

## Hajj to cost Tk 3.19 lakh

Say private agencies  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

This year, Bangladeshis, who would perform hajj under the private management, will be paying Tk 15,000 more than what they paid last year. The private hajj agencies have increased the minimum cost for a pilgrim to Tk 3.19 lakh. Last year, it was Tk 3.05 lakh.

The hajj agents could fix different hajj packages based on their facilities, but they have to maintain the minimum cost, Ibrahim Bahar, president of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab), said at a press conference in a city hotel yesterday.

He said this year's hajj might be on September 1. The minimum package includes costs for airfare Tk 1.25 lakh, accommodation Tk 89,000, food Tk 34,400, Muallem fee and service charge Tk 35,000 and the rest for other charges, said Bahar.

"The pilgrims must deposit the total amount of the packages with the religious affairs ministry or the Haab-approved banks or the hajj agents by March 30," Bahar mentioned.

Citing a Supreme Court verdict that allowed the hajj pilgrims to choose any airline for hajj journey, Bahar said there would be no suffering of pilgrims, and syndication of air ticket would be stopped if the government implements the court verdict.

On Monday, the cabinet meeting approved two hajj packages. The first package costs Tk 3.81 lakh, up from Tk 3.60 lakh last year, and the second package Tk 3.19 lakh, up from previous year's Tk 3.05 lakh.

This year, 117,198 Bangladeshis will perform hajj under the private management and the number under the government management would be 10,000.



Some foreigners visit a stall on the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan portion of Amar Ekushey Granthamela as an international literary conference was held yesterday, the second day of the month-long book fair.

PHOTO: STAR

## Festivity on book fair ground

DU CORRESPONDENT

The usual scene of the Amar Ekushey book fair is back again, with visitors hopping from one stall to another, admirers circling around their favourite writers, and buyers carrying bagfuls of books of their choice.

Unlike the opening day, the second day was more colourful yesterday when most of the stalls finished stacking their shelves with new titles. Publishers expect a bigger crowd today, the first day of the weekend.

As most of the favourite books are available, young buyers were seemingly happy.

"I cannot stop my three children because they are very much excited to get their beloved books," said Nurun Nahar Lovely, a lawyer. "My daughters bought ten books and want more."

Young writers are hopeful their books will sell well. Sharing his feeling, young writer Oishwarjo Ayon said, "My first novel 'Kacher Manush' (the glass man) depicts the struggle of a teenager."

"I think young promising writers have to come forward to enrich the Bangla literature with their innovative mind."

The book was published by Rodela Prokashan.

Prominent historian Prof Muntasir Mamun, who was visiting with some other academics, said among a couple of new books in the fair "Brahma Reevaluation of 19th Century in the East Bengal" from Ananna Prokashani and "Harie Jaoa Desh" from Journeyman Prokashani were notable.

"I hope that the readers will be eager to know the history and heritage through reading the books," he said.

Commemorating the birth anniversary of veteran writer Prof Hasan Azizul Haque, Ittadi Prokashani brought his

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## Frauds cloning phone numbers to swindle

Nine arrested in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Do not get carried away if your boss or a close relative calls you over the phone and asks for money urgently saying s/he is in a grave danger.

Before sending the money, make sure the call is made by the very person as several fraud gangs, using cloned SIM cards, are taking away huge amounts of money in such way.

The fraudulence came to light as Rapid Action Battalion on Wednesday night arrested nine alleged members of such gang from the capital's Uttara.

The gang has already misappropriated Tk 50 lakh with spoofing (cloning) mobile numbers of at least 40 district commissioners (DC), thana nirbahi officers and other government officials, said Khandker Lutful Kabir, commanding officer of Rab-4, at a press briefing at Rab media centre in Karwan Bazar.

Cloning of SIM cards is a system through which fraudsters make calls using a person's number. Only law enforcers have the technology to track down such callers, Rab said.

Mofazzal Hossain Chan, chairman of Jhenaigati Sadar

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## Draft law criminalises negligence in treatment

Soon to be placed in cabinet, Nasim tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The draft of Medical Service Act 2016, which criminalises negligence in treatment and bars government physicians from private practice within the district of their work station, will be placed for approval in the cabinet soon, the health minister told parliament yesterday.

Mohammad Nasim also said the government, from time to time, would fix charges and fees of private clinics, hospitals, and diagnostic centres.

The law aims to ensure quality medical service, he said in reply to lawmakers' queries. "We've finalised the draft."

The proposed act says physicians serving government and statutory organs shall not be allowed to carry private practice during office and duty hours; they can do private

practice only on holidays and only outside the district of their office location.

The new act will replace the Medical Practice Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982.

According to health ministry sources, there are 8,700 registered private hospitals, clinics and diagnostics centres in the country, alongside an unknown number of unregistered ones.

Section 21 of the draft says any negligence in providing treatment will be a criminal offence, and the judicial process will be initiated after an investigation of the allegations.

The draft law also asks physicians not to use any degrees of qualifications that are not recognised by the approved authorities in their business cards and sign boards.

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## 28 female 'activists of Jamaat' held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday claimed to have detained 28 alleged female leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami in Mohammadpur area in the capital.

They were detained while holding a secret meeting on the second floor of a building on Nurjahan Road in the area, said Hafiz Al Faruq, assistant commissioner of Mohammadpur zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Police also recovered leaflets of Jamaat-e-Islami and money receipts from their possession, Hafiz further said.

The arrestees are inhabitants of Mohammadpur and nearby areas. They are now being interrogated, Hafiz added.

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## Savar road crash kills 4

Four other die in three districts

CITY DESK

Four people were killed and 20 others injured in a head-on collision between two buses on Dhaka-Tangail highway in Moragang area of Savar yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Shodesh, 40, -- driver of one of the buses -- Moriom, 30, of Comilla, Abbas Ali, 30, of Khulna, and, Mozibor Rahman.

The accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound bus collided head-on with a local bus.

Three died on the spot while another injured, Mozibor, died after he was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Other injured were rushed to different clinics in the capital, said police.

In Comilla, two people were killed when a bus ran into a roadside tree after the driver lost his control over the vehicle on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Chandina upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was Billal Hossain, 60, driver of the vehicle and Imran Hossain, 22, bus helper. They hailed from Chandpur. Ten people were injured in the accident.

In Manikganj, an elderly man was killed as a truck ran him over while he was crossing

the road near Golora bus stand in Satura upazila yesterday.

The deceased Shahadat Hossain, 60, was a night guard of Muktiyoddha Market in the area, said police. In another incident in the district, five including three SSC examinees were injured as a three-wheeler carrying them collided head-on with a truck at Singair bus stand in Singair upazila yesterday.

The SSC examinees -- Jesmin, Tania and Maria -- were going to Singair Pilot Girls' High School centre to attend their examination, said Imam Hossain, officer-in-charge of Singair Police Station.

Seriously injured Jesmin was taken to Ibne Sina Hospital while Tania and Maria attended their examination with special arrangement after taking primary treatment at a local health complex.

Two other injured are auto-driver Rasel and Jesmin's husband Shahed.

In Bogra, a man was killed and three others were injured in a head-on collision between two trucks on Bogra-Natore road in Ushubpur area of Nandigram upazila yesterday.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately.

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