



GOING HOME ... Eid holidaymakers jostle to get on a train at Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital. With Eid-ul-Azha just around the corner, people have started leaving the capital in droves to spend the religious festival with dear ones. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

3-hr trip takes 6 hrs

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When it was more than three hours since their start, they were only in Baipail, merely one-fourth of the distance between Dhaka and Tangail.

Hundreds of potholes, compounded by rain-induced waterlogging at many places, on the near 15-kilometre stretch from Abdullahpur to Baipail aggravated the situation, making vehicles move slower than non-motorised carts or rickshaws.

"All the vehicles were moving so slowly that I think I could have moved faster than a bus if I had ridden on a rickshaw," Kibria said.

Suffering continued until their bus crossed Mirzapur of Tangail.

More than six hours passed when they finally reached Tangail around 4:00pm.

Two correspondents of The Daily Star travelled on the same highway yesterday and faced similar ordeals.

Hundreds of cattle-laden trucks were heading towards the capital while an equally high number of passenger buses from the capital was rushing towards the outer districts. This excessive flow of vehicles is the main reason for long tailbacks, according to the correspondents.

An almost 20-kilometre tailback stretched from Chandra intersection of Gazipur to Mirzapur of Tangail, they informed. It was almost four hours before vehicles began to move on the stretch, they added.

Thousands of passengers heading towards the northern districts, too,

suffered badly due to the gridlock on the Dhaka-Tangail highway.

Police and transport operators said huge traffic flow, narrow roads with potholes, haphazard movement of cattle-laden trucks and incessant rain caused the gridlock.

Homebound people have been suffering immensely from heavy traffic congestion on the highway over the last three days.

Highway police said that although the Dhaka-Tangail highway has the capacity of containing around 5,000 vehicles daily, it sees over 20,000 vehicles plying daily ahead of Eid.

However, no major tailback was reported in other highways across the country.

Meanwhile, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said incessant rainfall damages roads despite repeated repairs.

While visiting Gabtoli bus terminal, the minister also said, "This time our main target is to minimise public suffering. But I cannot guarantee that we'd be able to minimise all sufferings fully."

Passengers, who travelled through the water and rail routes, enjoyed almost hassle-free journeys as most of the launches and trains were operated on schedule.

Ferry services between the Paturia-Daulaia and Shimulia-Kawrakandi ghats of the Padma were smooth, report our Manikganj and Munshiganj correspondents.

France, Germany pledge help

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global climate battle.

"It's also clear to me if we want to offer lasting protection to the people of Patuakhali or elsewhere in this planet, we must address the root causes of climate change and we must act together to stop global warming now," said the German minister while addressing a function marking the topping-off ceremony of the Franco-German Embassy in the capital's Baridhara.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and diplomats of the three countries were present at the programme.

"It's a new symbol. The building we are inaugurating today symbolises our unique friendship in a unique partner-

ship we will build on to address joint challenges ahead of us," said Steinmeier.

It is the first embassy jointly built and operated by France and Germany. From the summer of 2016, it will serve as a joint workplace of German and French diplomats and their locally employed Bangladeshi colleagues.

On the Paris conference, the German foreign minister said it's really a key opportunity that must not be missed.

He said Bangladesh is a country with high opportunities, and despite having a lot of problems, people here are very positive. "It's good that Europe could be at your side."

Appreciating Bangladesh's commitment to climate battle, French Foreign

Minister Fabius later at a press conference said, "You are not responsible but you are having the consequences. You are already doing great things."

On a legally binding climate agreement, he said some countries have problems on this notion due to the ratification process in their parliaments. "We are working to find a formula which can be accepted by all."

The German foreign minister was scheduled to attend the briefing but he could not make it because of his flight schedule.

On the promise of \$100 billion climate fund every year, Fabius said, "Now we have a feeling that it can be achieved ..." Surprisingly, he added, no study has been done yet to know the terms of financing.

On the Franco-German Embassy, he said it shows the great symbol of friendship of the two countries who are working very hard through projects, finance, technology and common ideas on how to fight climate disruptions.

The two ministers took a boat trip on the river Bangshi to the northwest of Dhaka. It was organised by the French-Bangladeshi NGO "Friendship", working for 14 years to help address the needs of marginalised communities suffering from climate change impact.

After the boat trip, Fabius and Steinmeier called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and held a delegation-level meeting with Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali.

Cop withdrawal

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Sanjoy Sarkar, acting superintendent of Tangail police, told The Daily Star that the two were withdrawn to ensure a fair investigation into the incident.

Earlier on Saturday, the authorities withdrew seven junior-level cops - three sub-inspectors and four constables of the two stations - over the bloody incident that left four people dead.

The police firing occurred in Kalihati upazila on Friday afternoon when several hundred locals took to the streets, protesting an assault of a woman and her son.

The protest came after Rafiqul Islam Roma of Satura village in Kalihati with the help of some others abused and beat the mother and son, as the boy allegedly developed an affair with Roma's wife.

