

# EMPTY ROADS: WHAT DO THEY REALLY MEAN?

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If you come across empty roads in Dhaka, it can only mean one of these two things: a zombie invasion and people have shut themselves in, or, it's Eid!

Since a drastic attack has not been forecasted, it would be safe to assume that the reason why our city has started to become 'abandoned' is the next of the upcoming Eid. In the best few days, Dhaka will turn into an almost deserted town. Well, that's a little bit of exaggeration, may be, but given the mess that has been the streets of Dhaka in the past couple of weeks or so, Eid indeed is set to make a drastic difference.

The pre-Eid rush and frenzy is overwhelming and takes a heavy toll on the traffic. If congestion could not make you miss or delay your office plans even for a day, you don't know what would; you're unbearable. The jam-packed roads - and heavy rainfalls - make matters even worse - have made Dhaka rather unbearable.

But slowly but surely, the city is starting to relax again. According to yesterday's front page report on 'The Daily Star, 'Holidmakers Hit Highways', an estimated 80 lakh people are leaving the city for Eid! Now, that's a staggering number!

No wonder the roads become so empty, even desolate to some extent. What is the empty roads mean? Dhaka's story is largely shaped by those who have come and settled in from other places of the



PHOTO: TOUKER AHMED TANVEE

country. The university student who shares an apartment with his batchmates, the garment worker who works hard for her family, the rickshaw-driver who pulls through the rain to send a little more cash back to his village, your domestic helper, your chauffeur, the businessman in pursuit of the riches - this list can go on and on. These are the people who have left the comfort of their homes - at their own cities, smaller towns, or villages - for better livelihood or education. They have made a huge contribution to what Dhaka is today.

The empty roads point out how desperately we need proper infrastructure and facilities throughout the country, so that we can curb

migration towards Dhaka. Otherwise, we will simply continue to overburden one city.

Meanwhile, the Eid holidays are the perfect time for a leisurely ride. Driving in Dhaka is a nightmare for many, but the empty roads provide the rare opportunity of actually enjoying a ride. And have you realised how 'small' the city seems, given that we get to cover larger distances in smaller time periods?

"If only the roads could remain like this all throughout the year!" a common wish goes.

Well, enjoy the empty roads while they last! Eid Mubarak! N.B. The 'Streets of Dhaka' series will again resume from 7 July, 2017.

Streets of DHAKA

# Ministers stand by Muhith

FROM PAGE 1  
Some of them also attacked Muhith personally for his failure to take actions against those involved in bank scams, corruption and money laundering.

Jatiya Party MPs - Ziauddin Ahmed (Tasleem) and Kazi Feroz Rashid - on Tuesday called upon the finance minister to resign with honour due to his old age.

But the tide began flowing in the opposite direction after AL senior MP and Commerce Minister Toal Ahmed gave a speech in parliament on Wednesday extending his support to Muhith.

Tal even criticized the cabinet members who had lambasted the finance minister in parliament.

In yesterday's budget discussion, no lawmakers, either from the opposition or treasury bench, attacked or criticized the finance minister.

Information Minister Hasnul Haq Inu said debates over an everywhere key part of learning.

In fact, the purpose of our 'memory' is not to remember facts, but to help making intelligent decisions by retaining only valuable information. So the brain is not malfunctioning when it forgets something, it may have been actively trying to ditch the memory so it can focus on something more important or create a picture that is easier to understand.

One of the authors of the paper, Professor Blake Richards, of Toronto University, said, "It's important that the brain forgets irrelevant details and

minister has placed the huge size budget as per the prime minister's instructions."

Clinging back to those who had criticized Muhith, Inu, president of Jatiya Samitranik Dal, a component of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance, also said, "It is unfair that you will praise the country's economy and at the same time you will say that the finance minister is a failed minister."

"Success of the economy means the finance minister is successful and success of the finance ministry means our prime minister is successful."

Inu, however, recommended that the government suspend the implementation of the new VAT law until next year.

Regarding widespread criticism of excise duty, Health Minister Mohammad Nasim said he hoped the finance minister would bring changes in the proposed budget considering what was good for people.

AL MP Abdul Matin Khoshru said, "We feel proud of a person like Inu who is the finance minister. The nation was embarrassed for a while some MPs tarred and hoisted him. He is a senior citizen. What will the nation learn from us if we talk like this in parliament?"

JSD MP Rejal Karim Tanin saluted the finance minister for placing a time-befitting budget.

# Being forgetful isn't stupid

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instead focuses on the stuff that's going to help make decisions in the real world.

