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No plan to raise train fares soon

Railways minister terms news reports of possible hike rumour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Railways Minister Zillul Hakim yesterday said they have no plans to hike train fares anytime soon, a claim that goes against official documents signed by the minister himself.

He dismissed the news on railway's move to raise fares of passenger trains as "rumours", according to rail ministry press release.

The minister was speaking at a views-exchange meeting with public representatives, civil society members, and the Baliakandi upazila administration in Rajbari.

His comments came a day after several newspapers, including The Daily Star, ran reports that passenger train fares are going to be increased soon as the BR is set to cancel a longstanding rebate to the fares of passengers

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Students of Jagannath University's law department yesterday held a human chain, followed by a sit-in, demanding justice for Abontika, who died by suicide after alleged instigation by another student and the university's assistant proctor. Story on Page 1.

INDOMITABLE MARCH

Firing at Joydevpur

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

March 19, 1971

Curlflew was imposed this evening in Joydevpur town following a clash between the local people and army personnel, resulting in the death of at least three people. The problem was triggered when locals put up a barricade on the road to prevent a military commander from returning to Dhaka, who had earlier traveled to Joydevpur. The news of the attack angered the people of Dhaka, who immediately took out spontaneous processions in the city.

Bangabandhu strongly condemned tonight the firing on the unarmed people at Joydevpur. Speaking to journalists, he said, "If they think they can suppress people's struggle using bullets and force, they simply live in a fool's paradise." The Awami League chief said he wondered how the army could go to the Joydevpur Bazar when the martial law authorities stated that troops had already been withdrawn to the barracks.

'TALKS WILL CONTINUE'

The fateful talks between president Yahya Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman resumed at the president's house in the morning. The dialogue lasted 90 minutes. Bangabandhu reiterated his demands for the withdrawal of martial law and transfer of power to the elected public representatives.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

CLASS-3, 4 EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT

PSC to be revived to smoothen process

Govt move follows allegations of corruption, nepotism

BAHARAM KHAN

The government is planning to reintroduce the Public Service Commission (PSC) for class three and four (grades 13-20) employee recruitment in order to bring fairness and pace in the process.

As part of the plan, a high-level committee in the public administration ministry has placed five recommendations to smoothen the recruitment process of the two classes, which is often delayed for myriad reasons, including alleged corruption and nepotism.

Currently, class three and four employees are recruited through the concerned ministries and departments, while the PSC only recruits employees of classes one and two.

There are over 13.5 lakh posts designated for the two classes, which is around 71 percent of the 19 lakh government employee posts. As of December 2022, over five lakh posts remain vacant.

The committee in its report recommended assigning PSC for the recruitment of the two classes and bolstering the commission with necessary manpower, logistics and infrastructure.

The Daily Star has seen the report's recommendations.

To save time and reduce complexities, the committee further suggested

conducting a uniform test for similar-grade positions across ministries and departments, instead of separate recruitment tests for each position. For positions with different pay grades, it vouched for considering direct recruitment based on specific rules outlined in separate circulars.

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Before making appointments for grades 13-20, it recommended verifying the availability of positions in the relevant departments and districts.

Recruitment circulars should be issued accordingly, aligning with district quotas, the report said.

It suggested continuing the existing practices of appointing employees directly through divisional selection boards or district heads as per the PSC Act, 2023.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

HC scraps stay on Prof Yunus' sentence

Orders labour tribunal to dispose of his appeals fast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday scrapped the Labour Appellate Tribunal's order that stayed the sentence of Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus.

However, the HC stayed their imprisonment and fine till disposal of the appeals filed by Prof Yunus and three other top officials of Grameen Telecom challenging the verdict of the Third Labour Court in Dhaka.

The HC asked the Labour Appellate Tribunal to dispose of the appeals as early as possible.

On January 1, a lower court sentenced Prof Yunus and three others to six months in prison for violation of the labour law.

