



PHOTO: STAR

With bus seats unavailable or too expensive, people journeying home from Dhaka resort to a truck ride at Amin Bazar, Savar, yesterday. Thousands of city dwellers left for home to celebrate Eid with their near and dear ones.

Launch, bus terminals swarming with home-bound passengers

ABDUL KADER

Bus and launch terminals and the railway station in the city experienced heavy rush of homebound passengers yesterday as they left for their homes to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with their near and dear ones.

Most of the passengers have paid extra money for their tickets, but the service operators did not take any step

to make their journey comfortable.

Thousands of passengers were seen scrambling for a place on launches and trains.

All inter-district buses and south-bound launches charged each passenger extra Tk 50 in the name of the Eid celebrations. The operators argued that Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has increased the rate and showed a BRTA fare chart to

prove their claim.

"Sundarban Paribahan is charging Tk 300 per ticket, up from the normal fare of Tk 180," said a passenger bound for Moralganj, Bagerhat, at Sayedabad bus terminal yesterday.

The BRTA, in its latest fare chart, has allowed inter-district transport operators to raise the fare -- additional 0.72 paisa per km for buses and additional 0.75 paisa per km for minibuses.

South-bound launch passengers thronged the Sadarghat terminal in huge number until noon from early hours of yesterday to get a place in the river vessels paying extra money, source said.

"We are charging each passenger Tk 120," said a staff of Bhandaria-bound Parabat launch. The normal fare is Tk 70 to 80, he said. The same is for other launches.

Although the launches were carrying passengers beyond their capacity, putting the lives of the people at risk, the mobile court was nowhere there to stop the unlawful practice.

Most of the launches were

cramped with passengers by 12.00 noon, but passengers continued to pour in until evening. And most of the launches left the terminal at around 5.00pm.

Almost all the launches were in the mid-river and passengers had to reach them by boats paying extra Tk 10.

A boatman alleged that police collected Tk 10 to 20 in tolls from each boat.

Rickshaws, auto-rickshaws and taxicabs have also been charging more fare from the homebound passengers who were rushing towards the terminals.

The CNG autorickshaws and taxicabs were picking up passengers after a bargain on fare instead of meter reading. No cabs want to go to Sadarghat terminal in meter rate, they charged a fixed amount from the homebound passengers.

Strict security measures have been taken at the bus terminals by the government ahead of the Eid to ensure security of the passengers.

Although there was a huge rush at Gabtoli and Mohakhali bus terminals, passengers did not complain of harassment.

At Kamalapur Railway Station, rush of passengers was notable. But they left for home peacefully.

There were heavy rush of passengers at different bus counters in Fakirapool, Kalaypur and Shyamoli, but less people thronged the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) Motijheel bus depot.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury visited the Sadarghat launch terminal to see the situation yesterday.

SMA Rab murder Home ministry orders reinvestigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The home ministry has ordered reinvestigation of Khulna Awami League Mayoral Candidate SMA Rab murder case.

Sources said official order in this regard reached local CID office on November 20.

A supplementary charge sheet will be submitted naming those who were earlier spared under political influence despite circumstantial evidences of their involvement in the murder, said a highly placed source of CID.

The ministry has also directed the KMP authorities to ensure security of the complainant and prosecution witnesses including family members of the slain leader.

Zia Foundation to set up training centre

UNB, Dhaka

Ziaur Rahman Foundation will set up a training centre at Bogra to deal with asthma patients as part of its social development programme.

Minister for Health and Social Welfare Khondoker Mosharraf Hossain said the centre would be set up during the current fiscal year.

Bush felicitates Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

US President Gorge W Bush has felicitated Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

In a message to the prime minister, Bush said, "I extend my best wishes to you and your nation during this auspicious time of celebration. This year Bangladesh and the United States have worked more closely than ever towards making our world a more peaceful place.

"Id-Al-Fitr is not only a celebration for sharing with friends and family but also a time to reflect on all that has been achieved and look to a future where we are committed to attaining our common goals of democracy, prosperity and stability", he said.

President, PM greet Muslim leaders

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have conveyed warmest greetings and heartiest felicitations to the Heads of State and Heads of government of Muslim countries on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

In separate messages, they expressed their confidence that the divine blessings of this happy occasion would further consolidate and deepen the bonds of brotherhood and cooperation among the Muslim countries and inspire the Ummah to work together for the greater interest of Islam.

The President and the Prime Minister wished good health, happiness and personal well-being and long life of the Muslim leaders and peace, progress and prosperity of their respective people.

Morshed, Reaz

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman also have conveyed warmest felicitations and most sincere greetings to their respective counterparts of the Muslim countries on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

They expressed in their separate messages that teachings of the holy Eid-ul-Fitr would help the Muslim Ummah to work together for the unity and solidarity and contribute greatly to the advancement and prosperity of Islam.

They wished happiness, good health and wellbeing of their counterparts.

Australian film festival begins December 11

BSS, Dhaka

A two-day Australian film festival will begin at the British Council at Fuller Road here on December 11.

Organised by the Australian High Commission, the festival will be a showcase of Australian talents and award winning feature films.

Free tickets are available at the Australian High Commission at Gulshan and the British Council.

The high commission hoped that such film festival would further strengthen the cultural ties and the people-to-people contact between Bangladesh and Australia, said a press release.

The high commission organised a similar film festival last year.

US mission closed from Nov 25 to 27

All offices of the US Embassy in Dhaka including the Public Affairs Section, Information Resource Centre and Student Advising Section will remain closed from November 25 to 27 on the occasions of holy Eid-ul-Fitr and Thanksgiving Day, says a press release.

New executives of Aparajeyo Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shyamal Kumar Roy and MA Bari were elected chairperson and secretary

respectively of the governing council of Aparajeyo Bangladesh, a child rights organisation, for 2004-05.

Taherunnesa Abdullah was elected vice-chairperson and Abdul Gofran, treasurer.

Four general members were also elected. They are Rahima Khatun, Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed, Atiur Rahman and Ishtiaq Ahmed.

The eight-member council was elected at the annual general meeting held at the organisation's Mohammadpur office in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Draft of Private Medical Service Act approved

BSS, Dhaka

The cabinet yesterday approved the draft of the Private Medical Service Act-2003 aiming at ascertaining the quality of treatment and ensuring the proper management of the private medical services.

The approval was given at the regular meeting of the cabinet at the cabinet

room of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The cabinet also okayed an action plan for increasing fish production in many state-owned and private ponds, dighis, haors, beels and other water bodies across the country.

Under the action plan, a modern technology will be introduced in

pisciculture. Enormous job opportunities will be created for poor people, women and youths after implementation of the project.

Cabinet members, state ministers of ministries concerned, cabinet secretary, principal secretary of the PMO's office and secretaries concerned attended the meeting.

4 get life term in absentia Dr Mosharraf murder

UNB, Dhaka

Four young men were in absentia sentenced to life imprisonment for shooting down a physician at Mohammadpur in the city four years ago.

Those convicted are Masud, Mintu, Ibrahim and Anis who remained fugitive since the murder of 45-year old Dr Mosharraf Hossain on November 14, 1999.

Dr Mosharraf along with his daughter

was going to Green Herald School at Asad Gate by a rickshaw when the culprits shot him to death on the spot.

Earlier, in May the same year the accused snatched Tk 16,000 from Dr Mosharraf on the street. The pedestrians caught red-handed Masud, one of the snatchers and took him to Dr Mosharraf's chamber. Masud was set free after a written agreement promising to return the money, which was never done despite

repeated reminders.

The snatchers plotted to kill Dr Mosharraf for pressing to return the snatched money and executed the evil design.

His wife filed a case against the snatchers.

Jahangir Alam Mollah, judge of the speedy trial tribunal, pronounced the verdict after examining the prosecution witnesses.



PHOTO: STAR

With Eid only a day or two away, people buy prayer caps from street-side stalls in the city yesterday.