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## Driving stays willy-nilly

Random fines, strict watch do little to get vehicles into right lanes

HELEMUL ALAM

Dhaka dwellers did not see the benefit of the new traffic rules as a good number of drivers continued to drive willy-nilly despite many drivers faced penalties yesterday for failing to follow signal lights and maintain lanes.

In addition, the main opposition BNP's council at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre at Shere-e Bangla Nagar also made congestion worse at Collegegate, Asadgate, Agargaon, Shyamoli and Bijoy Sarani.

City dwellers had to face additional congestion on many streets between Gulshan and Moghbazar, Airport and Karwan Bazar, Mirpur and Gulistan yesterday while traffic flow from Shanir Akhra to Karwan Bazar saw little improvement in the morning but took a turn for worse in the afternoon.

A good number of drivers are still unaware of the new traffic rules. Many, however, appreciated the new system and emphasised on the need for its proper enforcement.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police had announced that from Tuesday drivers violating signal lights or lane rules could be fined a maximum Tk 1,000 with three month's licence suspension.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Vehicles are not maintaining designated lanes while a bus is loading passengers on a prohibited spot near Shahbagh intersection. Top right, a traffic sergeant intercepting a bus for changing lane in front of Sonargaon Hotel. Bottom right, a bike rider is being fined for violating signal at Asadgate intersection.



PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

## Repeal criminal defamation against journos

CJA urges PM

UNB, Dhaka

The Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) has welcomed the Bangladesh government decision to drop arrest warrant provision from the defamation law.

But it urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to repeal the provision for criminal defamation against journalists.

"We welcome the government decision to drop relevant clauses in the defamation law that allows courts to issue arrest warrants against editors, publishers, reporters or writers," said CJA International President Hassan Shahriar in a statement.

"We shall, however, appeal to Prime Minister Sheikh

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Govt slaps ban on raw jute export

Aims to ensure availability in local mills; traders, exporters protest

PORIMOL PALMA

The government has imposed a ban on export of raw jute to ensure smooth supply of the natural fibre to local mills, which are facing troubles because of rising prices of jute amid increased demand of jute goods in the international market.

"Considering the importance of ensuring availability of raw jute in the domestic market, the government has imposed the ban until further notification," said a circular of the Ministry of Textile and Jute issued on Monday.

The raw jutes that are already at the port awaiting shipment will also come under the ban.

People involved in jute industries lauded the

government move saying it will greatly help stabilise the volatile prices of raw jute, which they think was created artificially.

"Jute prices went as high as Tk 1700 a maund, which is unusually high," said Bangladesh Jute Mills Association (BJMA) President Najmul Huq. This price is still tolerable but if it goes beyond that then the millers could not sustain, he noted.

Bangladesh's raw jute production was estimated to be 55 lakh bales this year, but there is no exact data on it. The domestic demand of raw jute is around 35 lakh bales. According to local demand, there is not supposed to be any crisis, industry sources said.

Meanwhile, jute traders, exporters and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

## PILKHANA CARNAGE

Final charge sheet by this month: Sahara

UNB, Dhaka

The final charge sheet in the BDR headquarters killings case would be received within this month, Home Minister Sahara Khatun said yesterday.

Chairing a monitoring cell meeting on sensational cases at her ministry, the home minister said they reviewed the progresses in inquiry so far made in 10 cases, including the BDR headquarters killings case and the 10-truck arms haul case.

The meeting accepted the death of Ganotantri Party leader Nurul Islam in fire at his house in the capital as a sensational case.

Sahara said the meeting

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Buriganga cleaning drive from Jan 1

Polythene layers to be removed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities will launch a drive on January 1 for removal of layers of polythene from the Buriganga bed manually to free the river from the imperishable pollutant.

The government-formed taskforce on maintaining navigability and normal flow important rivers took this decision yesterday at a meeting at the shipping ministry.

And Dhaka Wasa will take measures to prevent direct dumping of clinical liquid waste from Mitford Hospital and other waste into the Buriganga.

The taskforce meeting, chaired by Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, also decided that the government would later procure excavators and other heavy equipment to expedite waste removal and demolish concrete structures within the river area, said a handout.

In Chittagong, the Karnaphuli river will be re-excavated up to Chaktai Khal to prevent water logging in the port city.

The meeting reiterated that Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority would not lease out river foreshores for sand extraction on daily basis until the land ministry comes up with a fresh set of policy in this regard.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## 10 wounded in cop-outlaw gunfight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

At least 10 people including three policemen were injured in a gunfight between police and the members of Janajuddha, a faction of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party, at Gurpikul Jojalpara in Tarash upazila yesterday.

Police also arrested two members of the outlawed party and recovered a shotgun, looted from Bamihai police outpost in Natore district on December 12, 2007, 10 bullets and some documents after exchanging around 20 rounds of bullet.

