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Eid exodus picks up momentum

Dhaka people brave rain, jam, and waterlogging to go home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Torrential rain since early yesterday morning put many heading home for the Eid holidays in trouble getting to bus, train and launch terminals in the capital.

The perennial congestion and the usual chaos of Dhaka were, however, easing off despite waterlogging and tailbacks on some thoroughfares. Streets around shopping malls were crammed with vehicles, causing home goers even more pain.

The city's bus, train and launch terminals saw increased flow of passengers. The rush of holidaymakers would intensify even further from today, the last working day before the Eid, which would either be on Saturday or Sunday.

Transport operators said the mad rush would begin tonight and continue until the night before Eid.

Many would take risks -- travelling unsafely -- during their journey home to celebrate Eid with their near and dear ones.

Transport operators said people had started leaving the capital a few days early to avoid hassles during late rush. Many working people had taken a day off to go home early and they had been leaving since Tuesday night.

Yesterday, people set off for terminals but had to face difficulty reaching there due to rain. Many were soaked but did not have to deal with any hassles at the terminals.

They did face congestions on Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Tangail highways and waterlogging on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway.



PLUTO UP CLOSE

New Horizons sending back data

AFP, Laurel

Scientists are receiving data that will offer the closest look ever of Pluto, after the unmanned Nasa spacecraft whizzed by the distant dwarf planet on Tuesday.

After a three-billion-mile journey that took nearly 10 years, the nuclear-powered New Horizons -- about the size of a baby grand piano -- snapped pictures of Pluto as it hurtled by on auto-pilot.

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Jubilant Nasa and project staff as telemetry is received from the New Horizons probe at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland, on Tuesday. Nasa Principal Investigator for New Horizons Alan Stern, top, and Co-Investigator Will Grundy holding an enlarged out-dated US stamp with "Pluto Explored" written on it.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS



Spotlight shining on Pluto

AP, Florida

The spotlight is bright enough to thaw even Pluto.

Well, not quite, but the tiny, icy world is getting front-page, prime-time attention as Nasa's New Horizons spacecraft zooms closer.

Tuesday morning's 31,000-mph flyby -- with closest approach at 7,767 miles -- is expected to open up new ground on the last unexplored planetary territory of our solar system.

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Journey highly risky

Little success in efforts to stop over-loading on river ways

PANKAG KARMAKAR back from Mawa

Overcrowded launches with too little safety gear left the Sadarghat and Mawa launch terminals in the capital and Munshiganj yesterday, putting the lives of thousands of home-goers at risk.

Rough weather and swollen rivers made their trips even more risky. Law enforcers and officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) did not act to stop overloading of vessels.

Visiting the two terminals, this correspondent found that most of the launches were carrying passengers more than double their capacity.

At least four single deck vessels left the Mawa terminal for Kawrakandi of Madaripur between 12:00pm and 1:00pm.

The Hirak has a capacity of 198 passengers, but it carried over 400. Over 300 passengers boarded the Sajal against its capacity of 151.

Another launch, the Farzana and Sanjida was carrying over 300 passengers, around 210 more than its capacity.



The Chatalpar plied the route with some 350 passengers against its capacity of 150.

Launch drivers at Mawa did not start their vessels until the BIWTA officials forced them to do so.

The shipping ministry had asked launch operators to keep enough life-saving gear on board, but there were hardly one or two life buoys and life jackets in each of the vessels.

However, most of the speedboat passengers put on life jackets while crossing the Padma.

Around 80 launches operate on the Mawa-Kawrakandi route daily, said sources.

At Sadarghat terminal, around 2,000 passengers got on MV Ranadut Plus for reaching Vandaria of Pirojpur, though its capacity is 720. The MV Parabat-9 was about to leave for Barisal carrying over 2,000 passengers, nearly 1,400 more than its capacity.

Mir Tareque Ali, professor of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, said overloading of

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Risking their lives, people cram onto small motor launches and speedboats at Mawa Ferry Terminal as thousands head out of the capital towards their homes for the Eid holidays.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BGB rescues 2 Myanmar soldiers

They were 'abducted by separatists'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) on Tuesday rescued two Myanmar army personnel who are believed to have been abducted by a separatist group of the neighbouring country.

The duo were found abandoned deep in the jungle between the main pillar 67 and tri-junction -- a bordering area of Bangladesh, Myanmar and

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SEHRI,IFTAR TIMINGS

Ramadan	July	Sehri	Iftar
28	16		6-52
29	17	3-50	6-52
30	18	3-51	6-52

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

They wanted to go home

This was the 'crime' for which two minor girls faced 18-min torture at Barisal orphanage

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal

Akhi is nine years old and Dalia is ten. Too poor to raise them, their mothers sent them in the care of a government orphanage.

Early this month, when Dalia's mother was returning after seeing her daughter, the girl could not help following her mother for some distance. Akhi accompanied Dalia.

And because of this, the two minors were subjected to torture by an official of the girls' orphanage, Barisal Shishu Paribar.

Md Dulal, a health assistant of the orphanage, beat the girls with a stick on July 4.

The incident came to light after a video of the torture, filmed by someone inside the orphanage, went viral on the social media on Tuesday.

The 18-minute clip shows Dulal beating the two kids all the while. The two, knocked to the ground, kept crying and begging for mercy.

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LOOTING ATTEMPT Robbers kill two Sonali Bank guards

A CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Two night guards at a Sonali Bank branch in Kolaroa upazila were killed in what appears to be an attempted robbery there.

The dead are Ansar members Jahangir Hossain Sheikh, 35, of the same upazila, and Asadur

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PRAYER TIMING

JULY 16

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
3-56	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-15
JAMAAT	4-06	1-15	5-15	6-62

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



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