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**NEW FELUDA**

Parambrata to play the sleuth in TV series for Bangladesh audience

PAGE 8

'WITCH HUNT' AGAINST TRUMP!

The US president says he is being investigated for his role in firing ex-FBI director James Comey

PAGE 10

Rough ride ahead

Eid holidaymakers, bus operators wary of trouble on highways as people are about to start leaving city

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Thousands of Eid holidaymakers may suffer in traffic jam if the authorities fail to control vehicular movement at some key points of the highways.

Traffic either slows to a crawl or goes haywire at those points, leaving people trapped in tailbacks for hours during the Eid rush.

Narrow and worn-out roads, unplanned intersections, narrow bridges, illegal roadside markets and the authorities' inability to control so many vehicles are mainly to blame, say transport experts, bus operators and passengers.

Besides, thousands of unfit and over-loaded vehicles are likely to hit the streets ahead of the festival. Many of them may break down right in the middle of the road, creating tailbacks.

This time, rain could make things even worse for an estimated 80 lakh

MAJOR CHALLENGES

- HUGE PRESSURE OF VEHICLES
- TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT
- EXIT POINTS OF DHAKA
- BAD CONDITION OF ROADS
- OVERTLOADING
- ILLEGAL STRUCTURES ON HIGHWAYS

holidaymakers who would travel to their home from the capital. The rush ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr is expected to begin on June 22, they said.

Those heading for southern districts in buses through the Paturia and Daulatdia ferry ghats are likely to get trapped in traffic snarl-ups for hours near the terminals. It's because hundreds of buses would race for spots in only 19 ferries, leading to traffic chaos.

Talking to The Daily Star on Thursday, transport expert Prof Shamsul Haque said "unplanned" intersections also hinder free movement of traffic on the highways. He said such intersections contribute a lot to traffic congestions.

"All our national highways have numerous intersections. Usually, vehicles get stuck for sometime at these intersections. But vehicles virtually come to a halt at those intersections during the Eid rush as traffic

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



At least 186 people were killed and 746 injured in 121 road accidents during the last Eid-ul-Fitr holidays

CHOKE POINTS ON 5 HIGHWAYS**DHAKA-CHITTAGONG**

Kanchpur bridge &

Meghna bridge

DHAKA-SYLHET

Gawsia market of

Narayanganj's Bhulta

(four-lane flyover)

DHAKA-TANGAIL

Bhogra intersection;

Chandra intersection of

Gazipur up to Mirzapur of

Tangail (15 km stretch);

level crossing at Dherua in

Mirzapur

DHAKA-ARICHA-KHULNA

Nabnagar intersection;

Paturia-Daulatdia ferry

terminals; detour through

Jhenidah

DHAKA-MYMENSINGH

Tongi bridge to Joydevpur

Chourasta (road shrunk to

two-lane from four-lane)

SOURCES: NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PROTECT SHIPPING, ROADS & RAILWAYS; BANGLADESH JATRI KALYAN SAMITY

**TOP! QUOTE**

"We want the trend of democracy to continue ... we want that they [BNP] don't commit the mistake of skipping election again. We want them to contest the elections."

PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA AT A CIVIC RECEPTION IN STOCKHOLM ON THURSDAY

Call for rehabilitation, relief gets louder

Food supply inadequate at shelters for Rangamati landslide victims

HASAN JAHID TUSHAR and MINHAJ UDDIN, from Rangamati

Nur Nahar was sitting despondently on the second floor of Bangladesh Radio sub-station shelter centre yesterday afternoon. On her lap was a six-month-old boy, constantly crying. It was clear the baby has breathing difficulties.

"My grandson caught cold after getting drenched by the rain during the landslide," said Nahar, 50.

She first took shelter at the passport office in Rangamati town on Tuesday following the country's deadliest landslide. There, a doctor examined her grandson and prescribed some medicines. But the centre didn't have those, and she didn't have any money to buy the drugs from

LANDSLIDES DEATH TOLL 150

outside.

