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# Unregistered driving schools mushroom

Untrained instructors teach driving to thousands; regulatory body sits idle

MORSHED ALI KHAN

For thousands of aspiring drivers of motor vehicles, the country has only 10 registered learners' schools and five 'qualified' instructors, according to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).  
With over 50,000 vehicles taking to the roads or applying for registration every year and another 1.2 million already on the roads, thousands of men and women are rushing to learn driving as the sector remains one of the most guaranteed job markets in the country.  
In the capital, hundreds of unregistered driving schools are sprouting every day and individuals with little or no knowledge about traffic rules are working there as instructors. Business of these illegally driving schools is booming, as

their course fees are much cheaper than registered schools. While a registered school charges Tk 8,000 for a month, an unregistered one demands one-third of the rate for the same package attracting youths from all over the country.  
The entire sector is gripped with problems resulting from years of negligence and indifference by the relevant authority. At present the number of 'genuine' driver's license holders is less than a million, according to BRTA officials. But lack of proper training even for genuine license holders is causing accidents as well as mayhem on the city streets, BRTA officials admitted.  
They however said that only two committees have been formed recently to oversee 'advanced driving test' for instructors and to allow more driving schools in the country.

According to an investigation, most instructors who are teaching driving to hundreds of people of all ages lack basic knowledge about traffic laws and regulations, which directly contributes to the chaotic situation on the roads of the country.  
\* The instructors follow age-old manual that prescribes using of horn at every intersection. The pupil is wrongly taught to cut corners while turning right, to use emergency lights for going straight at an intersection and to randomly flash headlights for unnecessary reasons. Most of these so-called instructors also fail to teach learners the aspects of road safety.  
The regulatory body of the sector, the BRTA, has chalked out a guideline for the driving schools. However, operators of these "illegally" running driving schools

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Driving schools, mostly unregistered, use run-down cars to teach trainees, putting both the learners and commuters at great risk. This picture was taken from the city's Mugdipara area. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQUE

## JCD's 3 units dissolved amid internal conflicts

DU CORRESPONDENT

Top leaders of the newly formed central committee of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) last night dissolved its three units including that of Dhaka University (DU) following a massive intra-party conflict over the new central committee.  
They also expelled four leaders of the JCD DU unit including its general secretary Saiful Islam Firoz and senior vice president Mamun-or-Rashid.  
President of the central

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## SC rules against tree plunderers

Stays all activities to develop ship-breaking yard at Sitakunda forest belt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed for two weeks all activities on a vast 40-acre forest belt in Sitakunda where a few influential people razed 15,000 Keura and Bain trees on Friday to develop ship-breaking yards.  
Justice MA Aziz issued the stay order following a petition filed by the high officials of the forest department in Dhaka, sources said.  
Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Chittagong Coastal Forest Division SM Khaleque Khan yesterday said the court order

came in favour of the forest belt near Sonaichhari coast but the plunderers have already destroyed the greens.  
"What we can do now is to re-establish our control over the land by cancellation of the lease and restart of forestation on the land to save the coastal embankment," he said.  
The DFO, however, alleged non-cooperation from land administration saying, "We requested them (land office) to provide us the documents of lease of the land but we're yet to get those."  
Hailing the move and the stay order, Syeda

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## JS body gets fresh graft allegations against Mainul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary sub-committee has received reports on a number of fresh irregularities against former adviser of the last caretaker government Mainul Hossain and asked the housing and public works ministry to come up with necessary documents of the allegations in next seven days.  
The allegations against Mainul include purchasing a flat and a plot against two names of his wife.  
He had first purchased a Rajuk plot at Baridhara in the

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## Feni BNP revolts Dumps Saeed Iskandar as it declares new district body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Feni district unit of BNP is rocked by an intra-party dispute over the new district convening committee formed by the party's centre, putting Maj (ret'd) Saeed Iskandar at the helm.  
Rejecting the newly formed committee, a sizeable section of BNP leaders of the district submitted a panel of alternative choices for the committee to party Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, according to party insiders.  
The proposed alternative committee consisting 51 members with Nurul Absar as the proposed convener was submitted on Sunday dropping Iskandar, brother of Chairperson Khaleda Zia, from it.  
The local leaders met Delwar in the party's central office and lodged a number of allegations against Iskandar, also a former lawmaker from Feni-1.  
The central committee on June 9 appointed Saeed Iskandar and Nurul Absar convener and joint convener respectively of the district committee.

