-3 arrested five people, including the ringleader of the criminal gang -- Nazrul Islam Milan, 42. The four other arrestees are Badal Akan, 40, Helal Uddin, 32, Abdur Rahman Ripon, 38, and

Masud Alam, 26.

A Rab team arrested the five on Monday around 6:15pm and seized 10 cell phones, eight ATM cards, three stamps, and Tk 25,000 from their possession, said Lt Col Arif Mohiuddin Ahmed, commander of Rab-3.

"They used to threaten the victims' families and told them not to contact law enforcers for assistance," the commander added.

Following the arrest, a case was filed with Paltan Police Station on Monday.

According to the first information report (FIR), arrestee

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BR hires joint venture for projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway yesterday hired a joint-venture firm to carry out preparatory works for several upcoming projects, including building a new rail line from Dhaka to Cumilla via Narayanganj.

Mahbubur Rahman, director of Railway Connectivity Improvement Preparatory Facility Project, and Yuji Asano, general manager (Dhaka office) of Oriental Consultants Global -- the firm representing the joint venture -- signed the contract at the capital's Rail Bhaban.

The consortium of Japan's Oriental Consultant Global, France's EGIS and Malaysia's HSS will carry out feasibility studies, prepare detailed designs and conduct other related works for 11 sub-projects. They are supposed to complete the works within 30 months at a cost of Tk 193.64 crore.

The JV will be assisted by five local companies -- KS Consultants Ltd, SODEV Consult International Ltd, STRATEGI consulting Company Ltd, DevConsultants Ltd and SARM Associates Ltd.

The new chord line from Dhaka to Cumilla via

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

3 more DU students suspended

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities have suspended three more students for allegedly tarnishing the university's image through indiscipline and misconduct.

Vice Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman approved the suspension yesterday, according to a press release.

The students -- Fazole Naveed Anana of theatre and performance studies, Rahat Rahman of management information systems, and Sadiq Ahammad of Institute of Social Welfare and Research -- were asked to show cause in seven working days as to why they should not be expelled permanently.

On February 12, they were expelled from Bangladesh Chhatra League for their involvement in mugging.

Earlier on February 5, a court sent them to jail in a case filed for stanching money from a covered-van driver.

On February 6, the DU authorities suspended another two students -- Tanzir Arafat Tushar and Rahul Ray, who were also BCL leaders -- for "breaching discipline".



CNG-run auto-rickshaws remain parked beside the Dharmarajika Buddhist Monastery Complex in Basabo, occupying a large portion of the entire stretch of the road. As a result, gridlock has become a constant in the area. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ

BNP shifts Dhaka road march to February 17

UNB, Dhaka

BNP has rescheduled its road march in the capital by a day, deciding to organise the programme on February 17 instead of 18 "due to unavoidable reasons".

BNP acting office secretary Syed Imran Saleh announced the decision at a press conference at its Nayapaltan central office yesterday.

He, however, said the date for holding a similar programme in all other metropolitan cities -- Chattogram, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Cumilla, Faridpur, Narayanganj and Gazipur -- remains February 18 as per the previous announcement.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

BNP starts road march after losing its way: Quader

BSS, Noakhali

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said sensing defeat, BNP is now afraid of joining the next general elections and the party has begun road march, going astray.

"There will be no movement if common people are not involved in it... BNP leaders and workers have joined the party's movement but they [BNP] failed to bring the common people," he said.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, made the remarks while speaking at a meeting on Basurhat Pourashava Bangabandhu premises in Companiganj upazila.

Speaking as chief guest, he said developed nations have put the entire world at risk today, but Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is tackling the crisis that Bangladesh is facing due to the global economic setback.

Recently, the IMF acknowledged Bangladesh as the 35th economically prosperous country in the world, claimed the AL general secretary.

Claiming that Bangladesh has started to turnaround from the ongoing crisis, he said Pakistan has no foreign reserves to import goods. "Bangladesh will not be like Sri Lanka. The country gave loan to Sri Lanka during its crisis period."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

FARDIN MURDER CASE

Bushra's bail extended

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended Amatullah Bushra's ad-interim bail till March 16 in the case filed over Buet student Fardin Noor Parash's death.

Bushra, who was in jail for two months following Fardin's death in November last year, was cleared of the murder charges by a report submitted by police's Detective Branch (DB) on February 6.

Bushra was present at the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday to submit a petition for permanent bail.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shanto Islam Mallik extended her ad-interim bail till March 16, the next date of hearing.

Meanwhile, Fardin's father yesterday filed a petition seeking time to file

Elegance is an attitude
Kate Winslet
Kate Winslet

LONGINES

The Longines Master Collection

TIME ZONE Authorized Sales Centre Imported & Marketed by: Kallol Enterprise Ltd. 199 Tejjagon I. A., Dhaka, Tel: 58816004-9