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Two kms in two hours

Rasulpur-Pungli stretch of Dhaka-Tangail highway almost impassable due to poor condition, 4-lane work

It takes vehicles about two hours to cross just a two-kilometre stretch of Dhaka-Tangail highway near Rasulpur and Pungli, said transport workers.

The condition of the road there is appalling, they said, adding that tailbacks of hundreds of vehicles are common. Though the road has been in a battered condition for the last couple of months, the authorities concerned are in no hurry to fix it properly, alleged transport workers, and traffic and highway police.

This correspondent yesterday saw several hundred vehicles, including buses and trucks, stuck on the two-kilometre stretch.

The patch repairs being done by the Roads and Highways Department are also deteriorating the traffic situation. The RHD has set up a contraflow there.

Traffic and highway policemen were seen struggling to ease the congestion.

Traffic Sergeant SM Shahid told this correspondent that gridlocks were a daily phenomenon for the last few months as the road was in a bad shape and expansion work of Joydevpur-Chandra-Tangail-Elenga road was going on.

"Numerous potholes, some of them really big, have appeared on the road, turning the road almost unusable for vehicular movement," he said.

"If the road is not repaired properly within the next few weeks, it will be a serious problem before Eid-ul-Azha," he

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Due to the bad shape of the road and the ongoing road expansion work, vehicles take almost two hours just to travel the two kilometres from Rasulpur to Pungli on Dhaka-Tangail highway. The tailbacks stretch for miles.

PHOTO: STAR

Charge sheet soon against that stepfather

Police say they have evidence of rape

STAR CORRESPONDENT

Police will soon press charges against stepfather Arman Hossain Sumon of raping his daughter.

Najmul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of the cyber crime unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that police had found evidence of Arman having raped the girl.

Besides, Arman, a sound engineer of a private TV channel, confessed to raping his daughter on Wednesday as he made his confessional statement before a magistrate.

Metropolitan Magistrate Ahsan Habib recorded his confessional statement under section 164 of the CrPc. He was then sent to jail.

"We will submit the charge sheet soon after receiving the medical report of the victim from hospital and forensic report from the Criminal Investigation Department," Najmul said.

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CONGESTION AT CIG PORT JS body blasts Shajahan Khan for 'inaction'

RASHIDUL HASAN

Members of the parliamentary standing committee on shipping ministry yesterday criticised Shajahan Khan for his ministry's "inaction" in reducing container congestion at the Chittagong port.

The seaport handles about 90 percent of the country's export-import trade. But unfortunately, vessels need to wait there for days to offload goods due to a shortage of jetties.

During a committee meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan, the members blamed the shipping ministry for not taking proper steps to build new jetties at the port in the last seven years.

In reply, Shajahan, also a member of the committee, hit back at the parliamentary watchdog, saying it "created obstacles" for his ministry to do its job, including purchase of equipment.

At one point, Maj Gen (ret'd) Rafiqul Islam, head of the JS body, and the minister had a slight altercation, said a meeting participant, wishing not to be named.

Later, Rafiqul rejected the allegation

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CIA halts support for Syria rebels

US officials say move part of an effort to improve Russia ties

REUTERS, Washington

The Trump administration has decided to halt the CIA's covert program to equip and train certain rebel groups fighting the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, two US officials said, a move sought by Assad ally Russia.

The US decision, said one of the officials, is part of an effort by the administration to improve relations with Russia, which along with Iran-supported groups has largely succeeded in preserving Assad's government in the six-year civil war.

The CIA program began in 2013 as part of efforts by the administration of then-President Barack Obama to overthrow Assad, but produced little success, said the officials, both of whom are familiar with the program and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The Washington Post was first to report the program's suspension on Wednesday. White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders declined to comment on the topic at the White House briefing.

The CIA also declined to comment.

The decision was made with National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster and CIA Director Mike Pompeo after they consulted with lower ranking officials and before Trump's July 7 meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the G-20 summit in Germany. It was not part of US-Russian negotiations on a ceasefire in southwestern Syria, the two officials said.

One of the officials said the United States was not making a major

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US, EU police close 'dark web' markets

AFP, Washington DC

US and European police yesterday announced the shutdown of two huge "dark web" marketplaces that allowed the anonymous online trade of drugs, hacking software and guns.

US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said underground websites AlphaBay and Hansa had tens of thousands of sellers of deadly drugs like fentanyl and other illicit goods serving more than 200,000 customers worldwide.

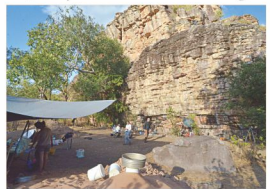
"This case, pursued by dedicated agents and prosecutors, says you are not safe, you cannot hide. We will find you, dismantle your organization and network, and we will prosecute you," Sessions said in a warning to dark web entrepreneurs.

The announcement came three weeks after AlphaBay stopped

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Aborigines in Australia for 65,000 years

Study reveals humans reached there 18,000 years earlier than thought



The excavation site at Madjedbebe, the oldest-known human occupation area in Australia.

PHOTO: AFP

AFP, Sydney

Aboriginal people have been in Australia for at least 65,000 years, longer than previously thought, roaming the area alongside giant megafauna, scientists said in a finding that sheds fresh light on when modern humans left Africa.

Australian Aborigines are believed to be custodians of the oldest continuous culture on the planet, but when they first arrived has been a contested issue. Previous estimates have ranged from 47,000 to

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KL sends back Adilur after detention at airport

STAR REPORT

Malaysia said it sent back Adilur Rahman Khan to Dhaka yesterday, with civil groups describing the treatment of the Bangladeshi rights activist as "harassment against human rights defenders".

Adilur, secretary of rights group Odhikar, was found to be "listed among the individuals banned from entering [Malaysia]" after he arrived at Kuala Lumpur International Airport early yesterday, Malaysia's immigration department said in a statement.

Adilur was due to speak at a two-day conference organised by the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network, reports AFP.

Rights group Voice of the Malaysian People (Saaram) earlier said Adilur was being kept incommunicado at the

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MONKEYS IN MISERY

Two monkeys with their babies waiting for food in Santoshpur under Madhupur upazila of Tangail. With mindless deforestation and no increase in the Tk 15,000 budget allocation for the conservation of the 300 monkeys who inhabit the surrounding areas, the wild monkeys now depend on villagers and tourists for their survival as food is no longer abundant in the forest.

PHOTO: STAR



PRAYER TIMING JULY 21

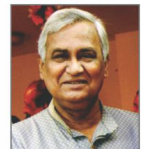
Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:15 12:30 5:00 6:54 8:15

JAMAAT 4:50 1:15 5:15 6:58 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Dua Mehfil



"You taught us everything, but forgot to teach us how to live without you...we wish you were here to tell us that everything is gonna be okay...we miss you."

We would like to inform all our family members, friends and well-wishers that the Dua Mehfil will be held on 21st July after Asar prayers for and in honour of Late Abdus Sobhan, who breathed his last on 10th June 2017. Please join us at "Prime Dell Residence" Gulshan-I to pray for the eternal peace and salvation of his departed soul.

- Family of Late Abdus Sobhan