

## Transport workers postpone strike

Passengers suffered all day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Transport workers postponed their indefinite strike till October 15 after meeting with the administration yesterday night.

Ali Akbar Rajan, joint general secretary of Sylhet District Bus Minibus Coach Microbus Sramik Union, confirmed this to The Daily Star.

A meeting presided over by Divisional Commissioner Muhammad Mosarof Hossain was held at the Circuit House around 8:00pm, which ended at 10:00pm.

Mainul Islam, president of Sylhet District Bus Minibus Workers' Union, said, "The administration assured us that they will accept our demands by October 15 and the police harassment will be stopped from tomorrow (today)."

Earlier, transport workers started an indefinite strike from 6:00am with a five point demand.

Their demands included stopping the harassment by traffic police, excessive fine collection, withdrawal of the metropolitan police commissioner, deputy commissioner of the traffic department, and additional

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Many had to walk long distances after getting off at Kadmatoli bus stand, since no modes of transportation were seen operating in the city streets yesterday. Transport workers in Sylhet went on an indefinite strike from morning to press home their five-point demand. Inset, at Humayun Rashid Chattar, 70-year-old Nawab Ali lies on a roadside while his wife tends to him. Nawab fell sick after waiting for transportation for hours to go to Companiganj.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## YABA RECOVERY

Arrestee's bail triggers mixed reaction

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Younus Miah Prokash Liton, who was arrested in a case filed for smuggling 38,871 yaba tablets to Saudi Arabia in October 2020, got ad interim bail from a Dhaka court yesterday.

The bail order has triggered a mixed reaction among lawyers and litigants, court sources said.

Liton was arrested on April 24 from Matuail Maternity in Kadamtoli. The next day, he gave confessional statements before a Dhaka magistrate.

In the forwarding report submitted on April 25, Masudur Rahman, also an inspector at Department of Narcotics Control, mentioned Md Asadullah, another accused in the case, told the court that Liton and Hasmat Ali Prince kept those yaba in three cartons for sending to Saudi Arabia where expatriate Rafiqul Islam will receive those.

Moreover, Liton confessed to the magistrate that he along with Prince, Rafiq and Md Sharif had been running yaba

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## PRAYER TIMING

SEPTEMBER 14



Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:30 6:14 7:45  
JAMAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:17 8:15  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## 12 policy reforms for \$1.5b WB loan

FROM PAGE 1

The commerce ministry has approved the framework for the policy, including institutional responsibilities and implementation arrangements.

Should the government implement the policy by the next fiscal year, Bangladesh's average nominal tariffs on imports would come down to 25 percent from the existing 29.6 percent.

Rolling out the automated challan system for deducting income tax at source in all tax zones across the country by fiscal 2023-24 is another condition put forth by the WB.

The move would bolster the National Board of Revenue's collections from income tax and value added tax by as much as 64 percent to Tk 244,200 crore.

The WB also called for full implementation of the e-Government Procurement system, which would bring down the average procurement lead time (from invitation to contract award) to 50 days from 70 days at present.

For that to happen, the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority Act must be enacted.

The Department of National Savings must adopt an automated system to link the issuance of the General Provident Fund and

## Helmets: crucial to saving lives

Only 34pc bikers use helmets, says study

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN, from COX'S BAZAR

Even though the number of motorbikes and deaths in bike-related accidents is rising sharply, only 34 percent of bikers wear helmets while driving, according to a recent study conducted by the World Bank and Buet's Accident Research Institute.

Around 53 percent of bikers wear helmets most of the time, 10 percent wear them once in a while and two percent do not wear helmets. Of the bike-related deaths, 88 percent of bikers were found to be without helmets.

Wearing a helmet accurately reduces fatality by 40 percent and severe injury by 70 percent, the study added.

The study was conducted between July 2019 and July 2021 among 400 riders in Dhaka, Barishal and Dhaka-Mawa expressway and Dhaka-Gaibandha Road.

Kazi Md Shifin Newaz, assistant professor of ARI, presented the study at a training session in Cox's Bazar recently.

According to ARI's data, at least 1,168 people were killed in 994 bike accidents last year, whereas there were 1,097 deaths in 958 bike-related accidents in 2020.

According to Road Safety Foundation, at least 2,144 people were killed in 1,733 road accidents in the first four months. Bike-related accidents alone were responsible for 830 deaths, which is 38.71 percent of the total deaths. Researchers said not wearing helmets or using low-standard ones is the reason behind this rising number of deaths in motorbike accidents.

Addressing the training session, Taifur Rahman, programme manager of Global Road Safety Partnership, said there is nothing mentioned in the law about the standard of a helmet. Bangladesh Standards and Training Institution has no mechanism for it.

Khalid Reza Chowdhury, assistant director of the certification marks (CM) wing of BSTI,

told this correspondent that the helmet was a mandatory product for certification. However, they were not able to check it for the absence of proper technical support.

"We have got the technical facilities six months back. We have started conducting mobile courts to remove low standard helmets from the market," he said.

Khalid said they have also started working in the port, especially in the Chattogram port, so that no low standard helmet is released and

### AT A GLANCE

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Year	Crashes involving bikes	Number of Deaths
2021	994	1,168
2020	958	1,097

imported. "Our officials will check the quality of the helmets that arrive at the ports. They can be sold in the market only after being certified by our officials," he added.

Meanwhile, experts said the government should bring the motorbike sale and licensing under monitoring.

