

Thousands start

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rate. They however claimed that they were not charging extra rather maintaining the government rate.

In reality, bus fare of different routes fluctuates by Tk 20 to 150 more than the usual.

Homebound people crowded the city bus and launch terminals and Kamalapur rail station after office hours yesterday.

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) will initiate special transport arrangements from Saturday to ease the home going rush.

People of the northern districts suffered a lot yesterday as a number of trains were delayed by over two hours, as the intersections in the city were jammed with traffic.

The train Ekota Express, which was scheduled to leave Kamalapur Railway Station at 9:40 am, left at 12:20 pm.

Special train service starts from today with seven more locomotives in addition to the 22 existing ones.

At Bikash Paribahan counter in Gabtoli one Selim Sikder of Moksudpur was found bargaining with the employees, as they demanded Tk 220 per ticket instead of the usual fair at Tk 140.

Terminal authorities of Saidabad, Gabtoli and Mohakhali on loud speakers have been asking the passengers not to purchase tickets from outside the counters to avoid black marketers, brokers, frauds, muggers and other criminals.

To ease the situation for the home goers Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), police and intelligence personnel have been deployed at the terminals.

BRTC EID SERVICE
The BRTC will start its special Eid service from Saturday and it will continue for the next three days.

BRTC sources said around 500 buses—either owned by the BRTC or on lease—will ply on different inter-district routes while 77 other buses, now running as city service and staff buses, will be added to the service.

The corporation has already started selling advance tickets in Dhaka and all other BRTC bus depots across the country. People can collect their tickets at Zorshahara, Motijheel, Kalyanpur, Mirpur-12 double-decker bus depot, Phulbaria CBS-2. The buses will leave for destinations from these places.

THE WATERWAY
With the Eid-ul-Fitr approaching the owners of passenger launches have started charging the homebound people extra, even double the fare, in absence of proper monitoring by the authorities.

Heavy rush coupled with additional fare has doubled the sufferings of the passengers in reaching homes and relatives on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Fitr.

Owners of the launches from Dhaka to the southern part of the country have already started selling tickets with extra fare, which is likely to continue at least 10 days after the Eid. However, they claimed that they were maintaining the rate fixed

by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) last year. The rate is yet to be revised this year.

The usual fare for Dhaka-Barisal route is Tk 80-120 per head on deck, Tk 300-350 for luxurious chair, Tk 700 for single cabin, Tk 1,000-1,200 for double cabin and Tk 1,500-2,000 for VIP cabin.

But during the Eid the fare rose to Tk 180 to 200 per person in deck, Tk 400 to 500 for luxurious chair, Tk 800 to 1000 for single cabin, Tk 14,000 to 16000 for double cabin and Tk 2,000 to 2,400 for VIP cabin.

The fare for all the places to south including on Dhaka-Bhola, Dhaka-Patuakhali, Dhaka-Chandpur, Dhaka-Rangabali routes, increased on the occasion.

Secretary of the BIWTA Monwar Hossain said the launch owners are indeed charging higher fare but it does not exceed the rate fixed by the BIWTA.

However, denying the allegations of charging extra fare President of Launch Owners Association Badiuzzaman Badal said stern actions would be taken if such allegations were proven against any launch service.

He also said the owners, who run their launches at lower fare round the year to compete with others, charge fare according to the BIWTA fixed rate during Eid season. That is why it seems to people that they are charging more during the Eid holidays.

Vice-president of Launch Owners Association Shahbuddin Milon, also the owner of MV Parabat, said, "We have to bear losses throughout the year. Eid is the high time to make up for the losses but we never charge more than the government rate."

Sources said the workers of different southbound launches are playing a vital role in making the fare go high. They by forming a syndicate grabbed most of the tickets of different launches and selling them at a high price.

Talking to The Daily Star a passenger of Bhola-bound launch yesterday alleged that the ticket manager forced him to pay Tk 900 for a double cabin while the normal rate is Tk 600.

Another passenger of a Barisal-bound launch said he faced a little difficulty buying tickets for a place on the deck, as he could not manage any for a cabin.

About security, Officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station Md Salauddin Khan said additional police have been deployed at Sadarghat since last Tuesday and they will remain deployed till the Durga Puja.

Operation Officer of Rab-10 ASP Enam said 35 Rab personnel have already been deployed at Sadarghat and reinforcement would be mobilised if necessary.

Asked about the monitoring activities of Sadarghat Md Shafiqul Haque, director (traffic) of BIWTA, said if the allegation of charging extra fare is proved the route permit of that launch would be suspended.

He also said a special control room has been set up from September 16 at the launch terminal to keep the law and order under control.

Ctg port

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The berth operators provided bonus money of Tk 2,000 to stevedoring staffs while Tk 4,000 to the dockworkers last year, sources said.

This year, the bonus was raised to Tk 1,000 for both the staffs and workers.

Handling of cargo of eleven vessels could not take place due to the sudden work abstention.

The stevedoring staffs also forcefully stopped the handling operation under the supervision of berth operators' own staffs on a few vessels around 1:00 pm.

Talking to The Daily Star, Berth Operators Association convenor Fazley Akram Chowdhury alleged that at least four of their staffs were injured in the attack of stevedoring staffs.

"After making such a contribution to the port introducing integrated operation, we now feel helpless and insecure," Akramsaid.

"We are going to meet the port chairman and other officials," he said adding that they will have to re-think about working at the port unless the port authority ensures safety and security of their men.

Meanwhile, Chittagong Port Authority formed a two-member committee headed by Director (Traffic) Ahasanul Kabir to hold a tripartite meeting to reach an understanding between the berth operators and stevedoring staffs.

The meeting was going on till filing of this report in the evening yesterday.

Lailatul Qadr

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the salvation of the departed souls.

They also joined milad, qurankhwan and religious discussions at mosques and their houses.

The holy Quran was revealed on this night to show the mankind the path of worldly and eternal emancipation.

Meanwhile, Jumatul Wida, the last Juma in the holy month of Ramadan, will be observed across the country today.

Devotees will spend the night, offering special prayers and reciting the holy Quran. They will also visit the graveyards and offer prayers, seeking eternal peace of the departed souls.

Special 'munajat' will be offered at all mosques of the country after Juma prayers where the devotees will seek divine blessing for peace, progress and prosperity of the nation.

The largest Jumatul Wida congregation of the country will be held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital. Thousands of muslims are expected to take part in the congregation.

Zia Orphanage

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passed the order following arguments passed by Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, lawyers present in the court said.

Reporters were not allowed inside the court yesterday and on the first day of hearing on Wednesday.

Deputy Attorney General of the HC bench Motaibar Hossain Sazu confirmed the court order to the media.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told newsmen that the lawyers for Khaleda and Tarique took back the petitions from the bench to move those before another bench upon reopening of the court on October 4 after its annual vacation.

He refused to make any comment on why the HC bench prohibited reporting of the hearing and why the petitions were taken back from the bench.

While coming out of the court, Khaleda's principal counsel barrister Rafique-Ul-Huq also refused to make any comment to the media.

Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon, who filed the petitions on behalf of Khaleda and Tarique, however told newsmen that they did not take back the petitions from the bench.

"The petitions are still pending with the bench of Justice AFM Abdul Rahman and Justice Md Rezaul Hasan. We will move the petitions after reopening of the court," he said.

Asked if they will move the petitions before the same bench, he said they would decide the matter later.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case against Khaleda, Tarique and five others on July 3 last year with Ramna Police Station for embezzling over Tk 2.10 crore by forming the "fake" organisation Zia Orphanage Trust.

Two petitions were filed with the HC on Tuesday for quashing proceedings against Khaleda and Tarique in the case.

On Wednesday, the bench adjourned the hearing until yesterday after Rafique-Ul-Huq placed his submissions.

Terror king

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police chief said yesterday.

Police hunting for suspects in Jakarta hotel bombings raided a hide-out in central Indonesia, sparking gunfire and an explosion Thursday that left four suspected militants dead, including Noordin, national police Chief Bambang Hendarso Danuri said. Three alleged terrorists also were captured.

Noordin's remains were found in the house on the outskirts of the town of Solo in central Java after the hours-long firefight, he said.

Fingerprints of Noordin's stored on a police database matched those of the body, Danuri said. DNA tests have not yet been conducted.

"It is Noordin M. Top," he told a nationally televised news conference to loud cheers from the audience. Documents and laptop computers confiscated from the house prove that Noordin "is the leader of al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia," he said.

Hundreds of pounds (kilograms) of explosives, M-16 assault rifles, grenades and bombs were removed from the house as ambulances shuttled away the dead and injured.

"We asked Noordin M. Top to surrender, but they kept firing," Danuri said. "That is how he died ... he even had bullets in his pockets."

