



GLIMPSES OF EID-UL-FITR



Clockwise from top left, Eid-ul-Fitr prayers at the capital's Baitul Mukarram National Mosque on Saturday morning. Children enjoy the day on a merry-go-round at Shishu Park. Meanwhile, tourists enjoy the environment in Bichanakandi of Sylhet. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia shakes hands with US Ambassador to Bangladesh Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat who turned up donning this saree at the reception organised by the former at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre marking the Islamic festival. In the meantime, Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina exchanges greetings with people from all walks of life at Gono Bhaban.

PHOTO: STAR, PMO, COLLECTED



Cabinet reshuffle a normal matter Says prime minister

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said cabinet reshuffle was a normal matter in the parliamentary form of democracy and this could be done at any time.

She was talking to journalists after exchanging Eid greetings with the people of all strata including party leaders and activists, professionals, judges and foreign diplomats at her official Gono Bhaban residence on Saturday.

Her remarks came after much-talked about changing of portfolio of Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam. Ashraf was made minister without portfolio after being relieved from the LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry

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Autistic girl raped in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 17-year-old autistic girl was raped allegedly by her neighbour in Mirsarai Upazila of Chittagong on Sunday night.

The girl was alone at home when Md Rasel, 18, of East Baroarkhali village, entered the house and raped her but her mother caught Rasel as she returned home to fetch something.

Hearing their scream, locals handed Rasel over to police. A case was filed yesterday.

Peaceful movement soon: Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has threatened that her party is going through an overhauling process and will launch a peaceful movement together with people very soon.

"Cases after cases have been filed against BNP leaders and activists. A good number of our party men are still in jail. And many of them have become victims of forced disappearance. Under the circumstances we must overhaul our party and then we'll wage a movement together with people in a peaceful and democratic process," she said.

Khaleda was talking to journalists after exchanging greetings with diplomats and eminent citizens on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital on Saturday.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Eid road crashes can't just be wished away

SHAHNOOR WAHID

A good number of fatal road accidents during the Eid vacation across the country have left many people killed and many more grievously injured, some crippled for life. The occasion of festivity turned into times of mourning for many families as they lost their near and dear ones in such accidents. The patterns of accidents this year were same as those that happened in previous years. There were head-on-collisions between passenger buses; vehicles had skidded off and fell in roadside ditches; some people met their death hit by tree branches as they rode on roof tops of buses and trains and so on. The gruesome graphics of some of these accidents have been displayed on some television channels.

The most annoying aspect of the whole thing is we have not seen any "Highway Patrol" on the highways to control overspeeding buses. We have not seen them near the sites after the accidents to offer help. It is the common people who had gone to the rescue of the victims. We know there is a department by the name of Highway Patrol equipped with high speed cars but we do not know where they perform their duties. Were they not aware that thousands of people would be travelling in vehicles of every description on the highways during this time? If they are not available on the highways in times of need then what is the justification of sporting that title?

Accidents on the highways during annual festivals are no new phenomena in this country. As hundreds of passenger buses and private cars begin to ferry people from

one end to another, our concerns begin to mount as we watch television reports of people scrambling on the roof tops of buses to embark on a perilous journey.

Researchers have already told us why such fatal incidents occur mostly during vacations. Among the many reasons are: old and faulty passenger buses put in service after hasty repair work; over speeding by buses and trucks on the highways to catch the ferry on the river bank or to reach destinations before the other; brake failure at the last moment; negotiating dangerous curves at breakneck speed; young immature drivers given employment during vacations at low salary; drunken driving or driving with serious eye problems; and absence of highway patrol police to deter over speeding.

These findings have been presented in numerous seminars and roundtable conferences by experts before the relevant authorities but we wonder whether even ten percent of those recommendations have been implemented in dead earnest. When will they be implemented in full? Or have they been dumped for good? To be candid, the regularity of fatal accidents during Eid and other festivals has somehow made our senses blunt to some extent. Unless we develop greater empathy within us for the travelling people, we shall not understand the pain and plight of those who lose their dear ones in road accidents.

