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POLICE-BCL CLASH IN CTG

15 injured, 3 of them bullet-hit, as BCL men obstruct construction of swimming pool

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TAKING LEGACY FORWARD

In conversation with folk musician and dotara player Nirmal Kumar Das

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It's a plot

Owners pull out around 40pc buses off Dhaka streets, 'aim' to keep charging unfair fare amid government drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three days have passed, and there is no sign of any respite. With the city's public transport system going haywire since Sunday, commuters have been left in the lurch as the government has yet to come up with a solution.

Amid the drive against so-called "special services" that overcharge passengers and yet operate in a chaotic manner, the capital saw many of its rickety fleet of buses and minibuses going off the roads over the last three days.

While Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) dumped some buses that had no valid papers, transport owners withdrew many buses from the streets, protesting the drive.

As of January, the city had some 6,000 buses run by private operators. In addition, the state-run BRTC operates about 100 buses.

Following the drive, private operators took some 25 to 30 percent of their buses off the roads, said Iqbal Ahmed, a traffic inspector (Tejgaon) of Dhaka

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Commuters attempting to board a moving bus in the capital's Sonargaon intersection around 5:00pm yesterday. People have been hit by shortage of transport for the last three days as many "seating", "gate-lock", "non-stop" and other so-called special bus service operators kept their vehicles off the streets to avoid action by BRTA mobile courts. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Troubles within

Men with multiple identities in govt stand in the way of getting transport sector in order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A solution to the chaos in the transport sector seems impossible as the people involved are all powerful.

They are ministers of the government, owners of transport companies and vehicles, and leaders of transport owners and workers organisations. They always protect their own interest rather than the people's interest.

They often violate existing laws and government directives. They even dare to disregard court verdicts and keep people hostage by enforcing strikes.

And now these people are standing against the government when it is about to enact a new law "Road Transport Act-2017".

They have announced protest programmes to press for their demand for withdrawing some clauses of the law which the cabinet had approved.

"With the government's protection, they [transport owners and workers] have gradually become powerful. They think they are all in and that's why they are not respectful of the court's verdict, and disobey government directives," said Mozammel Haque Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Passengers' Welfare Association.

The ongoing suffering of city dwellers is the manifestation of the power of these people.

As the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and the transport owners announced that no public transport would operate in Dhaka in the name of "special service" or "seating service" from Sunday, many owners took their buses off the streets to create a crisis.

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TOP!
QUOTE

"Those in the transport sector are not ordinary people. They are very influential... When they are asked to join a meeting, they don't show up."

ROAD TRANSPORT AND BRIDGES MINISTER
OBAIDUL QUADER
AT A PROGRAMME AT HIS MINISTRY

Arrest order for mayor-elect

Graft case of 2008 brings trouble for BNP man in 2017

STAR REPORT

Days before Monirul Hoque Shakoo would take oath as the mayor of Comilla City Corporation for a second consecutive term, ground has been made for his suspension.

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted the charge sheet in a corruption case filed against him in 2008. It also issued an arrest warrant for the BNP leader.

The acceptance of the charge sheet has created a scope for the government to suspend Shakoo, who won the Comilla mayor polls on March 30.

According to Section 12 and 13 of the Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009, a mayor or a councillor, if convicted or charge sheeted in criminal cases, can be suspended. The act also says any elected representative can be removed from office for skipping three consecutive general meetings without any valid reason.

However, it seems that the Local Government Division under the LGRD ministry has all along been strict only while enforcing the act in cases involving elected



Monirul Hoque

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LED BY THE HEART

Syria photographer takes action instead of pictures, picks up injured boy



PHOTO: CNN

CNN ONLINE

Every so often, a photograph cuts through the grim cacophony of the war in Syria and pierces viewers' hearts.

It happened in 2015 with an

image of the lifeless body of Alan Kurdi, face down on a beach in Turkey, who drowned in the Mediterranean fleeing the war.

It happened last year when a photographer captured little Omran Daqneesh sitting in an

ambulance, his body bloodied and dusty after his home was bombed in Aleppo.

And it happened again last weekend, when a bomb hit a convoy of buses carrying evacuees

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UK PM seeks early election on June 8

AFP, London

Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday called for a snap general election on June 8, in a surprise announcement as Britain prepares for delicate negotiations on leaving the European Union.

"We need a general election and we need one now. We have at this moment a one-off chance to get this done... before the detailed talks begin," said May in a policy U-turn that caught everyone off-guard.

Dhaka, Thimphu for boosting regional connectivity

5 deals signed; PM Hasina holds talks with Bhutanese counterpart

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh and Bhutan yesterday stressed the need for boosting regional connectivity and expediting the process of implementing the BBIN initiative to bring prosperity in the region.

The issues were discussed at the bilateral meeting between Bangladesh and Bhutan at Gyalong Tshogkhong in Thimphu.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led the Bangladesh delegation while her Bhutanese counterpart Dasho Tshering Tobgay led his country at the meeting, reports UNB.

Our diplomatic correspondent adds: Bangladesh and Bhutan yesterday inked five deals on avoidance of double taxation, agriculture, standardisation of goods, cultural cooperation and waterways connectivity.

Diplomatic sources said Dhaka allowed transit to Bhutan to use its waterways for transportation of goods imported through Chittagong and Mongla seaports.

The deals were signed at the Royal Banquet Hall of Gyalong Tshogkhong after the official talks between the two countries. The two premiers witnessed the signing of the deals.

Foreign Secretary M Shahidul Haque and PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

Termed the BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal) a major corridor for establishing connectivity in the region, Hasina urged the Bhutanese PM to expedite the process for ratifying the BBIN motor vehicles agreement addressing its environmental concerns.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck pose for a photograph at the Royal Palace in Thimphu yesterday. Related photo on page 5.

PHOTO: PID

FACTIONAL CLASH 2 AL men hacked to death in Comilla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Awami League activists were killed and at least 10 others injured in a clash between two groups of ruling party men in Comilla's Muradnagar upazila last night.

Faruk, 34, and Saidul, 24, were hacked to death around 10:30pm, said Shah Abid Hossain, superintendent of Comilla police.

SM Badiuzzaman, officer-in-charge of Muradnagar Police Station, said the dead were AL activists.

Locals and police said the two AL groups clashed in Rahimpur village over establishing supremacy.

The SP said they picked up Anis, Khokon and Kamrul, members of one of the rival groups. The law and order in the area was under control, he added.

The injured were undergoing treatment at Muradnagar Upazila Health Complex.

No case was filed in this connection till filing of this report at 2:00am today.