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Frightening flexibility

Unwritten law ups lorry load level

By Morshed Ali Khan

A five-tonne truck can now carry loads up to 10 tonnes thanks to an "unwritten law" enforced by the BRTC and others concerned, exposing both man and machine to greater

Officials of the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) and the Bangladesh Truck Owners' Association (BTOA) say they are "forced by the clients" to increase the load limit despite warning by manufacturers not to exceed five tonnes of payload.

More than 90 per cent of the

Loaded to limits

long?

country's 45,000 trucks are designed to carry a maximum payload of five tonnes each. So, the official "bluebook" says a truck can carry as much weight as prescribed by the manufacturers, sources said.

Even the Ministry of Communications has asked the authorities to officially increase the payload for carrying food grains from food department's silos, ignoring capacity of the vehicles and other consequences, the officials said.

Chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) Azmal Hussain Chowdhury told The Daily Star that they did not allow the carriers to transport ten tonnes of payload which are meant to carry only five.

"In fact, we have no mechanism to check weight of a truck. The two weigh bridges, one at Fouzdarhat (Chittagong) and the other at Gabtoli (Dhaka), have been out of order for many

"The Roads and Highways (Department) is planning to build some five weigh bridges in the country but it might take

RDODTLOA leaders of realising

one of their demands for fixing

same oil price for all depots

soon and deployment of police

visional commissioner of

Rajshahi tonight that they

would continue their strike un-

til all of their demands were

commissioner of Rajshahi said

the DC and SP of Sirajganj were

given the responsibility to

maintain law and order at

Baghabari depot. But the

Baghabari-based Oil Workers

Association continued their

Bomb-makers

injured in

explosion

By Staff Correspondent

two incidents at Goal Ghat and

Alu Bazar in the old part of the

city late Wednesday night when

the crackers they were allegedly

Nur Mohammad, Khokon,

Hasan, Akash, and Shamsud-

din, now under treatment at the

Dhaka Medical College Hospi-

tal (DMCH) under police cus-

tody, police and hospital

They have been identified as

making exploded.

sources said.

Five persons were injured in

protest, sources said.

When contacted divisional

But RDODTLOA told the di-

at Baghabari depot.

driving and the vehicle could also be permanently im-BRTC's traffic officers said remain in business.

"The private sector has been carrying up to 15 tonnes of load, so we had to accept the unwritten law of the land," said a traffic officer of the BRTC.

Rustam Ali Khan blamed the government for breaking the law. He said the government has started practising an "unwritten law" and imposing it on the transport sector.

carry 13 tonnes of food grains

Officer, S K Chowdhury said

some time to complete," the

BRTA chief said. He said as increased load on trucks is fast pushing the country's roads to saturation point.
Extremely vulnerable to accidents, these overloaded vehicles are also claiming thousands of lives every year. Moreover, crores of taka in foreign currency are also lost in purchasing spare parts because these vehicles break down frequently.

As per Rule 86 and 87 of

Chapter-7 of the Motor Vehicles Ordinance 1983, any person found overloading a vehicle could face permanent ban from

they had to increase the payload limit to ten tonnes for their fleet of 150 five-tonne trucks to

BTOA's General Secretary,

"The Ministry Communications wanted us to

in each truck, but we resisted fearing breakdown of our vehicles, then we decided to carry up to ten tonnes," Rustam told The Daily Star. BRTA's Administrative

they had allowed a total of 13 tonnes which included six tonnes of 'dead weight' of the vehicles. Asked what would happen to the manufacturers' instruction on payload on their vehicles. Chowdhury replied, "We have an order from the Ministry of Communication and we are only implementing

JU may reopen early Dec

Let's make things better.

By JU Correspondent

Jahangirnagar University, closed by protests over tuition fee hikes, could reopen in the first week of December if the university's acting vice-chancellor gets his way.

"I have already informed authorities to make all the necessary arrangements to resume academic and administrative activities," said Prof Abdul Bayes yesterday. "I've already held discussions with concerned circles and I will present my observations to the Syndicate very soon.

However, Bayes, who was appointed vice-chancellor on Nov 11, admitted he hasn't held formal discussion with the students about his plans.

"I couldn't hold any discussions with students on this matter, since the university was closed. However, informal talks are being held between students and my colleagues."

Bayes refused to comment on the Syndicate's decision to take punitive action against students. He denied rumours the university was making a list of students who violated university disciplinary rules.

In the aftermath of the protests, university authorities filed cases against six people in connection with a rape on campus. Authorities also sent a letter to the police regarding the killing of Ananda, a BCL ac-

"It's not in our hands anymore," said Bayes. "It's up to the law enforcing agencies."

Bayes said he will also examine the controversial staff appointments, but insisted reopening the university was his first priority.

Once the university is open, Bayes said he will introduce a plan to streamline the jammed session and create a better academic environment on campus.

Bayes said he will submit his plan, which includes an acanels navigable. Another dredger demic calendar, fewer vacations and extra classes, to the



Struggle for survival led the man and the monkey out on the streets during yesterday's turbulent hartal hours. -Star photo: A K M Mohsin

Shoals stunt ferries

Constant dredging keeps Aricha-Nagarbari service going

By Naimul Haq

Ferry service in Aricha -Daulatdia and Aricha - Nagarbari routes is being seriously hampered due to emergence of numerous shoals in the rivers Padma and Jamuna.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority has engaged two dredgers near Daulatdia Ghat and one near Aricha Ghat to remove the shoals to keep the ferry chanwill join the fleet shortly, BIWTA sources said

More than five large shoals appeared near Aricha and Daulatdia in the last two weeks. Constant dredging has kept the ferries plying, the sources added.

The situation is no better in Aricha-Nagarbari route, ferry Staff said. It now takes a much longer time to reach the destination as the ferries are to go

round a number of shoals in the route, they added. "This is however not unusual in this season", one of them

Ferry movement in the two routes has also been threatened by the 'seasonal decline' in river water level. If water level falls further, ferry service between Aricha and Daulatdia may even come to halt, one source pointed

An overloaded truck at the Badamtali ghat. It made a safe trip this time around, but how Syndicate if the students and staff accept the changes. Oil crisis EC probe body Hartal leaves no major Talks fail to mark on port city end strike in begins work Rajshahi divn From Staff Correspondent From Our Correspondent By Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Nov 25: The Sporadic explosion of cock-RAJSHAHI, Nov 25: Fuel oil dawn to dusk hartal today tails since morning created crisis in the northern region The Election Commission of Tangail worked as members passed off by and large peace panic among the city dwellers. has become acute after the talks yesterday officially constituted of the electoral inquiry comfully in the port city barring Police and BDR were debetween administration and its four-member investigation mittee in the Tangail by-elecsome stray incidents of vioployed at important points of Rajshahi Division Oil Districommittee to probe allegations the city to maintain law and butors and Tank Lorry Owners' of irregularities in the recently But the Law Ministry, while Exchange of brick-bats and Association (RDODTLOA) leaheld parliamentary by-election forwarding the EC proposal to chase and counter-chase be-Most of the shops and marders ended without any result. in Tangail-8 constituency. the SC, attached a note with it. tween supporters of ruling kets remained closed while of-The administration assured Headed by Additional The note said that the

Awami League and opposition BNP took place at Dewanhat crossing at about noon. Police dispersed the rival groups. Police and witnesses said the

party supporters reached near a The ruling AL organised anti-hartal rallies at New Mar-

pahani crossing also. Opposition parties brought out processions and held rallies at Tinpool crossing, Laldighi area, Port road and other areas fices, both private and public, functioned with thin attendance. Motorised vehicles kept off the roads. Railway sources said train

service to and from Chittagong was as usual

Cargo handling was normal at the port jetties but there was no delivery of goods due to lack of trucks, port sources said.

Production was hampered at mills and factories at Kalurghat, Nasirabad, Sitakundu and Patenga industrial belts due to thin attendance of workers, sources said.

Motor spares come in non-taxable pack Traders play profitable trick

By Reaz Ahmad

The government is being deprived of huge amount of revenue as some unscrupulous traders are importing motor parts in the name of tractor spares and other agri-equipment to evade tax.

The fraudulent practice, being done in connivance with a 'syndicate of corrupt customs officials' for quite some time now, has also exposed the genuine importers of farm machinery to an unhealthy competi-

tion, sources concerned said. After detecting 14 such consignments of motor parts imported under false declaration of tractor spares, the National

Board of Revenue (NBR) has formed a special squad to con-Import duty on motor parts

duct an investigation.

Mystery shrouds maid's death By Staff Correspondent

Mystery shrouds the death of a maid at Free School Street of Hatirpool under Dhanmondi police station last night. The maid was identified as

Khorsheda, 20, working for Ms Shahin Huq of Free School Street for more than three years. Hospital sources said that

from the terrace of a six storey building. She was rushed to the

rogate Shahin about the incident in the hospital She was later handed over to Dhanmondi police as she could not give satisfactory answer.

When contacted Dhanmondi

Prayer Timings November 26 Azan Jamaat Fajr 5-45 5-15 12.20 Juma 1-15 3-42 Asr 4-00 Maghrib 5-20 5-25

killed in Sylhet From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 25: An activist of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was chopped to death in the town last night. Sources said Jewel Ahmed,

BCL activist

18, son of Babul Mian of Tilagarh was attacked by some unidentified assailants while he was on his way back home at about 9 pm. The miscreants stopped his autorickshaw at Shibganj Senpara and he ran to a nearby shop. But the assailants chased him down the shop and chopped him with sharp weapons. They also fired several gunshots

Witnesses said a police patrol near by was informed of the incident, but did not act.

The victim was rushed to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital where he died shortly. The body was handed ever to the family after autopsy

this afternoon. Jewel was an activist of the BCL faction led by Ranjit,

sources said. Ranjit, joint-convenor of the

district BCL, has blamed the JCD for the killing while the JCD said the murder was a result of intra-party feud.



Judge and the Assistant Judge Triple murder Five on remand for 5 days

District Judge of Dhaka

Shahinur Islam, the three other

members of the committee are

Senior Assistant Judge of

Dhaka Shafiqur Rahman,

Deputy Secretary of the EC

Mohammad Zakaria and

Senior Assistant Secretary in

the Law Ministry Abu Saleh

to submit its report in ten days

announced that a four-member

probe body including three

judges would investigate the al-

legation of irregularities and

suspended the poll results pend-

proval of the Supreme Court

through the Law Ministry for

allowing the Additional

District Judge, Sub Judge and

Assistant Judge of Tangail to

work in the committee. The Sub

The EC earlier sought ap-

ing the investigation.

from the date of its formation.

The probe body is scheduled

The EC on November 17 had

Sheikh.

By Staff Correspondent The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday placed five people, including a woman - who were arrested in connection with the triple murder at Azimpur in the city early Monday, on remand for five

of Sajedunnisa, her son Swapon and her daughter Sabiha Begum, were recovered on Tuesday night from their flat on Azimpur Road that was locked from outside. Police suspect that they were killed by their relatives following a dis-

pute over land. Lalbagh police arrested Obaidul Akbar, Ahmed Hossain, Shafiqul Islam and Sufia, - nephews and niece of Sajedunnisa on Wednesday. Later one Golam Mustafa, a resident of city's Mirpur area, was also arrested for his alleged involvement in the murders.

Police produced the arrested five before the CMM's Court yesterday and prayed for 10 days' remand. The court granted remand for five days for each.

address: dstar@bangla.net

Administrative service polls postponed

Additional District Judge was

busy working in the Vacation

Bench of the higher judiciary

and that certain sections of

people had already objected to

Ruling party candidate in

the idea of making the two

other judges of Tangail mem-

the by-elections. Shawkat

Momen Shajahan, expressed

'no-confidence' in the judges

concerned. The judges, while

working as members of the elec-

toral inquiry committee, found

a couple of ministers guilty of

violating the electoral code of

conduct during the by- polls and

suggested measures against

Law sent to the SC a list of six

other persons including

Shahinur Islam, Shafiqur

Rahman Islam and Abu Saleh.

who got the approval. The EC

then inducted Mohammad

Zakaria into the committee.

However, the Ministry of

bers of the probe body.

The judge also ordered a Partially decomposed bodies hearing on a petition on November 28 which was filed by Zakirul Islam, a member of the BASA and PS to the leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia.

Judge Mainul Huq Sami rejected a prayer for temporary injunction on the election sought by Zakirul Islam.

Mainul Hug at 4 pm which prompted counsel Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed on behalf of Zakirul Islam to file a petition challenging the order at the District and Sessions Judge

alleged that his name was not on the voters' list because he could not pay his subscription because a short period of five days was given to collect the

Anwarul Huq's court at 4.15 pm. In his petition Zakirul Islam

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By Court Correspondent

The Dhaka District and Sessions Judge of Dhaka yesterday ordered postponement of the elections of the Bangladesh Administrative Service Association (BASA) scheduled to take place today.

A woman was arrested in connection with the incident at Goal Ghat on charges of helping the bomb makers at her residence, Sutrapur police said. She was identified as Asrafun, mother of one of the injured. Nur Mohammad

Earlier the Fourth Assistant Police said Nur Mohammad and Khokon were making crackers at the under construction first floor residence of As-The order was passed by rafun at about 11 pm Wednes-

Suddenly, a cracker exploded. Police rushed to the spot, arrested the two and took them to DMCH. Police recovered from the house seven crackers and other materials and chemicals used in making explosives. A wall of the under construction building also collapsed in the explosion.

> court placed her on three days' remand. In the other incident, Hasan Akash and Shamsuddin were injured while allegedly making explosives at a house at Alu Bazar under Kotwali thana late

Asrafun was produced before

the CMM's court yesterday. The

Wednesday night. Being informed, police rushed to the spot and arrested the three in injured condition.

trouble started when an antihartal procession of ruling rally of BNP supporters there.

ket crossing, Tiger Pass and Is-

in the city in support of hartal.

Bangabandhu Literacy Award

The government has decided to introduce Bangabandhu Literacy Award for outstanding personal or institutional contribution towards spreading education in the country, reports

The government will use the 15,000 US dollars it received as the International Literacy Award of UNESCO in recognition of its successful campaign against illiteracy in the country, a PID handout said.

The Bangabandhu Literacy Award will be given on International Literacy Day.

Khaleda From page 1

Sangsad ineffective and turned it into a party forum. It has also dishonoured the parliament by making untrue, indecent and vulgar remarks on the floor of the Sangsad, she said. The ruling party has con-

tinue naked interference and

adverse remarks against the independence of judiciary and the freedom of press, violating the Constitution at every step. she added. She said the government instead of accepting the people's

one-point demand is pushing

the country towards a conflict-

ing situation.

China ferry

From page 1

Dalian Evening News reported. Most of those aboard the boat were from Dalian, it said. A Shanghai newspaper, the official Xinmin Evening News. said the fire spread from the ship's lower vehicle deck and

may have been caused by a car.

Temperatures around freezing hampered rescue operations.

Bangladesh too good for Sri Lanka

Sports Reporter Bangladesh came from behind to beat Sri Lanka 3-1 in their third match of the 12th

Asian Cup Championship Group 3 qualifying round at Abu Dhabi yesterday. In the clash of the two South Asian nations, Sri Lanka took an early initiative when their veteran forward Amanullah scored in the 38th minute from

a goal-mouth scramble. But undaunted by the early setback, Bangladesh, who dominated the emerald islanders, bounced back into the game after only three minutes with diminutive striker Mizanur Rahman hammering the first goal for his side in the champi-

Septuagenarian shot dead in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 25: A 70year-old man was shot dead and 20 others injured in a clash between two groups of local people at Patharghata Jelepara late last night, police and witnesses The victim was identified as Gangajal Das.

The clash broke out after

midnight and continued for

about two hours. Both the

groups used firearms, other

lethal weapons and exploded cocktails. Police said the clash was a sequel to rivalry between two local groups led by one Delwar alias Dulu Sawdagar and Bijoylal Das.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. One person was arrested from the

is 37.50 per cent. Import of tractor spares is duty-free to promote use of tractors in agricul-"This fraudulent practice

ports and assembles Massey Ferguson tractors since 1954. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he alleged that the unscrupulous traders import tractor spares along with con-

has been going on for over three

years now", said an official of a

leading company which im-

signments of spares for trucks.

"They import the tractor spares as an eyewash", he said. Officials of some other companies marketing other tractors and agricultural equipment in the country also made

the similar allegations.

Khorsheda died after falling

Dhaka Medical College Hospital by Shahin and other locals. Plainclothes policeman inter-

police said that they were investigating the incident.

Esha 7-15 7-45 Source: Islamic Foundation

BNP plans PR campaign

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition will hold countrywide demonstration, rally and bring out processions on December 2 to mobilise public support in favour of the current one-point movement.

Announcing the programme at a post-hartal briefing at 29 Minto Road yesterday evening, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan said that the opposition will be compelled to announce tougher action programmes, if the government did not resign and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government immediately. "It would be wise for the gov-

the greater interest of the nation and also for the ruling party itself. Otherwise, Awami League will have to face a dreadful consequence," Bhuiyan observed. He alleged that the AL terrorists and police had jointly attacked pickets at different

parts of the country, including in Dhaka in which at least 15 persons were injured. Bhuiyan said one of the two critically injured might die at any time because his injury is

very serious.