Yesterday, while delivering a verdict on a criminal revision petition by the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE), the HC said the conviction of Prof Yunus and three others will be in force until their appeals are disposed of.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

'Mass death' imminent in Gaza

Warns UN-backed monitor as it reports famine-level food shortages in parts of the strip, urges immediate ceasefire

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Food shortages in parts of the Gaza Strip have already far exceeded famine levels, and mass death is now imminent without an immediate ceasefire and surge of food into areas cut off by fighting, the global hunger monitor said yesterday.

The UN-backed Integrated Food-Security Phase Classification, or IPC, which formally declares famines, said two of its three criteria - the overall shortage of food and prevalence of malnutrition - had probably already been met.

It did not have enough full data on death rates, its third criterion, but believed residents in affected areas would be dying of starvation and malnutrition at famine scale imminently, and children under four may already be.

"The actions needed to prevent famine require an immediate political decision for a ceasefire together with a significant and immediate increase in

humanitarian and commercial access to the entire population of Gaza," it said.

In all, 1.1 million Gazans, around half the population, were experiencing "catastrophic" shortages of food, the worst category, with around 300,000 in the areas now facing the prospect of famine-scale death rates.

"In Gaza, we are no longer on the brink of famine, we are in a state of famine, affecting thousands of people," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said at the opening of a conference on humanitarian aid for Gaza in Brussels. "This is unacceptable. Starvation is used as a weapon of war."

Borrell yesterday said that Israel's military campaign in Gaza had turned the territory into the world's biggest "open-air graveyard".

"Gaza was before the war the greatest open-air prison. Today it's the greatest open-air graveyard," Borrell said at a meeting of EU ministers in Brussels.

- » EU accuses Israel of using starvation as a weapon
- » WHO 'terribly worried' as battle rages at Gaza's largest hospital
- » Death toll in enclave now 31,726



(1962-2024)

Singer Khalid passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khalid, lead singer and frontman of Chime, passed away at 7:15pm yesterday, due to a cardiac arrest.

He was 62 years old. Music producer and sound engineer Isha Khan Duray confirmed the news.

He said Khalid suffered a cardiac arrest at his residence in the capital's Panthapath around iftar time (6:10pm) and was rushed to Green Road's Comfort Hospital. He was declared dead upon arrival.

Khalid is best known for his songs "Shorolotar Protima", "Himaloy", "Kono Karonei", "Tumi Nei Tai", among dozens of other hits spanning years between the 80's and 2000's.

Born in Gopalganj in 1962, he showed his vocal

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India EC removes home secretaries of six states

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PRIME BANK

PRAYER TIMING MARCH 19

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:49	12:45	4:30	6:13	7:45
JAMAAT 4:59	1:15	4:45	6:23	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
08	19		6:13
09	20	4:43	6:13
10	21	4:42	6:13



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A worker carries watermelons to a wholesale fruit market in Dhaka's Sadarghat on Sunday. Wholesalers sold the popular summer fruit, high in demand during Ramadan, for Tk 7,000 to Tk 50,000 per hundred, depending on the size. Many retailers, however, sell watermelons in kilograms to make extra profit.

MORE NEWS

Over 3.4m street children living without parental care: Unicef

PAGE 3

Journey to wedding party turns tragic

PAGE 5

Farmers face moderate to severe food insecurity

PAGE B1

বিজিএমইএ

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৪১তম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা

বিজিএমইএ'র ৪১তম বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা আগামী ০৬ এপ্রিল ২০২৪ (শনিবার) সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকায় বিজিএমইএ কমপ্লেক্স, বাড়ী # ৭/৭এ, ব্লক # এইচ-১, সেক্টর # ১৭, উত্তরা, ঢাকা-১২৩০ তে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

বিজিএমইএ'র সম্মানিত সদস্যগণ'কে উক্ত বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভায় উপস্থিত থাকার জন্য বিনীতভাবে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

মহাসচিব