

INTERCITY
NID copies
compulsory
from March 1
for rail travel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It will be compulsory for passengers to have copies of their identification cards while travelling on intercity trains from March 1 to keep black marketing and unauthorised travel in check, the railways minister said yesterday.

As part of an upgraded ticketing system, all passengers will have to register their NID cards or birth certificates with Bangladesh Railway (BR), Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan said at a press briefing at the Railway Bhawan.

People will be able to register using NID, birth registration or passport using BR's system from tomorrow. No one will be allowed to buy tickets for intercity trains without pre-registration from March 1, he said.

The railway authorities will also set up a help desk at major stations to facilitate this transition from next week.

Railway staffers will, for the first time, use POS (point of sales) machines to check the matter and issue tickets on board for those travelling without tickets, he said.

People with
leprosy left out
of economic
growth
Says UN expert
Alice Cruz

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of persons with leprosy in Bangladesh indicates that the country's outstanding economic growth is not reaching the entire population, UN expert Alice Cruz said yesterday.

She urged the government to increase budgetary allocations, undertake awareness campaigns, and ensure equal treatment facilities for leprosy patients at public hospitals.

"The problem is in the multiple layers of systemic exclusion, structural discrimination and institutional neglect in Bangladesh," said the UN's Special Rapporteur

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AMAR EKUSHEY BOI MELA

Rabindranath: timeless echoes

DIPAN NANDY

It's been more than a century since he won the Noble Prize in literature and 82 years since he passed away. However, Rabindranath Tagore remains alive in the minds of readers. Be it poetry, songs, novels, short stories or plays, the works of Rabindranath Tagore are forever etched in their minds.

This was evident in this year's book fair as well, as booklovers are thronging the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela to buy his much-celebrated literary pieces.

Anamika Roy, a student at Dhaka University, was seen purchasing "Gitanjali" from the sales executive of Puthinilo's pavilion at the Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday.

"Rabindranath's words are magical. I especially find it interesting how intricate human feelings are depicted in his tales. His works influence me to dream and to be strong even in the darkest of times. That's the main reason I am still



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

reading his books," she said.

Puthinilo published a series of books by Rabindranath Tagore, titled "Rabindranath in book pocket". They published all the novels in 26 parts. All the short stories of Rabindranath are published in 13 parts. The other set of his poems, dramas and songs was published in 11 parts.

Abdul Hanif, sales executive of the pavilion, said, "There is a huge demand for the books. The sales of "Shesher Kabita", "Gitanjali" and "Shonar Tori" are extremely high."

Publication house Oitijhya published Rabindra-Rachanabali in 30 volumes. The books are edited by Prof Syed Akram Hossain of

Dhaka University's Bangla department.

Amjad Hossen Kajol, manager of Oitijhya, said, "People still love Rabindranath's works. Our sales are solid."

Pathak Shamabesh published "Rabindra Samagro" in 25 volumes.

Shams Shuvro, manager of the Pathak Shamabesh, said, "The first 18 volumes are like the Bishwa Bharati edition. The other seven volumes include the English works of Rabindranath, the letters of Rabindranath, rare photographs and paintings of Rabindranath."

"We also sell a single volume. For the readers, we are offering a three to twelve months EMI system for buying all the volumes," he added.

"Rabindranath is relevant for all ages in his thought and spirit," said young poet-writer Pias Majid, in response to why Rabindranath's books are still being sold.

According to Bangla Academy, 84 new books were published at the fair yesterday.

A ray of hope for
kidney patients

Prof Towhid's dialysis, transplant centre providing
free treatment to the underprivileged



MID ABBAS

Md Shahajahan, a 23-year-old resident of Begumganj upazila in Noakhali, was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease in 2017. Following a thorough examination, doctors advised him to start dialysis treatment.

In 2018, he began his dialysis treatment, initially at a local hospital. However, to cover the expenses, he had to sell all the property he inherited from his father, leaving only his house.

In 2020, Shahajahan moved to Dhaka and began receiving dialysis services from the National Institute of Kidney Diseases & Urology (NIKDU). He requires two dialysis sessions per week, each of which costs Tk 2,900.

His monthly cost for dialysis,

including the expenses for medication, amounts to at least Tk 50,000. Despite his financial difficulties, he continued with his dialysis treatment until the end of 2021. However, at the beginning of 2022, he contemplated discontinuing the treatment due to financial strain.

