

EID JOURNEY

Advance bus ticket sale begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Private bus operators yesterday started selling tickets to those who would go to their hometowns for the Eid.

In the capital's Gabtoli, Kallyanpur and Shyamoli, the companies started selling tickets for buses from April 26-May 1.

The ticket counters were relatively empty in the morning, but crowds started to form as the day progressed, said Romesh Chandra Ghosh, chairman of Bangladesh Bus Truck Owners Association.

As government offices will be closed on April 28 and garment factories on April 30, the demands for tickets on those days are particularly high, he added.

Eid is expected to be on May 2 or 3.

About the allegations that some operators were overcharging for the tickets, he said bus operators offer discounts at regular times, but now they are charging the government-fixed rate.

"Some passengers are terming it overcharging," he added.

"A Panchagarh-bound bus usually takes less fare from passengers who get down before the final stoppage," he said. "However, during Eid, they charge the full fare from all passengers regardless of where the passenger gets down as the bus has to return to Dhaka empty," he said.

Bangladesh Railway earlier announced that it would start selling advance tickets from April 23.



People buying tickets from the counter of a private inter-city bus operator in the capital's Kallyanpur around 7:00am yesterday. Bus operators started ticket sales ahead of the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, during which there is a rush of people heading back to their ancestral homes from the capital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

No foreign plot to oust Imran Says Pak military; US 'agrees'

AGENCIES

Pakistan's powerful military has dismissed ousted prime minister Imran Khan's accusation that the United States had conspired to topple him in a parliamentary vote of confidence.

Khan, 69, who led the nuclear-armed South Asian country of 220 million people for 3-1/2 years, accused Washington of backing his ouster because he had visited Moscow against US advice.

Washington denies the charge. US State Department yesterday said the United States agreed with the statement given Pakistan's powerful military.

"Pakistan's military spokesperson said they had no evidence to suggest that the United States had threatened or was involved in the conspiracy to seek the ouster of Imran Khan's government. What are your comments on it?" the journalist had asked US State Department spokesman Ned Price.

"We would agree with it," Price said.

Khan met Russian President Vladimir Putin on Feb 24, the day Russian forces invaded neighbouring Ukraine.

Khan initially blocked the no-confidence move, saying a forum of civil and military leaders, the National Security Committee (NSC), had endorsed the alleged conspiracy.

The military's spokesman, Major General Babar Iftikhar, denied this on Thursday.

"You can see clearly whether there's any word of conspiracy in that statement. I don't think so," he told a news conference in reference to an NSC statement this month which had expressed concern over non-diplomatic language used in a cable from a "foreign

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MIGRANT WORKERS

Dedicated centre to help ease their hassles

JAMIL MAHMUD

The government has established a dedicated centre for migrant workers to reduce the hassles they face while migrating abroad and returning home.

Built on over 140 kathas of land in the capital's Khilkhet, the "Bangabandhu Wage Earners' Centre" will provide outbound and inbound workers with accommodation at affordable prices.

The centre will hold pre-departure briefings for outbound workers on destination countries and different services offered by the Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB). It will also brief returnee migrants on reintegration for socio-economic development.

The initiative has been taken marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, according to information available on the

WEWB website.

Shoaib Ahmad Khan, director (finance and welfare) of WEWB, said the centre will start providing full-fledged services after Ramadan.

He said migrant workers who need to stay in Dhaka before their flights or after returning home from abroad can get accommodation at the centre after showing necessary documents.

On many occasions, the workers have to come to Dhaka from different districts a day before their scheduled flights, the official said.

The workers, after landing at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport late at night, find it difficult to get affordable accommodations for overnight stay, the WEWB director said.

This centre can be a suitable place for such migrants, he said, adding that they would also ensure transport for them.

It takes only 20-25 minutes to reach the centre from the

airport. Nearly 50 people can stay there at a time. There are 10-12 seats for female migrants as well, he said.

"Once the centre becomes operational, it will be clearer which service needs improvement," Shoaib added.

According to the WEWB website, a migrant worker will need Tk 200 for an overnight stay there.

To get the accommodation, the workers have to apply either in person or online paying Tk 100 in registration fees.

One can apply for a seat and stay for maximum two nights at a time.

They have to show documents such as passport, air ticket copy, copy of immigration clearance and relevant other documents.

The migrant workers can also use lockers for keeping their important documents. Telephone and internet services will be available for them at the centre.

Besides, food will be arranged at affordable prices.

Man dies in cop custody

Policemen beat him up after altercation; SI closed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A 26-year-old man died after being beaten up by a team of policemen in the Kazir Chawra area of Lalmonirhat on Thursday.



Locals said the man, Rabiul Islam, got into an argument with officers when the police team detained him on suspicion of being a gambler around 10:00pm at a Baishakhi Mela, a traditional programme celebrating the first day of the Bangla new year.

About five policemen then beat him up until he fell to the ground and lost consciousness, witnesses said.

Doctors pronounced him dead after he was taken to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital around 11:45pm, according to hospital documents.

Sub-Inspector Halimur Rahman, who led the police team, was closed from Lalmonirhat Police Station and attached to the district Police Lines yesterday afternoon over the allegation of torture.

The announcement of his closure came after locals blockaded the Lalmonirhat-Burimari Highway from around 2:00pm-3:00pm in Mahendranagar area demanding justice for Rabiul.

Police then came to the spot and convinced locals to remove the blockade with promises of a

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Artists performing a traditional dance to herald the Bangla new year in front of hundreds of spectators on Pahela Baishakh in Chattogram city's Nazrul Square. After two years of scaled-back festivities due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the nation on Thursday celebrated the new year with traditional fanfare.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Cravings for chocolate lands boy in prison

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

A Bangladeshi teenager was sent to jail in India on Wednesday for illegally crossing into the neighbouring country to buy his favourite brand of chocolate.

The boy used to swim across the Shalda river to Sipahijala district in the Indian state of Tripura to buy chocolate, sources in India's Border Security Force said yesterday.

They said the boy aged 13 or 14 is a resident of Khaldanadi village under Brahmanbaria Police Station.

He used to sneak through a hole in the barbed wire fence to buy chocolate from a shop in Kalamchoura village in

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US start-up sends tiny robots on voyage into brains

AFP, Los Angeles

Sending miniature robots deep inside the human skull to treat brain disorders has long been the stuff of science fiction -- but it could soon become reality, according to a California start-up.



Bionaut Labs plans its first clinical trials on humans in just two years for its tiny injectable robots, which can be carefully guided through the brain using magnets.

"The idea of the micro robot came about way before I was born," said co-founder and CEO Michael Shpigelmacher.

"One of the most famous examples is a book by Isaac Asimov and a film called 'Fantastic Voyage,' where a crew of scientists goes inside a miniaturized spaceship into the brain, to treat a blood clot."

Just as cellphones now contain extremely powerful components that are smaller than a grain of rice, the tech behind micro-robots "that used to be science fiction in the 1950s and 60s" is now "science fact," said Shpigelmacher.