



EID JOURNEYS

Unfit vehicles, crashes caused the most pain

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The comparatively short Eid vacation and the ban on motorcycles on the highways resulted in high demand for public transport before Eid.

Taking advantage of the demand and lax law enforcement, many unfit vehicles and buses without route permits carried people across the country.

Many of the unfit vehicles broke down in the middle of the road causing congestion.

The journey towards northwestern districts was particularly miserable.

At least 53 incidents of broken vehicles, crashes and engines stalling after running out of fuel were reported from Bangabandhu bridge and its approach roads from July 7-9, said an officials at the Bangladesh Bridge Authority.

About 90 percent of the incidents occurred on the bridge on the Jamuna, causing long tailbacks on Dhaka-Tangail-Rangpur highway.

It takes between 15 and 20 minutes to tow away a vehicle from the bridge, and only one lane remains usable during the time, he said, adding that this causes long tailbacks on the link roads.

The congestion on the highway prompted thousands of people to choose railways and the train schedules fell apart due to the unexpected pressure of

passengers. Some travellers had to wait for about 12 hours for their trains while thousands climbed to the rooftop of carriages.

At times on Friday, there were congestions on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Madanpur, Dhaka-Sylhet highway between Kanchpur and Bhulta, and Dhaka-Mawa Bhangra expressway near the toll plazas.

Transport companies charged the travellers two or three times the usual fare, according to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity.

Officials, bus operators, holidaymakers and experts contacted by this newspaper corroborated the account.

But no visible action was taken to check it.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said “flawed management and lack of coordination” were to blame for the tailbacks ahead of Eid.

UNFIT VEHICLES

According to data from January, over 5 lakh registered vehicles were on the road without a fitness certificate mainly due to poor monitoring by the authorities.

The unfit vehicles play a major role in creating congestions and crashes on highways, officials said.

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People queue up near a TCB truck in the capital's Merul Badda yesterday -- the first day the vehicle arrived there to sell essentials at reasonable prices after the Eid-ul-Azha holidays.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Pranay Verma likely to be new Indian envoy



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Pranay Kumar Verma, currently the Indian envoy to Vietnam, will be the next Indian high commissioner in Dhaka, a diplomatic source has confirmed The Daily Star.

Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, the incumbent Indian envoy, will be appointed as the country's high commissioner to the UK, reported Indian media outlet WION yesterday.

Verma may take up his new assignment after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India, scheduled for September 5-7, the source said.

Verma served as the director-general of the East Asia Division at the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. He was also the director-general for external relations at the Department of Atomic Energy.

Earlier, there were media reports that India's incumbent deputy chief of mission in the US, Sudhakar Dalela, was expected to be its next high commissioner to Bangladesh. He was, however, appointed as the Indian envoy to Bhutan.

Bangladesh-India ties have seen an upswing, from connectivity to culture.

During the tenure of High Commissioner Doraiswami, high profile visits to Bangladesh by Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi took place last year as part of the celebrations of ties, centenary of the birth of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence.

Indian diplomacy is preparing new faces in the key capitals this month. The changes are underway following the appointment

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Rawhide market on road to recovery

Higher demand and prices prevented throwing away of animal skins

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA And SUKANTA HALDER

Bangladesh's rawhide market appears to have made a comeback this Eid-ul-Azha on the back of higher demand, better prices and a bar on rawhides arriving in Dhaka.

The government has fixed the price of salted cowhide at Tk 47-52 per square foot in Dhaka and Tk 40-44 in other parts of the country, up from Tk 40-45 and Tk 33-37 last year.

The price of male goat hide has been set at Tk 18-20 per sq ft from Tk 15-17 in 2021.

Furthermore, the government has put a bar on the arrival of rawhides in Dhaka in the week after Eid to prevent over-supply in the capital's market.

Zahurul Islam, owner of Sirajganj Traders in Savar Harindhara Bazar, one of the trading hubs for rawhides, has targeted to buy 5,000 pieces of rawhide and as of yesterday, was able to purchase about 1,000 pieces of skins.

A total of 99,50,763 animals were sacrificed this Eid, according to the fisheries and livestock ministry, up 9.4 percent year-on-year.

The price was slightly higher since the supply was low, according to Islam.

So much that there were no incidents of rawhide being -- which was a common occurrence in the past three years -- according to Tapan Kanti Ghosh, senior secretary to the commerce ministry.

On the day of Eid, which was Sunday, a piece of medium-sized cowhide sold for Tk 600 to Tk 750

and a large-sized cowhide at Tk 800-1,150 in Dhaka's Posta, the largest hub in Bangladesh.

This was in line with the government-fixed price, said Aftab Khan, president of the Bangladesh Hide and Skin Merchants Association, adding that the business was better than last year.

Seasonal traders, madrasas and orphanages, which collected animals' skins across the country, have all been able to sell rawhide at good prices.

“Hopefully, tanners will buy the salted hides at the same rate fixed by the government. If not, the traders will incur losses,” Khan said.

Md Shakawat Ullah, general secretary of the Bangladesh Tanners Association (BTA), assured that tanners would buy rawhides at the price fixed by the government.

Tanners collected 360,000 pieces of rawhides as of yesterday and would start buying salted hides after a week.

“Hopefully the business will be better this year than last year,” he added.

Tanners received Tk 170 crore from four state-run banks to clear dues that paved the way for fresh purchases, said Shahin Ahmed, president of the BTA.

Eid-ul-Azha accounts for nearly half of the rawhide needed by Bangladesh's \$1.24-billion export-earning leather and leather goods industry.

MIXED SCENARIO OUTSIDE OF DHAKA

In Narayanganj, traders did not buy rawhides at higher prices due to the increased price of salts and higher



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Tigers eye series victory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be the favourites to seal the three-match series when they take on hosts West Indies in the second ODI at the Providence Stadium in Guyana today.

The match is scheduled to begin at 7:30 pm [BST].

Recent history and stats speak heavily in favour of the Tamim Iqbal-led side as clinching a win today would see the Tigers extend their hot streak to 10 wins in a row over the Windies in the format. It will also see Bangladesh seal their fourth bilateral series in a row against the Caribbean side.

Unlike how things panned out in the preceding Test and T20I series, both of which Bangladesh lost by the margin of 2-0, the Tigers looked confident and on top of their game in their preferred format as they romped to a comfortable six-wicket win in the first ODI at the same ground three days ago.

The fact that West Indies are still finding their feet in the format under the new leadership of Nicholas Pooran only ought to work in the Tigers' favour.

Bangladesh are missing

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KHAGRACHHARI RAPE

3 accused still not arrested

Case filed on July 2; police say they are in hiding

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three rape accused in Khagrachhari have still not been arrested, even though a case was filed in this regard around 11 days ago.

The Hill Women's Federation, a representative organisation of the Jumma women in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, on July 4 issued a statement saying, “There have been no steps from the administration to arrest the rapists while they are moving freely in the neighbourhood.”

In the case filed by the victim, she said she was raped by three men in Khagrachhari's Bhaibanchara union on June 26.

According to the first information report, the 42-year-old jewellery seller, from Panchhari upazila, had gone to a village in Sadar upazila to sell products.

As it had gotten too late for her to return home, which was over an hour away, she decided to stay at her friend's house for the night.

Around 7:00pm, two men -- Pintu Chakma and Shadhu Chakma -- went to the friend's house, trashed the place and took the woman to a clubhouse in the neighbourhood.

“Inside the clubhouse, they verbally abused me. Before I could understand what was happening, they had pulled my scarf and Shadhu Chakma ordered me to comply with them,” the FIR said.

When she refused, Pintu and Shadhu raped her, after which another man named Jackson Chakma attempted to rape her as well and then beat her up with a cane.

“After about an hour, I lost consciousness. Locals then rescued me and took me to a nearby

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22 die on roads in five days

STAR REPORT

At least 22 people were killed and 30 injured in road crashes in four districts during the Eid rush between Friday and yesterday.

In Chattogram, a bus rammed into a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway in Bhayar Dighir Par of Patiya upazila around 8:30pm on Monday, killing six people and injuring 10 others.

After hitting the auto-rickshaw, the bus veered off the highway and fell into a roadside paddy field, said SM Rashidul Haque, superintendent of police in Chattogram.

The dead, all passengers of the auto-rickshaw, were identified as Biswajit Sen, 45, his wife Rupna Sen, 40, residents of Mohammadpur village in Chattogram's Chandnaish upazila, Shubha Dhar, 27, of Gachabaria Banik Para in the same upazila, Sabbir Hossain, 28, of Rashidabad village in Patiya, Rezaul Karim Rafiq, 45, of Kamalmunsir Hat in Patiya, and auto-rickshaw driver Md Ismail, 50, of Hulaine village in Patiya.

The injured were admitted to Patiya Upazila Health Complex.

Another road accident in Chattogram's Banskhalhi upazila on Monday morning claimed the life of the acting principal of Shekharkhil Daruchchalam Ardash Alim Madrasa, Morshedul Haque.

The accident took place when a bus collided head-on with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw, said Banskhalhi Police Station OC Kamal Uddin.

Police later seized the two vehicles.

In Tangail, at least 13 people, including three children, were killed and 20 wounded in eight road crashes in the last five days, police said.

Of them, 12 were killed in seven accidents on Dhaka-Tangail, Tangail-Bangabandhu Bridge, Tangail-Jamalpur and Tangail-Mymensingh highways.

Defying ban, a large number of three-wheelers plied the Dhaka-Tangail-Bangabandhu Bridge highway, locals said.

Yesterday, a five-year-old girl and her aunt were killed and two others injured

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PHOTO: STAR

A mangled CNG-run three-wheeler in Rabna Bypass area on the Dhaka-Sirajganj highway in Tangail yesterday after it collided with a bus. Two people, including a child, were killed. Three-wheelers are illegal on highways.