If you're trying to navigate the world and your brain is constantly bringing up multiple conflicting memories, that makes it harder for you to make an informed decision."

What information is discarded depends on the situation.

"One of the things that distinguishes an environment where you're going to want to remember stuff versus an environment where you want to forget stuff is this question: how consistent the environment is and how

likely things are to come back into your life," Professor Richards said.

For example, someone like a supermarket cashier who meets many people every day will probably only remember them for a short time, while a barista working from their own coffee van would start to remember the regulars.

The paper in Neuron said the "predominant focus" in the study of memory had been on remembering or 'persistence'.

"However, recent studies have considered the neurobiology of forgetting (transience)," the paper said.

# First shipment of rice to reach Ctg in 15 days

Vietnam envoy tells PM

LINB, Bhatnagar

The first shipment of rice from Vietnam is scheduled to arrive in Chittagong in 15 days.

Vietnamese Ambassador in Dhaka Tran Van Khoa said yesterday.

The newly appointed envoy said this in a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her parliament office.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said the envoy expressed satisfaction over the extension of an MoU on rice trade with Bangladesh.

The PM said the government is expected to keep extra grains in stock to cope with any eventuality.

She said Vietnam achieved remarkable success in socioeconomic development after her parliament opening in 2013 and we follow it. We had to fight for independence like Vietnam."

She stressed the need for strengthening connectivity and economic cooperation between Bangladesh and Southeast Asian nations.

Bangladesh and Vietnam could share their experiences in different fields like trade and culture, she added.

Describing BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir hit him and another CNG driver Abdul Aziz Emon, injuring them.

When agitated locals protested the incident, the accused in the case attacked them and vandalised two CNGs. Locals then took the injured

# Easy at exits, tough on highways

FROM PAGE 1

terminal in Manikganj.

Transport operators said the Eid rush began a few days back and they were expecting a huge flow of home goers in the next two days. The situation is almost the same for rail and river routes.

Three correspondents of this newspaper visited Gabtoli, Sayedabad and Mohakhali bus terminals and found the crowds swelling in the afternoon.

The passengers who bought advanced tickets started thronging the terminals since morning and waited for their transports with family members as well as luggage.

Many people who didn't buy advanced tickets, were seen striding the counters. Some of them got tickets but complained that bus operators charged additional fees.

Abdul Jalil, an elderly person at Gabtoli bus terminal, said he managed a ticket for an afternoon trip after offering additional Tk 170.

"I checked other counters but no tickets were available. I managed one at a higher price. I have nothing to do as I need to go home," said Jalil, who was on way to Jhikargacha in lessore.

However, the holidaymakers who started from Sayedabad terminal had to suffer at Jatabari intersection, thanks to the poor condition of the road. Many complained that it took about an hour to cross the intersection.

People started thronging Mohakhali bus terminal in the afternoon.

"We did not face any hassle to get tickets," said Jasmine, a housewife from Chankharul. Many other passengers experienced the same.

Jasmine bought tickets of Hazrat Shahjalal (R) Express bus to go to Netrakona.

Despite the setting up of a booth of vigilance team, commuters alleged that some bus operators, especially on Dhaka-Sherpur and Dhaka-Sirajgonj routes, charged additional Tk 100 without mentioning the fare on tickets.

DHAKA-CHITTAGONG HIGHWAY  
Severe traffic congestion was created on Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday morning. The tailback became 13km-long, stretching from Meghna bridge to Baushia.

Bhoberchar Highway Police Box Sub-Inspector Md Hasem Uddin said they were trying to control the situation.

Meanwhile, a six-kilometre tailback formed between Gouripur bus stand and Meghna-Gumti toll plaza.

Bus drivers said the vehicles had been moving too slowly since morning because of slow issuance of tickets from the toll plaza, reports our Comilla correspondent.

There was a 2km jam at Padura Bazar crossing and the highway police blamed it on extra pressure of vehicles.

DHAKA-TANGAIL HIGHWAY  
There were tailbacks at different spots on the seven-kilometre stretch on this highway from Rabna byenga in Tangail Sadar upazila to Elenga in

Kalhati upazila yesterday noon because of the flood condition.

Our Tangail correspondent saw law enforcers struggling to ease the situation at the ferry terminal.

Sajeedul Islam, a traffic inspector of Tangail police, said, "The seven-kilometre stretch is the narrowest portion on the highway. There remains no room for each other."

"Moreover, the condition of the road this year is bad with numerous potholes. We fear serious chaos in the next two days."

