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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE
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PONDS of Dhaka
VANISHING FAST
Almost all ponds of DSCC Ward-54 are lost to urbanisation
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CHINA 'FAILED'
Says Donald Trump on Beijing's effort to reign in North Korea
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HOLIDAYMAKERS hit highways

Mad rush begins today as 80 lakh people set to leave Dhaka

WASIM BIN HARBIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY
Amid growing concerns of tailbacks on highways, holidaymakers have started leaving the capital for homes to celebrate Eid with their loved ones, and the rush is expected to gain momentum today.

- 1.29 crore people to leave Dhaka, Gazipur, N'ganj
- 55% to use roads, 20% railways, 25% waterways
- 20.4% of national highways in poor to very bad condition
- 30.69% regional highways in poor to very bad condition

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Today will be the last working day before the Eid vacation and thousands of people would hit the road after work in the afternoon. The rush is likely to continue for the next two days. Although the authorities concerned have advised people of taking adequate measures to suffering, transport operators fear that the traffic will go haywire if it rains, which would not only slow down the vehicles but also damage the roads.

Some of the major highways have already been witnessing tailbacks, thanks to pothole-ridden roads, ongoing works to upgrade roads, and car crashes in the last few days, they added.

Only yesterday, people were caught in 10km tailbacks between Meghna Bridge and Bhabar Char Bazar for several hours, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

A truck broke down on the Meghna Bridge around 7:00am causing the jam. Traffic flow remained affected long after the truck was moved from the spot.



A train stops around 1.5 km ahead of Tejgaon Railway Station in Nakhlapara in the capital around 11:45am on June 10. Trains make such unscheduled stops allegedly to drop off drug peddlers and contrabands.

PHOTO: RASHID SHUMON

Lailatul Qadr tonight

Muslims across the country will observe the holy Lailatul Qadr tonight with due religious fervour and devotion.
The holy Quran was revealed to Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) on this night to show mankind the path of worldly and eternal emancipation.
According to the holy Quran, the night is superior to 1,000 nights.
Devotees will pray the night offering special prayers, reciting from the holy Quran and holding milad mahfil and zikr.
In their prayers, they will seek divine blessings for themselves, the country and Muslim Ummah.
Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Retar, private TV channels and radio stations will broadcast programmes while newspapers will publish special.

A gesture of compassion

District admin staff decide to celebrate Eid with the victims

HASAN JAHD TUSHIER, from Rangamati
In a unique gesture to stand by the landslide victims, the Rangamati district administration has decided to celebrate the Eid-ul-Fitr with them at 19 shelter centres.
The administration staff will buy new clothes for about 3,000 people with money they were supposed to spend for themselves and their family members on the occasion of Eid.
Some 150 officials and employees donated their one-day salary to the victims who lost everything in the June 13 disaster that claimed 120 lives in the district. They are not taking the Eid leave either.
"We want every people at the shelters get at least one new dress. We are buying clothes for them," said Executive Magistrate KM Ikhtiar Uddin Arafat, also the spokesperson for the district disaster control centre.
The staff of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board and Bandarban fisheries office have also pitched in to help the victims by donating their one-day salary.

Stops suddenly, but with a purpose

Drugs enter Dhaka as incoming trains halt at non-designated spots to let traders get down safely

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN
Around 10:45am on Sunday, Egaro Sindhur Provati, the express-train from Kishoreganj, slowed right down around half a kilometre before Tejgaon Railway Station. It eventually stopped for 30 seconds before it got moving again.
But within this half a minute, scores of people got down from the train and many of them had sacks on their heads. They disappeared within moments.
Egaro Sindhur Provati driver claimed that he stopped the train "as a large number of passengers get down at Tejgaon". "We stopped outside the station as we are not supposed to stop at the Tejgaon station," he added.
However, sources tell The Daily Star that drug traffickers pay railway

