

N'GANJ-DHAKA ROUTE Reduce bus fares: speakers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Passenger Rights Protection Forum, a Narayanganj-based organisation, yesterday announced a series of programmes starting from October 29, demanding bus fare reduction on Narayanganj-Dhaka route.

As per the organisation, the fare on this route for non-AC buses is currently Tk 55, which protesters demand should be reduced to Tk 45. They also demand that the fare for AC buses, which is Tk 80, must be reduced to Tk 65. The demands also included ensuring half-fare for students.

To press home their demand of fare reduction, the organisation has scheduled nine separate events, which will start Tuesday, said the organisation's convener Rafiur Rabbi at a press conference at the Narayanganj Press Club.

The programmes will continue till November 16, followed by back-to-back half-day strikes from the next day till the demands are met, he added.

"The situation of public transport sector has been anarchic for ages. Every government created syndicates in this sector to give unethical benefits to their associates. The syndicate has been holding passengers hostage for years. This anarchy increased terribly during Sheikh Hasina's regime," said Rabbi.

He also accused former AL lawmaker Shamim Osman and his family of extortion in this sector.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Rowshan Ali, president of Narayanganj District Bus-Minibus Central Owners' Association, said, "Our buses leave from Narayanganj, but they also operate in Dhaka metropolitan area. Our rent is fixed in accordance to that. It is not possible for the owners to reduce fares in the existing reality."

Action needed

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The aid money was not given through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), but was channelled through various financial institutions including the World Bank, he added.

Dhatri Kumar Sarkar of the Ministry of Environment and Forests said the discussion and recommendations will be added to the position paper prepared by the Bangladesh government for COP29.

Abul Hasan from the COAST Foundation said in order to make climate

funding need based and realistic, recipient countries must submit their realistic needs.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury from EquityBD said at least 75 percent of climate finance should be managed through the UNFCCC.

MD Ahsanul Wahed, deputy programme manager of MJF, Dr Fazle Rabbi from Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, Syed Aminul Haque from COAST Foundation and Ziaul Haque Mukta from Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods also spoke.

10 get Women

FROM PAGE 3

in lifetime achievement for outstanding contribution to equality and Bangladesh development.

The chief guest of this ceremony was Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director, Transparency International Bangladesh; and the special guest was Nazma Mobarek, secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

The 2024 National President of JCI Bangladesh, Imran Kadir, also spoke at the event.

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United Nations Development Programme জাতিসংঘ উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচী

Procurement Notice Quantum Reference UNDP-BGD-00696

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh is seeking bids from interested contracting firms/NGOs/Organizations for the following requirements:

Contracting Firm /NGO/Org for Facilitation and Quality Assurance Livelihoods Skills Training for the SWAPNO II Project.

The deadline for submission of the proposal is at 4:30 PM (Bangladesh Local Time), November 07 2024

The proposal may be submitted on or before the deadline indicated by UNDP in the **Procurement Notice**. Please visit the link below to learn more about RFP, pre-bid meeting link & submission documents through the quantum platform.

https://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=26880

For any technical query, please write to us through bd.procurement@undp.org mentioning the reference

No UNDP-BGD-00696 in the email subject by October 29, 2024.



Anjon Bepari, a local farmer, transports a cargo of fresh betel nuts on his boat through a small canal. After harvesting the fruits of the areca palm, he takes them to the village market, where he sells them in bundles of 100 for Tk 250-300. The photo was taken in the Dumuria area of Jhalakathi recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

FAILED LOAN SCHEME Halda fishers struggle for survival

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

A loan programme intended to offer alternative livelihoods to fishermen affected by the fishing ban in the Halda river has failed to meet its objectives, resulting in a waste of public funds.

The Department of Fisheries (DoF) launched the programme in 2010 under the "Halda River Natural Fish Breeding Ground Development and Management Project (Phase-I)", disbursing Tk 2.3 crore in loans to 2,300 fishermen.

Each fisherman received Tk 10,000, with a repayment period of 1.5 years. However, the DoF has been unable to collect the loans.

Speaking with loan recipients and DoF officials, it was revealed that the initiative was poorly planned and lacked follow-up supervision. They said the programme was implemented without a feasibility study on loan disbursement or collection.

The Halda, a vital breeding ground for carp and home to endangered Gangetic dolphins, has been under a fishing ban since 2007. In 2020, a complete fishing ban was enforced, yet no compensation was provided to the 2,000 fishermen whose livelihoods depended on the river.



The affected fishermen, who were already struggling, found the loan amount insufficient to create any sustainable alternative livelihood. Some collect hilsa eggs seasonally, a few find work as day labourers, some pull rickshaws, but most of them just feel forgotten, left behind.

Ananta Jaladas, a fisherman from Madarikul Jelepara village in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila, used the money to buy essentials, saying, "We are still battling poverty to survive, let alone finding alternative means to thrive."

Shafiqul Alam, a Halda researcher, said the DoF finished their responsibilities only by providing loans to fishermen without offering any sustainable solutions.

Sribash Chandra Chanda, Chattogram district fisheries officer, said, "We dropped the loan programme as we don't have the ability to collect the loans. Instead, we have included an incentive programme to create alternative livelihoods for fishermen."

While the DoF has shifted its focus, the long-term impact of the failed loan programme continues to leave the fishermen in financial distress, with no effective alternatives to sustain their livelihoods, said experts.

Over reliance

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Echoing him, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Coordinator Mohammad Tauhidul Islam said frequent use of AI tools will make us more vulnerable to future business models.

"These free tools are getting enriched by taking input from us. Such outward integration is dangerous. Many international news outlets are integrating AI internally. We too have to do that, create our own model of AI, otherwise news media will lose their distinctiveness," he said.

Emran Hossain, assistant professor and chairman of Barishal University's Mass Communication and Journalism department, said it is possible to get comprehensive output from AI if it is used responsibly.

11,286 tea workers

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Contacted, Emdadul Haque, general manager of NTC, said while the company is making every effort to pay the workers' wages, the lack of a fully structured board of directors of the company has hindered its ability

to secure loans from Bangladesh Agricultural Bank.

He hoped that the board will be fully constituted soon and pave way for securing loans to pay the workers' arrears.

Religious unity

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Dr Mamun Al Mostofa, an associate professor of Dhaka University, said religious and political tolerance in Bangladesh is not satisfactory, even though intolerance and violence have no connection with religion itself.

He opined that reforming the education system, promoting inclusive dialogue, ensuring good governance and accountability, and fostering social and cultural movements based on values can enhance religious harmony in society.

Sukomal Barua, supernumerary professor of DU, and Muhammad Rafiq Ul-Islam, director of Islamic Foundation, also spoke.

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PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

This is for kind information that the Board of Directors Meeting of BBS Cables PLC. held on 26th October, 2024 at 2.00 p.m. at the Corporate Head Office of the Company. The audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June, 2024 has been approved by the Board of Directors. In the said board meeting following price sensitive decisions were taken:

Proposed Dividend	: Cash @ 1%
Date and time of the 16th AGM	: Monday, 23 December, 2024 at 11.00 AM
Venue of the 16th AGM	: Hybrid System
Record date for 16th AGM	: Thursday, 14 November, 2024

PARTICULARS	JUNE 30, 2024	JUNE 30, 2023
Net Profits/ (Loss) (Taka)	(13,34,24,418)	97,442,033
Earnings per Share (EPS)	(0.63)	0.46
Net Asset Value per share (NAV)	32.16	32.99
Net Operating cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS)	2.29	2.49

By the order of the Board,

SD/-

Md. Golam Habib, CACC

Company Secretary

Attention: * Shareholders are requested to check and update their BOID's Bank A/c details along with Routing Number to get Dividend online through BEFTN system.
* Provide 12 digit e-TIN to BO A/c and get Tax deduction @10% instead of 15%.