The injured were admitted to the upazila health complex

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Gunmen fire at city shop; 3 injured

Criminal shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people including a woman sustained bullet injuries at Stadium Furniture Market in Mirpur as a gang of three criminals sprayed bullets during a snatch attempt yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, miscreants shot dead a listed criminal at Cantonment area yesterday.

In the first incident, law enforcers arrested two of the criminals -- Kamrul, 30, and Salam alias Akash, 30 -- with two firearms and four bullets at a nearby area while they

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## 'Shootout' kills outlaw in Bagerhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A leader of Janajuddha faction of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party was killed in a "shootout" between police and his cohorts at Brahmandia village of Fakirhat upazila in Bagerhat early yesterday.

He was identified as Sheikh Murad, 32.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team of Fakirhat Police Station raided Brahmandia Government Primary School area around 5:00am as outlaws were holding a meeting there, police said. Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the outlaws opened fire on police personnel.

Murad came in the line of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



A girl at Shahidnagar slums in the capital is having pieces of beef collected during Eid-ul-Azha baked in the sun to meet future needs of her family.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

## Baghdad blasts kill 127

AFP, Baghdad

Five massive vehicle-borne bombs rocked Baghdad yesterday, killing 127 people, including women and students, and wounding hundreds in the third co-ordinated massacre to devastate the city since August.

The attacks shattered a month of calm in the Iraqi capital and came hours before an official said the war-torn country's general election, the second since the US-led ouster of dictator Saddam Hussein, would be held on March 6.

Baghdad's top security officer said the attacks -- four of which were conducted by suicide attackers driving cars or minibuses -- and which targeted key government buildings, bore "the touch of al-Qaeda."

One of the suicide bombers detonated

his payload at an office of the finance ministry, another attacker struck at a tunnel leading to the labour ministry, and a third drove a four-wheel-drive car into a court building.

"The suicide bomber drove up to the court and the security forces tried to stop him by firing their Kalashnikovs, but they did not kill him before he exploded," police sergeant Emad Fadhil told AFP.

A fourth suicide bomber in a car struck a police patrol in Dora, in southern Baghdad, causing 15 deaths, 12 of them students at a nearby technical college, an interior ministry official said.

The first explosion in the centre of Baghdad was heard at 10:25 am (0725 GMT), another came within seconds and a third one minute later.

Although no group has yet claimed responsibility, the timing of the blasts and

the fact that three of them targeted government buildings bears all the hallmarks of an al-Qaeda operation.

The interior ministry official said 127 people had been killed and 448 wounded in the bombings, with the finger of blame pointed at al-Qaeda.

"The same black hand that was behind the attacks in August and October committed today's bombings," Major General Qassim Atta, a spokesman for security operations in Baghdad, told AFP.

"This has the touch of al-Qaeda and the Baathists," he said, referring to the outlawed Baath party of now executed dictator Saddam.

Both groups were blamed for bloody attacks -- including truck bombings outside the finance, foreign and justice ministries -- in Baghdad in August and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

## BSF kills Bangladeshi pilgrim

Abducts 1

STAR REPORT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday gunned down a Bangladeshi pilgrim in West Bengal's Basirhat area and abducted a farmer from Jibonnagar upazila in Chudanga Monday evening.

Our Satkhira correspondent reports: BSF shot dead an unidentified Bangladeshi pilgrim of Hindu community on Panitor border under 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, opposite to Bhomra border in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Lt Col Iqbal Azim, commanding officer of 41 Rifles Battalion of BDR, confirmed the incident and said identity

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## BDR MUTINY TRIAL Charge-framing in Satkhira Jan 18

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A special court in Satkhira yesterday fixed January 18 next year for framing charges against 60 accused BDR personnel of 7 Rifles Battalion under Khulna sector in the mutiny case.

All the 60 accused BDR men were produced before the special court no-1 that was formed at Satkhira 41 Rifles Battalion (BDR) headquarters to hold the trial of BDR mutiny at Nildum BDR battalion headquarters in Shyamnagar upazila on February 26.

The BDR has set up six special courts to try the BDR personnel with links to the February 25-26 mutiny at its headquarters in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country under the Bangladesh Rifles Order, 1972.

The court proceedings began at 10:10am yesterday and it went on for 55 minutes before being adjourned till January 18, 2010.

Prosecutor Lt Col Badrul Alam, also the commanding officer of 7 Rifles Battalion, read out the complaints yesterday against the 60 accused BDR personnel who were in the dock.

In his submission, the prosecutor told the court that the accused soldiers in collaboration with each other revolted at Nildum battalion headquarters in support of the carnage at

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

### OnlinePoll

Do you think it is possible to eliminate 'fatwa' from the country?

☐ Yes (54.8%)  
☐ No (42.0%)  
☐ No Comments (3.4%)

Total votes: 755

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you support the Election Commission's draft proposal to cancel political party's registration because of poor performance in polls?

Please cast your vote at [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

### Prayer Timing

December 9

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	6-15	6-50
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-19	6-22
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation