



VEGETABLE EXPORTS FALL

Shipments decline 16pc to \$76.9m in Jul-May due to ban on direct cargo flight

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TRUMP FACES NEW LAWSUIT

Two US attorneys general to sue him over foreign payments to his business empire

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DOWNPOUR plays havoc

Worsens traffic situation as many areas waterlogged

STAR REPORT

Incessant rain across the country disrupted people's lives, especially those in Dhaka and Chittagong, flooded streets and caused daylong gridlocks.

A rain-induced landslide claimed the life of a six-year-old girl in Police Lines area of Rangamati.

The apparently ceaseless rain began in the wee hours yesterday in the capital and swamped large parts of it. Traffic inched forward on major thoroughfares throughout the day and many vehicles suffered breakdowns on streets under knee-to-waist-deep water.

The inundations and breakdowns worsened the city's notorious Ramadan traffic, when people throng shopping arcades ahead of Eid. Thousands of city dwellers were trapped in gridlocks and were delayed by hours.

Port city dwellers took the brunt of yesterday's downpour. Roads in many areas went under knee-to-waist-deep water from early morning.

Rain triggered by depression in Bay

Ctg city worst affected by waterlogging

Landslide in Rangamati kills child

Intensity of rain to come down today

A man tries to push his car out of the way after it stopped in knee-deep water near Karwan Bazan in the capital yesterday. Inset, an SUV proceeds through a flooded area in Agrabad of Chittagong city. Most of the roads in Dhaka, Chittagong and several other districts went under water after it rained throughout Sunday night and all day yesterday causing trouble for people.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN/ PRABIR DAS



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'Plot to kill Islamic scholar' foiled

6 'Neo JMB' militants held in Dhaka; they 'planned attacks to mark Artisan anniversary'; 3 suspects held in Rajshahi; Rab detains 'key JMB man' in Demra

STAR REPORT

Counterterrorism officials have arrested six suspected "Neo JMB" men who allegedly planned to carry out attacks in Ramadan to mark the anniversary of deadly Gulshan café siege.

"As part of the plan, they had attempted to kill a top Islamic scholar who is vocal against militancy," Monirul Islam, chief of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of DMP, said at a briefing yesterday.

"The militants were preparing to respond to the call from international terror outfits Islamic State and AQIS for Muslims to launch attacks this month," Monirul told newsmen at the DMP Media Centre.

The suspects were arrested during a raid in New Market area in the capital around 3:35pm on Sunday with some documents

and several pen drives and memory cards containing extremist materials, he added.

Three other suspected "Neo JMB" operatives were arrested in a raid on a house in Rajshahi on Sunday midnight. Police said they seized a pistol loaded with five bullets, two suicide vests and explosives from the house.

Besides, Rab claimed to have arrested the ameer of Shariah Board of "Sarwar-Tamim faction" of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) from Demra in the capital yesterday.

NEW MARKET RAID

Two of those arrested in New Market area, Jahidul Islam alias Zoha alias Mashrur, 23, Abu Bakar Siddique alias Abu Mohammad, 19, had already done a recce of the house of the scholar, the CTTC chief said.

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Editor sued for report on MP, sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Habiganj court yesterday sent Golam Mostofa Rafiq, editor of a local daily, to jail in a case filed under the ICT Act.

Afruz Mia, president of Pukra union unit Jubo League, on Sunday lodged the case against Mostofa and two others with Baniachang Police Station for allegedly running a false report on Abdul Majid Khan, ruling Awami League lawmaker of Habiganj-2 (Baniachang-Azmirigan constituency), on June 8.

Others accused in the case are Rasel Chowdhury, acting editor of the Daily Habiganj Samachar, and Niharanjon Saha Niru, managing editor of the daily.

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Journey home for Eid may be tough this time too

Many key points on highways still left in poor condition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Like previous years, Eid holidaymakers may have to endure tailbacks while heading home this year as well thanks to poor condition of highways at some key points, say leaders of a platform working to ensure passengers' welfare.

Traffic slows to a crawl at those points and some of the vehicles even break down hitting large potholes, leading to gridlocks, they said.

The leaders also called upon the government to take steps so that vehicles can go easily through the traffic congestion-prone areas during the Eid holidays.

Every year, Eid holidaymakers brave traffic gridlocks on highways to celebrate the festival with their near and dear ones back at home. However, during the past couple of years, they went through intolerable sufferings as vehicles remained stranded in huge tailbacks for hours at several places of Dhaka-Chittagong, Dhaka-Tangail, Gazipur-Tangail and Dhaka-Sylhet highways.

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The ticket heat is on

People throng rail station, bus terminals for advance tickets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around midnight, people began gathering in front of closed ticket counters in the capital's bus terminals and railway stations so that they could grab advance tickets for their Eid travel before all seats were sold out.

They had their sehri there, and as the counters opened yesterday morning, they all lined up to buy tickets of the day they wish to travel to their village homes ahead of the festival.

Most of them seemed to have shrugged off the fatigue from their overnight wait as they got the tickets. Some people arrived at the terminals and Kamalapur station in the morning

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Sarfraz carries Pak into semis

Bangladesh to play India; Pakistan will face England

AFP, Cardiff

Sarfraz Ahmed produced a superb captain's innings following a top-order collapse to see Pakistan into the semi-finals of the Champions Trophy with a three-wicket win over Sri Lanka at Cardiff on Monday.

Pakistan's win confirms the semifinal lineup with Bangladesh taking on India in Birmingham on Thursday, while Pakistan will return to Sophia Gardens for a last-four clash with tournament hosts England in Cardiff on Wednesday.

Pakistan, chasing a seemingly modest 237 to win, slumped to 162 for seven.

But Sarfraz's 61 not out and Mohammad Amir's 28 not out saw Pakistan home with 31 balls to spare after they shared an unbroken eighth-wicket partnership of 75.

Man-of-the-match Sarfraz, crucially dropped twice, ended the contest when he uppercut Lasith Malinga for four.

It was his fifth boundary in 79 balls and led the joyous wicket-keeper to run a semi-circle round the ground.

Earlier, Pakistan induced a middle-order collapse as Sri Lanka slumped to 236 all out.

Both Pakistan and Sri Lanka had to win on Monday to join already qualified title-holders India from Group B in the knockout stages of a tournament featuring the world's top eight one-day international sides.

In what was a 'must-win match' for both sides, Sri Lanka were dismissed for 236 -- well below the modern-day ODI 'par' total of 300.

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PROPOSED 15PC VAT Plastic crockery to get pricier

SOHEL PARVEZ

Plastic crockery has seen a steady rise in sales over the last several years mainly due to its growing popularity among middle and low-income families for relatively cheap prices and more durability than glassware.

But this is likely to change soon as the prices of these items would go up for the withdrawal of VAT exemption benefit on them.

Uniform 15 percent VAT is going to be slapped on plastic crockery and some kitchenware once the new VAT law takes effect on July 1.

Industry operators fear the imposition of VAT on these items will push up the prices, eroding the purchasing capacity of consumers, particularly those from low and middle-income groups.

"People living in rural and suburban areas are our main consumers. When prices will increase, demand from this section of people will fall, resulting in a slowdown in growth of the sector," said Md Jashim Uddin, president of Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BPGMEA).

The concern comes as the government is going to implement the much-talked-about VAT and Supplementary Duty Act 2012 from July 1, doing away with multiple VAT rates now applicable for more than 100 goods and services.

The imposition of the flat VAT rate is feared to fuel living costs and affect people, particularly those from low and middle-income groups.

People will have to spend more to buy various items such as garment and furniture though the finance minister offered concessions to small and medium firms and VAT exemptions to 1,042 items, instead of 536 items under the VAT Act 1991.

Many of the products, which will get VAT exemptions, are not essential items.

Some consumers say that if plastic crockery prices rise for imposition of 15 percent VAT, many would go for imported products, instead of locally manufactured ones.

Until now, manufacturers have to pay VAT on import of raw materials for plastic crockery but there is no indirect tax at the production level, according to industry insiders.

"Prices of these items are going to increase for imposition of 15 percent

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