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2018

Traffic nightmare for city dwellers

Eid shopping rush, metro rail construction cause long tailbacks on major roads

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Although traffic congestion has become way too common in the capital, the Eid shopping spree and ongoing construction work of metro rail in the middle of roads has exacerbated its severity.

The construction work of Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project has halved the road space on one of the busiest parts of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

People have also been suffering because of the shopping spree and holiday-makers rushing out of the city. The tailbacks become unbearable in the scorching heat.

The World Bank in an analysis two years ago said the average traffic speed in the capital per hour has dropped in a decade from 21km to just 7km, which is only slightly above the average walking speed.

Congestion in Dhaka costs about 3.2 million working hours every day, it said.

“In the last few days, it has been taking more than two hours to reach Karwanbazar from Sadarghat. It takes nearly an hour to go across Tantibazar and another to go past Shahbagh intersection,” said Soheli, assistant of a bus of Bihanga Paribahan.

“Before the Ramadan, we used to make four round trips. Now we only have time for three,” he told The Daily Star.

Due to construction work, the road from Shahbagh to Mirpur has been narrowed. Even at Iftar time, when streets become relatively quiet and empty, vehicles remain stationary on this road, thanks to the rush towards several shopping malls, including Basundhara City Complex and Shah Ali Market.

“The situation is worse than last year,” said Ahmed Ali, a traffic constable at Shahbagh.

On weekends, the crowd of shoppers became so immense that police

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President Abdul Hamid meets Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi yesterday. The president visited India to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the Indian premier.

PHOTO: PID

ROHINGYA ISSUE Modi pledges continued support for Bangladesh

Holds talks with President Hamid at Hyderabad House

BSS, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday assured that New Delhi’s cooperation in resolving the protracted Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh would continue as President Abdul Hamid met him at Hyderabad House.

“We think Rohingya issue should be resolved on an urgent basis. So, we always speak about this in different international forums,” Modi told the Bangladesh president during the meeting.

Later, the president’s press secretary M Joyanal Abedin briefed newsmen about the outcome of the meeting.

The Indian prime minister said Rohingya issue was not a problem of Bangladesh alone, it was a serious threat to whole South Asia.

Referring to longstanding and historical bilateral and friendly relations between the two countries, Modi said India and its people are always beside Bangladesh.

The Indian premier stressed the joint celebration of the golden jubilee of Bangladesh independence and observance of birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

“It will have a positive impact on multilateral

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PRY TEACHER RECRUITMENT 45 held over question leak

Mobile court sentences 12 of them in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police yesterday arrested some 45 people, including 10 women, from different areas of Patuakhali town for their alleged involvement in leaking the question paper of government primary schools’ assistant teacher recruitment test.

Of them, 12 were sentenced to different jail terms by a mobile court while the 33 others were produced before the court, said Nurul Hafiz, additional deputy magistrate of the district.

Of the convicts, Dipu Sikder, 24, and Saiful Mridha, 25, are staffers at the deputy commissioner’s office in the district, Hafiz said, adding that each of them was awarded one month of prison sentence.

Some officials were working on the last moment preparation for the test at a room in the DC office on Thursday night when the two entered the room without any permission and tried to get a hand on the question paper, Hafiz said.

They were caught in the act and handed over to police, the magistrate also said while addressing a press conference in the

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PM Modi rejigs Indian cabinet

Amit Shah takes home ministry, Rajnath gets defence; tough times ahead for Finance Minister Nirmala as data shows a slowing economy

AFP, New Delhi

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday named his trusted aide Amit Shah to the key home affairs ministry as part of a major cabinet shakeup for his second term in office.

Rajnath Singh will be defence minister. Nirmala Sitharaman moved from defence to become finance minister in a second shock, while career diplomat S Jaishankar became foreign minister. Nitin Gadkari is the minister of road transport and highways.

Hardline Hindu nationalist Shah was the president of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) who masterminded Modi’s second straight landslide victory in the country’s national election.