Two days later, Nahar was relocated at the nearby Bangladesh Radio centre. "Here too, a doctor from the army came to see us but could not give us the medicines," said the anxious grandmother.

But those living here are grateful that they are getting food on time. However, those at the town's Juba Unnayan shelter centre are not so lucky. Some 118 indigenous people have taken shelter there.

All of them were hungry when these correspondents went there around 5:30pm.

"We got no cooked food for lunch today. Around 2:30pm, some 20kg rice, four raw jackfruits, some chillies and onions were sent to the shelter centre.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladesh 84th in global peace index

3rd most peaceful country in South Asia

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Bangladesh has been ranked the third most peaceful country in South Asia, faring better than India, Pakistan and Nepal in the Global Peace Index (GPI) 2017.

Bangladesh is ranked 84, down a notch from last year, out of 163 countries with a global score of 2,035, according to the latest report published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

The Sydney based think tank found that level of peace around the world improved slightly for the first time since the Syrian war began in 2011.

The report, however, said level of harmony deteriorated and terrorism records increased.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 2

Fresh VAT burden on weavers

SOHEL PARVEZ

Thirty years ago, Nilkamal Basak began weaving the much-coveted Tangail sari to take his family profession forward.

He didn't have to pay VAT until the revenue officials last year asked him and his colleagues in Pathrail, Tangail to pay a fixed amount as package VAT against sales of saris.

The weavers paid it to avoid any unnecessary hassle.

However, they are now confronting a new reality. A flat 15 percent VAT is going to be slapped on their products once the VAT and Supplementary Duty Act, 2012 comes into effect from July 1.

This is not the end.

Local fashion boutiques, the main promoters and sellers of handloom clothes, are also going to be under the purview of 15 percent VAT from the beginning of next month, up from 4 percent.

For Nilkamal, this is not good news at a time when the weavers are under pressure from falling demand for sari and influx of Indian saris through legal and illegal channels. The demand for saris is on the wane as more women prefer to wear salwar-kameez.

"Prices of saris will rise if 15 percent VAT is slapped on weavers. This would only compound our misery," said Nilkamal over phone.

Also, other handloom fabrics such as lungi and napkin known as

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

IS chief killed in airstrike?

Russian army for verification of claim

AFP, Moscow

The Russian army yesterday said it was seeking to verify whether Islamic State chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had been killed after its warplanes hit the group's leaders in a night raid in Syria last month.

The United States said it could not immediately confirm Baghdadi's death.

In a statement, the army said Sukhoi warplanes carried out a 10-minute strike early on May 28 at a location near Raqa, where IS leaders had gathered to plan a pullout by militants from the group's stronghold.

"Senior commanders of

Minara Begum, with her daughter, breaks down in tears at the sight of the body of her 12-year-old son Mujibur Rahman, who was buried under Tuesday's deadly landslide in Rangamati. The body was recovered around noon yesterday.

CLASH OVER HAWKER EVICTION 3 cops among 15 hurt in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 15 people, including three policemen, were injured in a clash between police and hawkers in Chittagong's New Market area over an eviction drive yesterday.

According to witnesses, when police went to evict them from a street in the area around 3:30pm, hawkers chased them and hurled brick chips at them.

Police then made a counter chase, fired rubber bullets and teargas shells to bring the situation under control.

When police went to tell the hawkers not to sit on the street, which created a hindrance to public movement, they attacked the police, said Jashim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Three policemen were wounded as the hawkers hurled brick chips at them, he claimed, adding that they detained nine hawkers from the spot.

Miran Hossain Milon, president of Chittagong Samilita Hawkers' Federation, claimed that some 10 to 15 hawkers were injured as police beat them up and also fired rubber bullets.

He, however, could not ascertain whether any of the hawkers was hit by rubber bullets.

Police had evicted the hawkers, who used to do business sitting on drain and footpath in the New Market area, on the second day of Ramadan, he said.

He added that the hawkers sat there again yesterday.

Miran said for the last couple of days, they had been demanding that police allow them to run their business there 10 days ahead of Eid.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS