

## No traffic jam on roads ahead of Eid

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said there is no traffic congestion on the country's roads and highways despite the pressure of vehicles during the Eid journey.

He made the remark while speaking at a press conference at the Awami League president's Dhanmondi political office in Dhaka.

Quader, also the AL general secretary, directed the authorities concerned to discharge their duties so that nobody can set up cattle markets on roads.

"Sacrificial animal-carrying vehicles and cattle markets may cause some traffic congestion... it is difficult to avoid sufferings when it rains. Attention should be paid to performing responsibilities and surveillance should be increased to prevent untoward accidents and loss of life on roads," he said.

About the remand of an AL leader over the killing of lawmaker Anar, the AL general secretary said it is not right to call anyone a criminal before a case is filed and the verdict is declared.

## Two children drown in Gazipur pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Two children drowned in a pond in Gazipur's Sreepur upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Zahid, 10, son of Kalu Mia of Morolpara village, and Nasir, 10, son of Qaium.

The incident happened at Morolpara in Kawraid Union around 11:00am, said Akbar Ali Khan, officer-in-charge of Sreepur Police Station.

Abdus Samad, sub-inspector of Sreepur Model Police Station, said Zahid and Nasir were playing on the bank of a pond in Morolpara and fell into the water.

Later, locals rescued them and took them to Sreepur Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared them dead.

OC Akbar said the bodies were handed over to the families.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

# Dev projects, dust pollution go hand in hand in Khulna

DIPANKAR ROY

Khulna city residents are suffering immensely as dust pollution has taken an alarming turn over the last couple of years due to several ongoing development projects.

Despite repeated calls from city dwellers, the Khulna City Corporation and Department of Environment are yet to take any measures in this regard.

According to the Air Quality Index, Khulna's air was extremely unhealthy from March till the first week of June.

KCC is working on a Tk 823 crore project to develop the city's drainage system alongside a Tk 607 crore road development project. Besides, several other projects of road department, electricity department, Khulna Wasa, Khulna Development Authority, and Public Works Department are also ongoing.

Usually, city corporation authorities are tasked with repairing and renovating roads after any development work. However, KCC and Khulna Wasa have been passing blame on each other for not fixing the roads afterwards.

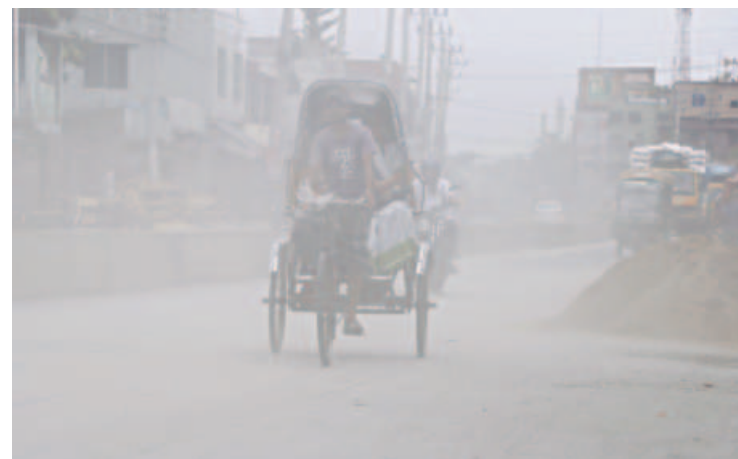
Visiting different KCC areas, including BIDC Road, Zero Point, Kuet Bypass Road, Rupsha Shipyard Road, Abu Naser Bypass Road, BIWTA Road, and

Sonadanga Bypass Road, this correspondent found almost all the roads in an awful state with dust accumulating everywhere.

"The roads are dusty, and moving vehicles cause the dust to rise and pollute the air. It becomes difficult to see and breathe. The

at least 200 shops on the road under Wards 6, 7, 12, and 15 are facing similar ordeals," he added.

The situation is particularly dire on Sonadanga Bypass Road, which is being used by around 400 long-haul buses daily.



dust also enters our homes all the time," said Tipu Kibria, a resident of Zero Point area.

Nittananda Saha, who runs a confectionary shop near Notun Rasta intersection, said his business has been adversely affected due to the dust pollution.

"Hundreds of lorries use BIDC Road to load oil from the three state-owned oil companies and cause dust pollution. Like mine,

The road is completely engulfed in dust, no longer has bitumen cover, and is riddled with numerous potholes.

"If there were sufficient waterbodies in KCC areas, that could have reduced air pollution. Also, lack of coordination among the authorities concerned further adds to the menace," said Prof Abdullah Harun Chowdhury of Environmental Science

department at Khulna University. "On some occasions, the same roads were dug several times before being left unattended, without repairs, for months," he added.

Md Anisur Rahman, KCC chief conservancy officer, said they procured two road-sweeping trucks, which will be equipped with water tanks for spraying.

"We generally do not use these machines at construction sites," he added.

Md Arefin Badal, deputy director of DoE in Khulna, said, "We need a comprehensive plan to minimise air pollution."

Sheikh Ashraf Uz Zaman, president of Greater Khulna Development Samgram Coordinating Committee, demanded immediate repair of the roads and drains.

Contacted, KCC Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque said, "Two big projects are being implemented on around 600 roads and 325 drains in 31 wards for the past two years, which deteriorated the city's air quality. Almost all works are about to be completed."

Khulna Wasa and KDA did not finish their repair work on time. The service-providing agencies must consider the sufferings of city dwellers before taking up development projects, he added.



Several fish enclosures have been set up using makeshift fences, bamboo and polythene sheets to prevent flow of water. Some pasture lands on the river bank were also dug to make more enclosures. PHOTO: STAR

## RANGABALI UPAZILA Fish enclosures at the expense of Darchira

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Some local influential people in Rangabali upazila of Patuakhali have been setting up fish enclosures grabbing a section of the Darchira river.

The Darchira flows through the upazila to join the Agunmukha river along the Bay of Bengal.

About 1,000 acres of the Darchira river bank have been occupied and fenced for fish enclosures in Char Tozammel, Char Emerson, Char Halim and Char Ganga areas of the upazila, said an employee of the upazila land office, wishing anonymity.

The encroachers have been using excavators to make makeshift dams on the river mouth for restricting water flow and digging earth for constructing the fish enclosures, said locals.

Visiting the river bank areas in Bara Baishdia union recently, this correspondent saw several fish enclosures have been set up using makeshift fences to prevent water from washing away the enclosures during tide. Some pasture lands on the river bank were also seen dug to make more enclosures.

Nuruzzaman, a local resident, said several complaints have been made to the upazila administration in this connection but no step has been taken yet.

Mojibur Rahman, Bellal Gazi, and Riaz Howladar of the area, who are allegedly among those involved in grabbing the river for fish enclosures, claimed that they did so on their own land on the river bank like many others in the area.

Lincoln Bayan, Barishal divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said grabbing the river at its origin to make dams and construct fish enclosures will eventually obstruct its natural flow of water and gradually lead the river to its demise.

Such activities cannot be allowed and the river must be saved at any cost, he added.

Contacted, Rangabali upazila nirbahi officer Mizanur Rahman said several drives have already been conducted to stop the illegal activities.

"Necessary action will be taken against the culprits by identifying them, and the encroached river bank areas will be recovered," he added.



At least three people, including a child, were killed and two injured in a head-on collision between a private car and a cattle-laden truck in Kalihati upazila of Tangail yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# 5 killed, 2 hurt in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed and two others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Tangail, three people, including a child, were killed and two injured in a head-on collision between a private car and a cattle-laden truck in Kalihati upazila.

The deceased are Abdullah Al Akshar, 6, son of Abdullah Al Mamun, district cultural officer of Jamalpur, his grandmother Husnara Begum, 70, and car driver Abul Hossain, 33.

Mamun and his wife were injured. The accident occurred around 2:30am on the Tangail-Mymensingh highway near Bangabandhu Textile Engineering College in the Baghutiya area.

Police, quoting eyewitnesses, said the car, heading towards Mymensingh, collided with the truck

coming from the opposite direction. After the collision, both vehicles fell into a roadside ditch.

Locals took the injured to Tangail General Hospital, where the three passengers of the car succumbed to their injuries, said Elenga Highway Police outpost in-charge Mir Sajedur Rahman.

The two injured were later transferred to a Jamalpur hospital. The driver and employee of the truck managed to flee, he added.

No case was filed immediately.

In Jamalpur, a woman was killed in a head-on collision between a private car and a CNG-run autorickshaw in Melandah upazila.

The accident took place on Jamalpur-Dewanganj road at Malanch, said Melandah Police Station OC Raju Ahmed.

Bonna, 31, daughter of Zainal Abedin Master from Dakpara area in Jamalpur municipality, died on the

way to Jamalpur General Hospital, said the OC. Police seized the vehicles but the drivers managed to flee.

In Feni, a man was killed as a truck hit him while he was walking along Feni-Noakhali regional road in Silonia Bazar area.

Md Ferdous, 40, from Alampur village in Daganbhuiyan was declared dead at a local hospital, said police.

Meanwhile, another man was found dead at Fathepur in Feni Sadar around 2:00am.

Al Islam, 40, from Zajira in Shariatpur, used to work in Chattogram, said Mostafa Kamal, officer-in-charge of Mohipal Highway Police Station in Feni.

He was going to his village home in Shariatpur to celebrate Eid. Police suspect that he might have been killed after being hit by a vehicle on the highway.

The OC said they are investigating the incident.

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