

# The Daily Star

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People's Right to Know

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PHOTO: STAR  
The city's Mirpur Road looks free from traffic jam with the ban on rickshaws on a stretch of eight kilometres between Gabtali and Kalabagan enforced from yesterday.

## Rickshaws off city's Mirpur Road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No rickshaw plied the Mirpur Road between Gabtali to Kalabagan in the city yesterday. A government decision to ban non-motorised vehicles on the eight-kilometre stretch of the road to free it from traffic jam was implemented without any resistance by rickshawpullers, authorities said. Several hundred policemen were deployed on the road early morning yesterday to face any possible protest by rickshawpullers. A few months ago, rickshawpullers fought pitch battles with law enforcers when the authorities attempted to enforce the decision. However, yesterday being a public holiday, the number of people on the street was less than normal workdays. As the rickshaws were off the road, many people including women were seen walking long distances and jostling to get into buses. Some people this correspondent talked to however welcomed the decision but said there should be more motorised vehicles. "Sufferings of people will start from today as office goers will rush for transports", pedestrian Zerin Akhtar Zali said. Sources said BRTC was suppose to introduce 35 double-decker buses on the route yesterday, but none was seen. Many rickshawpullers were seen trying to come on the street with their

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## Train derails in Kishoreganj, 30 injured

UNB, Kishoreganj

At least 30 people were injured in a scramble as an express train derailed at Ekrampur rail-bridge here yesterday following suspected disruptive acts. Sources said the bogie No. 1727 of the Dhaka-bound Isha Khan Express 40 Down Train from Mymensingh slipped off the track the moment it crossed the bridge near the Kishoreganj rail station at about 9:30am. Passengers hurriedly tried to get off the train as two other bogies also derailed when the driver halted the train. On information, an army medical team rushed to the spot for treatment of the injured. Mizanur Rahman, loco-master (driver) of the train, told the news agency that someone might have loosened the nut of brake handle of the bogie No. 1727 that led to the accident. "Many things of the train were checked out before departure from Mymensingh," he said. The driver, however, could not say when and how the brake-handle was unscrewed. A salvage train from Kewatkhali in Mymensingh started a rescue operation at about 2:30pm.

## Chickenpox breaks out in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chickenpox has broken out in the city. The highly contagious disease can spread fast, warn doctors. "This winter, one in every 20 patients is infected with chickenpox," said a senior doctor at his private chamber at Green Road. Chickenpox that rarely needs hospitalisation is an infection by varicella-zoster virus (VZV) of the herpes virus family. The virus spreads in nasal discharge and fluid from chickenpox blisters. "The disease is highly contagious and 90 per cent of people who are not immune will contract it, if exposed. The outbreak is common in late winter and early spring... children between five and nine account for half the cases," said Professor Ruhul Amin of the Institute of Child Health (Dhaka Shishu Hospital).

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# US moves a step closer to war

### Baghdad in material breach of UNSC resolutions, says Powell

REUTERS, United Nations/Washington

The United States moved a step closer to war by declaring Iraq was in "material breach" of UN Security Council resolutions for failing to disclose information about its illegal weapons. The pronouncements by Secretary of State Colin Powell in Washington and US Ambassador John Negroponte to the UN Security Council in New York on Thursday marked a turning point in tough US warnings to President Saddam Hussein. Bolstered by reports from UN arms inspectors, Powell, considered among the most reluctant in the Bush administration to go to war, made clear that time was running out for a peaceful solution. At the same time the Pentagon escalated

plans to move more US troops into the Gulf region. Iraq immediately called US charges "baseless" that it had withheld information in its 12,000-page declaration, called for in a Nov. 8 tough Security Council resolution. "The United States made it clear that the matter is not disarmament but to change the legitimate government of Iraq," said Mohammed S. Ali, Iraq's deputy UN ambassador. But Powell said the weapons documents showed Iraq's "pattern of non-cooperation, its pattern of deception, its pattern of dissembling, its pattern of lying." "If that is going to be the way they continue through the weeks ahead, then we're not going to find a peaceful solution to the problem," Powell said. Taking the same tact, Negroponte told the Security

Council, "These are material omissions which in our view constitute another material breach." Bush administration officials indicated the next milestone date is Jan. 27 when the UN weapons inspectors are scheduled to make their first substantial assessment to the Security Council. They said President Bush could make a decision around that time to attack Iraq. In Iraq yesterday, UN inspection teams for the second week in a row, drove to the sprawling al-Tuwaitha complex, the main site of Iraq's nuclear programme. Nuclear arms inspectors have searched the plant at Salman Bak, 12 miles south of Baghdad, several times since they returned to Iraq last month and on many occasions between 1991 and 1998.

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### Iraqi arms dossier

US alleges omissions in Iraq's UN weapons declaration

Missing from the report

<b>Growth media for anthrax:</b> enough to produce 26,000 litres of the virus	<b>Aluminum tubes:</b> attempts to procure for enriching uranium for weapons
<b>Botulinum toxin:</b> 1,200 litres	<b>Gases:</b> precursors for mustard, sarin and VX nerve gases
<b>Clostridium perfringens:</b> 5,500 litres of toxic organism	<b>Missiles:</b> has fuels for missiles that the country is not known to possess
<b>Uranium:</b> attempts to procure from Niger	<b>MIG-21 pilotless plane:</b> equipped to spray biological weapons

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PHOTO: STAR  
Army personnel check firecrackers recovered from three warehouses in an anticrime raid in Raipura Upazila, Narsingdi, yesterday.

## Huge quantity of 'explosives', firecrackers seized in Narsingdi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the joint forces seized a huge quantity of "explosives" and firecrackers from "some warehouses" in Narsingdi town yesterday. They claimed that acting on a tip off, the members of the joint forces raided the houses of some illegal explosive traders and recovered a truckload of explosives from three warehouses. But the local people said the inmates of the raided houses were manufacturers of fireworks. The members of the joint forces also arrested two women Hasna Begum and Hena Begum from the house where the explosives were kept. The houses were kept under lock and key and none of the inmates were found over there when this correspondent visited the scene. The detainees were sent to Sadar Thana and a case was filed under the Explosives Act. Asked about the raid, the Officer in Charge of Sadar Thana, Saiful Huda told last night that the army is yet to hand over the explosives that they seized. "And also the names of the owners of those houses are not there on the list of criminals," he said adding that since they have no licence for fireworks trading, they would be charged under the Explosives Act. The army sources said that they recovered explosives, gunpowder and yellow phosphorus, and some of the explosives are powerful enough to destroy building and bridges. There were 18 types of crackers and explosives. Until last night, police requested the members of the joint forces to hand over the explosives to the police station, but they were told that the seized materials would be given to them after being examined

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## Caught in cycle of poverty

### Unemployment, river erosion haunt hundreds of thousands in Gaibandha

ROVING CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Most people in Gaibandha are caught in persistent misery, brought about by lack of investment and recurring erosion by four rivers. Hundreds of thousands of people in the char areas face starvation in the ongoing lean period, a familiar phenomenon over the last 30 years, say officials and local. Between October and December every year, thousands face utmost poverty and starvation in rural and char areas of the district. Public representatives, government officials and NGO workers say the recent Zakat tragedy, in which 37 women and children were stam-

peded to death, serves as an indication of the prevailing misery. Local public leaders, officials and development workers say no industrial unit has been set up in the district since independence. According to official statistics, more than 50 per cent of some 2.2 million people in Gaibandha is landless peasants living below the poverty level. Erosions by the Khagot, Koratoa, Teesta and Brahmaputra render landless and homeless over 20 per cent of the population at any given time. Rickshaw pulling is the lone employment option but even the three-wheelers are so abundant that

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## Dense fog blankets roads, rivers

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Both road and river communications have become risky due to dense fog on the Barisal-Dhaka route. Fifty-year-old Paresh was run over by a vehicle under a blanket of fog on the Barisal-Dhaka Highway near Madaripur late Thursday night. Over the last two days, the road and river routes from Barisal to Dhaka have been cloaked in fog, disrupting communication for three to six hours, said sources in private and public transport sectors. The double-decked launches like Suravi, Parabat and Dipraj reached Barisal from Dhaka five hours late at 9.00am yesterday. The PS Ostrich of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) arrived at Barisal from Dhaka six hours late at 11.15am. Water vessels had to anchor at different points of the Meghna and other rivers for three to five hours Thursday night. Road communication was disrupted, as ferry services at Aricha, Mawa, Daulatdia, Calais, Kazirchar, Doanka and Shikarpur were seriously hampered by fog. Many ferries had to keep services suspended until sunrise in worst cases.