



Owners want to run buses at full capacity

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bus owners now want to operate their vehicles at full capacity despite the fact that the numbers of new infections and deaths from Covid-19 are still on the rise in the country.

They claim that the coronavirus situation is getting back to normal gradually.

In a letter sent to the road transport and bridges ministry on Sunday, Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association (BRTOA) said they will start charging passengers previous fares if they are allowed to run buses at full capacity.

BRTOA Secretary General Khandaker Enayet Ullah said, "All other modes of transport are carrying passengers at full capacity as the coronavirus situation is returning to normal gradually. We have written to the ministry to allow us to operate buses at full capacity."

If allowed, bus operators would start charging passengers previous fares, he told The Daily Star.

The demand comes at a time when allegations of charging extra fares have been made.

Under such a situation, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) will sit in a meeting with the transport sector stakeholders at its Banani office in the capital today to discuss enforcement of health safety rules in public transport services.

But health experts expressed a fear that allowing "full-scale" movement of public transport would increase the transmission of the deadly virus.

Infectious disease specialist Prof Dr Ridwanur Rahman said although the number of new Covid-19 cases is not increasing now in red zones like Dhaka and Narayanganj,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



Despite repeated warnings about the risk of landslides, hill-cutting and living on foothills continue unabated. Those living there have even gone on to form a committee to resist eviction drives. The photo was taken at Motijharna in Lalkhan Bazaar of Chattogram city yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Government distorting history to stay in power

Says Fakhru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday alleged that the government has chosen the path of "nasty politics to distort history" in order to cling to power.

"The incumbent government is doing dirty politics. It is making up false stories about Ziaur Rahman and his contributions to the Liberation War," said the party's General Secretary Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

Addressing a virtual press conference from his residence, Fakhru alleged that the government has destroyed the spirit of the Liberation War and established fascism in the country.

"The ruling party is distorting history...", he alleged.

Fakhru said that followers of Zia and Khaleida Zia rejected the state sponsored conspiracy and vowed to resist through systematic politics.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Flood in new areas in south

STAR REPORT

New areas in the southern region have been inundated, while the flood situation remains unchanged in the northern part of the country and some other districts.

Most of the major rivers in the southern region were overflowing and many of them crossed the danger level.

The forecast is not good.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) in its bulletin yesterday said, "Heavy to very heavy rainfall is forecasted for south-eastern hilly region and south-central coastal region in next 24 to 48 hours."

"Water levels of rivers in these regions may rise rapidly during the period," said the bulletin released at 9:00am yesterday.

"There could be a short flooding in some places of Chattogram, Bandarban, and Cox's Bazar in next 24 to 48 hours, and there is a possibility of landslide in vulnerable areas," the bulletin added.

At least six rivers were flowing above the danger level yesterday, according to the FFWC bulletin.

Meanwhile, over 49.60 lakh people of 160 upazilas in 33 districts are still being affected by the flood, according to the National Disaster Response Coordination Centre latest report released on Monday.

Our district correspondents report on the flood situation.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

New plan to avert Chinese veto

August 19, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU KEEPING WELL

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been keeping well for the last few days after undergoing gallbladder surgery in London on July 30, a health bulletin issued by his personal physician Dr Nurul Islam says today. He is, however, still weak and has to restrict his activities, the bulletin adds.

YUGOSLAVIA'S PROPOSAL TO AVERT CHINESE VETO

To avert the Chinese attempt to bar Bangladesh from membership of the United Nations, Yugoslavia has sent a proposal to Kurt Waldheim, the UN Secretary General, requesting him to include the issue of new countries' entry into the UN in the agenda of the upcoming session of General Assembly.

\$134m SDR for Bangladesh in IMF

The quota of Bangladesh in the International Monetary Fund is equivalent to 134 million US dollars Special Drawing Rights (SDR). Bangladesh became a member of the IMF, World Bank and IDA on August 17, 1972. Following Bangladesh becoming a member of these financial organisations, President of World Bank Robert McNamara congratulated the prime minister of Bangladesh.

In his message to Bangabandhu, McNamara said, "I am very delighted to welcome Bangladesh as the newest member of the World Bank and IDA and look forward to a fruitful relationship in the development of Bangladesh."

FOUNDATION FOR FREEDOM FIGHTERS



SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Why Harun still an MP?

HC question legality of BNP leader's JS membership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of Harun Ur Rashid's parliament membership as the BNP leader has been convicted and sentenced to five years' imprisonment in a corruption case.

The court issued a rule asking the respondents to explain in four weeks why the parliamentary seat of BNP lawmaker Harun, who was elected from Chapainawabganj-3 constituency, should not be declared vacant and why his activities as a lawmaker should not be declared illegal.

The law secretary, cabinet secretary, parliament secretary, the Election Commission and its secretary, the Anti-Corruption Commission, deputy commissioner of Chapainawabganj, and lawmaker Harun have been

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

'Lost' elephant shrew found in Africa



AFP, Paris

For half a century scientists feared that the Somali elephant shrew had vanished from the face of the Earth. No one had seen so much as a whisker.

But the tiny mammal with its probing trunk-like nose was quietly thriving in the arid, rocky landscape of the Horn of Africa, researchers said yesterday.

The elusive, insect-eating creature is neither an elephant nor a shrew.

It is a sengi -- a distant relation to aardvarks, elephants and manatees -- the size of a mouse,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Woman gang-raped in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A mother of three was confined to a house for three days and gang-raped in a village in Sirajganj's Ullapara, police said yesterday.

The housewife, 35, managed to escape and file a case with the local police station on Sunday. Later, the law enforcers arrested the key accused.

In the case, the victim, who was undergoing treatment at Sirajganj General Hospital, said one

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 19

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:25 12:45 4:45 6:38 8:00
JAMAAT 5:00 1:15 5:00 6:41 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Trial against Justice Sinha begins

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The trial of the money laundering case filed against former chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha and 10 others started at a Dhaka court yesterday with deposition of the complainant.

Four accused in the case -- Farmers Bank Ltd's former first vice-president Swapan Kumar Roy, the bank's vice-president M Lutful Haque, M Shahjahan and Niranjan Chandra Saha -- were granted bail after they surrendered before the court.

Former chief justice SK Sinha and three other accused in the case were on the run.

On August 13, Judge Shaikh Nazmul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka framed charges against SK Sinha and 10 others.

The same court recorded statement of complainant Syed Iqbal Hossain for an hour. Later, defence lawyers cross-examined the witness. The judge then fixed August

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



People jumping over the divider on Dhaka-Mawa expressway to get to the other side. Since the expressway is a direct route from Jurain to Mawa with no room for stoppages, many people opt to disembark right in the middle of the expressway, posing risks to their lives and the lives of others. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Pandemic now driven by younger adults

Warns WHO; urges nations to join global shared vaccine bid

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday it was concerned that the novel coronavirus spread was being driven by people in their 20s, 30s and 40s, many of whom were unaware they were infected, posing a danger to vulnerable groups.

WHO officials said this month the proportion of younger people among those infected had risen globally, putting at risk vulnerable sectors of the population worldwide, including the elderly and sick people in densely populated areas with weak health services.

"The epidemic is changing," WHO Western Pacific regional director, Takeshi Kasai, told a virtual briefing. "People in their 20s, 30s and 40s are increasingly driving the spread. Many are unaware they are infected."

"This increases the risk of spillovers to the more vulnerable," he added.

A surge in new cases has prompted some countries to re-impose curbs as companies race to find a vaccine for a virus that has battered economies, killed more than 774,000 people and infected nearly 22 million, according to a Reuters tally.

Countries putting their own interests ahead of others in trying to ensure supplies of a possible vaccine are making the pandemic worse, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in Geneva yesterday.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2