A clash erupted when police intercepted the demonstration. At one stage, cops opened fire, killing three people, locals said.

A fourth victim succumbed to his bullet wounds at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Sunday.

Meanwhile, a rights body yesterday filed a petition with the High Court, seeking its order upon the government for a judicial inquiry into the incident.

The HC bench of Justice Moyoenu Islam Chowdhury and Justice Zafar Ahmed heard the petition partly and fixed September 30 for further hearing.

Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), filed the petition.

She argued that an investigation by police might not be fair, as they themselves were involved in it.

"I'M STUNNED" Prof Mizanur Rahman visited Kalihati Bus Stand, where the clash took place, and spoke with locals, reports our Tangail correspondent.

The rights boss also met the family members of Rubel Hossain, the fourth victim who died on Sunday, at Dakkhin

Betdoba village in Kalihati.

Rubel's mother Ruposhi Begum and other relatives burst into tears and demanded punishment for the responsible policemen.

Mizanur then visited the tortured mother and her son at Tangail Medical College Hospital where they were being treated.

"I've heard the incident from the son and his mother. I am stunned ... what an uncivilised society we are living in!" he told journalists on the hospital premises.

Responding to a question, he said, "We think the action police took [on the protesters] was illogical and unacceptable, and police have shown their rudeness ... Why such a firing on such a peaceful protest?"

He also assured the victims' families of justice, saying the NHRC would investigate the incident if the probe committees did not look into it properly.

MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTS

Protests continue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students seeking admission to medical and dental colleges continued their demonstration for the third straight day yesterday across the country in protest at the alleged leak of questions ahead of Friday's admission tests.

They demand fresh tests be held.

In Dhaka, the police foiled an attempt to form a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club. The protesters even failed to besiege the Directorate General of Health Department, which was part of their protest programme for the day.

They finally staged a sit-in at the Central Shaheed Minar until afternoon and vowed to continue their agitation.

Admission seekers also held dem-

onstrations in Barisal, Bogra, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Sylhet.

Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday summarily rejected a writ petition seeking its order on the government to cancel the results of the medical and dental admission tests.

Aspiring candidates have been agitating since Saturday alleging that questions were leaked the night before the tests. Many candidates got the questions through Facebook, WhatsApp, and other social media, they said.

As per an earlier announcement, students and guardians began gathering in front of the press club around 9:30am to form a human chain.

But policemen who were prepared with armoured personnel carrier and a water cannon asked them to leave the place, students said.

Govt controls media

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control the use of social and other media."

He blasted Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu for creating "such a situation". "Oppression on the media increased manifold since Inu took over as the information minister."

Ripon said although the authorities of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo have not said anything "officially", as a newspaper reader he has noticed that in recent days ads from many multinational companies are not there in the two dailies.

Besides, the two leading newspapers are getting fewer advertisements from government offices, he mentioned, adding that the "government wants to control the media by stopping the flow of advertisements from private companies".

Talking about Friday's police firing

on a demonstration in Kalihati upazila of Tangail, he demanded formation of an independent judicial commission to probe the incident. Four people were killed in the incident.

"Police members have not been hired to kill people. We don't want to see people being killed by policemen. The police can't open fire on people as per the rules and regulations of the force," Ripon said.

He called upon the government to compensate the victims.

The BNP spokesman was critical of deputy inspector general (DIG) of police for directing cops to open fire on "troublemakers to contain them". "His remark is unlawful," he said.

According to media reports, DIG SM Mahfuzul Haque Nuruzzaman told fellow police officials in Faridpur on Sunday, "Open fire, if necessary. I'll shoulder the responsibility."

PM rules

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illegal the capture of power by military rulers.

Hasina said Bangladesh maintains good relations with its neighbours. "We've resolved many problems with our neighbours through discussions."

When the visiting ministers wanted to know about the condition of Bangladesh's garment sector, the PM said her government took steps for the welfare of garment workers.

The government and private sector have been working together to ensure the welfare of the four million garment workers, she mentioned.

Hasina elaborated the measures taken by her government to ensure safety and security of garment workers.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and PM's International Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi were present, among others.

Editor of Ctg daily Sangu sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chittagong court yesterday sent the editor of a local daily to jail in a case filed under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) act.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Nurul Alam Mohammad Nipu passed the order after rejecting the bail prayer of Kabir Hossain, editor of Dainik Sangu.

The case was filed under section 57(1) of ICT act-2006 (amendment-2013) against the newspaper's Editor Kabir Hossain, News Editor Badrul Islam Masud and Chief Reporter Champak Chakraborty with Bayezid Police Station for publishing reports on KDS Group Chairman Khalilur Rahman, also president of Chittagong Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, court sources said.

On June 24, 25, and 28, the newspaper published three reports on the KDS group chairman which tarnished his image, said Manash Barua, IO of the case, quoting the case statement.

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