police and staff for using the 17 trains that travel between Dhaka, Brahmanbaria and Bhabar every day to transport their contraband and the unscheduled stops were for dropping peddlers and contrabands off.
And it is a regular and organised affair.
A drug trafficker told this paper that they pay Tk 150 for each pair of Phensidyl bottles they get transported and Tk 800 to Tk 1,000 for every kilogram of marijuana.
When traffickers do not travel with their smuggled goods, they ship them on trains and attach special tags on the packages so that railway police and staff know where the packages have to be dropped off and that the bribe has been paid.
A package could have a tag with the image of a chicken, a fish, a

football or a rose.
If a package is loaded on a train in Akhaura and has the fish tag, it is supposed to be dropped off in Bhairab. Rose marked packages have to be dropped off in Brahmanbaria, football marked ones in Narasingdi, and chicken tagged ones in the capital.
If railway police see the tags, they would not check those, said the drug trafficker.
Trains slow down or have unauthorised stops at places so that the packages could be offloaded, sources said.
Abdus Sattar, officer-in-charge of Akhaura Government Railway Police (GRP), outright refused the allegation.
He told The Daily Star on Sunday that drug peddlers might have used the "package system" before to transport

ATTACK ON FAKHRI 26 ruling party men sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Twenty-six activists of the ruling Awami League and its front organisations have been sued over the attack on BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir's motorcade in Chittagong's Rangunia upazila.
The accused include Abu Tayab, general secretary of Chittagong north district unit BCL, Pavel, vice-president of Rangunia upazila BCL, Russel alias Rashid, joint secretary of Rangunia upazila BCL, Bhal Hossain Bablu, former union-leader of Svedchhasebak League, and Jubo League activists Md Sarwar and Najim Uddin Badshah.
Besides the ruling party men, 25 to 30 unknown people have been accused in the case.
Enamul Haq, a member of pro-BNP lawyers' organisation Jatrayatabadi Ainjibi

PM tells JS of 2041 goal

\$12,000 per capita income, economy \$2.5 trillion
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Bangladesh's per capita income would reach \$12,000 and the size of its economy \$2.5 trillion by 2041, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in parliament yesterday.
"By 2041, Bangladesh economy will be the centre of the Asian economy. The country will play a remarkable role in [maintaining] the local supply chain and the global value chain as well as in establishing and sub-regional communication and connectivity," she said in reply to lawmakers' queries.
Hasina noted that the open economy policies of her government would create a new era of success by ensuring a win-win situation for all in the areas of trade, commerce and investment in regional.



With flowers, Commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police welcomes drug dealers and addicts who surrendered to the police at an event in Boalia of Rajshahi city earlier this year.

Breaking the drug cycle

Police commissioner's innovative approach halves dealing in Rajshahi

ANWAR ALI with ANDREW EAGLE
Until four years ago, 32-year-old housewife Sohagi from Rajshahi city's Guripara was happy with her life. Her husband Motiur Rahman was a plumber. Family expenses were met. It changed when Motiur fell from a three-storey building and broke his backbone. Unable to work, he spent hours at home. Guripara was a haven drug zone. Motiur became a heroin addict and later a dealer. He involved ag in the trade. Her dream of a quiet life was shattered.
"I had no time for my son," she recalls. "Police chased us. Neighbours hated us. We wanted a normal life. Nobody listened."
The situation seemed hopeless. But in November last year, Motiur and Sohagi, along with all the drug dealers in Rajshahi city, were offered a life-changing second chance from a most unexpected quarter: the city's police commissioner.
Md Shafiqul Islam was first appointed commissioner of the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police in June 2016. He knew firsthand how drug destroy lives. The young son of a close relative, who had once been a meritorious student, was

ASP found murdered on city outskirts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
An assistant superintendent of police (ASP) of Savar highway circle was killed by unidentified assailants hours after he left his Uttara residence to join work at Kaliakoti in Gazipur yesterday.
Police recovered the body of ASP Mizanur Rahman Talukder, 50, from near Birualia Bridge around 11:30am, possibly dumped by the assailants after killing him at some other place, said Syed Shahid Alam, officer-in-charge of Rupnagar Police Station.
A piece of cloth was found wrapped around his neck, he said.
According to the inquest report, the body bore marks of injuries on the forehead.



Mizanur Rahman Talukder