BRTA limits number of buses on city roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A maximum of 3040 buses and 1730 human haulers will be allowed to ply the city roads from April 1.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has fixed the ceiling considering the 'road space' and 'road arrangement,' official sources said.

At present, 2500 buses and 1200 human haulers ply 42 bus routes and 34 human hauler routes in the capital.

Buses in different routes would also have to be painted with specified separate colours, the BRTA decided

The decisions will be strictly enforced from April 1, said Mahboob -e- Rabbani, assistant director of the BRTA.

A total of 230 buses will ply Route-1, the highest number in a route. Fifteen buses - the lowest number - will ply routes 28 (A), 28 (B), 29 (A), 29 (B), 31(A) and 31(B). The number of buses to ply some other major routes will be 210 for Route- 3, 180 for Route-2 and 200 for Route -11.

The BRTA took the decisions at a meeting recently with the Commissioner of Dhaka

Police asked to keep eye on Islamic NGOs

ANWAR ALI, Dinajpur

Police have been asked to keen watch on some two dozen Islamic organisations.

The organisations might have links to the militants who lived at their Chhoto Gurgola den. Their presence came to light after several bombs accidentally went off on February 13.

The names of the organisations under watch could not be obtained, but they include some madrassahs and NGOs, sources said.

District police held a meeting with the officers-in-charge of 13 upazilas yesterday.

Superintendent of Police SM Kamal Hossain asked policemen to remain alert about any activities of militants, sources said.

Although the police have details about the militants, they could not make any more arrests in connection with the bomb blasts yesterday.

Dinajpur Municipality Chairman Syed Mosaddek Hossain Labu alleged that police were treating the militants as common criminals who were trading in explosives.

BNP lawmaker

front of his house in Narayanganj

The home minister sidestepped another guestion by Azam whether he would step down. Meanwhile, the AL

registered their protest to the Chair against the home minister's statements outside his written answer to a star-marked question.

Altaf said a 76-kg bomb was recovered from the helipad in Gopalganj although security forces and intelligence agencies were deployed seven days before the visit of the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

He wondered why a 76-kg bomb was planted when a 15-kg bomb was enough to destroy even a tank. AL lawmakers protested his state-

AL lawmaker Fazlul Karim Selim asked the Chair to expunge the additional comments by the home minister. But the deputy speaker who was presiding over the session turned down his plea.

The home minister told the House that 80 people were killed in 11 bomb blasts during the AL rule.

Metropolitan Police, Md Abdul Qaium, in the chair.

The decisions will be applicable to all city service buses -- the stateowned BRTC buses and privatelyowned ones -- air-conditioned or

Mosquito protest in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An opposition MP yesterday brought dead mosquitoes in a packet to the Jatiya Sangsad in a bid to draw the House's attention to the mosquito menace in the capital.

Atiur Rahman Atik, an Awami League lawmaker, came up with the packet and urged Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to take immediate steps to contain the menace that has

He opened the packet and showed it to the Speaker while speaking a call life has become unbearable in the city. including at the MP hostel where he

Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui, who was chairing the session, asked Atik to disclose his formula of fighting mosquitoes for public benefit. Atik said he had sprayed insecticide to kill those mosquitoes.

A Jatiya Party deputy, Mashur Rahman Ranga, then urged Local Government and Rural Development Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan to do something about the problem as the Dhaka City Corporation has failed to combat the mosquito menace.

Man sneaks into Biman aircraft, held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man was arrested for illegally entering into a Biman aircraft at the Zia International Airport sterday morning.

Security personnel caught Zahidul Islam and handed him over to Airport Police Station. Police said was mentally retarded.

Officials of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) said the man entered the airport through a hole in the barbered wire

He climbed the stairs, opened the door and entered the aircraft.

The officials said Biman engi neers earlier did some maintenance work in the aircraft and did not take away the stairs. But they could not say how the man opened the door.

N'ganj murder

sion the lawmaker from the party.

