

## 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.

Dharitri 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.

The keynote speech at the event was delivered by Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director (CEO) of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "Women have played a pivotal role in shaping our society, and it is essential to acknowledge their achievements and inspire future generations."

Mukhlesur Rahman Sarker, additional secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, praised the awardees for their accomplishments.



**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-II)", 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 Jelepura 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.

## 76 job seekers still await approval

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November 2020, the term "recognised universities" was removed.

Despite the amended policy, many candidates (holding certificates from recognised universities) were recommended for final appointments in the 3rd public recruitment notice in 2021. They were also included in the MPO list.

Similarly, in the 4th public recruitment notice, the same types of candidates received final recommendations and were included in the MPO. In the 5th notice, candidates with similar certificates were also recommended.

But these 76 candidates were deprived of the final recommendations, they claimed.

Mohidul Islam, one of the candidates, said, "We

did not find any solution for the 76 candidates despite multiple applications. Now we have been experiencing extreme discrimination and prolonged frustration for over a year. It has already affected most of our families."

Another candidate, Aziz Mia, said under the 2018 policy, assistant mauvi candidates holding honours and master's degrees were recommended and included in the MPO in the 3rd notice of 2021, while many others were recommended in the 4th notice based on their fasil certificates. Some of their fellows even received final recommendations in 5th notice.

However, the 76 applicants have not received any solution despite applying several times over

the past year, he added.

Asked over the matter, NTRCA Secretary Rizwanul Haque said he heard of such a letter submitted by a group of candidates. There were discussions over the matter. He, however, couldn't specifically share any follow-ups regarding the matter.

Contacted, Farzana Rasul, assistant director of NTRCA's education and standard section, said, "There is no such chance to eliminate them from final recommendations without proper grounds. Maybe they did not meet the criteria asked in the circular."

When it was mentioned that other candidates with similar certificates and qualifications were given recommendations, she said the NTRCA authorities would look into the matter.

## Over reliance

FROM PAGE 3

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

FROM PAGE 3

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.

## Work stalled over

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Meanwhile, the construction site only has several large holes dug with rods placed there for constructing pillars. Rainwater has accumulated in the place, turning it into a breeding ground of mosquitoes.

Locals alleged that the contractors had misappropriated the project's funds in collusion with officials of DHE. They also alleged DHE has been negligent in monitoring the project's implementation.

Mohammad Rezaul Karim, upazla health and family planning officer, said, "The hospital is now being run amid a space constraint, which disrupts the services considerably. The outpatient services are in disarray with more than 200 patient coming in daily while we hardly have much space to accommodate them."

He demanded appointment of a new contractor to complete the construction works.

Contacted, Ziaul Ahsan Titu, owner of contractor firm Ziaul Traders and also former councillor of ward 28 of Khulna City Corporation, said, "Former MP Aktaruzzaman Babu was handling the project under my licence. His delays and eventual disappearance have left us in a difficult position."

Babu could not be reached for comment as his phone was found switched off.

Shahriar Hasan Mohiuddin, executive engineer of DHE in Khulna, said they have cancelled the contractor's work order over delays. He said they are looking into the issue of money mismanagement and fraudulence.

## Elected govt now

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now a demand of the time to establish an elected government and elected rule by completing the necessary reforms," he said.

He warned that the longer the interim government takes to hold the election, the more new organisations and individuals will emerge, claiming to represent the peoples' will, and present various proposals and aspirations.

Recalling the role of Maulana Bhasani, Nazrul said the Awami League regime attempted to erase his name and contributions from the country's history.

Meanwhile, Amir Khasru said the time has come to restore peoples' ownership of the country

through holding a free, fair and acceptable election and restoring democracy.

"People must be ensured their right to vote so that they can elect a parliament and government that will be accountable to them. There's no alternative to this," he said while addressing the 6th national council of Liberal Democratic Party in Dhaka.

Stressing that Sheikh Hasina was removed through a national unity, Khasru said, "We must maintain that unity to achieve our goal of restoring peoples' ownership of Bangladesh."

"If politicians fail to understand the nation's aspirations and changes in mindset, then politics will have no future," he warned.

## BCL is banned

FROM PAGE 3

reports our Dinaajpur correspondent.

He also addressed recent allegations against police personnel, confirming that some officers are under investigation. He assured that anyone found guilty would face legal consequences.

He said the police force

could not perform its duties due to the actions of a few misguided leaders. He said the current government aims to reform the police to better serve people.

"Cops who wish to engage in politics should resign, and politicians who seek to manipulate the police must refrain from doing so," he said.

## Transfers not enough

FROM PAGE 3

"This is not the Bangladesh the martyrs like Abu Sayed envisioned and gave their lives for," he added.

Amid the widespread protest of Jatiyo Party activists, Sarjis visited Rangpur yesterday, accompanied by IGP Md Moinul Islam, and attended meetings and offered prayers at Abu Sayed's grave.

On October 14, JP officially declared Sarjis and Hasnat Abdullah, both coordinators of the student movement, "unwelcome" in Rangpur for their comment to exclude the party from the national dialogue.

JP leaders and activists staged agitations in Rangpur protesting Sarjis's visit to the city yesterday.

Speaking at another programme at BRUR yesterday, Sarjis said those who legitimised Sheikh Hasina's government

over the past 16 years, particularly during the 2014, 2018, and 2024 national elections, are allies of that fascist regime.

"These members of the Jatiyo Party, these opportunists, take on an opposition role just to get a car, a house in the ministerial area, a salary, an MP seat, or to engage in tender manipulation, and extortion. Now these hypocrites are pretending to be respectable. Each of them must be brought to justice for bringing the country to this state."

Sarjis said a grand rally of students and people will soon be held in Rangpur. "Along with two student advisers, the entire platform of the student movement will shake the ground of Rangpur, demonstrating how we can crush the collaborators of the fascists on the streets."

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**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-notice.undp.org/view\\_negotiation.cfm?nego\\_id=26880](https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_negotiation.cfm?nego_id=26880)

For any technical query, please write to us through [bd.procurement@undp.org](mailto:bd.procurement@undp.org) mentioning the reference **No UNDP-BGD-00696 in the email subject by October 29, 2024.**

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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 16 <sup>th</sup> AGM	Monday, 23 December, 2024 at 11.00 AM
Venue of the 16 <sup>th</sup> AGM	Hybrid System
Record date for 16 <sup>th</sup> 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

Date : 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2024  
Place : Dhaka

**Attention:** \* Shareholders are requested to check and update their BOD'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%.