

Cops visit Prof Yunus' Ctg house

Say they went there to collect info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police have visited the village home of Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus in Najumia Haat area of Chattogram's Hathazari upazila to collect information about his family members.

Police went there on September 3. "It was a routine work. We've visited and collected some information about him and his family members for security reason," Abu Tayeb Md Arif, additional superintendent of Special Branch, told The Daily Star.

"We know that Prof Yunus and his family members are not living in Hathazari," he added.

Asked why police need the information about him, the police officer declined to comment.

Moinul Anam, younger brother of Prof Yunus, told this newspaper over the phone, "A policeman called me on September 3 and enquired about the details of my brother. I asked him why he was enquiring about my brother. He said it was an official instruction."

DHAKA-BHANGA LINE

Special train completes test run via Padma Bridge

PM to inaugurate route October 10

STAR REPORT

The Bangladesh Railway yesterday ran the test run on the 82 kilometre Dhaka-Bhanga rail line via the Padma bridge.

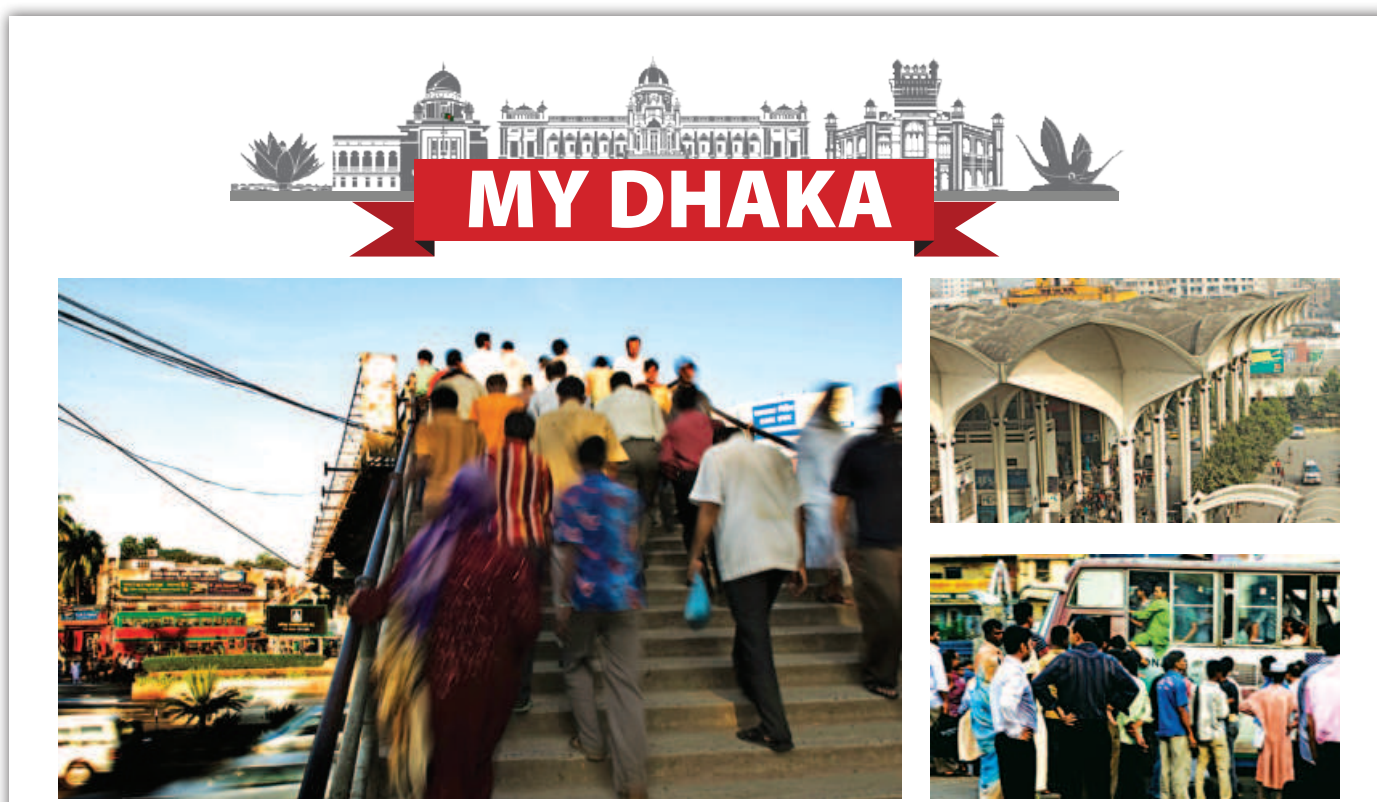
The train -- which was carrying Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon, some other lawmakers, government's senior officials, dignitaries and journalists -- left Dhaka's Kamalapur Railway Station at around 10:12 am.

