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## Truckers' strike hits businesses

*Strike called off after over three-hour meeting with home boss; goods stuck at ports as workers obstruct transports*

STAR REPORT

Truckers and covered-van drivers called off their strike last night after halting transport of goods across the country for about 18 hours, which hit businesses hard.

Rustam Ali, convener of Bangladesh Truck, Covered-van Goods Transport Owners-Workers Unity Council, made the announcement around 1:00am today following a meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan at his Dhanmondi residence in the capital.

"They [the government] met some of our demands and assured us of meeting some others. They said they would review the new road transport act," he told The Daily Star.

Following the over three-hour meeting, Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary Nazrul Islam told reporters, "We have not made any specific commitment about bringing amendments to the law, but we assured them of reviewing it."

The truckers and covered-van drivers

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Scores of people walking on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in the capital's Matuail area yesterday amid a transport strike. *Below*, protesters smeared the face and arm of a pickup driver with used lubricant; a bus and car being intercepted at City Gate in Chattogram.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON/RAJIB RATHAN

## People left in the lurch

*Many find no vehicles; some pay 3 times as much to travel*

STAR REPORT

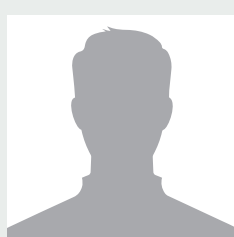
Commuters in 20 districts across the country suffered for the third day yesterday due to the transport strike, called to protest the enforcement of the much talked-about Road Transport Act, 2018.

Hundreds of passengers gathered at different bus terminals since morning only to find no bus was operating.

Failing to get buses, many were seen desperately looking for alternative transport like three-wheelers, motorised van, or easy bikes, to reach their destinations. Many had to walk long distances.

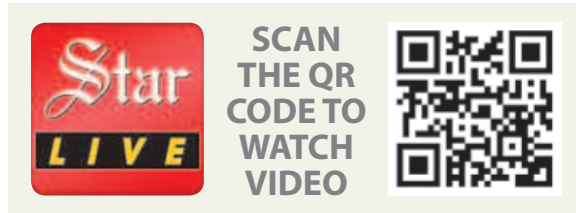
Drivers of such alternative transport took this

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



"I paid Tk 100 to travel from Signboard area to Jatrabari on a rickshaw-van, whereas the bus fare is Tk 5-10."

ALOK SAHA, AN INSURANCE COMPANY EMPLOYEE.



## ILLEGAL WEALTH ACC to go after more suspects

*Hints the graft watchdog boss*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid the ongoing crackdown on those involved in graft, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Iqbal Mahmood yesterday hinted at taking action against more people who earned money through illegal means.

"We've already made a list of 159 who have amassed wealth illegally ... the list is getting longer as the commission is receiving complaints every day," he told reporters at his office in the ACC's headquarters in the capital's Segunbagicha.

The commission will not show any mercy to any corrupt in line with its "zero tolerance policy" against corruption, he said.

The ACC has already sent a list of 105 people to the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) and requested their banking information, he added.

On September 30, the anti-graft body began inquiries into illegal wealth amassed by many following drives by Rab against those involved in illegal gambling businesses and extortion.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## Negligence of 3 led to B'baria train accident

*Says railways minister citing probe reports*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Negligence of the driver, his assistant and the guard of Turna Nishita Express was responsible for the train accident in Brahmanbaria, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan said yesterday.

"The accident occurred as the train driver, his assistant and guard of Turna Nishita Express did not operate the train following the signals properly," he said at a press briefing at the capital's Rail Bhavan.

The briefing was organised to inform the media about the findings of the probe committees, formed after the November 12 accident that left 17 passengers dead and many others injured.

For the railway ministry, briefing the media on probe findings is a rare incident.

The minister said the three staffers have been suspended and further punitive actions would be taken after completing the necessary administrative process.

The highest departmental punishment for such a "major offence" is termination from job.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

## Jacking up rice prices won't be tolerated

*Warns food minister saying rice stock sufficient; government starts procurement of Aman paddy*

STAR REPORT

The government yesterday sounded a note of warning against unscrupulous traders and said rice price manipulation would not be tolerated as the country had no shortage of the staple.

"It will not be acceptable at any cost if anyone tries to manipulate rice prices ... there is no reason to hike the price illegally," Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder told reporters after a meeting with rice mill owners and traders at the Secretariat.

Meanwhile, the food office yesterday started procuring Aman paddy from farmers in some areas where the harvest began.

The government has decided to procure 6 lakh tonnes of paddy this Aman season, the highest for the season in the last 24 years, according to ministry data.

The minister said the paddy price did not increase, so there was no logic in increasing prices of rice, reports BSS.

"Farmers would rather have benefited had the paddy price been higher, but unfortunately it did not happen," he said.