Those present at the press coference included alliance leader ATM Kamal, Secretary of Narayangani Bar Association Abul Kalam Azad Biswas, Juba Dal leader Mominullah and oca Pourasabha Commissioner and Sabbir's brother Maksudul Alam Khondoker. But the complainant in the murder case, Ttaimur, was not

Maksudul Alam alleged that a minister 'backs toll collectors and drug peddlers' in the district. He apprehended that the minister and the accused lawmaker might target them for saving this.

Meanwhile, a big procession was brought out here yesterday under the banner of citizens of the town demanding trial of Giasuddin and Zakir Khan on Thursday.

On the other hand, Shiddhirgan unit of BNP brought out a big procession chanting slogans saying Giasuddin is not guity. At a rally later, local BNP leaders blamed 'Taimur group' for making 'baseless allegation' against the lawmaker.

Khoka wants DCC

"I am trying to involve the whole government, especially the PMO, with all the initiatives."

The mayor promised to involve representatives of civil society and experts with all development activities in the DCC's 360 square kilometres area to ensure the quality of work undertaken and good management.

He said the mosquito eradication and waste management programmes would be given to the private sector in 10 zones.

Khoka said he planned to shift all cattle markets to the outskirts of the city to reduce public nuisance in the inner part of the city.

The mayor also reiterated his stand against any digging works during the rainy season and urged the Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB), Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripokkho (Rajuk), and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to coordinate their work.

The mayor said the DCC is suffering from severe fund crisis and argued that the mayor should have more financial power in order to ensure prompt action.

"When I joined the office last year the DCC was Tk 631 crore in debt, of which Tk 200 crore was

borrowed from the government,"

At present, the mayor can now approve projects worth Tk 2 crore only, though the post enjoys the status of a minister. A minister can approve expenditures up to Tk 25

Also, the mayor felt, holding tax and other taxes need to be raised since the conservancy tax was had not been raised for 18 years.

"Tk 42 crore is needed a year for conservation, with Tk 14 crore coming from taxes." The DCC would take some incomegenerating initiatives including construction of shopping centres in partnership with the private sector,

The mayor pressed for modernisation of the tender bidding process to ensure fairness and accountabil-

"I have taken necessary initiatives about the recent tender manipulation incident just to ensure fairness and accountability in the whole process, which is a clear signal for improving the better management in the Nagar Bhaban," he said, referring to the tender scam last year involving Tk 93 crore for a road construction

Three robbers held with arms in Ctg

BSS, Ctg

Detectives arrested three robbers in the port city yesterday.

The arrested robbers are Abu Bakkar Bablu alias Lal Babu. 25. Mohammad Shahidul Islam alias Reza, 22, and Mohammad Faruk Hossain, 26, a CMP press release

Acting on a tip-off, detectives raided Yakub Sawdagar Colony at Asraf Ali road at about 2 pm and nabbed them with a pistol.

Jt forces nab 7 in Rajshahi

BSS, Rajshahi

The joint forces arrested seven persons from different areas under Durgapur upazila Wednesday night, police said.

They are Fazlu alias Tharu, 28, Naoshad, 41, Zoinal Abedeen, 38, Aynal, 45, Idrish Ali, 36, Harunar Rashid, 43, and Zaitun Ali, 35.

Police and BDR personnel have been conducting joint operation to nab criminals in Rajshahi, Natore and Naogaon.

Hartal in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Life was partially disrupted in the port city as opposition Awami League (AL) enforced an eight-hour hartal here vesterday in protest against killing of a party leader and a businessman on February 12.

No untoward incident took place in the city during the hartal hours, police vehicles stayed off the city

roads. Inter-district buses and those connecting the city with other upazilas did not leave their stands

Rickshaws plied the roads in large numbers.

Port activities were also hampered. There was no delivery of cargo from the port but loading and unloading continued at jetties

Faruq Ahmend Siddiqui, assistant office secretary of Chittagong district AL (north) and Solaiman Khan, owner of a hatchery, were gunned down at Burishchar Ziaul Ulam Madrassah in Hathazari, allegedly by activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student front of Jamaat-e-Islami. They came under the attack while at a meeting of the Madrassah governing body.

Three Shibir activists have been arrested in this connection.

NAM conference

FROM PAGE 12

Muslims and the feeling of helplessness in Islamic countries which gave rise to the September 11 2001 attacks on the US, he says.

He warned yesterday that war could also drive the price of oil up sharply and seriously damage the world economy.

While the US will undoubtedly come under fire over Irag, an attempt by North Korea to blame Washington for the crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme is set to get a less enthusiastic response, delegates

North Korea submitted a draft proposal stating that the "removal of the constant threats of the US against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitute a precondition for ensuring a stable beace and security on the Korean Peninsula.'

It calls on the NAM to express "their view that the hostile policy of the US against the DPRK should be given up" and that a non-aggression treaty should be signed between the two countries, according to a copy of the draft seen by the AFP.

Diplomats said there was strong lobbying against the North Korean proposal among senior NAM offi-

cials meeting yesterday. NAM has been seen as increasingly irrelevant since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but with the organisation including within its membership all three legs of US President George W Bush's "axis of evil" -- Irag. Iran and North Korea -some see the Kuala Lumpur summit as an opportunity to reverse the decline in the organisation's for-

Illegal immigration

FROM PAGE 1 like so-called Banga Sena or Bangabhumi Andolon to destabilise territorial integrity will not be tolerated. Chowdhurv vowed.

"Ours is a unified and cohesive country. Any attempt or action that affects sovereignty cannot be accepted." he said.

Chowdhury described Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan's visit to New Delhi as useful, productive and timelv 'The two foreign ministers (of India and Bangladesh) reached an

understanding to resolve all issues through agreed mechanisms." he added. Preparation for the Bangladesh-India foreign secretary-level meeting to be held in Dhaka in April to discuss the issues is underway. However, the date has not been

finalised, he said,



(CJA) at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

Aussie juggernaut roll on

Scoreboard of the World Cup

Harvey, replacing spinner Brad Hogg in what was Australia's third of three team changes, clean bowled Schiferli for nine. Medium-pacer de Leede, who

took four for 35 against India, again bowled effectively. Meanwhile recalled left-arm spinner Esmeijer also did well, his

five 'death' overs costing just 16. But it was first change de Leede who made the breakthrough when, with the last ball of his first over, he had Maher (26) caught at slip by van Bunge to leave

Australia 52 for one in the 13th.

Fellow seamer Kloppenburg then agonisingly failed to hold a low left-handed chance off Martyn as the batsman checked a drive. But de Leede had a second

wicket when Hayden holed out tamely to Schiferli on the mid-wicket boundary for an unusually slow 60-Martyn's 76-ball innings included

six fours with Lehmann 29 not out. The start was delayed by an hour after water spilt on to the pitch as the covers were being removed and a police helicopter was summoned to help dry the surface.

tion of Urdu as the sole official

February 21, 1952 led to the long-

drawn-out struggle and eventually

countries across the globe also join

Bangladesh to observe the day as

the International Mother Language

Day. UNESCO recognised Ekushey

February as the International

Mother Language Day on

nation in paying homage to the

language martyrs by placing

wreaths at the Central Shaheed

Minar as the clock struck one minute

past midnight. Prime Minister

Khaleda Zia was next. The cabinet

members were present when the

president and the prime minister

Earlier, in his message on the

eve of the Amar Ekushey, the presi-

dent said the language movement

"has a far reaching significance in

our national life" and "the national

awakening out of self-imbued spirit

has taken international shape

The prime minister, in her mes-

AL team meets McKinnon

Parliament, political

situation discussed

Chowdhury said

sage, said Bangladesh would be

ever grateful to the language move-

A four-member delegation of Awami

League led by its general secretary

Abdul Jalil called on Com-monwealth

Secretary General Don McKinnon at

his hotel suite here and discussed

matters relating to parliament and the

political and economic situation in

Other members of the AL delega-

tion were Deputy Leader of the

Opposition Advocate Abdul Hamid

MP, Saber Hossain Chowdhury and

the parliament is being made ineffec-

tive by preventing the opposition from

discussing important national issues

like push-in, law and order, price spiral

of essentials and export of gas. Saber

Hossain Chowdhury told newsmen

government recognises the impor-

tance and role of the opposition to

ensure development and advance

democracy. Because of bad gover-

nance, the national target for poverty

alleviation is also suffering,

"We feel it is essential that the

The delegation told McKinnon that

President lajuddin Ahmed led the

One hundred and eighty-eight

The protests that sparked off on

SCOREBOARD

language of Pakistan.

the birth of Bangladesh.

November 17, 1999.

placed the wreaths.

todav"

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh.

Syed Abul Hossain MP.

after the meeting.

Pool A match between Australia and the Netherlands at the North West Stadium in Potchefstroom on Thursday

Maherc van Bunge b de Leede 26

Hayden c Schiferli b de Leede Martyn not out Lehmann not out Extras: (b-4, lb-3, w-8) Total: (For 2 wkts in 36 overs) 170 Fall of wickets: 1-52, 2-103

Lefebvre 19 0 34 Kloppenburg 0 32 Van Bunge 0 20 **NETHERLANDS**

Van Troost c Bichel b Lehman 23

Van Bunge c Martyn b Gillespie Zuiderent c Maher b Gillespie Van Noortwijk Ibw b Lehmann De Leede c Maher b Bichel Scholte Ibw b Bichel Schiferli b Harvey Kloppenburg c Ponting b Bichel Lefebvre not out

ment martyrs for their supreme

sacrifices which generated indomi-

table aspirations for creation of an

Meanwhile, in her message

Leader of the Opposition in

Parliament Sheikh Hasina said the

martyrs "have created a new chap-

ter in the history of Bangladesh by

shedding their blood for establishing

ties, which supervise the Ekushey

programmes, have prohibited

hanging of any portrait, poster or

banner on the Minar and bringing

out of processions or holding of

rallies in Doyel Chattar,

Chankherpul, TSC and Plassey

the national flag will fly half-mast

atop all government, autonomous

surroundings have been given a

facelift to mark the occasion.

Different roads and road-divider

islands have been decorated with

festoons inscribed with Bangla

ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party

(BNP), the Awami League, the Left

Democratic Front, the 11-party

alliance, the Jatiya party and all

The AL delegation, he said, also

pointed to the integrity of the general

election of 2001, city corporation

elections of 2002 and the current

Union Parishad elections. "We told

him that we must find means of purify-

ing the system so that will of the elec-

torate is accurately reflected in the

McKinnon said parliament is

essentially for the opposition and the

Commonwealth Secretariat feels that

ways and means must be found to

He said the Commonwealth would

be happy to cooperate with Awami

League for it to play its due role in the

Bangladesh political environment. He

also hoped to continue dialogue with

Awami League and meet Sheikh

Hasina at an opportune time in the

the Commonwealth Matthew

Neuhaus was present in the meet-

Director, Political Affairs Division of

strengthen the institution of parlia-

In observance of the day, the

alphabets and national flags.

The day is a public holiday and

The Shaheed Minar and its

Barracks area.

and private buildings

The Dhaka University authori-

the right of mother language'

independent nation-state.

Smits c Maher b Harvey

Extras: (lb-4, w-11, nb-1)

Language heroes

Esmeijer c Ponting b Harvey

Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-18, 3-42, 4-59, 5-85, 6-90, 7-96, 8-112, 9-118 Bowler McGrath 10 Gillespie Lehmann

Total: (All out in 30.2 overs)

Symonds Bichel Harvey Result: Australia won by 75 runs (Netherlands target revised to 198 in 36 overs) Man-of-the-match: Damien Martyn

Umpires: David Orchard (Rsa) and Peter Willey (Eng) TV umpire: Aleem Dar (Pak) Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle

Bombs found

FROM PAGE 1

Toss: Netherlands

Jamaatul Mujahidin, had planned to bomb Ekhushey programmes in different northern towns

The government has banned the Jamaatul Mujahidin. "Recovery of bombs at Rajshahi

shows that extremists are trying to disrupt peace," observed a police official in Dhaka.

other political parties and their front

organisations have undertaken

elaborate programmes to observe

five-day special cultural programme

to mark the Ekushev and the

International Mother language Day

at the Central Public Library.

morning.