Noordin, a Malaysian citizen, fled to Indonesia in 2002 amid a crackdown on Muslim extremists in Malaysia in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States. He was linked to bombings on the Indonesian resort island of Bali in 2002 and 2005 that together killed 222 people, mostly foreigners.

"The most dangerous

terrorist in Southeast Asia has been put out of commission," said Jim Della Giacomia, Southeast Asia project director for the International Crisis Group think tank.

"It would have been better if police had managed to arrest him alive, but it appears that this was not an option," he said. "Unfortunately, Noordin's death does not mean an end to terrorism in Indonesia, though it has been dealt a significant blow."

Noordin, who is accused of heading a splinter group of the al-Qaeda-funded regional terror group Jamaah Islamiyah, has been implicated in every major attack in Indonesia since 2003, including a pair of suicide bombings at Jakarta's JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in July that killed seven people and wounded more than 50.

He is also blamed for an earlier attack on the J.W. Marriott in 2003 and a bombing at the Australian Embassy in 2004.

A counterterrorism official said the militants killed Thursday included alleged bomb-maker Bagus Budi Pranato. The captured militants included a pregnant woman who is being treated at a hospital, national police spokesman Nanan Sukarna said. She was in stable condition.

Police tracked the seven suspects to the town of Solo and besieged a village house on its outskirts overnight. The raid ended near daybreak when an explosion occurred inside the house, Sukarna said.

The operation left behind a charred house with no roof and blown-out walls. The bodies were flown to Jakarta for autopsies.

US pledges support

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detail the issues that are of concern to both the countries.

Terming Bangladesh a model of empowerment of women and a country with strong secular and democratic heritage, Hillary said 'Bangladesh' embodied the promise that President Obama spoke of in Cairo.

"We are committed to work with you, with your government, and with the people of Bangladesh for a brighter future," she told Dipu Moni at the meeting.

Dipu Moni briefed her about the December 29 parliamentary elections and the vision of the new government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"Our resolve is to ensure rule of law, good governance, protect the inclusive and pluralist nature of our society, promote women's empowerment, opportunities for the young and the disadvantaged," she said.

Dipu Moni said the government's goal is to attain a level of socio-economic development that would elevate Bangladesh to a middle-income country by 2021.

"We need support and assistance from our friends, particularly from the United States," she said.

The foreign minister discussed with Hillary various areas of cooperation between the two countries that include enhanced trade opportunities, US investment in Bangladesh, and cooperation in the area of counter terrorism and debt relief for Bangladesh.

Dipu Moni requested Hillary to give Bangladeshi products duty-free and quota-free access into the US market and sought cooperation in deportation of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Some of them have reportedly been living in the US.

Referring to her visit to Bangladesh, Hillary said she met many dynamic women in positions of responsibility, and saw the way that pioneering micro-credit projects really invented in Bangladesh—especially through the Grameen Bank—helped women living in poverty gain self-sufficiency and offered them a better life.

She lauded the government's efforts to increase access to education for young girls.

Terming the last parliamentary election the freest and fairest in the country's history, she said Bangladeshis now have the opportunity to build on this success and strengthen their democratic institutions.

"The United States stands ready to work with Bangladesh. And we will work to enhance economic opportunities," said the secretary of state.

She also discussed the possibility of a bilateral trade and investment framework agreement, which would make it easier for US companies and investors to expand their activi-

ties in Bangladesh and increase trade.

Hillary thanked Dipu Moni for Bangladesh's leadership on a range of regional and global issues that include efforts to combat violent extremism, providing peacekeeping forces in troubled spots around the world, enhance food security and global health and address the threat of climate change.

"President Obama and I look forward to discussing these issues further next week in New York at the United Nations General Assembly," Hillary said.

The foreign minister briefed Hillary on the adverse impact of the climate change on vulnerable countries such as Bangladesh and stressed the need for collective action to cope with the challenge.

Dipu Moni said she drew Hillary's attention to the increased cost of development endeavours due to climate change and underscored the need for developed countries' assistance in adaptation and mitigation.

On the global financial crisis, Dipu Moni said they agreed that the challenges cannot be resolved by any single country and that there is need for concerted action.

Replying to a question on duty-free access of Bangladeshi goods to the US market and the country's inclusion into Millennium Challenge Corporation, Hillary said they discussed both the issues along with many others in a very comprehensive discussion.

