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PANKAJ KARMAKAR

Kawsar Mahmud had taken a one-day leave from his office in Dhaka to visit his family in Rangpur.

His plan was to make a nighttime journey by bus and start for Dhaka again the next night after spending some time with his loved ones.

"But my entire plan fell through due to the suspension of bus movement at night. Now it will take at least three days to make the visit," Kawsar, who works at a private firm, told The Daily Star at a bus counter at Kalyanpur on Wednesday.

Moinuddin Ahmed, a small trader from Sylhet, shared his sufferings with this correspondent at the Mohakhali bus terminal.

"I had an appointment with a doctor at six in the evening. I could go back home tonight to do some of my important work there if the buses were running normally. Now I will have to stay with my relatives for an extra day," he said on Wednesday.

Passengers, who prefer to travel by bus at night, have been facing similar problems since transport owners stopped running buses on highways after 9:00pm on "security grounds".

The decision was taken in a meeting between State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and transport leaders on Monday.

Several bus operators, however, have expressed their dissatisfaction over the decision, saying their businesses were being affected severely.

The number of passengers had already declined sharply because of the blockade. The new decision has worsened the

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Bus helper Bappi is in excruciating pain at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night. He suffered severe burns when his bus came under a petrol bomb attack in the capital's Banasree around 8:00pm.

PHOTO:
BANGLA CHOKH

Bravery of a female cop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bravery of a female assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of Police led to the arrest of two pickets with a petrol bomb at Fatullah in Narayanganj on Wednesday night.

The arrested are Rafiqul Islam, 35, and Abdul Gazi, 30. Police also seized a motorcycle from them.

ASI Farida Khanam Tagor told The Daily Star that she along with five constables was on duty at a check post in front of Fatullah stadium from 6:00pm Wednesday till 6:00am yesterday.

Two people around 10:30pm on a motorcycle were heading from Chashara towards the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway. When they were about 100 yards from the check post, she signalled the riders to stop but they ignored her and tried to speed away.

As the constables aimed their rifles at the motorcyclists, they halted and tried to flee. But Farida with the assistance of the constables caught the two, Rafiqul was

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More hartal
likely from
Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led 20-party alliance has threatened to go for a "tougher" programme from Sunday if the government failed to meet by then its demands, including the release of all its leaders and activists.

The warning came through a press release yesterday afternoon, some 14 hours before the latest

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Media freedom on
decline worldwide

Bangladesh's position unchanged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's position remained unchanged at 146 among 180 countries in this year's World Press Freedom Index.

Finland topped the list for the fifth consecutive year, followed by Norway and Denmark while Eritrea hit the bottom.

The yearly index by Reporters Without Borders evaluates countries on a range of

KHALEDA'S OFFICE
Leaders, staff
live on dry
food

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers for the second straight day yesterday did not allow in any food and mineral water bottles at the Gulshan office of BNP chief Khaleda Zia.

The items were for party leaders and office staff. Gulshan police claimed they were not aware of any such incident.

However, food for Khaleda was let into the office where she has been staying since January 3.

Sayrul Kabir Khan, a senior member of the BNP chairperson's media wing, said two rickshaw-vans carrying breakfast and lunch reached the office gate around 10:30am and 2:00pm.

People at the office were having dry food like dates, bread and puffed rice and their stock has been depleting fast, said Shamsuddin Dider, another member of

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SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

Smokers have
thinner brain
cortex: study

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A key part of the brain that is needed for thinking skills is smaller in smokers, new research has found.

The findings show that smoking has an impact on brain functioning -- as well as the heart and lungs.

The outer brain layer or brain cortex is thinner in smokers, researchers have found. And while some of the thickness might come back after they

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The Daily Star



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ONLINE POLL
Do you agree with Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed that the civil society members' proposal for dialogue is "unrealistic and unacceptable"?

Yes (16%)
No (84%)
TOTAL VOTES: 504

TODAY'S POLL
Do you agree with BNP chief Khaleda Zia that the only way to resolve the current political crisis is to hold an inclusive, competitive and meaningful election?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT
www.thedailystar.net

PRAYER TIMING

FEBRUARY 13

Fazr Juma 12:30 4:15 5:46 7:15

AZAN 5:35 6:10 1:15 4:30 5:50 7:45

JAMAT 10:20 20:00 CFM

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Jobseekers throng the Prabasi Kalyan Bhaban at Eskaton in the capital yesterday to get registered with the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training for employment in Saudi Arabia.

PHOTO:
RASHED SHUMONShock, anger
over Chapel
Hill shooting

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The mother of one of the three victims of the Chapel Hill shooting has lead tributes to her son during a candlelit vigil.

Thousands gathered at the centre of the University of North Carolina campus, where 23-year-old Deah Barakat was in his second year of studying to become a dentist.

He along with his wife, 21-year-old Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha and her sister Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, 19, were "murdered execution style" at home on Tuesday evening.

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Ukraine peace talks
agree on ceasefire

AFP, Minsk

Marathon talks in Belarus ended yesterday with a ceasefire announcement in the war between Ukraine and pro-Moscow rebels, but Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel warned that "big hurdles" remained.

Russian President Vladimir Putin emerged from the summit in the Belarusian capital Minsk, saying he, Merkel, French President Francois Hollande and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko had agreed on the "main" points.

Putin said a ceasefire would take effect on Sunday and that heavy

weapons would be withdrawn from frontlines of the conflict, which has already killed at least 5,300 people and driven a million people from their homes.

Hollande went further, saying there was agreement on "a comprehensive political solution." The French leader said there was "serious hope, even if all is not done".

However, Merkel spoke only of a "glimmer of hope".

"I have no illusions. We have no illusions," she said, adding that "much work" remained.

The truce -- meant to ease a crisis that has plunged the West and Russia

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