Atia Rahman Shuchi works part-time in three different places in Dhaka. Without her car to take her when there is a hartal, she uses a bus or bicycle. "It's quite scary. I have to get to my work no matter what may be on the roads," says the 29-year-old who works at a university and for an international organisation. "One day there was an incident when I took a bus from Dhanmondi to Gulshan. Suddenly a picketer came up with a cocktail in his hand and we all had to jump from the bus through the windows." She also recalls picketers throwing things at her while on her bicycle in Gulshan 2, an area considered to be one of the safest neighbourhoods even during hartals. The young mother adds, "CNGs and rickshaws aren't as available and if they are, they ask for too much money, sometimes double or triple the amount."



"A picketer came up with a cocktail in his hand and we all had to jump from the bus through the windows."

Atia Rahman Shuchi, lecturer and INGO worker

Jannatul Ferdous Nahin, who studies computer science at a private university, agrees that inflated transport costs are not affordable considering the number of hartals recently experienced. "My office is in Uttara and I don't feel safe during hartal. There aren't many buses so I have to take a CNG but my cost of travel becomes very high so I take the train."



"My child had to suffer from teargas on his way back from school a few times."

Reshma Akter, housewife

You might think that CNG drivers and rickshaw pullers do good business during a shutdown because of their higher prices but they insist they do not profit from the occasion because there are less people on the streets to get business from. "I don't support hartals," says 40-year-old CNG driver Selim. "My income source is reduced by hartals. My family starves because we don't get any money."

A rickshaw puller for 20 years, Aminul Islam believes hartals limit his ability to move around, which in turn affects his crucial daily earnings. "Hartal is damaging for me and it's hard to carry

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS



Jamaat-Shibir men set fire to new school text books stored in Bashkhali Upazila Parishad, Chittagong.