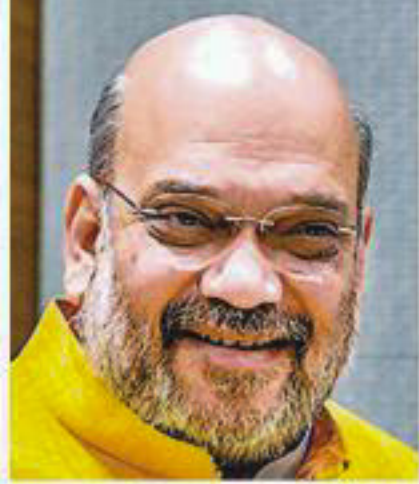
Shah, 54, will now pursue Modi’s nationalist agenda in internal security, immigration and other key national issues.

A controversial figure, Shah was accused of ordering police to carry out three extrajudicial killings in his home state of Gujarat in 2005. He was banished from the western state for two years before being cleared in 2014 for lack of evidence.

Recently he hit the headlines after comparing illegal immigrants to “termites” that must be thrown out of the country.

But he has been a close confidante of Modi for nearly two decades and some analysts say Shah is now in place to take over the party if Modi stood down.

“Congratulations to @AmitShah ji who transformed BJP into one of



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6th grader raped in Dinajpur

2 guards held; woman gang-raped in Hatia

STAR REPORT

A sixth grader was allegedly raped by two guards of a litchi orchard in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur yesterday after she went there to collect fallen litchis.

Meanwhile, police arrested three men in Noakhali’s Hatia upazila yesterday over the alleged gang rape of a woman the night before.

In Birganj of Dinajpur, local people caught the two suspected rapists -- Khalil Mia, 33, of Proshadpara village, and Ranjit Devnath, 30, of Shulshuli village.

The 13-year-old schoolgirl lives with her grandmother at a nearby house as her parents work at garment factories in Dhaka, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

Kutub Uddin, chairman of Shatagram Union Parishad in Birganj upazila,

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Hydrogen-powered flying machine ready for take-off



Ap, Los Angeles

A transportation company is betting its sleek new hydrogen-powered electric flying vehicles will someday serve as taxis, cargo carriers and ambulances of the sky, but experts say they will have to clear a number of regulatory hurdles before being approved for take-off years in the future.

With six rotors on the roof and seats inside for five people, a passenger model of the Skai (pronounced “sky”) unveiled Wednesday near Los Angeles resembles an oversized drone crossed with a luxury SUV.

Like a drone, the vehicle from Alaka’i Technologies takes off and lands vertically. It’s one

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HIT HARD BY LOW PRICES

Farmers fill a bag with paddy for sale in Jhalakathi’s Baukathi Bazar. Growers incurred a huge loss as they had to sell each 50kg bag of paddy for only Tk 450 to Tk 600. The upcoming Eid will not bring any joy to farmer Mantu Miah, top left, of Lalmonirhat’s Aditmari upazila as the staple is now priced well below production cost. Bottom left, paddy being loaded onto a trawler near the Baukathi Bazar. The photos were taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: STAR

ANTI-IMMIGRATION MEASURE US to hit Mexico with new tariffs

AFP, Washington

Washington will impose a five percent tariff on all goods from Mexico -- increasing to as much as 25 percent -- until “illegal migrants” stop coming through the country into the US, President Donald Trump said Thursday.

“On June 10th, the United States will impose a 5% Tariff on all goods coming into our Country from Mexico, until such time as illegal migrants coming through Mexico, and into our Country, STOP,” Trump tweeted.

“The Tariff will gradually increase until the Illegal Immigration problem is remedied, at which time the Tariffs will be removed,” he wrote.

According to a White House statement, the tariff will rise to 10 percent on July 1, then increase by five percent increments each month until topping out at 25 percent on October 1.

“Tariffs will permanently remain at the 25 percent level unless and until Mexico substantially stops the illegal inflow of aliens coming through its territory,” the statement said.

“If the illegal migration crisis is alleviated through effective actions taken by Mexico, to be determined in our sole discretion and judgment, the Tariffs will be removed,” it said.

The announcement came the same day that Trump kick-started the process of ratifying the new North American trade pact with Mexico and Canada -- an agreement that now may be under threat.

MEXICO RESPONDS

The tariffs would have severe consequences on Mexico, which sends 80 percent of its exports to the United States.

Mexico’s president said yesterday the country is “doing our job” to stop the flow of undocumented migrants to

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