Later, he came in contact with Prof Dr Towhid Hossain, a retired professor from the National Institute of Kidney Diseases & Urology, who has been providing free dialysis services to underprivileged patients for the last one and a half years.

"I told Towhid Sir everything. He managed free dialysis services for me. Since then, I'm getting free dialysis treatment and now I'm doing good," Shahajahan shared with The Daily Star.



PHOTO: STAR

Thirty-year-old Kamrul Islam has also been availing of free dialysis services from Prof Towhid for the past eight months.

Kamrul and his wife Sharmin Akhter moved to Dhaka from Bhola after learning about Prof Towhid's services. Since then, Kamrul has been receiving free dialysis. The couple was also provided with free accommodation in Dhaka.

Expressing her gratitude, Sharmin said, "If Prof Towhid did not help us, my husband's treatment might have stopped."

Around 113 underprivileged dialysis patients are receiving completely free dialysis services from Prof Towhid, who is currently a doctor at North Bengal Hospital in Sirajganj.

To cater to the demands of the

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We plan to purchase four acres of land within a mile's distance from the current centre. Hopefully, we will be able to set up the hospital within two years.

DR TOWHID HOSSAIN



USAID Bangladesh Advancing Development and Growth through Energy (BADGE)

গ্যাস্টস ফান্ড এর জন্য আবেদন আহ্বান

বাংলাদেশে ইউনাইটেড স্টেটস এজেন্সি ফর ইন্টারন্যাশনাল ডেভেলপমেন্ট (ইউএসএআইডি)-এর অর্থায়নে পরিচালিত বাংলাদেশ অ্যাডভান্সিং ডেভেলপমেন্ট অ্যান্ড গ্রোথ থ্রু এনার্জি (ব্যাঙ্গা) এর বাস্তবায়নকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান টেট্রা টেক ইউএসআইডি, গ্যাস্টস ফান্ড প্রদানের বিজ্ঞপ্তি ঘোষণা করছে। বাংলাদেশী স্থানীয় তৃণমূল সংস্থা, কমিউনিটি গ্রুপ, স্থানীয় উদ্যোক্তা, গ্রাইডেট কোম্পানি, অলাভজনক প্রতিষ্ঠান, একাডেমিয়া, রিসার্চ এন্ড ডেভেলপমেন্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান, এক নারী নেতৃত্বাধীন প্রতিষ্ঠান যারা বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন, নবায়নযোগ্য বিদ্যুৎ, বিদ্যুতের গুণগতমান আর্থনিক ও নির্ভরযোগ্য পরিবেশা উন্নয়নে কাজ করে, যা ব্যাজ প্রকল্পের লক্ষ্য অর্জনে সহায়ক, সে সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের কাছ থেকে গ্যাস্টস ফান্ড এর আবেদনের আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। বিস্তারিত জানতে, www.bdjjobs.com -এর টেভার/ইউআই সেকশনে দেখুন।

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NHRC being in
lower category
not 'honourable'
Says commission's chair

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Being a category "B" human-rights institution is not "honourable" for the National Human Rights Commission, said Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed, the new chairperson of NHRC, at a webinar yesterday.

All the national human rights institutions of the world are categorised in a global ranking by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), from which the commissions must get accreditation.

The GANHRI indexes the institutions in "A" and "B" categories according to how compliant they are to the Paris Principles -- a set of minimum standards that all national human-rights institutions must operate by. The principles are decreed by the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

Category A institutions are fully compliant with the principles, and category B institutions are partially compliant. The national institutions of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are category B, while those of India and Nepal are category A.

Kamal said they are trying to alleviate the limitations that prevent them from being promoted to category A. One of the limitations is the founding law of the NHRC, the National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009, which restricts the commission from investigating any law enforcement agency, including the police and Rab.

DR KAMAL UDDIN AHMED
NHRC Chairperson

enforcement agency, including the police and Rab. He said they are trying to change the law.

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) organised the webinar to exchange dialogue with the new chairperson.

Speakers from different human-rights organisations commented that the NHRC must devise methods to work around the legal restrictions that prevent it from exercising its role fully.

They added that the commission must take steps to make sure that they are exercising whatever power they have been given.

ASK Executive Director Nur Khan Liton pointed out that the nature of enforced disappearance has changed; victims are no longer being permanently disappeared. Rather, law enforcers are temporarily disappearing victims by picking them up and keeping them in illegal detention for over 24 hours before showing them as arrested.

ASK Programme Director Nina Goswami moderated the event.

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