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Risking life to save money

Trucks unload vegetables in Karwan Bazar, hit roads to North loaded with passengers

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Flouting laws, a section of truck drivers carry passengers to northern districts from the capital's Karwan Bazar every night to earn extra bucks.

The passengers, most of whom are day labourers and rickshaw pullers, choose to travel by truck risking their lives as it costs them five to eight times less than that by bus.

According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, carrying passenger in goods-carrying vehicle is a punishable offence.

Because of their structural design, trucks are riskier than buses as a means of public transport, says Prof Hasib Mohammed Ahsan, director of Accident Research Institute at Buet.

In the first six months of this year, 1,309 vehicles were involved in road accidents across the country. Of them, 406 were trucks, a police report says.

The exact number of the trucks involved in carrying passengers could not be known, but traders at Karwan Bazar said the number could be in dozens.

These trucks enter Karwan Bazar, one of the biggest wholesale markets in the city, with goods from the northern districts at night. On their way back, they carry 500 to 800 passengers every night, the traders added.

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People of low-income bracket, most of whom are day labourers and rickshaw pullers, take a journey by truck finding the mode of transport cheaper than bus. The photo was taken last month.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Three bridges in danger of collapse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three major bridges -- Kanchpur, Meghna and Gumti -- on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway may collapse anytime, said Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday.

"The soil around the bases of the bridges have almost been washed away due to overloading, sand extraction and movement of overloaded cargo vessels on the water, he told The Daily Star after an inter-ministerial meeting at the conference room of his ministry.

Quader said he already talked to the authorities concerned about taking measures against overloaded cargoes that pass by the bridges on the respective rivers.

"We have to save the bridges otherwise it will be a disaster for the whole nation," he said adding

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Criminal database underway

Rab hopes for quick crime-busting

M RAHMAN

The government is working on a highly-sophisticated criminal database, the first of its kind, to facilitate law enforcers in detecting criminal elements quickly by cross-checking the bank of biometrics and other records.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) began implementing the Tk 2.5 crore-project in June last year in cooperation with Tiger IT Bangladesh Ltd, a local software firm, who conducted the national identity card project.

Installation of the software for

the Rab Criminal Database was completed in June.

"As many as 150 particulars of a criminal including photograph, prints of 10 fingers, images of retinas, blood group and available previous criminal records are being stored in the database," Lt Col Ziaul Ahsan, chief of Rab intelligence wing, said.

He said the database would be available on website, "but its access will be restricted". It would be shared with other law enforcing agencies too.

"We have so far incorporated the particulars of around one lakh

criminals, arrested by Rab since its inception in 2004, to the newly installed database," Lt Col Ziaul said.

The project is likely to be launched after recording the particulars of the inmates in jails.

"On October 14, we wrote to the home ministry for conducting the task in 67 jails including a jail for female," he said.

Rab teams, equipped with necessary tools, would collect the data in each jail.

In 2005, Rab had initiated preparing a similar database, but it could not be materialised.

Following the arrest of a person, law enforcers now would be able to know when, where and why the person was arrested earlier (if arrested earlier). Once launched, it would prevent arrested criminals, pretending to be innocent, from deceiving the law enforcers, he said.

Criminals, especially militants, use fake names and addresses, making the task for law enforcers - to arrest and identify them - very difficult. "Here, the database would work as a deterrent to the criminals," he observed.

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Ensure workers' well-being

Khaleda asks RMG owners; Batexpo ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the owners of garment factories to take adequate measures aiming at improving the well-being of their workers.

"Workers are the main force behind the machine for any productive industrial unit. So, if the workers live well the industries will run well," Khaleda said at the 22nd Bangladesh Apparel and Textile Exposition (Batexpo) in the city.

The Leader of the Opposition in parliament, Khaleda was invited as the chief guest at the closing ceremony of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4 PHOTO ON B3

TIPAI DAM Resistance at any cost

Reiterates BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Building of Tipaimukh dam will have to be resisted by any means as it will affect Bangladesh badly, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said yesterday.

He also blasted the foreign ministry for seeking an explanation from party Chairperson Khaleda Zia regarding her past role on the Tipaimukh issue.

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2 workers killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two workers died in separate incidents at the city's Dhanmondi and Kamrangirchar area yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Abdus Salam Mollah, 55, and Shafiqul Islam, 17.

Abdus, who hailed from Pirojpur district, was working at an under-construction building at Dhanmondi.

Abdus was hit by a crane, which he was using

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Man shot, Tk 3.9 lakh mugged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed muggers on motorbikes shot a person yesterday at the city's Mirpur and took away Tk 3.90 lakh from him.

The victim Abdul Gani Khan, 36, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with bullet wounds on his legs.

Abdul told reporters at DMCH that he exchanged

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A man climbs a date palm for tapping the topmost part of the tree trunk to collect sap -- a sign that winter has arrived in the country. The photo was taken in Jessore last week.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

WAR TRIAL Order on SQ Chy's petitions Nov 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) yesterday fixed December 19 for passing order on the petitions submitted by BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury on November 30.

The three-member tribunal headed by its Chairman Justice Nizamul Huq set the date following the hearing on the petitions.

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They prevail over odds, beat others

Achievers in SSC, HSC exams honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixty underprivileged students, who have beaten all odds to achieve GPA-5 in this year's SSC and HSC examinations, were accorded a reception in the city yesterday.

Though a bit nervous, their bright faces were shining with optimism. No obstacles could hold them back from making their dreams come true.

They shared their heartfelt stories of pain and struggle at the event organised by Prothom Alo Trust at the CA Bhaban auditorium.

AlAmin of Dumuria in Khulna narrated how he strenuously pursued his studies to

achieve the highest grade in the SSC examinations.

"My father died in a road accident when I was only a six-month-old baby. It was a great shock for my mother and she became mentally sick. It was unthinkable for me to bear my educational expenses as we had to struggle for two meals a day," said AlAmin.

"Yet I didn't give up," he maintained adding, with the help of maternal uncles, teachers and neighbours he got scholarships in classes V and VIII and later secured GPA-5.

Leading Bangla daily Prothom Alo has

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Unemployment world's fastest rising fear

BBC ONLINE

Unemployment is the world's fastest-rising worry, a BBC World Service survey covering 11,000 people in 23 countries suggests.

The annual poll, called The World Speaks, gave people a list of concerns and asked which they had discussed with friends or family in the past month.

Corruption and poverty still ranked the highest, but unemployment was mentioned by 18% - six times the rate citing it in the first survey in 2009.

The poll was carried out by Globescan. The growth in concern was found across all countries surveyed, although

corruption emerged as the most talked about global concern.

Nearly a quarter of those asked had discussed that topic in some form over the past four weeks.

Issues associated with inflation, such as higher food and energy prices, were on level pegging with unemployment in third place - with both topics mentioned by 18% of those surveyed.

Concern about joblessness seemed to vary by country.

Top of the list was Spain, where 54% of

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PRAYER TIMING December 13

Azhan	Jamaat
Fajr 5-15	5-50
Zohr 12-45	1-15
Asr 3-45	4-00
Maghrib 5-19	5-22
Esha 7-00	7-30

Sources: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with prime minister that when in power BNP forgets everything and remembers everything when it is in the opposition regarding the issues with neighbouring country?

Yes (55.5%)

No (41.5%)

No Comments (3.0%)

TOTAL VOTES: 827

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia that all the cases filed against her son Tarique Rahman are false?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

YOU MAY ALSO VOTE AT facebook.com/dailystarnews