He also said a control room had already been opened under the food ministry and vigilance teams were monitoring the rice market at the field level.

Asked, Majumder said the ongoing nation-wide transport strike would not impact rice prices for the next 8-10 days as each market across the country has sufficient rice stock.



SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

## Fire destroys shops in city market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire burnt down over a dozen shops in New Rajdhahi Supermarket in the capital's Tikatuli yesterday.

The fire began at a mattress store on the first floor of the two-storey market around 5:15pm, officials said.

Twenty-five fire engines were deployed to douse the fire.

Director General of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Brig Gen Sajjad Hossain said 14-15 shops were burnt down and 2-3 other shops were partially damaged. The fire was extinguished around 6:45pm.

However, several shop-owners and witnesses claimed that around 50-60 shops on the first floor had been gutted.

A committee will be formed to find the cause of the fire and how much damage had been done, the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## Onion flown in from Karachi

*Biman waives cargo handling charges for onion import*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday waived its cargo handling charges for onion imports, hours before the first consignment of Pakistani onions landed at Dhaka airport.

Eighty-two tonnes of onion were flown in from Karachi by an Azerbaijani air freighter at 7:15pm, Group Captain Mehboob Khan, director at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, told The Daily Star.

Another consignment of the essential cooking ingredient from Egypt was expected to arrive at the airport around 1:00am today.

These onions will be sold in the open market through the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

Meanwhile, the civil aviation and tourism ministry at a meeting decided to waive the cargo handling charges for any airlines that will import onion.

Chaired by Secretary M Mohibul Haque, the meeting was held at the ministry.

Talking to The Daily Star, Biman Managing Director Mokabbir Hossain said, "We made the decision [to waive the charges] in public interest."

Biman charges Tk 18 per kg for any perishable goods, imported by any airlines, for its cargo handling services, he mentioned.

The waiver of charges for onion imports will help keep its prices stable, said a press release of the civil aviation ministry.

The ministry will provide all sorts of support to onion importers in this regard, it added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## ROHINGYA CRISIS Reconciliation necessary to resolve it

*Dhaka tells UNSC*

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has said it believes reconciliation can be a critical enabler for resolving the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, the brunt of which the country is bearing.

Referring to various successful models of reconciliation, Bangladesh urged Myanmar to adopt clearly defined reconciliation strategies through a whole-of-society approach and by ensuring transparency and objectivity in the reconciliation process.

Masud Bin Momen, ambassador and permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN, raised the issues while addressing a Security Council Open Debate on "The Role of Reconciliation in Maintaining International Peace

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Major polluters far off climate targets

*Says UN; new analysis shows climate impacts to cost world \$7.9 trillion by 2050*

AGENCIES

The world's major fossil fuel producers are set to bust global environmental goals with excessive coal, oil and gas extraction in the next decade, the United Nations and research groups said yesterday.

The 10 nations in focus, including superpowers China and the United States, plan to produce fuels by 2030 at levels between 50-120% over Paris Agreement targets, the study showed.

Under that 2015 global pact, nations committed to a long-term goal of limiting the average temperature increase to within 1.5-2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

But by 2030, the 10 countries' planned production would lead to 39 gigatonnes (Gt) of carbon dioxide emissions, 53% higher than what is needed to reduce temperature rises to 2C and 21 Gt, or 120%, more than is needed for 1.5C, the report said.

Other countries analysed included Russia, India, Australia, Indonesia, Canada, Germany, Norway and Britain.

"The world's energy supply remains dominated by coal, oil and gas, driving emission levels that are inconsistent with climate goals," said United Nations Environment

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

কি ছাত? Apex Rewards

এবার অপেক্ষা -এ শপিং করে জিতে নিতে পারেন

বসন্ত ১০ লক্ষ টাকা

এছাড়াও ৫ লক্ষ, ৩ লক্ষ, ১ লক্ষ, ৫০ হাজার, ২০ হাজার টাকা ও স্মার্ট ফোন সহ আরও নানা বিশিষ্ট উপহার

১০ লক্ষ, ৫০ লক্ষ, ১০ লক্ষ, ৫০ লক্ষ, ১০ লক্ষ

\* কোন একক বিজ্ঞপ্তি দেয়ার একমুহুরে এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি দেয়া-করা হবে শুধু ক্রেতার ক্ষেত্রে ২০০০/- টাকা ডিসকাউন্ট বা একক বিজ্ঞপ্তি দেয়ার ক্ষেত্রে ডিসকাউন্ট করা হবে। অন্যভাবে ডিসকাউন্ট দেয়া হবে না।

\* বিজ্ঞপ্তি দেয়ার ক্ষেত্রে ২০০০/- টাকা ডিসকাউন্ট দেয়া হবে।