It reached the Munshiganj Mawa Station, which is located at the edge of Padma bridge, at 11:20 am, said Ahmed Jamiul Islam, the project manager of Padma Bridge Rail Link. At around 12:20 pm, the train reached Bhanga Railway Junction in Faridpur, said officials concerned.

The train, which consists of six coaches with locomotive, went slower than its normal speed as it was a trial run, Islam told The Daily Star.

Once commercial operation starts, trains on this route will operate at a speed from 100 to 120 kilometres per hour, he added.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



PHOTOS: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

DHAKA

Day one and counting

BY ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

There are too many people in Dhaka. So many that it's choking the city. However, every person here is here for a reason.

The capital is full of opportunities and people from all over the country gather here for their own. For most, the first day in Dhaka remains vivid in their memories.

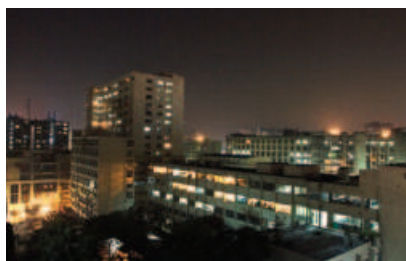
Dhaka can be scary for newcomers, as it's not the friendliest city for them. Add to that is the constant commotion here and there.

My first visit to Dhaka happens to be one of my oldest memories -- I was 11.

As I got off the bus at Gabtoli, there were too many vehicles, too many people, and too much noise. I remember holding on to my bags with both hands in fear of losing them.

When I later moved to the city, I remember getting lost on a regular basis as the alleys would confuse me. They all looked the same.

Trying to take shortcuts was out of the question because I just ended up



walking in circles. Even the highways were confusing to me.

On my first week in Dhaka, I remember being in Shahbag one day and needed to get to Kamalapur.

I boarded a bus which had a sticker saying "Kamalapur", thinking this is the one I had to take to get there. However, when the conductor came to collect the fare, I learned the bus was in fact coming from Kamalapur and not the other way around.

Another fact that newcomers in Dhaka learn quick about the city is that it isn't for the faintest of hearts.

People here are busy and don't have time to be nice. As a result, the city appears to be quite hostile when you first arrive.

For example, if you are trying to find a particular shop on the street and your pace is slower than those around you, people will bump into you with quite the force and will not bat an eyelash for having done so.

But the funny thing about Dhaka is

— the more nervous you are, the more you will suffer. If you put on a bold face, Dhaka embraces you as its own.

Even when you have adapted to this hostile city, it's still a challenge to get through the days. For some reason, Dhaka brings stress to everyone who dares step into it. One can feel the pangs of the stress from their first day in Dhaka and the feeling doesn't go away.

Whether you ask any of your friends or manage to realise it yourself, Dhaka is constantly straining people.

From my first moment off that bus, till this very moment, I can feel that constant pressure and no matter what I do, the feeling lingers.

The overly crowded streets, the loud noise, the tall buildings and the overall unfamiliar setting; all of this combine together to induce anxiety, especially for the newcomers.

Of course, everyone has different experiences with this concrete jungle.

There are thousands of people in this very city who came here with nothing more than the transportation cost in their pockets. Now, they are thriving thanks to the bustling and rushing nature of Dhaka.

Surprisingly, even though the city is chided more often than not, people end up forming a bond with it -- one that you learn to cherish only when you are leaving.

290 cops

FROM PAGE 1

Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal explained that these posts were created under "special arrangements" to address the pending promotion issue in the police administration.

He said if the supernumerary posts are not created, officials would not get promotions until 2030.

However, sources said many police officials are dejected for not getting promotions.

A lack of promotion opportunities is frustrating officials, said PHQ officials.

A BCS cadre officer, who joins the service as an assistant superintendent of police, is supposed to be promoted to SP after 10 years in service.

The SP post is fifth in the hierarchy of BCS cadre service. The 28th batch of officers were appointed to the police force in 2010.

According to the PHQ database, 150 officers of the 28th BCS cadre batch are waiting to be promoted to SPs from additional SPs. Thirty-five officials from the 29th BCS, who joined the force in 2011, are also awaiting this elevation.

But only 77 SP posts will be vacant by 2030 as officers from the ranks of SP to additional IGP are scheduled to go into pre-retirement (PRL) leave by that time.

In the seven years, 233 officers, including 81 additional DIGs, 57 DIGs, and 18 additional IGs, will go into PRL.

Nato chief warns against 'escalation' in Kosovo

AFP, Brussels

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg yesterday called for all sides to maintain calm in Kosovo after violence in May that wounded 93 peacekeepers.

"I welcome recent steps taken by Pristina to lower tension, including reducing the number of special police in the north, and plans to facilitate new municipal elections," Stoltenberg said after meeting Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani Sadriu.

Will work in unison to stop US 'dictates'

FROM PAGE 1

The bilateral trade between the two countries is about \$3 billion. Bangladesh is also constructing its first nuclear power plant in Rooppur with Russian support.

However, making payments to Russia faced challenges because of US sanctions on Russian banks. Bangladesh early this year restricted 69 US-sanctioned ships from berthing in Bangladesh.

Lavrov assured of timely implementation of the project, saying, "We have assurances from both companies supplying in this project that this will be moving according to the schedule."

The first shipment of nuclear fuel will arrive in Bangladesh in October, he said.

Regarding Bangladesh's decision to use yuan, the Chinese currency, to pay back the loans for the power plant, he said, "We are moving very fast to use a variety of systems that would be based on the national currency and not of the currency of countries who use it as a weapon."

Russia and Bangladesh have

spoken about making a permanent deal regarding the possible supply of LNG, wheat and fertilisers from the former to the latter, said Lavrov.

ON ROHINGYA
Russia and China have been opposing UN resolutions on Myanmar over the Rohingya issue since the beginning of the crisis in 2017. Russia is also a major arms supplier to the Myanmar junta.

"We are moving very fast to use a variety of systems that would be based on the national currency and not of the currency of countries who use it as a weapon."

Lavrov yesterday announced Russia's support for Bangladesh in the ongoing dialogue with Myanmar.

"Russia thinks that the Rohingya should go back to Myanmar. We believe that outside actors should limit themselves to simply creating favourable conditions for a mutually acceptable solution. This is exactly

what the Russian Federation is doing in [this] context... and will continue doing so.

"However, certain outside players use these issues to exert pressure on one of the parties and to interfere in its domestic affairs. I believe that this is both counterproductive and unacceptable."

When it was his turn, Foreign Minister Abdul Momen said, "There are challenges in doing business due to the Ukraine war. We also requested duty free quota access for our products."

Bangladesh does not want any war and crises should be solved through dialogue and discussion, Momen said.

A journalist asked Momen why Bangladesh was neutral about the Russia-Ukraine war as Bangladesh too has been suffering from the US sanctions.

Momen replied Bangladesh has a foreign policy of "friendship to all and malice to none. We maintain a very balanced foreign policy. Our position is very simple."

"We don't want to see any proxy war in this region."

Special train completes test run

FROM PAGE 1

pm, the train reached Bhanga Railway Junction in Faridpur, said officials concerned.

The train, which consists of six coaches with locomotive, went slower than its normal speed as it was a trial run, Islam told The Daily Star.

Once commercial operation starts, trains on this route will operate at a speed from 100 to 120 kilometres per hour, he added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the Bhanga-Dhaka rail route through the Padma bridge on October 10, according to Sujon.

Commercial operation of trains will begin within a few days of the inauguration, he told journalists after getting off the special train in Faridpur.

"A long-cherished dream of the people of this area has come true today," he added.

A 172-km railway line from Dhaka to Jashore via Padma bridge is being constructed under the Padma bridge rail link project. But the entire route is yet to be constructed, according to railway officials.

About 80 percent of the Dhaka to Mawa rail route, 96.5 percent of the Mawa to Bhanga rail route and about 78 percent of the Bhanga to Jashore rail route have been completed, Sujon told The Daily Star.

The project will be completed by June next year, he added.

Sujon took the same trial train back to Dhaka in the afternoon. After commencement of

commercial operations, passengers will be able to get on and get off at Dhaka's Kamalapur and Gendaria stations; Munshiganj's Nimtola and Mawa stations; Shariatpur's Padma station; Madaripur's Shibchar station and Faridpur's Bhanga station, said railway officials.

Earlier, BR ran a trial train from the Bhanga to Mawa end of the Padma bridge on April 4 after the completion of the stoneless railway line on the Padma bridge.

On October 14 last year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the construction work of the rail link between Dhaka and Jessore.

[Our Correspondent from Munshiganj and Faridpur contributed to the report]

Councillor held on rape charges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police arrested a ward councillor in Savar's Rajphulbaria area yesterday on charges of raping a woman.

The arrestee, Mahfuz Sarkar, 45, is the ward-7 councillor of Manikganj's Singair municipality, said Nayan Karkun, inspector (operation) of Savar Model Police Station.

The woman filed a case against him with the police station early yesterday, he said.

According to the case statement, Mahfuz raped the 35-year-old woman on Wednesday night.

A Dhaka court sent the arrestee to jail, the police official added.

Cattle trader shot dead by 'BSF'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A Bangladeshi cattle trader was shot dead allegedly by members of Indian Border Security Force along Mominpara border in Panchagarh Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased, Nur Alam, 30, was a resident of Nurnagar Bakshiganj village in Boda upazila.

Police recovered the body with the help of BGB members in the morning.

Following the incident, BGB and BSF held a flag meeting around 10:30 am.

Lt Col Asaduzzaman Hakim, commanding officer of 56 BGB Battalion in Nilphamari, who led the Bangladesh side to the meeting, said they protested the killing of a civilian, while BSF officials said their members opened fire in self-defence as "a group of intruders attacked them" when they were on patrol along the border.

2 bikers die as speedy motorcycle crashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Two people were killed after their motorcycle hit a speed bump and crashed in Kurigram's Rajarhat on Wednesday night.

Quoting locals, police said the bike carrying three people was being driven at high speed. As the motorcycle rider failed to notice the speed bump, the bike hit the bump and the three fell on the road in Sinai area. They suffered severe head injuries as they were not wearing helmets.

Of the two deceased, Maniruzzaman Pavel, 31, died on the way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital and Hossain Ali, 30, at the same hospital. Injured Marzan Ali, 29, was undergoing treatment there. The three were from Ulipur upazila.

Pavel was driving the bike, said Abdullah Hill Zaman, officer-in-charge of Rajarhat Police Station.

Putin orders state support for AI as race heats up

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered his government to fund research into artificial intelligence as competition with the West to develop such technology heats up, according to a Kremlin document published yesterday.

Economy, stability to get priority

FROM PAGE 1

especially in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the pandemic.

For Bangladesh, the Rohingya crisis has been a real headache for the last six years, while climate change is a perennial issue affecting millions.

Momen said Bangladesh wants to be the voice of the Global South at the summit, raising issues of climate change, the Rohingya crisis, food and energy challenges.

"Also, we have made significant achievements in terms of socio-economic development and women empowerment. We have been a leader in the Climate Vulnerable Forum. We want to showcase these achievements at the summit," he said.

"Our prime minister will also call on the global leaders for a solution to the Russia-Ukraine war. We want global stability because the people, especially the women and children, are being affected," he said.

The G20 members are responsible for 80 percent of the carbon emissions but the developing countries suffer due to this. They should take aggressive actions to reduce carbon emissions and help developing countries under the Loss and Damage initiative, which is yet to be operationalised, Momen said.

"We will also discuss safe and rights-based regular migration. They create jobs..." Momen said.

DHAKA, DELHI TO SIGN 3 MOUS
MoUs on cooperation on agricultural research and education, extension of cultural exchange programme from 2023 to 2025, and on facilitating transactions of Rupee and Taka between the two countries will be signed, Momen said.

The two countries' trade is worth more than \$14 billion. Talks are going on for the signing of a comprehensive economic partnership agreement.

India has extended \$7.5 billion across three Lines of Credit (LoCs)

since 2010 for 46 projects. As of June, only \$1.5 billion has been disbursed.

Officials said during the meeting with Modi, Hasina may seek easier terms and conditions for the LoCs, which come with terms such as employment of Indian contractors, and procurement of 65-75 percent raw material from India.

Asked, Momen said Bangladesh always raises these issues and India has made some changes. He said Dhaka will not seek any new LoC.

The minister did not say anything when asked if the Teesta water-sharing issue would be raised.

Teesta water sharing agreement could not be signed despite all preparations made since 2011 due to the opposition from West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

On the Ganges Water Treaty, which is to expire in 2026, Momen said, "We already started making noise about it. In time, we will articulate this."

Asked if Hasina would discuss anything regarding the upcoming elections in Bangladesh, Momen said, "I don't know."

Bangladesh is committed to free and fair elections, he said, adding, "We will welcome if anybody wants to extend any support or recommendations, but we will not entertain any bossing."

He said the Awami League government over the last 14 years worked very hard and believes that the people will vote for the party again.

In the past, there had been many incidents of terrorism, strikes, violence and bombings. People don't want this, he said.

"We have transparent ballot boxes. So the voting will not be in the dark of the night," Momen said, adding that Bangladesh is an independent sovereign country and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is not afraid of any pressure.