


PHOTO: ZAHEDUL I KHAN

# A Shocking Incident

I am a teacher at an English medium school in Dhaka and am in charge of one of the school buses that bring the students home. To get to our stops, we must travel through some remote places and that is where this incident happened. A few weeks ago, we were on the school bus with about 80 students when suddenly, three young men who were in the car in front of us suddenly stopped their vehicle and blocked the road, forcing us to stop. They got out of their car and came towards our bus shouting that we had hit them, which of course hadn't happened. Their eyes were blood shot and they demanded we let them into the bus. For us, this was out of the question as the only adults were myself and another elderly teacher and the bus driver who seemed panicked. When we refused and asked what they wanted, they said we should either let them in or get the driver off the bus so they could punish him for hitting them. We begged them to let us go at which point they broke some branches from nearby trees and started hitting the bus as hard as they could causing chaos and panic among the students. We called the school for help and proceeded to try and reason with them. When they realised we were on the phone, it must have scared them a little and they asked for money. We only had Tk 1,500 but they wanted atleast Tk 5,000. When we couldn't provide that they continued to attack the bus. The other teacher and I were in tears and begged them to let us go. At this point, some other cars had come our way and were slowing down to see what was going on. Noone came to our aid, but this still made them nervous. They took our money and left hurriedly. When we had time to calm down, we realised they were not professional hijackers and that they had come unarmed and we concluded that they must have been drug addicts looking to make some quick cash by acting rashly without thinking. It made me sad and afraid at the same time seeing what our society is becoming. If our system was efficient, we would have had policemen there before these men had a chance to get away. We were there for half an hour and yet no help came till after the incident. Noone stopped or called for help after they saw what happened, showing how indifferent we have become to each other's plight.

*Rehnuma Khan*
*Via email.*

# An Accident and a Surprise

A few nights ago, my husband and I were returning home to Dhanmondi around 11pm from a dinner party when something we all dread happened. We were at the Jhigatala Tempo stand near a check post and going straight. A large truck (lorry van) was on our right apparently going straight as well. All of a sudden, without a signal or any indication of its intentions, the truck turned left, hitting our car and practically pushing it to the left as it went. My husband luckily still had control over the car and swerved out of the truck's way. The policemen at the check post saw what had happened and tried to stop the truck, at which point it broke the barriers of the post and almost ran over a Sergeant and sped away. Some of the policemen chased after the truck while the others waited with us making sure we were okay. Luckily they managed to stop the truck some distance away and cuffed the driver and insisted he call the truck owner. Our car was badly damaged and it turned out the truck driver was highly intoxicated, so the owner compensated us for the repairs. When I managed to get over my shock at the whole incident, I had to appreciate the help we received from the policemen, who exceeded my expectations and did their job as they were supposed to.

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