The workers of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) were found repairing some of the potholes at Elenga around noon.

Shamol Chandra Saha, driver of a Rajshahi-bound bus, said the last moment repairing by the RHD at this time was causing traffic chaos.

PATURIA  
The pressure of passengers and vehicles increased at Paturia ferry terminal in Manikganj. More than 200 buses were seen in a long queue around 3:00pm yesterday.

However, the terminal authorities claimed the situation was normal.

There are 14 ferries in operation on Paturia-Daulatdia ferry route. Two more ferries will be added in two days, said Aimal Hossain, deputy general manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWT), Aricha regional office.

Mahfuzur Rahman, superintendent of police in Manikganj, said

more than 800 members of Rabta, Anar, APBN and Community Police were deployed along with 600 policemen to ensure smooth collection at the ferry terminal.

DHAKA-SYLHET HIGHWAY  
Although the pressure of vehicles on this highway increased in the second half of the day yesterday, there was no severe gridlock there, our Narayanganj correspondent reports quoting drivers, locals and police.

While information is discarded depends on the situation.

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likely things are to come back into your life," Professor Richards said.

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hours, one of the correspondents found the number of passengers directly after 1:00pm. Many of them increasing came to the station from office.

Comilla-bound Comilla  
Commuter was delayed by around two hours. Chaperones at the terminal of Rajshahi Express by 70 minutes and Khulna-bound Sundarbans Express by 20 minutes.

Stangshu said a total of 68 trains, including two special ones, left Dhaka yesterday for different routes. These trains have some 50, 000 seats but some 75,000 people will leave Dhaka everyday during this vacation, he added.

Day Labourer Rafiqul Islam came to the station around 2:00pm and got his ticket for Mymensingh. "I thought I would not get any ticket but it was less crowded today," he said.

LAUNCH  
Around 25 launches left from Sadarhat Launch terminal in the afternoon, said Rahat Mannan, a magistrate of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

A comparatively lesser number of holidaymakers are expected to be seen in the morning, with many staff asking people to board their launches. Launch owners and port officials expect rush of passengers early today.

# ATTACK ON FAKHRUL

Now a case filed against 26 BNP men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

A day after a case was filed against the ruling Awami League men over the attack on the BNP secretary general's motorcade, another case was lodged with the same Chittagong court yesterday afternoon, accusing 26 BNP activists of attacking CNG drivers in Chittagong's Rangunia upazila on Sunday.

One Md Mohsin of Rangunia municipality area lodged the case with Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Shahidullah Kaiser under the Speedy Trial Act.

The case statement, the plaintiff introduced himself as a CNG driver. He stated that he was waiting in front of Ichhakhali Health Complex of Rangunia for passengers around 10:40am on Sunday, the speedy vehicle carrying BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir hit him and another CNG driver Abdul Aziz Emon, injuring them.

When agitated locals protested the incident, the accused in the case attacked them and vandalised two CNGs. Locals then took the injured



They are all students, affected by the deadly landslide in Rangamati. Their books and study materials were buried when the disaster struck the hill district on June 13. Sheltered at BADC building, they are worried about how they will continue their study. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# RANGAMATI LANDSLIDES

## School-goers stare at bleak future

HASSAN AHMAD TUSHER, back from Rangamati

Hassan Begum is still numb from the shock of losing her husband in the landslide that reduced all her valuables and belongings to ruins just a week ago. But the thought of the future of her school-going children is what sends shudders down her spine, unsettling her even further.

With all their textbooks gone, the children, aged 14 and 12, had nothing left and no place to study as they are now staying at a shelter in Rangamati. As of yesterday, over 3200 people were living at 19 public shelters. Even in these heart-breaking circumstances, perhaps they are at least more fortunate than the 120 people who died in the landslides.

Her children, Md Arif and Tanzina Khatun, study at Rangamati Govt School and Rani Dayamoi High School in class six and seven respectively. With her children's half-yearly examination approaching, Hassa worries about how she will pay the tuition and examination fees along with other costs including the private tutor's fee. The mother, in her 30s, tries to think of ways but all she sees is dark days ahead.

"I don't know what will happen to my children now," said Hassa while talking to this correspondent at the Bangladesh Relief Shelter center.

"I have lost my house. The savings for my children's tuition and exam fees have been buried under the soil. I am now worried about the future of my children. I want to make them educated," she told The Daily Star at BADC Buildings shelter center.

She said she saved Tk 3,000 for her children's tuition and exam fees but the landslide took it all away and now she has