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Moon ride on Dhaka roads

Dug-up, ill-repaired streets go from bad to worse in the rains

HELEMUL ALAM

Poor road conditions, delayed repairs and continuous road diggings have left many residents suffering at different places around the city.

Road works completed after digging up roads, and then filled back, have been left without complete repairs, adding to the misery of commuters.

The monsoon rains, as every other year, have made the dug up roads risky for commuting. The number of accidents on such roads has also increased, as has

traffic congestion in the same areas.

Busy roads at Jurain, Postogola (near Postogola Buriganga Bridge), Basabo, Madartek, Mir Hajirbagh, Babu Bazar, Islambagh, Lalbagh, Mirpur section-11, Kazipara, Barobagh, Manipur and Karwan Bazar are in extremely poor condition.

On one hand dilapidated roads pose risks to commuters and on the other, different utility service agencies including WASA have also been busy digging up different roads even with the onset of the monsoons.

Adding to this is the roads which were dug up some five months back for works and have since not been re-carpeted. These include Dinnath Sen Road and Rajanikant Road at Gendaria.

The DCC has also left roads in Mohammadpur -- including the very busy Tajmahal Road -- without re-carpeting.

DCC, which collects a digging fee from companies, which dig up the road for works, is supposed to re-carpet the roads once work is completed and the dug up

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PHOTOS: AMRAN HOSSAIN, SHAFIQUL ALAM

Construction of a culvert, top, on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Kutubkhali has increased traffic congestion in the area while digging up of the road, bottom left, from Moghbazar Wireless Rail Gate to Nayatola-Modhubagh causes severe obstacles to the flow of traffic. A large ditch, bottom right, in the middle of the road near Shyampur Police Station.

140 killed in China riot

Cops clash with protesters amid tension between ethnic Muslims and Han majority

AP, AFP, Urumqi

Tensions between ethnic Muslims and China's Han majority in the far western Xinjiang region erupted in riots that killed 140 people and injured 828, an official said yesterday, marking the deadliest unrest to hit the volatile area in decades. A peaceful protest Sunday of about 1,000 to 3,000 people in the regional capital,

Urumqi, apparently spun out of control, as rioters went on a rampage and clashed with police. The official Xinhua News Agency reported hundreds of people were arrested.

There was little immediate explanation for how so many people died. The government blamed Uighur exiles for stoking the unrest. Exile groups said the violence started only after police began

violently cracking down on a peaceful protest.

The Xinjiang regional government blamed Rebiya Kadeer, the Uighurs' leader who is living in exile in the United States, for orchestrating the unrest.

"An initial investigation showed the violence was masterminded by the separatist World Uighur Congress led by

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Stocks erratic amid foul play allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The stock market has been experiencing an erratic situation for the last two months following an alleged bid by a group of dishonest traders to make extra profit through manipulation.

Stocks finished lower for a second day in a row as rumours of regulatory interventions left investors on edge yesterday.

Dhaka Stock Exchange's benchmark index dropped about 20 points or 0.74 percent, while the Chittagong Stock Exchange's key index slipped almost 80 points or 1.22 percent.

Analysts pointed to reports

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Draft law on protection of Bangabandhu family okayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved a draft law to ensure security of the family members of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with immediate effect.

The weekly cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, gave the approval in principle to the proposed law titled "Father of the Nation's Family Members Security Act 2009."

Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder placed the draft of the law at the meeting, which endorsed it after a brief discussion.

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Govt's fair price for farmers gobbled up

Rice traders, food officials manipulate procurement, relief to make a mint

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Massive irregularities have gripped the public food distribution and procurement system in Kushtia as a section of food officials in connivance with dishonest rice traders are pocketing huge money through a 'buyback' arrangement.

Allegations are there against the food officials that they force the recipients of rice sanctioned under the government's test relief (TR) programme to sell the same at a lower price to the rice traders.

The traders then resell the rice to the eight public granaries in the district at a premium price under the current food procurement drive.

Sources said a section of officials of food godowns are compelling TR recipients to sell the rice to certain rice traders at Tk 15,000 per tonne and then they are procuring it from the traders at Tk 22,000, making a hefty profit of Tk 7,000 per tonne.

The profit from the 'buyback' arrangement is being shared among the traders and godown officials, sources alleged.

The government has launched the ongoing food procurement drive to provide fair price to the farmers.

On June 24, some local journalists during a spot visit to a district food godown first

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Wealth card from MPs next month

Draft rules prepared, says Muhith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday the government will start taking wealth statements of the ministers and lawmakers next month to ensure its transparency and accountability.

"A draft regulation for submission of wealth statements by the ministers and lawmakers has been prepared and sent to the Cabinet Division," he told journalists after a meeting with the visiting Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Bert Koenders at his office.

The regulation might be placed before the cabinet for approval by the end of this month or early next month, Muhith said.

Earlier in January, shortly after assuming office the finance minister told the media that the government would start taking wealth statements in February. But the process is yet to start.

Replying to journalists' questions yesterday, Muhith said enactment of a law is not necessary for this, and it can be done by making a regulation or issuing an order.

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WAR CRIME TRIAL

Cabinet okays law changes

Bill to empower executive magistrates also approved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday in principle approved a proposal to amend the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973 to ensure fairness and neutrality in holding trial of war criminals.

The draft copy of the amendment will be placed in parliament within one or two days for its passage, said Law Minister Shafique Ahmed while talking to reporters at his secretariat office.

Meanwhile, the cabinet meeting also endorsed the draft of the Mobile Court Bill 2009 aiming at empowering the executive magistrates again to run mobile courts for holding summary trial of some specific offences.

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