



PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

SHARAT RITU

The perfect excuse for a lotus pond boat ride

RBR

What is the best thing about Sharat, you ask? For me, it is the change in the city's breeze, in the soft, golden rays of the sun, and yes, the clear azure sky, with floating white fluffy clouds.

Sharat Ritu is the name for the early Autumn season in the Bangla calendar. After the stilling, humid late monsoon days, Sharat gives us respite with its iridescent white light and soft hues of nature.

This is when we bathe in the beauty of lotus and lily ponds, scattered on the outskirts of Dhaka. A boat ride in the lotus pond, losing yourself to the calmness of nature and colouring your soul with lily and lotus colour, is maybe the best excursion of the season. If it drizzles, it just means the fairies have showered you

with luck.

However, for me, the evenings under a pariijat or sheuli tree take centre stage for the season. It intoxicates the gardens with its divine scent and caresses your senses. Sheuli, also called night jasmine – with its creamy white, pin-wheel petals, and a saffron-shaded soft stem – this heavenly bloom is a favourite. Drenched in dew drops, the petite sheuli blooms in the evening and falls off the bough at the first light of dawn.

All sorts of fragrant blooms make Sharat special – for example Bakul phul, said to be a sign of purity, divine beauty, and spirituality, because of which, they have a special place in rituals like puja. Our Ramna

Park is filled with the heady scent of this beautiful

flower. The park has several very old Bakul trees and you can go and pick them from the green carpet of grass or buy garlands from little girls selling them.

Mallika and Madhobi leave an impression, but that tiny bunch of white stud-like kamini or orange jasmine fills you with a sense of love and harmony. And yes, the dirty white kash phul or kans flower in places like Uttara third phase, 300 feet, and Notun bazar area has made Dhakaites ecstatic. Visiting kash phul grounds for photographs is trending in Dhaka now.

These sharat flowers have mesmerised the cityscape. There are many poetic myths surrounding sharat because it is a season of auspiciousness, and new beginnings and coincides, with harvest time in the middle of autumn in most of the Asian culture.

MASS UPRISING

Case filed with ICT against Hasina over killing of schoolboy

AL, 14-party alliance members face genocide charges in another case

A complaint was filed yesterday with the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 24 others over the killing of a schoolboy in the capital's Chankharful area on August 5 during protests that toppled her government.

The schoolboy's father Palash filed the complaint yesterday with the ICT chief prosecutor's office.

The boy, Anas, joined the anti-discrimination student movement in the Chankharful area on the final day of the protests.

He left a letter for his parents, pleading for their forgiveness and urging them to be proud of him if he did not return home, according to the complaint. He was shot dead.

"We have received video footage of members

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Age limit for entry into govt jobs likely to rise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, convener of the committee reviewing the age limit for entry into government jobs, yesterday said that there was logic behind increasing the age ceiling.

However, during a press briefing at the Ministry of Public Administration, he refrained from specifying how far the limit should be raised.

"I cannot say anything specific at this moment. We will make a decision after reviewing all aspects," Mueyed said.

The committee, formed to assess the demands of job seekers, is expected to submit its report within the next seven working days.

Currently, the maximum age for entry into government service is 30 years for general candidates and 32 years for children and grandchildren of freedom fighters.

Job seekers are pushing for the limit to be extended to 35 years.

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Run over by bus, man dies in Gazipur

Mob torches two buses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A man died after being run over by a bus on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Gazipur's Bhogra area last night.

After the accident, a mob set fire to two buses, including one of Balaka Paribahan which was involved in the accident.

The identity of the deceased could not be confirmed till the filing of this report around 12:30am today.

Quoting witnesses, Basan Police Station OC Jahangir Alam said the accident occurred near the Columbia Garment around 9:00pm yesterday when the man was crossing the road.

He died of his injuries on the way to a hospital, the OC added.

Soon after the accident, a mob of over 100 people set fire to the buses, said Abu Sayeed, a firefighter from Bhogra fire service.

He said that the driver of the bus which ran over the man managed to flee.

Sayeed said they could not fight the blaze as the mob obstructed them from getting to the scene.

7 corporate giants barred from share transfer

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Nazrul Islam Mazumder, chairman of Nassa Group; Mohammed Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group; Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, chairman of Bashundhara Group; and Mohammad Obaidul Karim, chairman of Orion Group.

Salman and Nazrul are behind bars in cases over killings during the student-led movement that toppled the AL government on August 5.

In a separate move in August, the NBR asked banks for account details of Chattogram-based businessman Mohammed Saiful Alam, chairman of S Alam Group, and his family members.

In August, the tax authority said the CIC had launched a special inquiry into allegations of tax evasion against individuals who had amassed significant wealth. A senior official working in a field office of taxes said the CIC has already summoned tax files of all these business groups as part of its investigations.

Telcos' service falls short of BTRC standard

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Over in Keraniganj upazila, all operators' call drop rate was above the BTRC's ceiling of 2 percent for 2G voice calls, with Banglalink faring the worst (4.25 percent).

However, for 4G voice calls in the upazila, only Banglalink passed the test, with Robi faring the worst (3.98 percent).

All four operators failed to meet the BTRC's ceiling for call setup time of 7 seconds in Savar for 2G voice calls.

Banglalink and Teletalk also failed in Keraniganj, while Teletalk missed the mark in Dhaka and Narayanganj.

For call setup success ratio, which should not be less than 97 percent, all operators except Grameenphone failed in Keraniganj.

For 2G voice calls, only Robi met the call setup success ratio in Dhaka and Narayanganj.

The unsatisfactory performance comes as the operators are not fully utilising the spectrum from the higher bands assigned to them in March 2022. Conversely, the operators are relying on the lower band, which offers wider coverage with fewer base stations.

The higher band have a shorter range but more bandwidth, meaning better transmission capacity but with a higher concentration of base stations.

Banglalink, which purchased 40 MHz in the 2,300 MHz band, has deployed the spectrum only to 7.07 percent of its sites, according to a BTRC presentation in June.

Grameenphone and Robi, both of whom bought 60 MHz in the 2,600 MHz band, have deployed the spectrum to 11.92 percent and 17.76 percent of the sites respectively.

If the operators offload data service pressure to a higher band, the lower band spectrum is freed up to

offer better 2G voice services.

However, the lack of proper spectrum usage is causing customers to experience poor signal, frequent call drops and mute calls.

Over the past decade, the BTRC has implemented measures such as infrastructure sharing and unified licensing to optimise operational costs.

Yet, the mobile operators' QoS is falling short of customer expectations.

The drive test result is a setback for operators, who often claim compliance with the BTRC benchmarks despite deteriorating service quality.

It also raises questions about their ambitions to become digital operators offering services such as payments and OTT platforms while struggling to provide core telecom services.

"The BTRC as the regulatory body should ensure satisfactory services and tariffs for the users," said Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

Contacted, Emdad Ullahi, who was appointed the chairman of the BTRC on September 10, said he has not seen the result of the drive test yet.

However, Bari said he sat with the chief executive officers of the telecom operators on Tuesday regarding QoS.

"We have urged them to find the way to ensure QoS, including when inside buildings," he said, adding that the BTRC will hold an industry consultation on the matter on October 10.

Robi and Banglalink said the drive test result conducted by the BTRC's newly procured tool differed from the ones derived from their own tests in several parameters.

The operators have expressed their concerns and feedback about

the drive test results through the Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh.

The results do not depict the correct picture, said Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer of Robi.

"We are hopeful in reaching an acceptable conclusion regarding the drive test results," Alam said, adding that Robi plans to roll out the 2,600 MHz band in 35 percent of the sites this year and will continue to deploy in more sites as per requirement and traffic forecast.

The BTRC's results do not reflect the network's performance and could cause confusion, said Taimur Rahman, chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer of Banglalink, adding that the operator is "fully utilising the 2,300 MHz band" at present.

The AMTOB, the BTRC and drive test vendors are working together on a unified methodology for calculating the KPIs as significant differences have been observed between the drive test results of the operators and the telecom regulator's, Grameenphone said in a statement.

About the low deployment of the spectrum from the 2,600 MHz band, Grameenphone said the 60 MHz of spectrum in the band was acquired to enhance capacity based on traffic and QoS demands.

The demands are determined by various ecosystem factors such as user behaviour, usage profiles, user concentration and handset penetration.

Grameenphone monitors traffic demand almost in real-time and initiates capacity expansion or new spectrum deployment as needed, the statement added.

Teletalk could not be reached for comment.

Fierce clashes rage inside Lebanon

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Hezbollah's media chief Mohammad Afif said those battles were only "the first round" and that the group had enough fighters, weapons and ammunition to push back Israel.

Israel's addition of infantry and armoured troops from the 36th Division, including the Golani Brigade, the 188th Armoured Brigade and 6th Infantry Brigade suggests that the operation may move beyond limited commando raids.

Israel also renewed its bombardment of Beirut's southern suburbs, a stronghold of the Iran-backed group, with more than a dozen airstrikes against what it said were targets belonging to Hezbollah.

The aerial strikes killed 55 people and wounded 156 in 24 hours, the Lebanese health ministry said. In retaliation, Hezbollah targeted areas north of Israel's city of Haifa with a large missile salvo early yesterday.

More than 1,000 people in Lebanon have died since last week when Israel started attacking targets inside Lebanon.

Ibrahim Jafari, an advisor to the General Commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, said a cyber operation was launched along with the missile strikes which reached their targets. Yemen's Houthis also targeted military posts deep in Israel with three winged 'Quds 5' rockets.

Meanwhile, Israel's foreign minister said yesterday that he was barring UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres from entering the country because he had not

"unequivocally" condemned Iran's missile attack on Israel.

World leaders yesterday called on Iran and Israel to step back from the brink.

"The Chinese side calls on the international community, especially major influential powers, to truly play a constructive role and prevent the situation from further deteriorating," said a foreign ministry spokesman in a statement published online.

"This situation is developing by the most worrying scenario," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said yesterday.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called on Iran and Hezbollah to immediately end their attacks on Israel and warned that Iran risks inflaming the entire region. Japan said it is deeply concerned by the situation.

Meanwhile, police in Denmark and Sweden yesterday said they were probing explosions and gunfire around Israeli embassies in their capitals which took place amid spiralling Middle East tensions.

In Denmark, police said three Swedish nationals had been arrested after two blasts, likely from hand grenades, in the "immediate proximity" of the Israeli embassy in Copenhagen early Wednesday.

Swedish police said the Israeli embassy in Stockholm had been targeted in a shooting on Tuesday just before 6:00 pm (16:00 GMT).

No injuries were reported from the incidents.

Govt to sit with major political parties Oct 5

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once the reports of the six commissions are finalised.

In his address to the nation on September 11, Yunus announced the formation of the six commissions to reform the judiciary, the election system, the administration, the police, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the constitution.

Shahdeen Malik was named the head of the Constitutional Reform Commission; Justice Shah Abu Naim Mominur Rahman the Judicial Reform Commission; Badiul Alam Majumdar the Election System Reform Commission; Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury the Public Administration Reform Commission; Safar Raj Hossain the Police Administration Reform Commission; and Iftekharuzzaman the Anti-Corruption Commission Reform Commission. Shahdeen Malik, a Supreme Court lawyer, was later replaced by Professor Ali Riaz as

the head of the Constitutional Reform Commission.

Initially, the government had planned to hold talks with the political parties on the recommendations of the commissions. The commissions were supposed to start work from October 1.

But Shafiqul on September 30 said the interim government has decided to sit with the political parties to discuss the reforms before the six commissions commence their work in full swing.

Replying to another question, the press secretary yesterday said that there was no instability in the Chattogram Hill Tracts.

"Tension grew there centring the death of a Bangalee teacher. The situation has improved," he said.

Chief adviser's deputy press secretaries Apurba Jahangir and Abul Kalam Azad Majumdar were also present.