Academy premises.

FROM PAGE 12

president said.

Monday.

Bangladesh.

religious freedom.

issions in Dhaka will

President: CJA

gathered here to celebrate the silver

iubilee conference of the CJA." the

inaugurated the CJA conference on

praised journalists for defending

and advancing the freedom of

press, particularly in

parcel of democratic administration

and good governance," he said

adding that the government has

ensured press freedom, which is

guaranteed by the Constitution of

land of communal harmony and

for its role in fostering democracy

conference would promote better

understanding and cooperation

Information Minister Tariqui

Islam, outgoing CJA president

Murray Burt and its president-elect

Hasan Shahriar, and editors of

A free press offers a vital platform for

public debate and allows a diversity

of views to be heard on issues of

common concern, he said. " A free

press empowers citizens. It enables

them to monitor the performance of

government policies and put pres

sure on those in power to tackle

McKinnon said that by denounc-

ing corruption both in public and

private sectors, the press can contribute to the development of

good governance practices. " As a

result, a country's chances of attracting foreign investment are

trickling down the economy," he

president of the CJA, chaired the

session attended by journalists from

Murray Butt, immediate past

positive outcomes

issues they deem important.

national dailies were present.

Freedom of

speech

FROM PAGE 12

improved with

noted.

among Commonwealth journalists.

and defending human rights.

He also said Bangladesh is a

He lauded the Commonwealth

The president hoped the CJA

Commonwealth countries

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia

President lajuddin Ahmed

"Press freedom is part and

The government has begun a

Cambodia asks Thailand to talk **DPRK** nuke crisis

THE NATION/ANN, Chiang Rai

Cambodia has invited Thailand to join the Asean Regional Forum's 'Friends of the Chair" set up to deal with the US-North Korean nuclear crisis, Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai said yesterday.

He said the government would consider the request.

The ARF is an international security forum that consists of the 10 Asean members and Asean's dialogue partners: the US, UK, Australia, France, Germany, China and North Korea. The forum meets annually in parallel with the Asean Ministerial Meeting

North Korea has been at odds with the US over its surprising announcement that it has nuclear weapons programme and nuclear

Asean countries agreed to establish the FOC in their ministerial meeting in Brunei last year.

Surakiart said that the FOC chairmanship would be held by

Ekushey Padak FROM PAGE 12

be meaningful even if a single person of the country remains unfamiliar with the Bengali letters?'

she asked. The prime minister said her government has taken up educational programmes to eradicate the widespread illiteracy that now plagues the country, and mentioned

to the higher secondary level. She said Bangladesh is now known as the centre for practicing Bengali and that all endeavours to enrich Bengali now revolves round Dhaka

her government's education

programme for girls which is free up

"Only expressing emotion and joy for our language is not enough. All of us have to put in more efforts to develop and enrich our language,

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman also addressed the function, which was conducted by Cabinet Secretary Dr Sadat

Cambodia and comprise two Asean and two non-Asean members. The chairmanship would rotate and be an Asean member. He added that the US and North Korea should not be part of the FOC.

The ARF set up the FOC in the belief that it should play a mediating role in solving the US-North Korea stand off, given that both countries are members.Surakiart said that FOC would not overlap with existing efforts to defuse the conflict but would play a complementary role.

Cambodia's Foreign Minister Hor Nam Hong extended the invitation by telephone when Surakiart accompanied Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on an official visit to Beijing from Monday to Wednesday this week. Surakiart said that he also raised

the idea with China, which supported the idea. However, North Korea said early

this week that it wanted to talk the issue with the US bilaterally.

Poll campaigner shot dead in Barisal

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

One person who came to campaign for his father-in-law in Unioin Parishad election was shot dead at Gazalia village in Uzirpur upazila vesterdav. A gang of eight entered the house

of Yasin Molla, a member candidate in Qtra UP polls, at about 7:30 am and shot dead his son-in-law Pannu. The incident took place just before voting started at nearby Gazalia

primary school polling centre. Quoting villagers, police said Yasin Molla had rivalry with his cousin Abdus Salam, also a member candidate.

Pannu came from Kathalia in Jhalakati district to campaign for his father-in-law. A case was filed with Uzirpur thana

and the body sent to Barisal Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

PM leaves for NAM

forum of developing countries. which is taking place at a critical juncture of the forum's evolution and global situation. UN secretarygeneral Kofi Annan will also be

A major part of the discussion at

the summit will focus on "Continuing

Representatives of the foreign the Revitalisation of NAM" in the The NAM leaders will also diswreaths at Shaheed Minar in the cuss recent developments having A month-long book fair has already started at the Bangla

regional and global implications, and issues related to disarmament and strengthening of multilateral bodies, including the United

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to call upon the NAM leaders to work steadfastly towards a lasting and just solution to the tragic problem of Palestine. She is also likely to call upon all

the nations of the world to rededi-

cate themselves to the cardinal

principles of NAM including respect

for the sovereignty and territorial

integrity of all nations and settlement of all international conflicts by peaceful means The prime minister is also expected to raise the issues of support to UN Peacekeeping

Operations in different parts of the

world and establishment of an equitable international economic order taking into account the legitimate concerns of the weaker developing countries. On the sidelines of the summit,

bilateral and multilateral matters with leaders of a number of NAM member countries. return home on February 26.

Khaleda Zia will exchange views on

Plane crash

FROM PAGE 1

Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iran has been forced to supplement its fleet of Boeing and Europeanmade Airbus airliners with planes bought or leased from the former

Soviet Union. Last December, a Ukranian Antonov An-140 plane crashed into a mountain in central Iran, killing al 46 aboard. Most of the passengers were top Ukranian and Russian aerospace officials who were travelling to Iran to test fly an Iranian-built copy of the plane. The crash was

blamed on pilot error. Earlier last year, all 119 people aboard an Iran Air Tours died when a Tupolev-154 aircraft crashed near the western city of Khorramabad

Turkey tests US

FROM PAGE 12

actually addressing the guestion of a veto.

Russian minister said. "We are not against a second resolution in principle, but we must see what purpose it would serve. To

be clear: if the resolution aims to

reinforce the mandate of the (UN

weapons) inspectors, we will be ready to look at it. of force, we believe it would be detrimental." Ivanov said, adding: 'Russia's intention is not to divide the Security Council but, on the contrary, to maintain maximum

unity.' Ivanov also claimed in Moscow

Council vote on a new resolution drafted by the US and Britain now appears to be early March, once chief weapons inspector Hans Blix has delivered his latest report to the Council

League announced.

ministers would meet on February 27 to lay out the summit's agenda. Bahrain, which hosts the headguarters of the US Fifth Fleet deployed in the region, had origi-

nally been selected as the venue for

the summit to be held on March 24, but stood aside in favour of Egypt which hosts the 22-member Arab League, as the Iraqi crisis esca-Egypt tried to organise an emergency summit for the end of February but foreign ministers last weekend failed to agree on a date

and the initiative was abandoned as deep differences emerged. In Baghdad, the Babel daily tabloid, run by Saddam Hussein's cause.

son Uday, rounded on Arab nations for not doing enough to help the Iraqi "Some have not only dithered and played the card of regional interests at the expense of brothers in Iraq and Palestine, they have

their people to stop them from helping Iraq," the paper said. They have blocked all those

offering support to Iraq to help it face up to the aggression.

devoted to the Iraqi crisis, the Arab

Arab League spokesman Hisham Yussef said Arab foreign

"It's an extreme measure to be used in a responsible way," the

"If it is designed to allow the use

that Russia had received "alarming information" that weapons inspectors were "under very strong pressure" to produce reports supporting US military strikes against Baghdad. The earliest date for a Security

The annual Arab summit will take place in Cairo on March 1 with Bahrain in the chair and will be

applied pressure and threatened

who have even thought about