"Certainly with respect to the Millennium Challenge Account, the foreign minister recognised that circumstances have changed with the election of a new government in December. We are both young administrations and working hard to get established and proceed on the numerous goals that we share," Hillary said.

With respect to the foreign minister's request for duty-free access, she said the two countries have a vibrant trade relationship now, and it has been growing, and they look forward to continuing to grow that trade.

"We did specifically talk about the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, which has been discussed between our two governments—your trade officials along with our trade representative," said Hillary.

Bangladesh Ambassador to US Akramul Qader, Director General of Bangladesh Foreign Office Mohammed Ali, Deputy Chief of Mission of Bangladesh Embassy in Washington Mohammed Belal and Press Minister at Bangladesh Embassy Akhter Ahmed Khan were present on the Bangladesh side.

CPB BLAST CASE DCC Councillor Arif remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department took BNP leader Arifur Rahman on a three-day remand in connection with the blast at a rally of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in 2001.

Metropolitan Magistrate Munshi Abdul Mazid granted the three-day remand yesterday after the CID personnel produced him before a Dhaka court on Wednesday seeking a 10-day remand.

Arifur Rahman, also a councillor of Dhaka City Corporation, was found involved for which he should be quizzed to elicit further information about the incident and whether he had any accomplices in the crime, CID sources said.

Earlier, Arifur's lawyer Sanaulah Miah prayed bail for him. The magistrate cancelled the bail prayer after the hearing of the case.

The CID members arrested Arifur from his Malibagh residence Tuesday night.

Senior Assistant Superintendent of CID Abdul Kahar Akand told The Daily Star that they arrested him following information extracted from other accused.

Earlier, CID arrested Harkatul-Jihad-al-Islami's (Huji) leader in connection with the blast at Paltan Maidan on January 20 in 2001 that killed seven people and injured many others.

Former Huji chief Maulana Sheikh Abdus Salam was also arrested and now he is on bail.

Cab driver

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One of the criminals, Imran, was admitted to Pongu Hospital with bullet wounds under police custody.

The driver, Nuruzzaman, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 1:30 am.

He was the son of Khalilur Rahman and a resident of Pallabi.

In another incident, Mukter Hossain, 24, who was beaten by an angry mob during snatching a private car in Pallabi residential area on Monday, succumbed to his injuries yesterday.

His associate Abdul Halim died on the spot in the mob beating while the third one could manage his escape well.

Banks

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Bangladesh Bank circular issued yesterday to the chief executive officers of commercial banks.

Meanwhile, the commercial banks witnessed a huge client pressure yesterday, the last day of transactions officially, before going on a long five-day vacation.

A few banks were planning to keep a very few branches open tomorrow.

The bank branches in the country's commercial hub of Motijheel were seen serving their clients even beyond the transaction hours yesterday.

Bank executives said there were huge pressure of withdrawals as well as the payment of utility bills, as people might have tried to go on vacation clearing their outstanding bills.

They said inter-bank money market was also very active, as the banks had to cope with the withdrawal pressure.

The inter-bank transactions ranged between Tk 3,500 crore and Tk 4,000 crore during the day.

"Unlike previous occasions, the call money rate remained within 8-10 percent in the highly liquidated market," a fund manager told UNB.

4 suspects

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man of Pashapal Union Parishad of the upazila in 1996. His wife Aklima Begum is vice chairman of the same upazila.

Locals and police said Imamul Hasan Tutul came under attack as he just got out of the party office with others at around 10:30 pm. A gang of four to five armed men opened fire and hurled bombs at him leaving him dead on the spot and left the scene. He received three bullets in his head and chest.

Seven others including upazila Chhatra League president Shariful Islam and Aslam Hossain were injured. Aslam is undergoing treatment at Jessor General Hospital while others took treatment at upazila health complex.

Additional DIG Khulna range Siddique Rahman and Jessor Police Super Didar Ahmad visited the spot on Wednesday night.

Tutul was laid to rest at his family graveyard at Roghunathpur village on Thursday evening after namaj-e-janaza held at Chawgachha bazar and his village.

Police want no more

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of some Ansars. So, the police department has sent the proposal to the home ministry.

The home ministry sources said some 32,031 police personnel would be recruited in phases within shortest possible time.

Director (Operation) Forqan Uddin Ahmed of Ansar said of the 2311 Ansars, 400 Ansars are working under the traffic wing of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), 494 special Ansars at different police stations in 34 districts, including DMP, 464 under government railway police (GRP) while the remaining others in 16 districts.

