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Bus fare cut turns out to be farce

Due to lack of monitoring, passengers still forced to pay old fare

PANKAG KARMAKAR

The reduced passenger fares announced by the government on May 3 have not been implemented amid slack monitoring by the road transport and bridges ministry.

The fares, hiked once, would never be reduced in a country like Bangladesh, passengers say.

"We, the common people, always suffer," said Kawser Mahbud before boarding a Jhenaidah-bound bus.

Many other passengers there alleged that they paid what they had been charged before the government reduced fuel prices in April.

Bus owners in the capital's Gabtoli and Mohakhali bus terminals yesterday were seen charging passengers in the range of Tk 24 to Tk 117, which is higher than the rates set on the government's new fare chart of different routes.

Kamrul Hasan, a private university student, said he had bought a ticket to travel from Gabtoli to Jhenaidah for Tk 450 whereas he was supposed to pay Tk 357 according to the new fare chart.

"The fare has not been reduced as I have been paying the same amount for the distance for more than the last six months," he said.

Another passenger, Nadim Mahmud bought a ticket for Gabtoli to Faridpur route of Golden Lines Paribahan for Tk 300 but the government-set fare is Tk 183.

The staff of Shyamoli Paribahan and Hanif Paribahan at Kalyanpur bus counters were seen charging each passenger Tk 350, while SR Paribahan Tk 380 for travel from Dhaka to Bogra. But the latest fare set by the government is Tk 298.

At Mohakhali bus counter, Rajib Paribahan was charging passengers Tk 300 each to travel on Dhaka-Jamalpur route.

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Is this a road?



Vehicles making their way through the muddy and bumpy Sylhet-Companiganj-Bholaganj road. Accidents are frequent on this road because of its appalling condition. Hundreds of stone-laden trucks ply the road every day, and many of them break down midway, causing other vehicles to wait in long queues. The photos were taken from Shalukti in Gowainghat yesterday.



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

ARREST ON SUSPICION SC judgment today on govt appeal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court will deliver a verdict today on a long-pending appeal against the High Court directives on the detention of any person under suspicion and subsequent dealings with the detainees on remand.

A four-member bench of the SC's Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha on May 17 concluded the hearing of the appeal and fixed today for delivering judgement on it.

On April 7, 2003, the HC issued 15-point directives barring the government from arresting any person under the Special Powers Act after picking him/her up on suspicion.

One of the directives says an accused must be interrogated by the investigation officer in a prison room, instead of a police interrogation cell, until the cell has a glass wall or a wall with grilles on one side to make the accused visible to the lawyer or relatives.

The court also ruled that sections 54 and 167 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) dealing with the arrest on suspicion and

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Break this cycle of violence

Worried at recent spate of attacks, EU diplomats urge govt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Concerned over the recent spate of attacks on various targeted groups, the European Union yesterday raised the question of security in Bangladesh and urged the government to break this cycle of violence by bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Heads of Mission of the European Union resident in Bangladesh made the call at a meeting with Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali at the State Guesthouse Padma.

Referring to the attacks targeting innocent people, including bloggers, religious minorities, human rights activists, law enforcers and foreigners, the EU envoys said, "These attacks constitute an unprecedented threat to human rights and freedom of expression and belief."

These might taint the international reputation of Bangladesh as an open and tolerant society and the stability and prosperity of the country, they said in a joint statement issued after the meeting.

Pierre Mayaudon, ambassador, EU delegation to Bangladesh, led the EU diplomats. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam and acting foreign

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Scribbling poetry on cement bags

Bangladeshi worker's literary talent recognised as Singapore publisher brings out book on his poems