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## Concern over raid on Adcom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Advertisement professionals yesterday expressed concern over the raid, and seizure of equipment, computers and valuable documents of advertising firm Adcom and its associate organisations.  
They demanded that the authorities return the seized things, and resolve the problem, says a press statement.  
At a meeting, they said the incident is a setback for ad industry in the country which has a market of Tk 1,500 crore.  
Signatories to the statement are Reza Ali, Aly Zaker, Ramendu Majumder, Wazir Sattar, Munir Ahmed Khan.

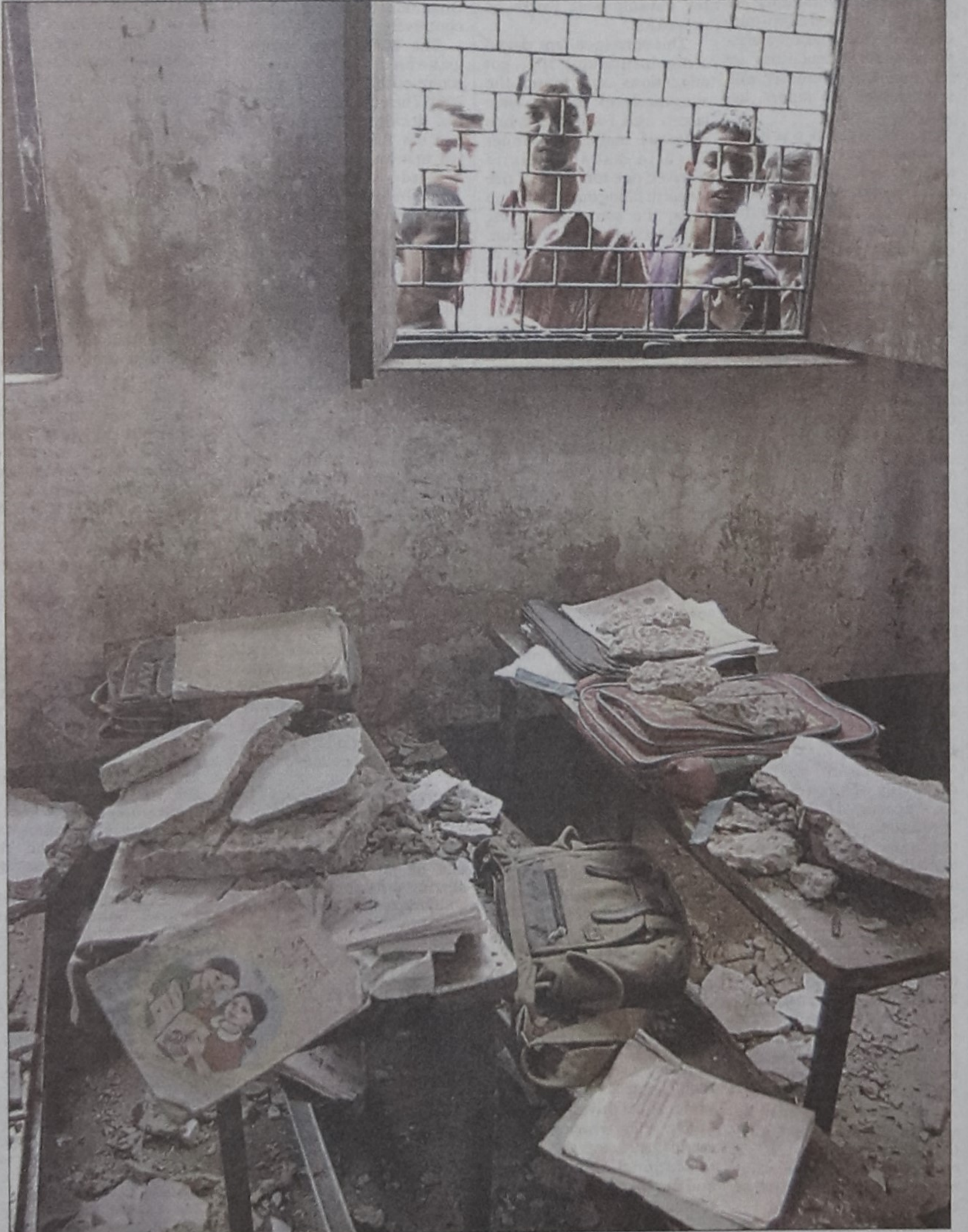
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## Seven school kids hurt as plaster falls from ceiling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least seven students of class-I sustained injuries as a large chunk of plaster came off the ceiling of a classroom of Prasanna Poddar Lane Govt Primary School in Kotwali area of the city yesterday.  
Four of the injured students -- Mithila, Soniya, Rubina and Asha Moni--were rushed to Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital while Zahura had to be shifted to Pongu Hospital. The other two injured were released after first aid at a local clinic.  
Sources said Zahura sustained severe injury in her hand, head and other parts of the body. She had to undergo a surgery.  
Witnesses said the chunk of plaster fell on the students around 9:30am--during drawing class at the four-decades-old school building. The students were badly injured and seen losing a lot of blood from the wounds they sustained, they added.  
Panic-stricken students, teachers and locals around rushed to the scene right after the incident. Soon after the news spread, parents, guardians and relatives of the students thronged the school to rescue the children, witnesses said.  
The school was declared closed to avert any more casualties.

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A chunk of plaster from the ceiling of a classroom of Proshonno Poddar Lane Government Primary School in the capital fell on the students attending a class yesterday, injuring five of them. PHOTO: STAR

## Dutch help pledged in climate change

Visiting minister also assures govt of assistance in water management, river training

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dutch government would continue to assist Bangladesh in water management, river training and battling the climate-change, said Netherlands's visiting Minister Bert Koenders yesterday.  
Netherlands, the main bilateral partner of the country, would strengthen its cooperation against the backdrop of climate change, said the Dutch minister for development coopera-

tion at a press conference held at a local hotel.  
He also said his country would work closely with Bangladesh in preparation for the summit on climate change in Copenhagen in December. He emphasised on the involvement of village people through participatory water management and termed it as the key element for improving flood protection, drainage and irrigation.  
Asked about India's role in Tipaimukh dam

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## Date for Tipai trip after BNP's nomination Says JS body on parliamentary team

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on water resources ministry yesterday said it would finalise the date for visiting Tipaimukh Dam site on receipt of the BNP lawmaker's name for inclusion in  
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Two more electrocuted  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Electrocution claimed the lives of two more construction labourers in the city's Dhanmondi area last night, raising the death toll from similar incidents to seven in one week.  
The deceased were identified as Lovely Begum, 20, and Mohammad Arif, 26 of Pabna district.

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## Russia, US agree on nuke arms cut Obama meets Medvedev

AFP, Moscow

The Russian and US leaders Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama yesterday announced agreements on Afghanistan and cutting their nuclear arsenals as they sought a new era in battered relations.  
The ex-Cold War foes issued a declaration on replacing a key disarmament treaty -- including figures for major cuts in nuclear warheads -- and clinched a breakthrough deal for US military transit for Afghanistan across Russia.  
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Prayer Timing		
July 7		
Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr	5-10	5-45
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	6-00	6-15
Maghrib	7-55	8-00
Esha	9-17	9-45

Source: Islamic Foundation