Over 15,352 Ansar members, including around 830 females, are serving under 38 battalions on regular basis. Of them, 6,000 Ansars have been deployed in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), 2,500 in southwestern region to tackle outlaw activities while the remaining Ansar men in other parts of the country, he said.

The 494 special Ansars were earlier the members of outlawed Purbanga Bangla Communist Party, active in Southwestern region of the country, Ansar Headquarters sources said.

Different quarters apprehend further deterioration of law and order in the southwestern region if the special Ansars who were imparted training on arms return to their previous activities in the region.

The then Awami League government declared amnesty to the outlaws in the southwestern part of the country from June 7 to July 27 in 1999 and 2,700 outlaws availed this opportunity after they surrendered their 2,100 firearms.

Of the outlaws, 795 were recruited in Ansar department as special Ansar members after providing them an arms training for 28 days at Shafipur Ansar and VDP Training Centre and deployed in 34 districts to aid police.

Forqan Uddin said recently several district police administrations have sent separate letters to district adjutants of Ansar for withdrawing the Ansar members from district police. In reply, the Ansar department has requested the home ministry for taking decision in this regard, he said.

Ansar sources said following the reply the police headquarters sent proposals twice—on July 27 and August 31—to aid police.

Barapukuria

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they pelted police with brickbats and damaged a number of windowpanes of the company office. A pitched battle between police and protesters took place before BCMCL.

People of 11 villages including Partapara, Baspukur, Patigram, Kalupara, Jhigagari, Moupukur, Kazipara, Kashidanga and Boigram gathered at Barapukuria High School at 11:00 am.

They brought out a procession carrying banners, festoons and placards and marched towards BCMCL chanting slogans.

After the procession, the protesters held a rally in front of the entrance. They said around 2600 families and six rice mills of 11 villages have been under threat since 2006 due to the subsidence triggered by mining. Besides, 646 acres of land has already been damaged.

They also demanded Tk 60,000 per decimal of land affected by the mining.

Ibrahim Khalil, convener of BCMCL Jiban Rakha Committee urged the BCMCL authorities to pay appropriate compensations to the villagers.

He also requested the authorities to sit with the villagers.

Sources said BCMCL distributed compensations of Tk 1.41 crore last month among the subsidence victims of the nine villages around the coalmine.

Mine officials said the villages affected by coal extraction are classified as zone of influence. These villages include Moupukur, Kalupara, Bolorampur, Barapukuria, Jhigagari, Baspukur, Barapukuria Bazar, Baddyanathpur, Patigram and Partapara.

In 2005-06 the authorities distributed Tk 58,000 among villagers in Moupukur and Tk 52,000 in Kalupara and Bolorampur.

Managing Director of BCMCL Quamruzzaman said they are preparing all necessary documents for permanent resettlement but it will take some time.

They will decide on providing land compensations after the experts assess the value of land, he added.

the home ministry for withdrawing Ansar men from police. The ministry has extended time to December 31 so that the Ansars can stay with police forces till then.

Forqan Uddin said despite parliamentary standing committee on the home ministry on May 17 took a decision for deploying 400 more Ansars under DMP traffic police, the traffic department is yet to respond to the decision.

He said of the 795 special Ansars, 30 left their jobs during the first 28-day long training while 271 were sacked or left the job within two years of their joining.

Ansar sources said if the special Ansars are sacked from police department, they might return to their criminal activities reinforced with more training.

The special Ansars who once had link with criminal gangs may develop nexus with them again if they remain jobless, sources said and added that the government should rehabilitate them after their termination.

The sources apprehend that other Ansars who will lose jobs may get involved in criminal activities too for meeting their daily needs.

Purbachal plots

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conducted in the utmost transparent manner unlike the previous years.

"I can challenge all of you that no irregularities were there in the process. I would give award to the person who would be able to find any irregularities," he said.

"Neither I nor any of my relatives even applied for the plots," he added.

In response to a question from the audience, Mannan Khan said the lottery of the rest of the categories will be held soon in two phases after the Buet team completes the process.

Referring to the demand of the audience for giving them back the deposited money, he said they have already talked to the banks.

"We're trying to return the deposited money as early as possible. A cell will be formed in Rajuk so that the process is completed smoothly," he said.

Chairman in-charge AYNM Golam Kibria said the unsuccessful applicants can apply for withdrawing the