

## Nightmare for homegoers

Disorders at train, ferry and bus terminals; long tailbacks on either end of Bangabandhu bridge



**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Khaledun Nabi reached Kamalapur Railway Station around 7:00am yesterday. His train to Bogura was supposed to leave the station two hours later, but it did not even arrive at 2:15pm.  
Sitting on a platform, the man was struggling to feed his three-year-old son, who looked restless.  
"I work at an NGO in Cumilla. We had to come to Dhaka as we didn't get any bus tickets to go to Bagura. We thought the

journey would be smooth, but we were wrong," he said.  
Like Nabi and his family, Asma Akhter and her family members had been waiting since 7:00am to board the Rangpur Express train to travel to Saidpur.  
"We chose train journey to avoid possible tailback on highways. But see what's happening here," Asma said.  
Neither of the two trains arrived at the station till 3:10pm when The Daily Star left the station.

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Vehicles are caught up in long tailbacks on Dhaka-Tangail highway in Gharinda area of Tangail around noon yesterday. Thousands of Eid holidaymakers bound for northern and south-western districts faced delays on the highway throughout the day. Police said the tailbacks were built up mainly due to excessive number of vehicles. *Inset*, an overcrowded train leaves Mymensingh Railway Station for Jamalpur.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL, COLLECTED

## Hajj today

2m Muslims gather in Makkah

**AFP, Makkah**  
More than two million Muslims began the annual hajj yesterday as the Saudi hosts seek to deter politicisation of the pilgrimage against a backdrop of simmering Gulf tensions.  
The hajj, one of the world's largest annual religious gatherings, is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken by all Muslims with the means at least once in their lives.  
It consists of a series of religious rites which are completed over five days in Islam's holiest city and its surroundings in western Saudi Arabia.  
"All of the arms of state have been deployed (and) we are proud to serve as 'God's hosts'," said security forces spokesman Bassam Attia.  
In total, some 2.5 million faithful, the majority from abroad, will undertake the pilgrimage this year, according to Saudi media.  
"More than 1.8 million visas were delivered online without the need for middlemen. It's a success," said hajj ministry official Hatim bin Hassan Qadi.  
"We feel cleansed by achieving this pillar of Islam and meeting people from across the world. It's marvellous," said Mohamed Jaafar, a 40-year-old Egyptian pilgrim.  
"It's an indescribable feeling. You have to live it to understand it," said an Algerian in his fifties completing the

