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'BANGLAR JOYJATRA'
Khalilur requests
Iran for safe passage
through Hormuz

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman has yet again requested Iran to facilitate the safe passage of the Bangladesh-Flagged vessel 'Banglar Joyjatra' through the Strait of Hormuz.

He made the request while meeting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey on Sunday night, according to a foreign ministry statement.

During the meeting, Khalilur Rahman thanked Iran for including Bangladesh among the six countries whose vessels would be permitted to cross Hormuz, reiterated Bangladesh's balanced position on the war, and underscored the importance of restraint and resolution of differences through diplomacy.

Saeed Khatibzadeh followed up on the matter immediately and informed that while the situation continues to remain tense, necessary directives have been given to the authorities concerned in Iran.

He appreciated Bangladesh's constructive stance and expressed hope that the Bangladesh foreign minister

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A large number of battery-powered rickshaws exacerbate the Dhaka University campus road traffic yesterday. Despite a ban imposed by the authorities on such vehicles, they continue to ply there freely, often driving on the wrong side and posing significant risks to students and pedestrians.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Govt decision on
transport fares
likely tomorrowOperators already charging
higher rates amid fuel price hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even after a day-long discussion between the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and leaders of bus, truck and launch owners' associations, transport fares remained unsettled till yesterday, with a decision expected tomorrow (Wednesday), said an official of the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges.

The BRTA sat on Sunday evening to revise public transport fares at its Banani headquarters after the government raised fuel prices on Saturday night. However, they could not finalise the fares.

The new rates would be fixed after a meeting on Wednesday, said Nobel Dey, information officer at the Road Transport and Highways Division.

However, transport operators have already begun raising fares on their own at varying rates, particularly for Dhaka intercity and long-route buses, as well as goods trucks.



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JS RESERVED SEATS
Jamaat-led alliance
names 13 candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jamaat-e-Islami-led 11-party electoral alliance yesterday announced a list of 13 candidates for the reserved women's seats in the 13th parliament, hours after the BNP released its own list.

Jamaat's central publicity department sent the list to the media in the evening, signed by Hamidur Rahman Azad, coordinator of the 11-party alliance and assistant secretary general of Jamaat. The names were later formally announced at a press conference.

According to the list, eight candidates are from Jamaat-e-Islami, two from the National Citizen Party, and one each from the Jatiya Gonoratrik Party (Jagpa) and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis. One is from a July martyr's family.

The Jamaat nominees are Nurunnisa Siddika, secretary of its central women's wing; Marzia Begum, assistant secretary; Sabikun Nahar Munni, secretary of the law and human resources department; Mardia Momtaz, a teacher at Daffodil International University; Nazmun Nahar Nilu, secretary of publicity and cultural affairs; Mahluza Hannan from Sylhet; Sajeda Samad, a Bogura-based leader and former upazila women vice-chairman; and Shamsunnahar Begum from Chattogram.

The NCP nominees are Monira Sharmin, convener of its women's platform Jatiya Nari Shakti, and member secretary Mahmuda Alam Mitu.

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PARTY-WISE
NOMINEES

Jamaat	8
NCP	2
Jagpa	1
Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis	1

*One nominee represents a July martyr's family.

'Vaccination for
every child'Says PM, inaugurates nationwide measles-
rubella vaccination campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A nationwide emergency measles-rubella (MR) vaccination campaign was launched yesterday amid efforts to curb a sharp rise in measles cases and deaths.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman inaugurated the emergency MR vaccination campaign at Ziaur Rahman Gram Hospital in Bagbari under Gabtoli upazila of Bogura.

Speaking on the occasion, the PM said every child should be brought under the vaccination coverage, and field workers should be vigilant to ensure that no child is left out.

PM's wife Dr Zubaida Rahman, State Minister for Health MA Muhit, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Mir Shahe Alam were present, among others.

Meanwhile, inaugurating the drive in Narayanganj's Ruppangj upazila, Health Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Husain said the government is planning to collect vaccines and other logistics, considering the demands of 15 months.

A stock of six months will be



A total of 21.8 lakh children from 30 high-burden upazilas and four city corporations and 1.58 lakh more children from the rest of the country are expected to be vaccinated.

ensured so that no shortage is reported, he added.

Amid the surge in measles cases and deaths, the government earlier began an emergency MR vaccination campaign in 30 high-burden upazilas across 18 districts on April 5.

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SSC, equivalent
examinations
begin today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Secondary School Certificate and equivalent examinations begin today, with authorities rolling out enhanced surveillance to prevent question leaks and ensure smooth conduct.

A total of 18,51,423 candidates - 9,30,305 boys and 9,21,118 girls - under 11 education boards are sitting the exams at 3,902 centres nationwide.

As per the schedule, Bangla compulsory first paper and Sahaj Bangla first paper exams will be held on the first day.

Written tests will continue until May 20, followed by practical examinations from June 7 to June 14.

At a briefing at the Secretariat yesterday, Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon said special monitoring cells had been set up at the ministry and other government offices to oversee the exams. CCTV feeds from centres will be monitored centrally.

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'The state must
protect survivors
of sexual violence'
MJF condemns attack on
Noakhali girl, family after
filing attempted rape case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has condemned the attack, vandalism, and threats against the family of a teenage girl in Noakhali's Subarnachar after they filed a case against a madrasa superintendent accused of attempting to rape her.

In a statement yesterday, the organisation expressed deep concern that the survivor and her family faced further violence and intimidation instead of receiving protection.

Citing reports, MJF said a group attacked their home and pressured them to withdraw the case, describing the incident as a serious abuse of power and a failure to ensure justice.

It warned that such incidents discourage families of sexual violence survivors from filing cases and seeking justice.

"This incident shows how survivors and their families are often punished for seeking justice. The state must protect survivors and their families and ensure the arrest and prosecution of the accused."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

A daily struggle for
water in the hillsDrying streams, wells leave remote
Rangamati communities in crisis

RIKORS CHAKMA, Rangamati

For people in remote hilly areas, late spring and the onset of summer dry up springs and wells, creating a shortage of drinking water.

Their year-round reliance on spring water forces many to dig holes near sources and install pipelines to collect what little water remains.

More than 50 families in the Sapchari Joint Farm area of Rangamati Sadar upazila face a shortage of potable water during the summer, particularly from March.

To cope, residents installed a pipeline from a nearby jhiri (small stream) under Furoman Hill to collect water for cooking, bathing and drinking.

But the jhiri has recently dried up, leaving them struggling. Even when a small amount of water flows through



the pipeline, they have to wait for hours.

The Roads and Highways Department in Rangamati recently supplied 5,000 litres of drinking water to ease their suffering, but residents say it is far from enough.

"We placed a water tank

next to the jhiri to collect water through a pipeline, but we still suffer during the summer and have to wait from early morning till noon to collect water. The situation will worsen in a few days," said Kalindi Chakma, a resident.

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A dense layer of plastic bottles, polythene bags, and other non-biodegradable waste floats on the waterbody at Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka, highlighting a severe lack of maintenance at the historic site. The park's ecosystem is severely polluted and neglected, threatening both the environment and public health. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON