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Silversea ushers in tourism hope

The Monaco-based luxury cruise line arrives in Bangladesh within days with 100 tourists

SAJADUR RAHMAN

Silversea, a Monaco-based luxury cruise line, will arrive in Bangladesh in the middle of this month with around 100 tourists and the same number of crew members.

This will be the first ever trip by an internationally-reputed ocean cruise line to Bangladesh, which will put the country on the world's cruise map and help boost future tourism.

The tourists will visit Maheshkhali Island in Cox's Bazar and the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world. "This cruise tourism will have a positive impact on Bangladesh as a safe destination," said Toufiq Rahman, chief executive officer of Journey Plus, the local partner of Silversea.

Among the tourists are nationals from the US, European countries, Australia, Canada and New Zealand and the fare

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina flipping through the pages of a book after inaugurating the month-long "Amar Ekushey Boi Mela" and the three-day International Literature Conference on the Bangla Academy premises yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Tigers depart for a piece of history

STAR SPORT DESK

A 16-strong Bangladesh squad will depart today on an 11:30am flight to the Indian city of Hyderabad, where they will be part of history when they take the field for Bangladesh's first Test on Indian soil starting from February 9.

The tour will comprise a warm-up match against India A before the one-off Test at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium (RGICS), but it holds much greater significance than the short duration may suggest. Although they were Bangladesh's opponents in the country's inaugural Test at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in November 2000, India remain the only Test-playing nation never to host Bangladesh for a Test in the latter's 16-plus years as a Test nation.

The short nature of the tour also suggests that it may be an attempt on the part of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to

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Four 'JMB men' held in city

Two pistols, 21 bullets, bomb-making materials seized; Rab says arrestees are members of 'Sarwar-Tamim group'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday claimed to have arrested four members of the banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) at a flat in the capital's Jatrabari.

According to Rab, the four belong to "Sarwar-Tamim group". The arrestees include the "IT chief" of the group Ashfaq Azam alias Apel, 26, of Rangpur. The others are Shahinuzzaman alias Shaon, 30, of Jhenidah, Mahbubur Rahman alias Rumi, 23, of Bogra, and Ashraf Ali, 24, of Jamalpur.

They were trying to reorganise the group and had a plan to carry out subversive activities, Mufti Mahmud Khan, director of Rab's legal and media wing, told reporters at a press briefing in front of the building.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-10 arrested them along with two pistols, 21 bullets and bomb-making materials, including explosives, detonators and circuit breakers, he added.

Introducing them as construction workers, they rented the flat on the first floor of the five-storey building. The militants then set up a "factory" there to produce bombs, Rab claimed.

Around 3:30am, Rab took position around the building and conducted the drive breaking into the flat half an hour later.

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Acid attack on 2 cops

Police say attackers belong to militant outfit; one held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three suspected militants on a motorbike attacked four policemen with acid and sticks at a checkpoint in Old Dhaka early yesterday, leaving two of the law enforcers wounded.

Police captured one of the attackers -- Zubayer -- who admitted during primary interrogation that he is a member of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), Noor Alam, officer-in-charge of Bangladesh Police Station, told The Daily Star.

The 28-year-old militant suspect suffered bullet wounds in his legs as the policemen fired shots in retaliation. The other two attackers managed to escape, he said.

The police official said they seized the motorbike, a bag containing a bottle of acid, electronic devices and explosive materials weighing around 500 grams.

Around 12:30am, Assistant Sub-Inspector Nuruzzaman and Constable Rafiqul Alam, along with two other



Rafiqul Alam

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Paralysed patients see new hope



REUTERS, London

Scientists have developed a brain-computer interface that reads the brain's blood oxygen levels and enables communication by deciphering the thoughts of patients who are totally paralyzed and unable to talk.

In a trial of the system in four patients with complete locked-in syndrome - incapable of moving even their eyes to communicate - it helped them use their thought waves to respond yes or no to spoken questions.

People who are paralyzed except for up and down eye movements and blinking are classified as having locked-in syndrome. If all eye movements are lost, the condition is referred to as complete locked-in syndrome.

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'Blind measures'

UN chief slams US travel ban, says such measures ineffective in fighting terrorism

AFP, United Nations

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday sharpened his criticism of the US ban on travellers from seven Muslim nations, saying such "blind measures" are unlikely to be effective in fighting terrorism.

Guterres said countries seeking to strengthen control of their borders cannot do so "based on any form of discrimination related to religion, ethnicity or nationality."

Such discrimination "triggers widespread anxiety and anger that may facilitate the propaganda of the very terrorist organizations we all want to fight against," Guterres said in his first statement on the controversy.

On Friday, President Donald Trump signed an executive order suspending the arrival of all refugees for a minimum of 120 days, Syrian refugees indefinitely, and barring citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days.

The decision triggered protests and chaos at airports while UN human rights chief Zeid bin Ra'ad Zeid al-Husseini declared it illegal and "mean-spirited."

"Blind measures, not based on solid intelligence, tend to be ineffective as they risk being bypassed by what are today sophisticated global terrorist movements," said Guterres.

Guterres earlier said through his spokesman that he hoped the US measure was temporary, but did not condemn it, nor did he urge Trump to reverse course.

In the statement released Tuesday, Guterres did not explicitly mention the US ban, but there was no doubt his statement was a response to the controversial measure.

He said he was concerned by decisions around the world that are undermining international refugee protection.



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TRUMP PICKS GORSUCH FOR SC - PAGE 8

SSC exams begin today

BSS, Dhaka

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent examinations of 2017 under ten education boards across the country begin today.

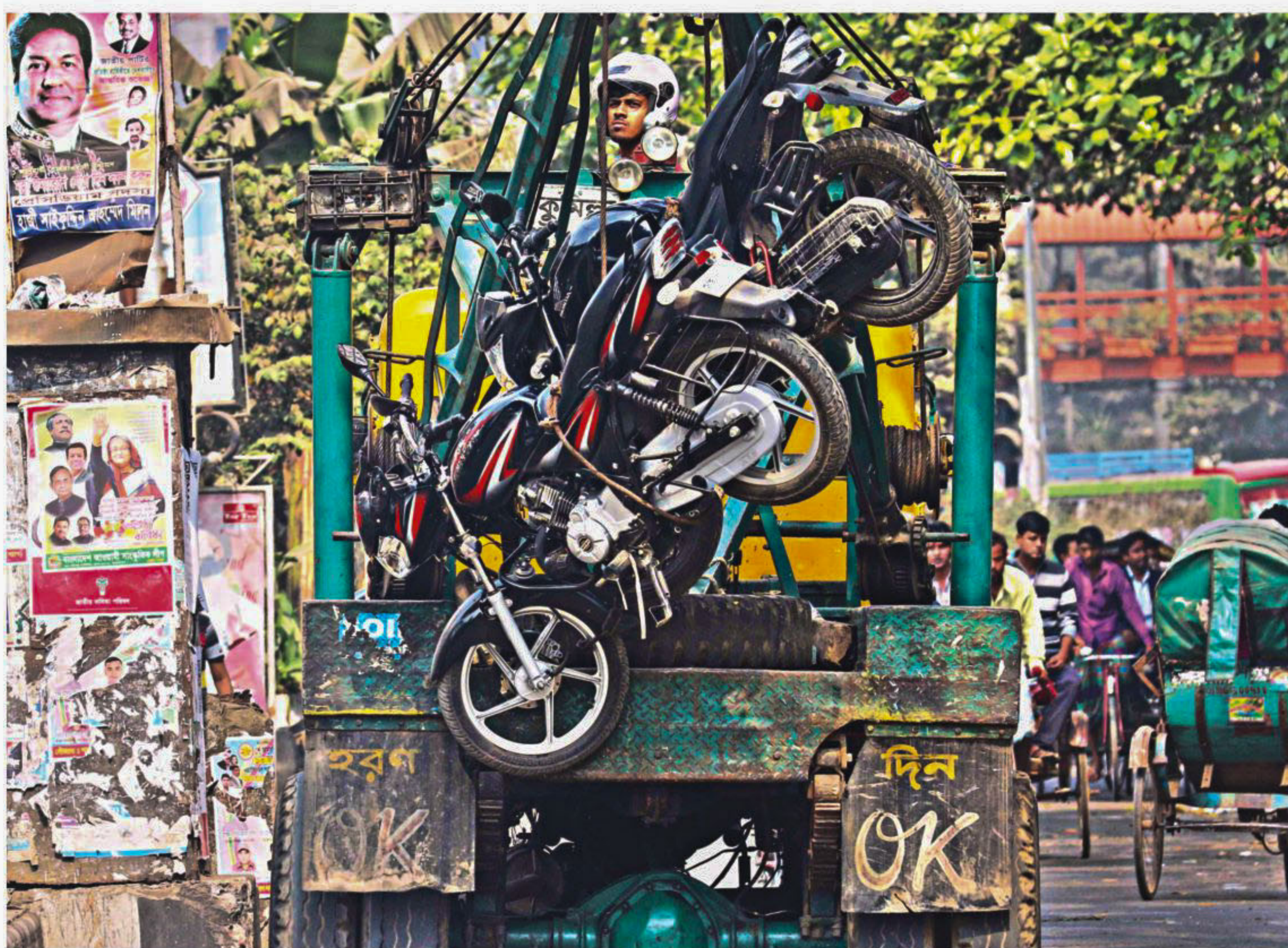
"Preparations have been taken to hold the examinations successfully," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told a press briefing at the ministry conference room on Tuesday.

This year, 17,86,613 students - 9,10,501 boys and 8,76,112 girls, will take

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SIBL
Social Islamic Bank Limited
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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 2
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:52 7:15
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:56 7:45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Two motorbikes are being taken away by police for illegal parking in the city's Shahbagh yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

It's temporary arrangement

Shahriar Alam on Rohingya camp relocation to Hatiya island

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam yesterday termed the government's plan to relocate Rohingyas to Thengar char in Noakhali's Hatiya Island a temporary arrangement until their repatriation to Myanmar.

Tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims, who fled to Bangladesh amid persecution by military in Myanmar's Rakhine State over the years, are now living in camps and slums mainly in Cox's Bazar.

"There was a proposal and the government has, in principle, agreed to gradually relocate the documented and undocumented Rohingyas to the char until they are repatriated to their motherland Myanmar. This will be a temporary arrangement on humanitarian ground," said the minister.

Asked about reports in the international media, he told a press briefing at his office that although registered refugee camps in Cox's Bazar has the capacity to accommodate 30,000 people, more than three lakh Rohingyas are living there in inhuman condition, casting a negative impact on environment and society.

That is why the government has in principle decided to relocate the Rohingyas to a suitable place, he added.

The Rohingyas would get healthcare, education and other facilities, he said, adding, "Currently, at least 10 to 12 Rohingyas live in a small room where hardly three people can stay."

The state minister, however, repeatedly reminded everyone that this is a very temporary arrangement. "We want Myanmar to take back all their nationals at the earliest possible time."

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