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## DENGUE OUTBREAK

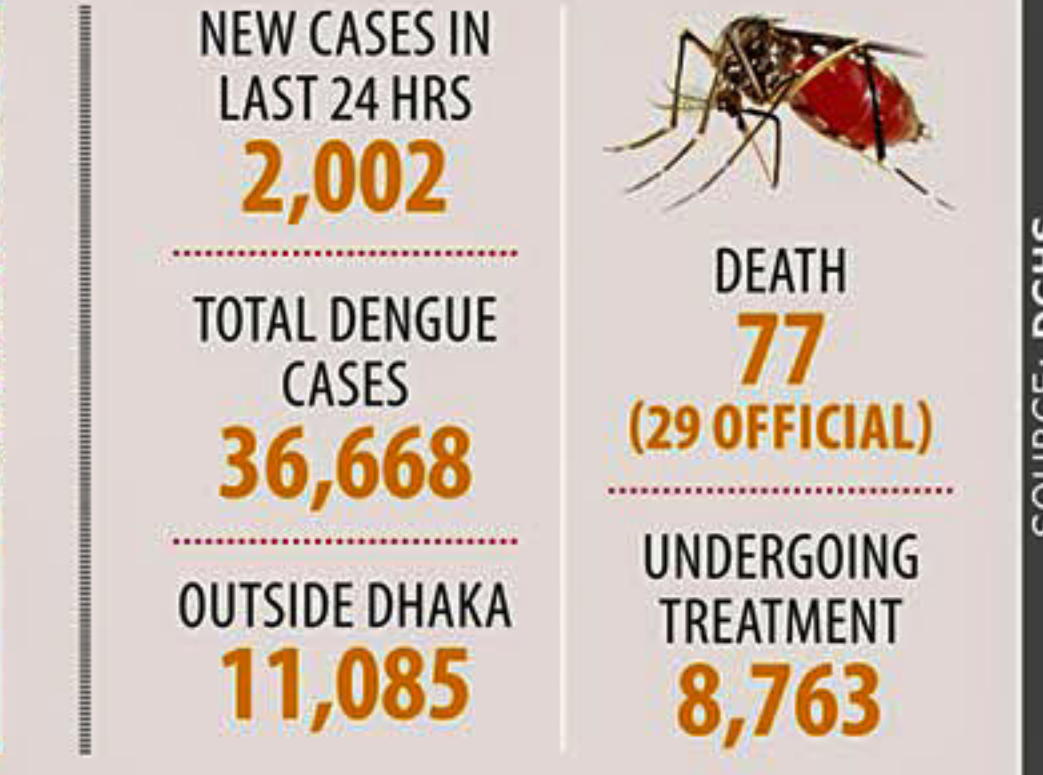
### Little time for other patients

Overwhelmed doctors, hospital authorities struggle to cope the pressure



HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Sharna Akhtar, 18, who had swallowed poison, was in a critical stage when she was brought to the Mugda General Hospital last week.  
After she was admitted there, doctors prescribed several blood tests. But her mother Hasina Akter could not get the tests done even after waiting in the queue for nearly three hours.  
"I went to the lab with the blood sample around 8:00am when the services begin. But people were queuing up for dengue diagnosis since 5:00am," said Hasina, adding that her family could not afford to go to a private facility.  
As the hospital's blood testing services for non-dengue patients close at 11:00am, Hasina had to



go back without being able to submit the blood to the lab.  
However, the services remain open until the evening for those who are diagnosed with dengue or have the symptoms.  
Hasina eventually left the hospital with her daughter for Dhaka Medical College Hospital without having the tests done as doctors said they could not give her daughter the attention she needed due to the rush of dengue patients.  
Like her, many patients are not getting the attention of healthcare personnel as the facilities are swamped with people with dengue patients.  
Meanwhile, an 8-year-old boy and a 55-year-old man, who had been suffering from dengue, died yesterday in Dhaka.

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## India to fence entire border

Bangladesh has no objection if due procedure followed, says Kamal

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Bangladesh has no objection to India's plan to fence the entire border between the two countries if it is done following due procedure, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said yesterday.  
"India has already fenced about 80 percent of the border. They want to complete the rest of the work. I said that if it is done in line with the border act, we won't have any objection," he told The Daily Star yesterday upon his return from a three-day visit to the neighbouring country.  
The two countries share a 4,096km border.  
Asaduzzaman held talks