Speaking at the training, Sahin Islam, director general of National Institute of Mass Communication, said with the number of non-licensed

bikers is also increasing.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, in an advertisement published in a newspaper on May 9, said the number of registered bikes and issued licenses are 36.50 lakh and 23.50 lakh respectively, implying that around 13 lakh bikers do not have licenses.

The number of registered motorbikes was 22.70 lakh and licensed riders 11.32 lakh in 2018. He said the issuance of fake licenses also needs to be checked properly.

### SAFETY FIRST

### RISK FACTOR

Not wearing helmets or using low standard ones

Not bringing motorbike sale, licensing under monitoring

Year	Registered Bikes	Issued Licenses
2022 (Till May)	36.50 lakh	23.50 lakh
2018	22.70 lakh	11.32 lakh

Meanwhile, the ARI study also revealed that around 62 percent of bikers do not wear helmets when they are on a short trip and 19 percent do not wear one during hot weather.

Besides, 45 percent of bikers feel uncomfortable and 21 percent feel suffocated, the study added. Experts recommended initiating research to develop more comfortable helmets considering the socio-economic and environmental characteristics of the country.

One killed, 10 hurt as bus, human haulier collide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man died and at least 10 others suffered injuries when a bus and human haulier collided in Dhaka's Demra area yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Md Rajib (33), the driver of the human haulier, said police.

The human haulier, carrying at least 12 passengers, was heading towards Borpa of Narayanganj from Jatrabari. As the vehicle reached near Demra around 8:00am, a bus coming from opposite direction hit it, leaving its driver and passengers injured, said Md Ridoy, an injured.

Eight of the injured were rushed to DMCH where doctors declared Rajib dead around 10:15am.

SI Tajul Islam of Demra Police Station said a bus of Asian Paribahan collided with the human haulier as it was trying to overtake another bus. The bus driver fled the scene.

## Make umrah airfare affordable: HAAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the face of the high price of air tickets for umrah hajis, Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh yesterday demanded that the government take necessary measures to bring the airfare on the Dhaka-Saudi Arabia route to a rational level.

HAAB president M Shahadat Hossain Taslim and its secretary general Faruk Ahmed Sardar submitted a letter to State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahbub Ali at his secretariat office.

The HAAB boss said the airfare to Saudi Arabia was around Tk 74,000 a month ago. But now it has increased to around Tk 1 lakh, which is irrational and unacceptable.

In the letter, the HAAB leaders said in 2020 and 2021, Bangladeshis could not perform hajj due to the pandemic. This year, only a limited number of Bangladeshis could perform hajj due to restrictions of the Saudi authorities. Besides, due to age restrictions, many could not perform hajj.

"That is why many people from Bangladesh are eagerly waiting to perform umrah this year," HAAB said in the letter.

## 'Blue' panel sweeps syndicate poll at DU

UNB, Dhaka

Blue panel, the Awami League-backed teachers' panel of Dhaka University, has bagged victory in the senate election.

The poll was arranged at the university's Nawab Ali Chowdhury senate building from 10:00am yesterday morning.

Elected teacher representatives of Dhaka University Syndicate are Dr Mohammad Masudur Rahman as the hall provost, Prof Nijamul Hoque Bhuiyan as the representative of Professors, Abu Hossen Mohammad Ahsan of Public Administration Department as associate professor, Mohammad Sharif Ul Islam as assistant professor, Dr Ismat Rahman of Computer Science and Technology Department as the associate professor of academic council, ASM Manjur Al Hossain of Medicine Technology Department as the representative of lecturer and Dr Mohammad Shafikul Islam of Applied Mathematics

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For that to happen, the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority Act must be enacted.

The Department of National Savings must adopt an automated system to link the issuance of the General Provident Fund and

the Contributory Provident Fund instruments to national identity cards.

This would bring down the net sales of costly savings instruments by as much as 52 percent by fiscal 2023-24 from Tk 41,960 crore in June last year.

The WB has given special emphasis to improving the banking sector's

It has called for an amendment to the Bank Company Act to strengthen the supervisory framework in line with good international practice, recovery plans for weak banks and Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) for all undercapitalised banks, including the state ones.

The finance ministry has to issue a notice with strengthened corporate governance requirements for state banks in line with international best practices.

"All the reforms for the financial sector would be extremely beneficial for the industry and the economy," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the WB's Dhaka office.

The WB's conditions are also aimed at strengthening the country's resilience to future shocks.

One of the conditions for budget support is expanding cash transfer programmes this fiscal year by more than five times to cushion the poor from the brunt of the elevated price

levels at home and abroad.

Cash transfers of Tk 24,040 crore must be made to the mobile financial service accounts of the reclassified list of beneficiaries by the ministry of social welfare.

Another condition is the use of the National Household Database for beneficiary identification by major social protection programmes.

"This would bring clarity in the government's expenditure on social protection," Hussain said.

The WB has also called for

allowing private sector players in power transmission projects.

"We have underinvestment in transmission. Our generation capacity is a lot but without fixing the transmission line, we will not achieve energy security," Hussain said.

However, competitive bidding must be ensured in the private sector's participation in power transmission projects. "Otherwise, we will just convert a public monopoly into a private monopoly."

Regardless, all the reforms are welcome and much-needed, Hussain said. Whether the government implements those remains to be seen.

"The funds will help in meeting the government's budget deficit, prop up foreign exchange reserves and give impetus to the reform plans."</