In full consideration of the rising number of deaths of people in road accidents globally, World Health Organization (WHO) had declared the theme of World Health Day 2004 as "Road Safety Is No

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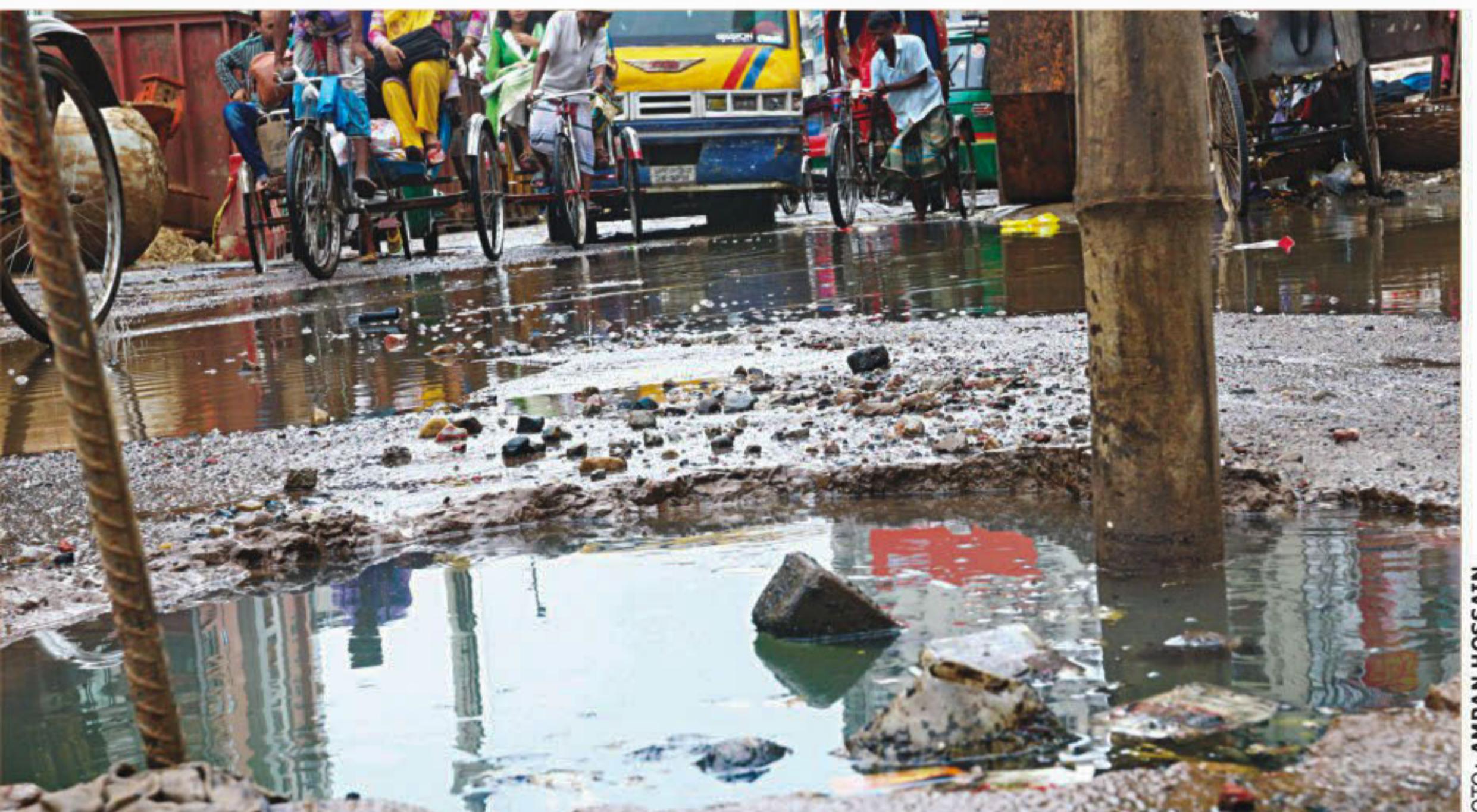


PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Incessant rainfall in the last few days has wreaked havoc on the roads in the capital's Malibagh. Large potholes filled with muddy water were all around creating the risk of accidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

Swan workers yet to get paid

Demonstrations continue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defying rainfall all throughout the day, over 100 workers of Swan Garments (Pvt) Ltd staged a sit-in in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club for the ninth day yesterday demanding four months' wage arrears and Eid bonus while the government is yet to resolve the issue though the factory closed three months back.

"The government and owners remain indifferent even though workers passed Eid day here. It proves that they have no responsibility," said Ruhul Amin, general secretary of Garment Workers' Trade Union Centre, which brought the workers together.

The union accused the government

of dilly-dallying over the issue by making promises in the last three months.

Early this month, the labour ministry formed a committee headed by the inspector general of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE).

Labour Secretary Mikail Shipar told The Daily Star that the committee would sit on July 26 to find ways to resolve the issue.

He said the company owner died and the successor needed a succession certificate from the court to sell off assets and pay the workers. "It will take time. They (workers) should wait for at least for a month," he said.

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Drug addict kills father

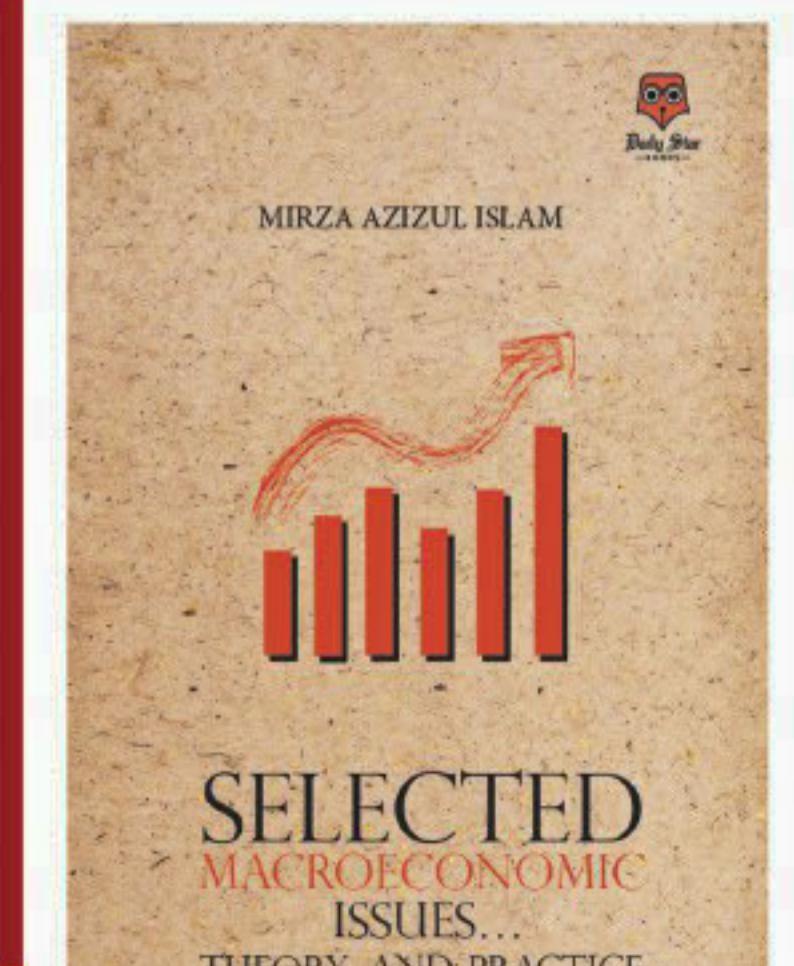
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A drug addict youth killed his father over a trivial matter in the capital's Turag on Friday.

The deceased Abul Hashem was a grocery shop owner.

Family members said Manik went traceless with his father's motorcycle from Thursday afternoon. After finding Manik at a relative's house yesterday at Bauniabandhi, Hashem went there to bring back his motorcycle and scolded Manik.

At this Manik stabbed his father with a kitchen knife on his neck and fled. Hashem died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.



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THEORY AND PRACTICE

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