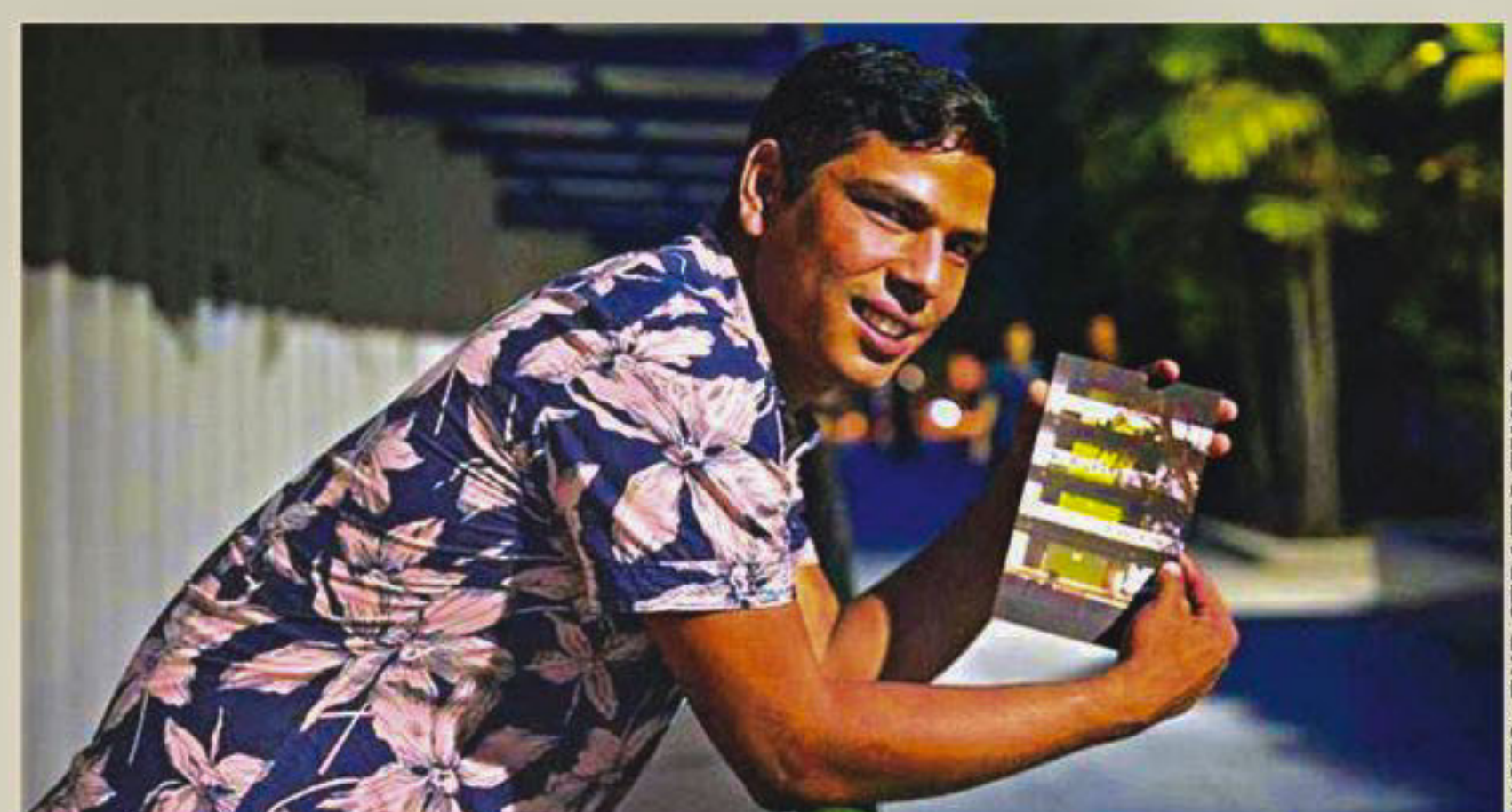
THE STRAITS TIMES, Singapore

Angry at a former boss for threatening to cut the workers' pay, Bangladeshi construction worker Md Mukul Hossine started scribbling poetry on the bags of cement he was carrying in 2014.

After a long day's work, he would stay up late -- sometimes till 3:00am -- working on his poetry.

His poems can now be read on paper instead of cement bags after the 25-year-old became the first foreign worker to have a poetry collection brought out by

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Through his book of poems, *Me Migrant*, Mukul hopes to convey the perspective of the foreign worker and also keep hold of what is dear to him.

PHOTO: THE STRAITS TIMES

Hasina won't join Mamata's oath-taking

No decision yet on who to represent

STAR REPORT

Dhaka has not yet made any decision about who will represent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's swearing-in ceremony on May 27.

Mamata invited Bangladesh's premier to attend her oath-taking programme, but Hasina would not be able to attend as she is scheduled to leave for Japan on May 26 on a five-day official tour to take part in the outreach meeting on the sidelines of the G7 Summit to be held in Ise-Shima on May 27.

"No decision is yet made about who will represent the prime minister since the invitation is given directly to her. We are expecting a decision from the Prime Minister's Office very soon," State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam told The Daily Star yesterday.

Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif echoed Alam.

Meanwhile, talking to The Daily Star yesterday, several highly placed sources in Dhaka said a senior minister of Hasina's cabinet might represent her.

Our correspondents in New Delhi and Kolkata report that Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Syed Muazzem Ali is expected to take part in the swearing-in of Mamata in Kolkata.

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Obama lifts arms ban on Vietnam

China welcomes the move, calling it 'a product of the Cold War'

AFP, Hanoi

US President Barack Obama yesterday scrapped a Cold War-era ban on weapons sales to Vietnam, as ties between the former foes grow closer thanks to trade and mutual fears of Chinese expansion in disputed seas.

The announcement, made at the start of Obama's three-day visit to Vietnam, could strengthen Hanoi's hand against Beijing, which has been increasingly assertive in its claims to contested areas of the South China Sea.

"Over the past century, our two nations have known cooperation and then conflict, painful separation, and a long reconciliation," Obama said at a press conference alongside Vietnam's President Tran Dai Quang.

The move, Obama added, was not prompted by China's regional manoeuvres but came as the countries entered a "new moment" taking them towards a "normalisation" of ties.

Quang welcomed the rollback of the ban, hailing the shared "common concerns and interests" that now bind the two countries.

The Obama administration has pitched this week's trip as an opportunity to push ties beyond the period of rapprochement, with Vietnam a vital plank in America's much vaunted pivot to the Asia-Pacific.

The visit is Obama's first to the country -- and the third by a sitting president since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Direct US involvement in

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US President Barack Obama shakes hands with Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang in Hanoi yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Fire at Thai school dorm kills 17 girls

AFP, Bangkok

Seventeen girls died after a fire swept through the dormitory of a school for children of hill tribes in northern Thailand, officials said yesterday, with a survivor describing fleeing as flames engulfed the building.

The fire started late Sunday night, meaning many of the children at the school run by a Christian charity were asleep as flames spread through the two-storey wooden building.

"The fire broke out at 11 pm on Sunday. Seventeen girls were killed, with five injured," Colonel Prayad Singin of the police in the town of Chiang Rai told AFP.

Two of the injured are in a serious condition, he said, but initial fears that two more girls were missing had been discounted after rescuers picked through the charred debris.

The school in Wiang Pa Pao district is home to girls aged between six and 13.

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Those in the dormitory on Sunday night were drawn mainly from the deprived local hill tribes, who live too far away to travel to school every day.

Television interviewed one girl aged around 10 who escaped with several friends.

"I woke up and saw a lot of smoke. It was dark. The fire had broken out downstairs so I called to my friends" she said, describing her flight.

But those who did not wake up in time died.

"There were 38 students inside the dormitory when the fire broke out. Some were not yet asleep so they escaped," deputy provincial governor Arkom Sukapan told AFP, confirming the death toll.

"But others were asleep and could not escape, resulting in the large number of casualties."

৬৫ মুনতাসীর মামুন

৬৫- তে পদার্পণ

মুনতাসীর মামুন

যে কলম আলোর দিশারী
এ কোনো জনোৎসব নয়
অন্ধকার তাড়ানিয়া আলোর কল্লোল

সোমপনিও যোগ দিন

প্রথম খণ্ড: পূর্ববঙ্গ, দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড: ঢাকা
তৃতীয় খণ্ড: মুক্তিযুদ্ধ, চতুর্থ খণ্ড: সাহিত্য, পঞ্চম খণ্ড: রাজনৈতিক প্রবন্ধ


প্রতি খণ্ড ১০০০ টাকা

আনন্দ উৎসব উপলক্ষে প্রতি খণ্ড বিক্রি করা হবে মাত্র ৫০০ টাকায়

এছাড়াও প্রকাশিত হবে মুনতাসীর মামুনের সমগ্র বই নিয়ে আলোচনা

মুনতাসীর মামুনের বই (সম্পাদিত)

ক্যামেরামো রেখে দিন। পরবর্তী খণ্ডগুলি কেনার সময় এটি দেখলে একই মূল্যে সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন।



কথাপ্রকাশ
প্রকাশনা স্বজনপাল পল্লী



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PRAYER TIMING MAY 24

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|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| Fazr | Zohr | Asr | Maghrib | Esha |
| 4:05 | 12:45 | 5:00 | 6:40 | 8:00 |

JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-45 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION