

BRTC plans special bus service to meet Eid rush

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will operate 334 special buses on 108 inter-district routes from Dhaka and various districts from today till December 11 on the occasion of the Eid.

Of the buses, 153 will ply from Dhaka and 181 from Chattagong, Bogra, Rangpur, Pirozpur, Khulna, Chandpur, Khagrachhari, Pabna, Panchagah and some other districts.

BRTC Chairman Taimur Alam Khandaker said at a press conference yesterday the special bus service will be inaugurated at 10:00am at the BRTC's Kamalapur bus depot.

The special service will charge half the fare from the blind and disabled and seats will be kept reserved for them and for women, Taimur said.

Moreover, on the Eid day, the BRTC's Volvo city service will carry commuters of Motijheel-Mirpur route at Tk 5 each instead of Tk 10 and on Motijheel-Tongi route at Tk 7 each instead of Tk 15.

BRTC tourist buses will ply for four days from the Eid day to Mirpur Zoo, Botanical Garden, Jamuna Bridge, Fantasy Kingdom and Nandan Park. Kalayanpur bus depot will manage the service.

Sale of advance tickets for the special buses started yesterday at the BRTC counters for the convenience of the passengers. Strict measures will be taken to prevent blackmarketing of tickets, the BRTC chairman said.

Fare was not increased compared to that in the previous year, he added.

From Kalayanpur bus depot in Dhaka, 69 buses will ply various destinations including Rajshai, Chapainawabganj, Gopalganj, Kishazani, Nazirpur, Narail via Lohagara, Burimari, Kumarkhali, Kotalipara, Karimganj, Setabganj, Paturiahat, Chilmari and Naogaon.

From Motijheel bus depot, 75 buses

IGP

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and conduct of behaviour to their police personnel.

Earlier, the HC bench issued a notice of query on the IGP and the principal of Sarda Police Academy while drawing contempt proceedings against five police personnel.

The contempt was drawn by the then justice of the HC division, AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury, over an incident that occurred on June 23 near the Farmgate in the city between him and the said police personnel.

The HC said the police personnel did not salute Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury in his way to the court.

The IGP in his clarification sent to the registrar mentioned that 'a traffic policeman on duty is not obliged to salute anybody but a discretion is left on him to pay compliment to anybody without risking traffic accident. The duty of a driver is to obey the direction of the traffic policeman and he has no right to conduct a research as to whether the direction given by the traffic policeman is right or wrong'.

The IGP sought for drawing charges against Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury under relevant sections of the penal code, if not barred by the law, for the incident.

The IGP had levelled Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury in his clarification as a former justice reportedly removed from service.

Alliance govt faces

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would be difficult to maintain the unity of the alliance if it deteriorated.

"There is still time to narrow down the ever widening gap through sharing of power with the two parties considering their contributions during the movement and the election. Maybe they are not so strong, but we cannot ignore them and forget the commitment to form a four-party government," he said.

Another senior BNP leader observed that a section of his party leaders believed that no other party was of any consequence if Jamaat remained with the BNP, but that was not realistic.

He said the AL has already reached a strong understanding with the Workers Party, CPB and JSD (Inu) and announced programmes, while on the other hand 'we are reluctant to maintain even the existing unity of the alliance'.

Leaders of both the IOJ and BJP were highly critical of the current role of BNP-Jamaat government and said they would not bear any responsibilities of the 'misdeeds, corruption and the failure to maintain law and order', since the two parties were not in the government.

These leaders have alleged that the BNP has forgotten them and was happy with Jamaat-e-Islami.

They said although IOJ top leaders like Fazlul Haq Amin and BJP Leaders Nazir Rahman Manjur and Kazi Firoz Rashid skipped the Iftar parties, the BNP-Jamaat high-ups have not yet noticed their absence nor have they inquired about their absence in the

will ply Sirajganj, Gaibandha, Netrokona, Kishorganj, Mymensingh, Pathorghata, Beani Bazar, Lakhai, Dighinala, Chittagong, Mohanganj, Raojan, Khagrachhari, Kendua, Panchagarh and Jhalokati.

Nine buses from Jowarshahara bus depot will go to Narail, Sherpur, Bogra, Rangpur and Dinajpur.

About night service buses, Taimur said they have requested the home ministry to ensure adequate security. As in the previous year, deployment of army at bus terminals would benefit passengers, he thought.

He also said a new bus depot in Sylhet and a training school in Khulna will start operation by next month.

Outlaws kill 2 in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two persons were shot dead by the cadres of an outlawed party at village Ballavpur in Sadar upazila of the district on Sunday night.

The victims were identified as Maznu, 18, son of Afsar Ali and Shahjahan Ali, 30, son of Lutfor Rahman of the village.

According to police and locals, 15 armed cadres belonging to Gano Mukti Foj (GMF) swooped on Maznu and Shahjahan while they were sitting at a shop at about 8:00pm. The GMF cadres took the two to a paddy field nearby and shot them point blank. Both died on the spot.

Earlier, the outlawed party had threatened the victims with death for their alleged involvement in the killing of its leader Ahasan Ali at the village on October 31.

Police recovered the bodies yesterday morning and sent them to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

Two separate cases were filed with Sadar Police Station, but police could not arrest any of the killers till 6:00pm yesterday.

Kurd rebels

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the PKK, branded a "terrorist" organization by both Ankara and Washington.

Last month, the two sides agreed on an "action plan," including military measures, against the group.

Ankara says up to 5,000 PKK rebels are hiding in northern Iraq.

In September, the PKK, which fought a bloody 15-year campaign for self-rule in predominantly Kurdish southeastern Turkey, ended a four-year unilateral ceasefire with Ankara.

Meanwhile, a US military policeman died in ongoing attacks on coalition troops and their allies, the US command said yesterday, as the US Army intensified operations to root out the growing insurgency, AP reports from Baghdad.

The brief statement said the MP was killed Sunday evening by a rocket-propelled grenade fired at a patrol in the town of Iskandariyah, 40 miles south of Baghdad.

The death brought to 37 the number of American soldiers who have died in Iraq this month. The Downing last week of the Chinook and the crash of a Black Hawk helicopter made the first week of November the bloodiest for American forces since President George W Bush declared an end to major combat May 1.

Khulna customs seeks NBR nod to file case against HRC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna customs has sought permission from National Board of Revenue (NBR) to lodge an FIR (First Information Report) under the Arms Act against HRC Shipping Lines in connection with the recent seizure of weapons from one of its ships.

Three sophisticated M-16 rifles along with 169 rounds of ammunition were seized from MV Banga Lanka on the night of November 6 at Mongla port.

Investigation is already underway in connection with a departmental case filed earlier by a customs officer questioning the shipping company's authority to keep the unlicensed M-16 rifles for the last four years in the bonded locker of the vessel for security purposes as claimed by the ship's authorities.

Mohammad Nurul Islam, joint commissioner of the customs, said a show cause notice to this effect would be served shortly upon the ship's owner.

An official of the HRC Shipping Lines at its Khulna office said the rifles are properties of MV Banga Lanka, not of the HRC. Therefore, the HRC is not required to obtain any separate licence for the weapons. "The arms are of no use to us."

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Khulna Range Abdul Aziz Sarker said the ship is out of the jurisdiction of Khulna police since it is now at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port. But the matter is still being investigated as the weapons were seized by Mongla Sea Customs, the DIG said.

Mild tremor jolts Ctg

BSS, Chittagong

A mild earthquake jolted the port city and its adjoining areas last night.

The tremor measured 4.2 on the Richter scale struck at 1:37:04 hours and lasted for 17 seconds, sources at the local Seismic Observatory Centre said yesterday.

The epicentre of the tremor was some 152 kilometre off the seismic observatory centre.

The last tremor recorded by the centre was of moderate category, which struck on September 21 and was measured 5.77 on the Richter scale, sources added.

Charges pressed

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arrest against them.

The IO however did not press charge against police informant Delwar, as his name and address could not be found. He made 15 people prosecution witnesses.

A businessman filed a case under the Law and Order (Disruption) Speedy Trial Act on October 31 against the eight law enforcers and the police informant soon after they robbed two Jhut (garment-by-products) traders of Tk 2 lakh.

Immediately afterwards, locals caught four policemen and recovered Tk 1.46 lakh from SI Shamsul Haq.

The mugging took place when people of Meradia were demonstrating against the policemen of the same police station, protesting the killing of a young man in their custody. Police allegedly tortured Shakil Ahmed Sumon to death, as his parents did not pay Tk 2 lakh to police in bribe.

ADB

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fiscal 2004-05.

Yoshihiro Iwasaki, ADB director general for South Asia, yesterday informed Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman of the bank's increased assistance package.

The credit will be spent in the government's priority areas, including development of railway, Chittagong Port, capital market and small-and-medium ventures.

The ADB executive appreciated Bangladesh's achievements on the economic front during the last two years and hoped that the economy would grow 5.7 percent in the current fiscal year.

The minister thanked the DG of the funding agency for its "continued support to Bangladesh's development efforts".

Internet

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ise the VoIP had been pending for a couple of years.

Akhtaruzzaman Manju, president of the Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA), hailed the cabinet decision.

He termed it a milestone in the history of the country's ICT sector and said it will pave the way for fostering ICT growth.

He said local firms will be able to set up call centres, medical transcription service and many other IT-enabled services following the decision.

Manju said the regulatory authorities should limit the number of phone lines the internet telephony firms would use.



President Iajuddin Ahmed, right, exchanges greetings with Justice Habibur Rahman, former chief advisor of the caretaker government, at an iftar party also attended by ambassadors of Muslim nations, defence high officials and civil society representatives at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Besiege JU VC

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strike called by Jahangirnagar University Teachers Association to press their three-point demand. The demands include election to VC panel.

The students started the demonstrations at around 12 noon at the foot of Amar Ekushey, a sculpture. They paraded down the campus carrying placards and reached the administrative building at 12:15pm to submit a memorandum to the VC who was not there.

The proctor came down from the building and tried to pacify the agitating students, failing which he called Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal's (JCD) JU unit organising secretary to the building to force the students back to their dormitories.

Angered by the presence of Organising Secretary Nazmul Hasan Ovi, the students besieged the proctor in front of the building and locked all the entrants to the building, leaving the employees of the building trapped inside.

Ovi however fled the scene in the face of students' protest.

At 12:30pm, the VC drove to the building in a private car only to be besieged by the students. The students

3 abducted in Rangamati

BSS, Rangamati

Armed miscreants abducted three tribals from Longadu upazila of the district Sunday morning.

Police and security sources said Bijoy Lal Chakma, 55, and Prem Lal Chakma, 52, of village Rangapanichhara, and Purna Sen Chakma, 45, of village Buchhari, were abducted from their houses.

Police and security forces are conducting joint operation in different areas of the upazila to rescue the abducted three.

Police suspected that the abductors might be the members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).

JS body

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"While the newspapers wrote onion was selling at Tk 20 a kg, the actual market price was Tk 16. When the press makes such misleading reports, the traders try to take advantage of the situation and the buyers get panicked," Monirul added.

The sub-committee has engaged 10 persons to collect data from different markets and authorities, he claimed.

How much onion was imported in the last three months and whether there was anything wrong with the import will also be probed.

"The sub-committee will meet once all information are gathered," said Monirul.

Eid shoppers

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Jahangir Alam also blamed the government's decision last year to ban import of yarn through land ports.

Local fabric manufacturers, who were mostly dependant on Indian yarns, are charging exorbitant prices that are not proportionate to international prices, he said.

Only two months back local cotton was available at \$2.2/kg and Indian cotton at \$1.9. But the prices of local yarn are \$3.3/kg and Indian imports \$2.75/kg, he said.

"Due to high price of local yarn we are being forced to import heavily to stay competitive," said Monjurul. He urged the government to withdraw ban on import through land ports immediately before the knit industry falls flat on its face.

An official of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association meanwhile said they are not hoarding yarn.

Rise in cotton price in the international market forces us to increase yarn price," he said.

then read out the memorandum and handed it over to him, asking him to give a written statement on the resumption of classes by December 14.

Meanwhile, the authorities have closed the university for 33 days on the occasions of Eid-ul-fitr, Martyred Intellectuals' Day, Shab-e-Qadr, and Victory Day. The classes and examinations at JU will remain suspended from November 15 to December 18.

"The VC closed the university in the face of demonstrations to silence the students' voice. The long-term closure is meaningless," a JU syndicate member, preferring anonymity, said.

Partex factory gutted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A raging fire gutted most of the machinery, raw materials and products of a Partex factory at Jurain in Shyampur yesterday.

The blaze at Habib Partex Limited started at about 10:55am and soon engulfed the whole factory, a fire brigade official said.

Six fire fighting units from Postagola, Sadarghat and the headquarters rushed to the spot and doused the fire after one and half hours of struggle.

However, the cause behind the fire and the loss due to it could not be known immediately.

5 more JCD men held for assault of army officer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Five more cadres of the JCD Sylhet unit have been arrested in connection with the assault of an army officer.

They are Muhibul Haque Chowdhury Rahi, Humayun Kabir Khan, Lipu Banik, Junel Ahmed and Aminur Rahman Pavel. All were arrested in Dhaka.

A police team went to the capital to bring them back to Sylhet.

The private car in which they were travelling was also recovered.

With them the total number of JCD cadres arrested in connection with the incident now stood at eight.

They were produced before the Sylhet sadar magistrate's court yesterday afternoon.

Police took three accused-Diba, Lavlu and Rahi on one-day remand while the others were sent to jail hajat.

The main accused Habib Ibne Islam Chamak is yet to be arrested.

Earlier, Diba, Lavlu and Hakim were arrested from Sylhet on Friday and Saturday night.

Bogra Jubo League leader murdered

BSS, Bogra

A Jubo League leader was murdered in Majhira upazila Sunday night.

Police said Ramananda Das, joint convener of Jubo League Majhira upazila unit, came under attack by a gang of unidentified miscreants at about 9:00pm at a tea stall at village Demazani.

They stabbed him in the chest and abdomen. Ramananda was rushed to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) where the doctors declared him dead.

His body was sent to Bogra Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Leaders of Awami League Bogra district unit condemned the killing and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

PM

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relief operation and measures undertaken to face the situation.

The cabinet, however, expressed satisfaction over the measures taken to overcome the situation as well as the relief operation.

UNB adds: At the meeting, the cabinet also approved the draft of the Code of Civil Procedure (Third Amendment) Act 2003 and a proposal for ratification of the Protocol on Biosafety to the convention on biological diversity.

The meeting approved yet another proposal for packing 10 percent of urea fertiliser in polypropylene bags for storing in buffer godowns for preservation and distribution.

Cabinet members, state ministers in charge of ministries concerned, cabinet secretary, principal secretary and other secretaries concerned were present.

Iran suspends

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develop nuclear weapons. The Kremlin has said it shares some of the US concerns and prodded Tehran to accept tighter controls by the IAEA. Moscow has also insisted that all spent fuel be returned to Russia.

Putin indicated that Moscow was satisfied with Rowhani's pledges.

"With regard to the enrichment of uranium, Iran has a right to carry out these kinds of activities but we are pleased to note that Iran has itself resolved to limit itself," Putin said.

Traces of weapons-grade uranium have been found on enrichment centrifuges at two Iranian facilities, but Iranian officials say the imported equipment was contaminated abroad before Iran received it.

Before traveling to Moscow, Rowhani met in Vienna with the head of the IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, who is currently preparing a report to the IAEA board of governors on Tehran's nuclear activities.

The board will consider ElBaradei's report on Nov. 20. If the board decides that the report justifies declaring Tehran in violation of the Nonproliferation Treaty, it will ask the UN Security Council to get involved. The council, in turn, could impose sanctions.

Fiji villagers

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Korol said the trip, which has been planned for next week, would cause financial problems for the villagers in Nubutautau, where the ceremony will be held.

"It's about time that we should stop trying to believe that we cannot succeed because of the curses placed on our ancestors. It is time we make a difference and look for a better way of living," he said.

Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase said he would also attend the ceremony.

ODI series

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favoured to go for a clean sweep when they take on the hosts at the same venue tomorrow.

Chasing a paltry 134 in 50 overs, the visitors had some trouble initially when they lost three wickets for only 37 runs.

The home side could have been in an even better position had Manjarul Islam not dropped dangerous Andrew Flintoff when he was on 26 and England on 76 in the 21st over.

Flintoff accepted the gift and took Bangladesh bowlers to the sword and belted them all around the park to see the Englishmen sail home in 27.4 overs.

Flintoff, who took four wickets and scored an unbeaten 55 to guide England to a seven-wicket win in the first match in Chittagong last Friday, once again remained not out on 70 off 47 balls.

He reached his fifty in only 37 balls with four sixes and half a dozen boundaries.

Captain Michael Vaughan with an unbeaten 37 stroked the ball around to make sure that there were no more hiccups.

Earlier, Captain Khaled Mahmud won the toss for a second straight time and elected to bat, but the hosts were blown out of the game, losing four wickets with just seven runs on the

Frigate case

Hearing on quashment petition of Hasina Dec 6

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday fixed December 6 for hearing the quashment petition of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The petition was filed to quash the proceedings of a corruption case now pending with a lower court.

The case was filed against Sheikh Hasina and six others for their alleged corruption in purchasing a frigate from South Korea.

Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud appeared before the court on behalf of Sheikh Hasina.

Information ministers

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incites or perpetuates hate against a member and should be sensitive to diverse values and cultures in the region.

A major reason for a common Saarc position on transnational broadcast is the shared concern over its socio-political impact on the countries in the region.

It claims to evolve a balance between Saarc commitment to the free flow of information and news and its impact on the social, cultural and political fabric.

The guideline underscores discretion, good taste and decency in dealing with sensitive subjects like religion, children and sex.

The need for a guideline was articulated at the first meeting of Saarc information ministers in Dhaka in 1998.

India is likely to propose holding of a Saarc film festival. Among other issues expected to figure are a regional media forum, an annual conference of editors and working journalists and training of

US warns

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forces, until we can rest assured that our country is free of devils and wicked people," he said.

The former Saudi intelligence chief, describing the compound of mostly Arab expatriate workers as a soft target, said the kingdom had had successes against militants in the last six months. "There have been many arrests, many discoveries of arms caches, munitions and explosives," he said.

The suspected al-Qaeda bombers posing as police blew up their explosives-rigged car in the Muhaya compound in the Saudi capital.

MILITANTS THREATEN SAUDI STABILITY

Saudi media said the Riyadh blast had taken the battle to an unprecedented level, threatening the stability and economy of the country.

Local newspapers, which usually reflect government thinking, said the suicide attacks which killed mostly Arabs had robbed militants of their claim of fighting the "infidel" presence in the cradle of Islam.