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## TORTURE ALLEGATIONS

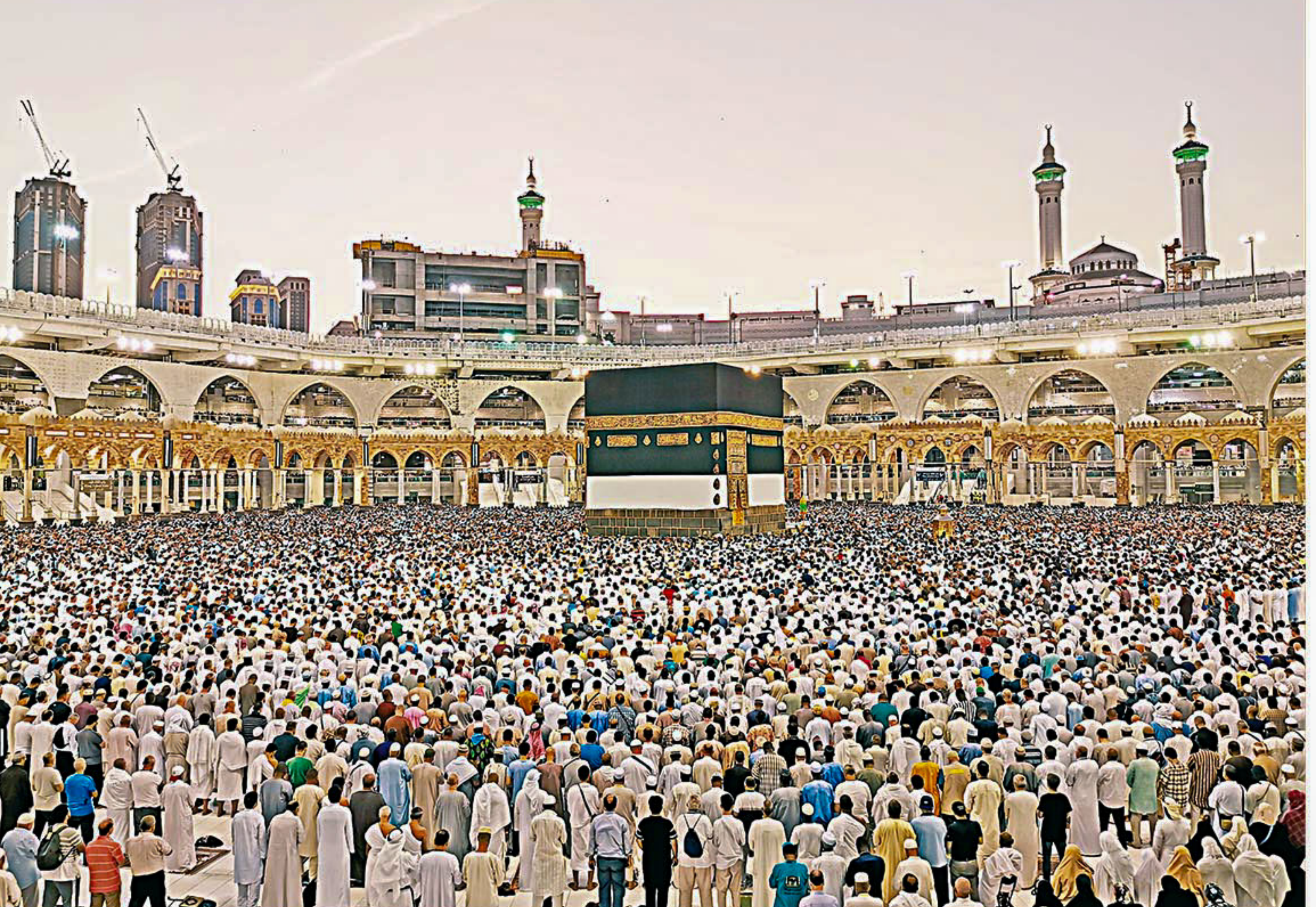
### Form independent probe commission

UNCAT calls on Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) has expressed concern over Bangladesh government's failure to disclose information about allegations of torture against law enforcers, their misconduct, absence of their accountability as well as incidents of unacknowledged detention and enforced disappearance.  
Reviewing the situation in Bangladesh for the first time since it became a signatory to the UNCAT charter, the UNCAT committee expressed concern over many other issues.  
In its final observations, published in Geneva, capital of Switzerland, yesterday, the committee came up with 77 recommendations for the government. Those include formation of an independent commission to conduct enquiry into the allegations.  
The committee also regretted a delay of 20 years by Bangladesh in placing its first report to it since the country became the signatory to the charter.  
The review committee of UNCAT, however, termed constructive the government's verbal and written replies to different questions raised at its meeting in Geneva on July 30 and 31.

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Muslims pray at the Grand Mosque during the annual Hajj pilgrimage in their holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Booming sales on fridge market Customers throng Walton showrooms

The day after tomorrow is Eid-ul-Azha or Qurbani Eid. People need refrigerators and freezers to preserve the meat of sacrificial animals. This year, the fridge market is fully ruled by Walton. Customers are seen thronging Walton showrooms across the country. They are picking none but Walton fridges. The local brand is enjoying booming sales.  
This year, the presence of foreign cattle are less in the cattle market as people prefer locally brought-up cattle. Likewise, people are preferring buying fridges of local brand Walton. To them, fridge and Walton are nearly synonymous. The sales of Walton fridge boosted for several reasons. Customers have chance to get Tk. 10 lakh under the campaign 'Who will be Millionaire today'. Besides, there are scope of getting Tk. 1 lakh, free products including a fridge, TV or sure cash voucher. Moreover, Walton fridges are affordable in prices but best in quality. Walton has over two hundred models of refrigerators and freezers. That's why customers rush to Walton showrooms. A vast number of customers already become millionaire buying Walton fridge.  
Among them, Asma Begum Sadia, a

housewife from Habiganj, got Tk. 10 lakh buying Walton fridge. She said, whomever I asked, all advised me to buy Walton fridge. My neighbors also use Walton fridges. So, I bought it and surprisingly got Tk. 10 lakh which heightened our Eid enjoyment. Thanks to Walton.  
Meanwhile, another local brand, Marcel also providing its customers with the scope of getting Tk. 1 lakh everyday which have been already received by a vast number of people. Marcel customers may also get another free product or sure cash voucher. This brand has more than one hundred & fifty models of refrigerators and freezers.  
Walton authorities said, they are going to sales 10 lakh unit fridges on this Eid. Walton solely grabbed the major share of the country's fridge market. Besides, 'The Made in Bangladesh' Walton fridges are being exported to different countries. The Bangladeshi brand is getting export order for 4.5 lakh unit fridges and air conditioners this month. According to concerned sources, Walton is the fastest growing brand in fridge market all over the world. None other brands have got customers trusts so fast. So, it can be said, it's time for Walton, it's time for Bangladesh.



National Cricket Team all-rounder Mehdi Hasan Miraz is handing over a cheque of Tk. 10 lakh to Md. Miraz Howlader from Khulna