

# Up to false CRISIS

Passengers suffer as operators take buses off Dhaka streets on second day of drive for just fare

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Commuters continued to suffer yesterday on the second day of BRTA's drive against "seating", "gate-lock", "nonstop" and other so-called special bus services as many owners kept their buses off the streets to artificially create a transport crisis in the capital.

Failing to get transport, many walked to their destination while some had to spend extra money for hiring CNG-run auto-rickshaws.

"They [bus operators] haven't plied their buses to artificially create a transport crisis, thinking that they would be able to take benefits from the crisis and continue charging passengers extra later on," said a member of Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Malik Samity, wishing not to be named.

Recently, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and the transport owners announced that no public transport would operate in the city in the name of "special" services from Sunday.

The same day, the BRTA launched the drive against the unauthorised services.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



Commuters cram into a bus on the second day of the drive on buses that offer so-called "seating service". A large number of buses went off the city roads, causing immense sufferings to passengers. In these photos taken in Farmgate and Karwan Bazar areas yesterday, commuters, including women, jostle to board buses, top right and middle; and many wait for transport, bottom right.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, PRABIR DAS

## HAJJ REGISTRATION Govt extends deadline till April 23

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended the deadline for registration for this year's hajj until 5:00pm of April 23 amid demands by the private hajj agencies.

Religious Affairs Minister Motiur Rahman announced the decision after meeting leaders of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab) at his residence in the afternoon.

To press home the demand for an extension, Haab suspended registering pilgrims in the morning. Its leaders said each registration took longer due to slow response of the server.

Coming out of the meeting with the minister, Haab President Ibrahim Bahar told The Daily Star that they are satisfied with the government decision. Registration for hajj resumed soon afterwards.

The religious affairs ministry published a gazette last month setting the deadline for registration of pilgrims on April 17.

This year, a total of 1,17,758 people would perform hajj through private agencies.

## Fugitive transfers his properties!

Surprised war crimes investigators press for action against Maheshkhali sub-registrar

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Moulavi Zakaria Sikdar has been on the run since a war crimes tribunal issued an arrest warrant against him around two years ago.

But during that period, he not only evaded arrest but also transferred properties to his relatives through Heba Dalil (verbal donation) "with the help" of a sub-registrar's office and taking advantage of a special provision of laws.

With police's failure to arrest the 78-year-old of Cox's Bazar, Zakaria handed over his property worth Tk 38 lakh to his daughters in November last year, and the sub-registrar of Moheshkhali upazila had "helped" him transfer the land and dodge arrest, according to documents obtained by The Daily Star.

After the Investigation Agency of the International Crimes Tribunal came to know about the development, it wrote to the inspector general of registration on March 15 for taking necessary action, Abdul Hannan Khan, coordinator of the agency, told this newspaper.

Signed by Hannan Khan, copies of the letter were sent to the secretaries of home and law ministries

and the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police of Cox's Bazar.

The agency in its letter said Zakaria of Gorakghata Sikderpara of Moheshkhali used the proceeds from the property ownership handover to influence the prosecution witnesses of the case. It also submitted other documents related to the land registration.

On May 21, 2015, Tribunal-2 issued arrest warrants against 16 war crimes accused of Moheshkhali, including Zakaria. Police arrested three of them but could not arrest Zakaria.

On October 8, 2015, the investigation agency completed its probe into the case and found the involvement of Zakaria and 18 others in the killing of at least 94 people and other offences during the Liberation War. The prosecution pressed 12 charges against them on March 15 last year.

Police at least twice filed reports to the tribunal showing him absconding. The last report was lodged on February 15 this year, tribunal sources said.

But the documents obtained by this paper show

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

## Secret of mummy wearing 'Adidas boots' revealed



GoGo MONGOLIA, Ulaanbaatar

The restoration reveals that the boots which went viral were felt lined, over-the-knee fashion boots with metal ornament, and more than three patterns.

The finds of Ulzuur Gylan, also known as mummy wearing "Adidas boots" was found in Hovd province, the Western parts of Mongolia a year ago.

A joint research team of Hovd University and Hovd museum excavated the findings in April 2016.

Cultural Heritage Center under Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports made restoration to the finds for a year and currently, the restoration process has completed.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

## 3 grenades, 500 bullets found in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered three grenades and around 500 bullets at a land-filling site in Trimohoni area of Badda in the capital.

Labourers at the site found the bullets of three-knot-three rifles and unexploded bombs while filling land at the site, Abdul Jalil, officer-in-charge of Badda Police Station, told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

**PRAYER TIMING APRIL 18**  
 Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
 AZAN 4-35 12-45 4-45 6-24 7-45  
 JAMAAT 5-10 1-15 5-00 6-28 8-15  
 SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## PM flies to Bhutan today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave for Bhutan today on a three-day visit when the two countries are expected to make moves towards establishing hydroelectricity generation, waterways connectivity and sub-regional cooperation.

Invited by Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, Hasina is likely to sign six agreements and make a decision on 1,125-megawatt Dorjilung Hydropower Project in Lhuentse.

The hydropower project is trilateral cooperation between Bhutan, Bangladesh and India, in which Bangladesh will invest \$1 billion to import electricity.

Among other deals, Dhaka will allow Bhutan to use its inland river routes to transport goods imported through Chittagong and Mongla seaports.

During the visit, Hasina

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



AJM Nasir Uddin, mayor of Chittagong City Corporation and general secretary of city unit of the Awami League, left, and ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, former mayor and president of the unit, vow to work together regardless of their differences at a programme in the port city on the occasion of the Mujibnagar Day yesterday. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: STAR

## US era of patience with N Korea over Warns VP Pence, declares 'all options are on the table' to halt Pyongyang's missile programmes

AFP, Seoul

US Vice President Mike Pence yesterday warned North Korea not to test Donald Trump's resolve, declaring that "all options are on the table" in curbing its missile and nuclear weapons programmes.

Defying international pressure, the North Sunday test-fired another missile as fears grow that it may be preparing for its sixth atomic weapons test.

"We hope to achieve this objective (the North's denuclearisation) through peaceful means but all options are on the table," Pence told a press conference in the South Korean capital after his trip to the tense border with the North.

"Just in the past two weeks, the world witnessed the strength and resolve of our new president in actions taken in Syria and Afghanistan.

"North Korea would do well not to test his resolve, or the strength of the armed forces of the United States in this region," Pence said at the press conference with South Korea's Acting President Hwang Kyo-Ahn.

Tensions between Pyongyang and Washington have soared in recent weeks, as a series of North Korean missile tests have prompted ever-more bellicose warnings from Trump's administration.

The new and inexperienced US president has indicated he will not allow North Korea to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the western United States.

Pence declared that the era of US "strategic patience" in dealing with the North was over, after more than two decades.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5