

## Speeding Rab vehicle injures six

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) pickup sped away yesterday after hitting a CNG-run auto-rickshaw at Bailey Road in the capital leaving six persons, including four of a family, injured.

The injured are Md Sabuj, the auto-rickshaw driver, Halim Begum, her daughter Marium Begum, Marium's husband Abul Kalam and their daughter Lamia. Mahbulul Alam, passenger of a rickshaw, also sustained injuries.

Traffic sergeant Mahbul Hossain, who witnessed the incident, told The Daily Star that the auto-rickshaw and the rickshaw had stopped to let the home minister's motorcade pass.

He said they started moving after the motorcade had passed. Suddenly, a speedy Rab pickup van, which was behind the motorcade, hit the small vehicle which veered off and hit the rickshaw.

Contacted, Commanding Officer of Rab-3 Lt Col Anisur Rahman said they heard about the incident but no Rab-3 vehicle was involved.

## Left parties put out call for hartal tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal and Gontantrik Baam Morcha, an alliance of seven left-leaning parties, yesterday called upon all pro-liberation forces to repudiate the war criminals through enforcing a peaceful hartal tomorrow.

Meanwhile, different garment workers' organisations, including Garments Sramik Trade Union Kendra and Bangladesh Poshak Shilpo Sramik Federation, expressed solidarity with tomorrow's hartal.

On December 7, the three left-leaning parties called the countrywide daylong hartal for tomorrow demanding a ban on communal politics including that of Jamaat-e-Islami and ensuring quick trial of the war criminals. The demand also included the arrest and punishment of all responsible for the November 24 fire at Tazreen Fashions.



President Zillur Rahman being seen off by cabinet members, diplomats and high civil and military officials at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday as he leaves for the UK for a medical check-up.

PHOTO: PID

## Traffic jam at Farmgate Coaching centre boom is the cause

Says transport expert

SUBIR DAS AND MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

A major junction of the capital's road network, Farmgate, has now turned into a coaching hub, which draws tens of thousands of students from different areas every day, choking a major portion of the capital with traffic, says a transport expert.

The haphazard trips generated to and from the major junction leave a bad impact on almost every city road, said Shamsul Haque, a professor of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

During a recent visit, The Daily Star found at least 75 coaching units (individual coaching institutions plus their branches) in Farmgate, where thousands of job seekers, university admission aspirants, and school and college students flock every day.

Md Kamal Uddin Patwary, director of University Coaching Centre (UCC), said no less than 8,000 university admission aspirants attended classes at his institution at different slots a day.

At Omeca, another admission coaching centre, more than 6,000 students aspiring for engineering education attend classes per day, said a teacher of the institution, wishing anonymity.

Locals said traffic situation in Farmgate area was worsening day by day, as a number of new business establishments and private student lodging houses were springing up there centring coaching business.

Prof Haque picked holes in the urban planning and said a planning must have a proper zoning system so that educational institutions, hospitals, and other emergency establishments became community-based.

He said the tailbacks arising from the trips of thousands to and from the junction left a ripple effect across the capital. This jam has no pattern at all either, he said, as students from different parts of the capital use different modes of transport, including buses, rickshaws, bicycles and private cars to visit the coaching hub.

"Unfortunately, Rajuk turned a blind eye to the very high concentration of coaching centres at Farmgate, which triggers such a huge number of trips every day that it puts a heavy burden on the roads," he said.

"In developed countries, before permitting construction of new buildings, the city authorities estimate the possible impacts on the road due to regular trips of people. This is what we call Traffic Impact Assessment."

"They go with this planning before allowing further establishment in the city, as it is very difficult to change the setup of an already built-up area."

Prof Haque said, "Even a particular residential area in those countries is provided with all basic facilities like school, clinic, shopping mall and church so that people do not require travelling out of that area regularly."

Chairman of Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) Md Nurul Huda admitted that the high concentration of coaching centres in Farmgate significantly contributed to the city traffic jam but said his office had no role to play here.

## Victory Day in Ctg

METRO DESK

Demanding an immediate verdict in the trial of war criminals, people from all walks of life in Chittagong city yesterday celebrated the 41st anniversary of the country's victory in the Liberation War.

Chittagong University (CU) and Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) also celebrated Victory Day amid colourful processions and other cultural activities.

In the city, Chittagong City Corporation Mayor Md Manjur Alam began the day by laying a wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Different political and social organisations and educational institutions and people from all social strata also laid wreaths at the Shaheed Minar to pay tribute to the war heroes who sacrificed their lives in 1971 Liberation War.

Several programmes featuring patriotic poetry recitations, songs, street dramas,

patriotic songs and photo exhibitions were also organised in different parts of the city.

Meanwhile, Cuet organised a daylong colourful programme including a discussion meeting in its auditorium to observe the day, said a press release.

Cuet Vice Chancellor Dr Md Jahangir Alam said, "We have got the taste of independence and now we have to work hard from our own positions to build a rich nation."

On the other hand, CU Vice Chancellor Prof Anwarul Azim Arif placed a wreath at CU "Shadhinota Sharok" statue and inaugurated the "Bijoy rally", which paraded the main routes of the campus.

A discussion was held at the CU Mukto Moncho premises after the rally ended.

In the discussion, Prof Anwarul Azim Arif said the nation needed to establish the four main principles of the Liberation War--democracy, nationalism, secularism and socialism.



PHOTO: STAR

A group of kids, holding a wreath, gather at Shaheed Minar in Nandan Kanan area of Chittagong city yesterday to show respect to the martyrs of Liberation War on the occasion of Victory Day.

## Robbers 'loot' jewellery shop in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers allegedly looted about 20 tolas of gold ornaments from a jewellery shop at Chalabon in the capital's Dakkhin Khan area Saturday night, according to the shop owner Ibrahim Khalil Liton.

Abdul Hekim, officer-in-charge of Dakkhin Khan Police Station, said some miscreants exploded cocktails in front of the shop, Liton Swarna Shilpalaya, in the area on that night.

He, however, said he had no knowledge about the amount of gold and other ornaments looted from the shop.

According to Liton, about six to seven robbers created panic by exploding cocktails and entered the shop around 8:00pm.

The robbers took away 20 tolas of gold ornaments and about 7 tolas of silver ornaments, he said.

Earlier, Liton went to Tongi leaving salesman Sohel at the shop. A few minutes later, Sohel contacted him over cellphone and informed about the looting.

He rushed to the shop and found that all the display racks were empty and broken.

No case was filed in this regard till filing of this report at 9:20pm yesterday.

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