

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN DHAKA

## E-ticketing remains only on paper

DIPAN NANDY

E ticketing for all buses in Dhaka was launched last year, first on Mirpur route and then on other routes for over 3,000 buses, aiming to bring discipline in the capital's public transport sector and reduce conflicts between passengers and bus helpers over additional fares.

The service, however, now remains on paper only!

Since the very beginning, allegations were raised against bus staffers for refusing to use the POS (point of sales) machines provided by the bus owners' association for e-tickets and collecting fares, and the situation has only gotten worse over time.

Upon boarding 25 buses in Gulistan, Paltan and Farmgate areas recently, this correspondent did not find a single bus using POS machines for e-tickets.

It seems these POS machines have disappeared in thin air from Dhaka buses.

Many commuters remain unaware that they are supposed to get e-tickets for local buses. Even as signs inside most buses read, "Do not pay fare without a ticket,"

this directive often goes unnoticed.

Shamim Khan, a regular passenger of Akash Paribahan on the Paltan-Bashundhara route, said, "I didn't even know e-tickets exist. The bus helpers never informed me about it once."

In response, Ajmot, who collects fare for Akash Paribahan, answered, "If the passenger wants, I give the ticket. The machine (POS) cannot be hung around the neck all the time."

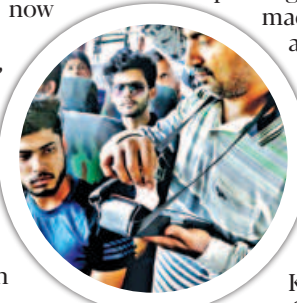
When this correspondent told him to show the POS machine, he could not.

This correspondent had a similar experience on board a bus of Malancha Paribhan, which runs from Mohammadpur to Katherpool intersection.

On his way from Paltan to Shabbagh, when he asked the helper to provide an e-ticket, Shakil, the helper, said, "There are no machines, if you want to travel on this bus, you have to pay the pre-decided fare."

Shariful Islam, a resident of Mirpur's Senpara Parbata area, comes to his office at Kawran Bazar every day by bus.

"When the service was first launched, they provided us e-tickets for the first two



Saima Wazed, a thematic ambassador of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and the chairperson of the National Advisory Committee on Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, presents a souvenir to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the latter's residence in New Delhi, yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana's son Radwan Mujib Siddiq were present there.

PHOTO: PMO

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## BRI will take us to new heights

Says Chinese diplomat

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Embassy Charge D'affaires, Yan Hualong, yesterday stressed that China will always remain a trustworthy neighbour to Bangladesh and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will take the two nation's relationship to a new height.

"China will continue to encourage more Chinese enterprises to invest in Bangladesh and promote the steady and long term development of China-Bangladesh economic and trade relations," he said.

Yan Hualong said this while addressing the inauguration of "The Belt and Road Initiative in Bangladesh Exhibition 2023" at the Bangabandhu-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Dhaka's Purbachal.

The Embassy of China in Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Bangladesh-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chinese Enterprises Association in Bangladesh, organised the event.

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PRAYER TIMING		SEPTEMBER 9	
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:30	6:20 7:45
JAMAAT 5:10	1:15	4:45	6:25 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## President reaches S'pore

BSS, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin reached Singapore yesterday afternoon after concluding his five-day Indonesia tour where he attended the 43rd Asean Summit and 18th East Asia Summit.

A VIP flight (aircraft BG-1911) of Bangladesh Biman Airlines Limited, carrying the President and his spouse Dr Rebecca Sultana, reached Changi International Airport in Singapore at 2:12pm (Singapore time).

On arrival, the President was welcomed by the Bangladesh High Commissioner to Singapore Tauhedul Islam and senior officials concerned with the Bangladesh High Commission.

The Head of the State and his wife will have their health check-up there. He is scheduled to return home on September 16.

## CUSTODIAL DEATH OF JONNY

## A long wait for closure

Appeal hearing yet to start three years after lower court verdict

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Justice continues to elude the family members of Ishtiaque Hossain Jonny, a garment-waste trader from Mirpur, whose custodial torture and death in 2014 sparked outrage and led to the country's sole case filed under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013.

While the trial proceedings at a lower court concluded three years ago, the final verdict remains elusive. The lower court issued its judgment on September 9, 2020, sentencing 5 people, including 3 police officials, to different jail terms.

But the proceedings of appeals filed by the convicts, challenging the trial court's decision, are still to commence in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court.

The uncertainty comes as the convicts have failed to prepare the essential paper book for the case.

Additionally, the prospect of further legal battles looms large, with the possibility of appeals before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the High Court judgment and the potential pursuit of a review of the apex court's verdict.

WHAT WAS IT ABOUT

A group of 25 to 26 police officers — including then sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station Zahidur Rahman — raided a house during a wedding ceremony in Pallabi's Irani camp area and picked up Ishtiaque Hossain Jonny, who was then 28 years old, and his brother Imtiaz Hossain Rocky on February 8, 2014.

Police informers Sumon and Russell called the police after Jonny slapped Sumon for stalking and harassing women at the programme. Police then tortured the brothers at the station, according to the case statement.

After Jonny fell sick the next day, he was admitted to a local clinic. Later, he was transferred to Suhrawardy Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

On August 8, 2014, Rocky filed the case with the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court

This is the country's sole case filed under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013.

Ishtiaque Hossain Jonny, a garment waste trader from Mirpur, allegedly died after being tortured by cops at the Pallabi Police Station in February, 2014

On September 9, 2020, a Dhaka court sentenced former SI Zahidur and ex-assistant sub-inspectors (ASI) Qamruzzaman Mintu and Rashedul Islam of Pallabi Police Station to life imprisonment and sentenced police informers Sumon and Russell to seven years in jail.

of Dhaka in connection with the death of his brother.

On September 9, 2020, a Dhaka court sentenced former SI Zahidur and former assistant sub-inspectors (ASI) Qamruzzaman Mintu and Rashedul Islam of Pallabi Police Station to life imprisonment and sentenced police informers Sumon and Russell to seven years in jail.

The trial court also asked each of the officers to pay Tk 2 lakh compensation to the complainant, Rocky, through Bangladesh Bank and fined Zahidur and Rashedul Tk 1 lakh each. Sumon and Russell were fined Tk 20,000 each.

This was the first verdict under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013.

Convicted Mintu has been on the run, and Russell, who had been absconding during

the delivery of the trial court's judgment, surrendered to the lower court later.

Zahidur, Rashedul, Sumon and Russell filed separate appeals with the High Court challenging the trial court verdict.

Russell secured bail from the HC on November 22 last year and Zahidur, Rashedul and Sumon are now in jail in connection with the case, complainant Imtiaz Hossain Rocky told The Daily Star on September 6.

He said he is yet to receive any compensation from the convicts as the appeals of the case have not been disposed of by the High Court.

On May 10 this year, the High Court refused to grant bail to Zahidur, Rashedul and Sumon in the case and also ordered the convicted accused to deposit the fines to the treasury of the state within one month.

The bench of Justice SM Kuddus Zaman and Justice Shahed Nuruddin also asked Rashedul to prepare the paper book of the case in two months, SM Rezaul Karim, principal lawyer for Rocky, told The Daily Star.

A paper book that contains all details of a case, trial proceedings, statements, evidence, orders, verdict and other relevant documents is necessary for the HC to hear and dispose of an appeal, he said, adding that Rashedul is yet to prepare the paper book.

"This [Jonny murder] is the sole case filed under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013, as victims don't dare to lodge cases against the law enforcers for torture and death in custody," said Advocate Rezaul Karim.

Rashedul's lawyer Md Abdur Razzak Razu told this correspondent on September 6 that the paper book of the case will be prepared soon on behalf of his client.

He said all convicted accused have deposited the compensation and fines to Bangladesh Bank while filing their appeals in accordance with the relevant provisions of the law.

The HC may start hearing of the appeals after it will reopen on October 8, he added.

## AL making country a battleground of big powers: Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday feared that Bangladesh was going to be used as a field in the fight of the big powers to establish their supremacy only because of the government's imprudent diplomacy.

Speaking at a rally, he also voiced concern over Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's comment that the US and its allies are trying to promote their interests in the South Asia region by using the Indo-Pacific strategy with their goal of countering China and Isolate Russia.

"What the Russian foreign minister said

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## 46 Jamaat-Shibir men held in Dhaka

STAFF REPORTER

Forty-six members of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir were detained as they were holding a protest rally without permission from authorities in Dhaka's Jatrabari area yesterday.

Mofizul Alam, officer-in-charge of Jatrabari Police Station, claimed the Jamaat-Shibir men lobbed at least three crude bombs from the procession at the law enforcers around 8:00am, injuring two police personnel.

They also vandalised three vehicles, he said. Police detained 46 Jamaat-Shibir men from the spot.

Most of them are thana and ward-level leaders and activists of the party, he said adding filing of a case is underway.

Jamaat in its verified Facebook page, claimed they held a rally at Jatrabari area with various demands, including the holding of free and fair polls, restoration of caretaker government system, and release of arrested leaders and activists.

When the rally was about to end, police took action against the protesters by firing tear gas shells. Police also detained numerous leaders and activists from the spot and surrounding areas, it added.

## HARASSMENT OF FLIGHT ATTENDANT

## Bangladeshi man arrested in Mumbai

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A Bangladeshi national has been arrested in Mumbai allegedly for sexually harassing a female flight attendant on board a Muscat-Dhaka flight travelling via Mumbai.

The incident took place in the early hours of Thursday before the Vistara flight was scheduled to land at the Mumbai International Airport, said Dikshit Gedam, deputy commissioner of Mumbai police yesterday.

"The accused, identified as Md Dulal, 30, who is a Bangladeshi national, was going to Dhaka from Muscat via Mumbai on a Vistara flight. Half an hour before the plane was to land in Mumbai, Dulal got up from his seat, hugged a female flight attendant and tried to kiss her," the official said.

The accused flyer also did not pay heed to the flight captain's warning when the latter read out a red warning card declaring him an unruly passenger, he said.

On landing at Mumbai airport, the Bangladeshi national was handed over to security officers who took him to the Sahar Police Station, the official added.

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Eminent singer Syed Abdul Hadi receives a lifetime achievement award from noted singer Runa Laila at the Meril-Prothom Alo Awards 2022 yesterday. Matiur Rahman, editor of Prothom Alo, Anjan Chowdhury, managing director of Maasranga Television and Square Toiletries Limited, among others, were present on the stage.

PHOTO: STAR