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IS ANYBODY WATCHING?

MIRPUR ROAD TAILBACKS Chaos stems from 2 points in 50 yards

HELEMUL ALAM

Two turning points within a stretch of less than 50 yards in Science Laboratory-City College area on Mirpur Road have become a sheer nightmare for commuters with appalling tailbacks throughout the day.

Four of the city's busiest markets -- New Market, Gawsia, Chandni Chawk and Dhanmondi Hawkers Market -- bustling with Eid shoppers in Ramadan are located near this stretch, worsening the traffic congestion that often lead to tailbacks stretching by a few kilometres.

As shoppers crowd these markets, long snarls are created on all four roads -- one going south towards Azimpur, one to Kalyanpur to the north, Dhanmondi road-2 on the west and Elephant Road on the east -- around this stretch.

On Wednesday afternoon, it took Akhtaruzzaman, driver of an intra-city bus on the Mirpur-Azimpur route, three hours to reach Nilkhet from Mirpur-12, a distance which otherwise takes around an hour.

"Due to immense tailbacks, I had to spend about one and a half hours just to cross the area from Kalabagan to Nilkhet, about a 15-minutes' drive only," said Akhtar.

CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver Mamunur Rashid felt the impact of the traffic pressure from as far as Matshya Bhaban, around two km from Science Lab area.

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Buses from Jhigatola take turn en route to Elephant Road, creating traffic chaos at Dhanmondi-3 turning in the capital around 2:00pm yesterday.

An end to child marriage Dhaka to reaffirm pledge at Girl Summit

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will renew its firm commitment to eliminating child marriage at the first-ever Girl Summit in London on July 22, foreign office sources said yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will lead the Bangladesh delegation at the summit being hosted jointly by British government and the UNICEF.

She is due to leave for London on Monday morning.

The sources said Hasina will attend the High-Level session of the Summit on Tuesday and interact with First Lady Chantal Compaore of Burkina Faso, a West African Country and Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan.

The session will be moderated by UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake at Walworth Academy.

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Gaza bleeds on

Death toll hits 342 despite restraint calls; UN chief heads to region; protests intensify worldwide

AFP, Gaza City

Israel's operation against Hamas saw one of its bloodiest days yesterday, with 46 Palestinians killed in Gaza and two Israeli soldiers dying in a clash with militants who infiltrated the Jewish state.

As Israeli warplanes bombed Gaza from the air, and ground troops pressed an assault on land, the Palestinian death toll rose to 342, with rights groups warning that a growing number of victims are children.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon was Saturday headed for the region to bolster intense diplomatic efforts

aimed at ending 12 days of bloodshed in and around Gaza, even as Israel warned it was ready to intensify its ground assault aimed at destroying a network of cross-border tunnels.

Despite the blistering offensive, Palestinian commandos in central Gaza managed to use one of the tunnels to infiltrate southern Israel, sparking a deadly skirmish in which one militant and two soldiers were killed, the army said.

The soldiers died when the militants fired a machinegun and an anti-tank missile at an army patrol, the army said.

Troops fired back, killing one of

them, while the others fled back through the tunnel in an operation claimed by Hamas's military wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, which said 12 militants had been involved.

An Israeli Bedouin was killed when a rocket hit his encampment in southern Israel in an attack which also wounded four of his family, among them two young children, police said.

The deaths raised to five the total number of Israelis killed since July 8 -- three soldiers and two civilians -- in the deadliest confrontation between Israel and Hamas militants since 2009.

Israel's Chief-of-Staff, Lieutenant

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KHALEDA LEAVES DHAKA Trip to serve 3 purposes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It's a three-in-one tour.

There will be Umrh, family reunion and political meetings when Khaleda Zia visits Saudi Arabia this week with her two sons -- Tarique Rahman from the UK and Arafat Rahman Koko from Malaysia -- joining her there.

Khaleda left for Saudi Arabia in an Emirates flight around 9:45 last night at the invitation of the Saudi government.

Tarique and Koko along with their families will also go to Saudi Arabia this week, turning the Umrh tour into an

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Nur Hossain's associate held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Detectives arrested a close associate of Nur Hossain, the key accused in Narayanganj seven-murder case, from Brahmanbaria yesterday.

The detainee was identified as Ali Mohammad, son of Akbar Ali of Shimrail area in Siddhirganj of Narayanganj.

He was the cashier of Nur's illegal money and a close aide in toll collection, drug dealing and other illegal activities of Nur Hossain.

Acting on a tip off, a team of DB police raided Akhaura Bazar area and

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Rasu Sheikh cannot hold back tears seeing his son Selim Sheikh at Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday. Selim is one of the 15 Bangladeshis who had been held in captivity for 24 days in conflict-torn Iraq.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

15 return from restive Iraq

BELAL HOSSAIN BIPLOB

Rasu Sheikh could not believe his eyes as he saw his son walking towards him at Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

After being held captive for weeks in Tikrit of Iraq, Selim Sheikh returned home and got reunited with his father.

Sixty-year-old Rasu could barely hold back his tears as he hugged Selim. "I can't express my happiness in words right now. At last I have found my son whom I presumed to be dead," he said.

"My family was in deep shock. We had nothing to cheer about since my son had been in danger," mentioned Rasu.

Selim along with 14 other Bangladeshis were held captive by Sunni rebels in trouble-torn Iraq for 24 days. They returned home on an Air Arabia flight around 9:00am.

The motive behind holding the Bangladeshis captive could not be known.

This was the first batch of expatriate workers who

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The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you support the draft proposal for restoring parliament's authority to impeach judges?

Yes

No

(21%)

(79%)

TOTAL VOTES: 146

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think BNP's new committee for Dhaka city unit with Mirza Abbas its convener will help the BNP-led 18-party alliance to wage strong movement for holding a national election under a non-party administration?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT

www.thedailystar.net

Another killing in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

An alleged criminal was killed in a "shootout" with police in Sharsha upazila of Jessore early yesterday.

The dead, Anisur Rahman, 32, was son of Waziar Rahman of Baliadanga village of Satkhira Sadar upazila, said police.

Anis, who was accused in over a dozen criminal cases, was arrested on Friday night from Dhaka, said Ahmed Kabir, officer-in-charge of Sharsha Police Station.

Around 2:00am today, police of Satkhira Sadar and Sharsha jointly raided Bashatpur village in Sharsha to arrest Anis' accomplices and recover firearms.

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SEHRI, IFTAR TIMINGS				
Ramadan	July	Sehri	Iftar	
21	20		6-51	
22	21	3-53	6-50	
23	22	3-54	6-50	

PRAYER TIMING July 20		
Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr 3-57	4-02	
Zohr 12-45	1-15	
Asr 5-00	5-15	
Maghrib 6-51	7-01	
Esha 8-15	8-45	

Source: Islamic Foundation

Cry when you write in it!

WWW.ODDITYCENTRAL.COM

Notebook manufacturer Magnus Ferreus recently launched a quirky new product -- the Onion Note. True to its name, the notebook will make you cry every time you scribble something in it. Thankfully, it doesn't stink like an onion, it only has the same effect as cutting one.

The pages of the Onion Note have been treated with allyl propyl compounds -- the same ones found in

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