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ইদ উপলক্ষে মার্চেল এসি কিনে পেতে পারেন লক্ষ লক্ষ টাকার ক্যাশব্যাক এছাড়াও রয়েছে নিশ্চিত ক্যাশ ভাউচার।

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EID HOLIDAYMAKING

Home trips turn chaotic

Long wait at bus, ferry terminals; ferries take more time due to strong current; trains run one to three hours' late

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eid holidaymakers faced long delay on their way home yesterday due to disruption of ferry services, long tailbacks on highways and late departure of some trains. Heavy rain throughout the day added to their woes.

People heading for south-western districts such as Khulna, Jessore and Barisal were among the worst victims, as they had to wait for hours, first at bus terminals and then at ferry terminals. Ferry services were disrupted because of strong current in the Padma river.

Those bound for north-eastern regions were stuck for hours in tailbacks on Dhaka-Bogura, Dhaka-Rajshahi and Dhaka-Mymensingh highways.

And as on the previous day, most intercity trains heading for north-western districts ran one to three hours behind schedule.

"The overall situation is very bad," said Osman Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation.

Although the three-day public holiday for Eid will begin Sunday, a large number of government and non-government employees left Dhaka yesterday. Many of them took leave for Wednesday (August 14), the only working day next week, to make their vacation longer.

FERRY TERMINALS

Ferry services at Shimulia-Kathalbari saw a huge pressure of vehicles yesterday as water vessel operation resumed after 17 hours of suspension due to rough wave and strong current in the Padma.

More than 300 vehicles were waiting at Shimulia at 7:00pm, said Abdul Alim, manager (commerce) of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Shimulia terminal.

Only four ferries were in operation in the morning due to bad weather. The authorities were able to operate all the 16 ferries only after 12:00noon, when weather became normal.

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Vehicles negotiate a flooded road in the capital's Nayapaltn area yesterday. Rain throughout the day inundated many streets in the city, causing people to suffer. Related story on page 2.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

PM returns home after 20 days

AGENCIES, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home yesterday morning from London, wrapping up her official visit to the United Kingdom.

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the PM touched down at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 10:45am.

Leaders of Awami League and its associate bodies greeted the PM at the Gono Bhaban after she reached there from the airport.

Meanwhile, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said the PM asked the authorities concerned to intensify the cleanliness programme to prevent the outbreak of

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DENGUE OUTBREAK

Cattle markets may heighten risks

Water of wet hay in the markets suitable for Aedes breeding, says expert; 2 more die; 34,666 infected so far

HELEMUL ALAM and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Heavy rains in Dhaka since Wednesday have increased the chances of Aedes mosquitoes breeding in cattle markets.

A total of 24 makeshift cattle markets, with several lakh sacrificial animals, have been set up for the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha. Experts fear the conditions there may become favourable for mosquitoes to breed.

"The water of wet hay is suitable for breeding by Aedes mosquitoes. If the water from the hay pools some place, that becomes an even more favourable place," said entomologist Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University.

He said they usually make ovitrap to collect Aedes mosquitoes and their eggs.

"We put water from wet hay into the ovitrap to attract Aedes mosquitoes to lay eggs," he said.

An ovitrap is a device which consists of a dark container with water and a substrate where mosquitoes can lay their eggs. The eggs then fall through the mesh into the water, where the larvae hatch and develop into pupas.

Bashar said straw was a staple in the diet for cows and many cattle traders would bring it to the markets. If there was continuous rain, the hay would get wet and then attract Aedes mosquitoes to lay eggs there.

"Cleaning the cattle markets properly is very important to destroy these breeding places," said Bashar.

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Hajj begins today

AFP, Makkah

More than 2.5 million Muslims will begin the annual hajj pilgrimage in the Islamic holy city of Makkah today.

Crowds of worshippers have already begun to gather in Makkah in the days ahead of the hajj, the focal point of the Islamic calendar.

"It's the first time I've felt something so strongly -- it's striking," said 40-year-old Indonesian pilgrim Sobar in rudimentary Arabic.

More than 1.8 million visitors had arrived by midday local time on Tuesday, Saudi authorities said.

Crowds of faithful from across the world were flowing white robes as they descended on the holy city located in the west of the ultra-conservative kingdom.

The pilgrims will undertake religious rites that have remained

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JASHORE-DHAKA HIGHWAY

Extortion stalks cattle trucks

MOKAMMEL SHUIVO, back from Jashore

Different transport workers' associations and local goons are extorting money from cattle-laden trucks at seven points on the Jashore-Dhaka highway.

Besides, local drivers alleged that monthly toll collection from trucks by a section of unscrupulous traffic personnel was going on as usual.

This was found during a journey on the 250km route.

This correspondent boarded a cattle-laden truck from Saatmile Bazar in Sharsa upazila of Jashore on Tuesday to get the first-hand knowledge of extortion from such vehicles.

Another purpose was to verify cattle traders' claim that illegal toll collection on highways is a big factor behind the high prices of the sacrificial animals.

According to truckers, police used to charge up to Tk 400 each from cattle-laden vehicles at several points on the highway, including Ramnagar in Magura, Rajbari intersection and Kanaipur in Faridpur, and Paturia. But it stopped around a week ago.

During the journey, the driver told this correspondent that they pay Tk 2,000 per month to a certain traffic police

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

RIFAT MURDER CASE

HC refuses to grant Minni bail

Her lawyer retracts petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has refused to grant bail to Ayesha Siddika Minni in connection with a case filed over her husband Rifat Sharif's murder.

The bench of Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman passed the order yesterday.

While hearing Minni's bail petition, the HC bench said it would issue a rule asking the government to explain why Minni should not be granted bail in the case.

Meanwhile, petitioner's advocate ZI Khan Panna withdrew the bail petition from the HC bench saying he would move the same petition before another HC bench.

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Rahima Akhter taking care of her daughter Jannatul at Mughda Medical College and Hospital in the capital yesterday. The girl, 7, was admitted to the hospital with dengue fever on Wednesday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

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