



The photo on the left taken on September 30 at 1:30pm and published by The Daily Star yesterday is of a stretch of Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Gazipur. However, Bangladesh Army has transformed the stretch since then to ease traffic movement during the Eid rush as seen in the photo on the right.

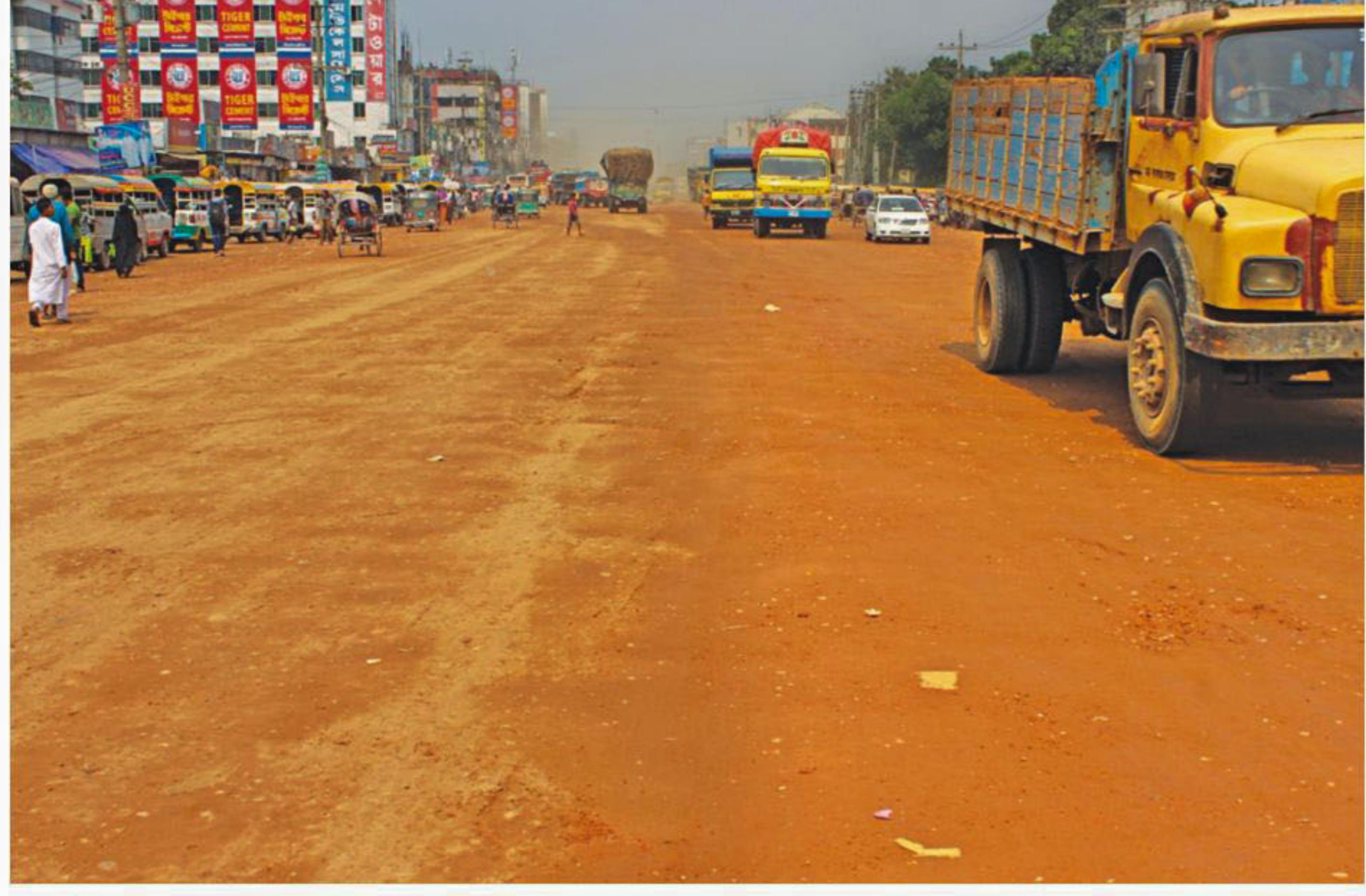


PHOTO: BANGLADESH ARMY

2 AL men held over attack on UNO

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police yesterday arrested two activists of the ruling Awami League for their alleged involvement in attacking Nawabganj upazila nirbahi officer and vandalising his office on Wednesday.

They are Abdul Mannan and Alam Mia, activists of the upazila unit AL. Around 60 men of AL and Chhatra League allegedly attacked the office of Nawabganj upazila nirbahi officer in Dinajpur on Wednesday morning, leaving UNO Syed Farhat Hossain critically injured.

The attackers also vandalised furniture at his office over recruiting night guards at 39 government primary schools in the upazila, the UNO office sources said.

Following the incident, Abdur Rahman, an official of the UNO office, filed a case against 50-60 unnamed people with Nawabganj Police Station at night on Wednesday.

Amirul Islam, officer-in-charge of the police station, confirmed filing of the case, and said two people were

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Cattle markets in city

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Bepari at the Postogola cattle market. He incurred a loss of Tk 5 lakh last year.

Although there is a huge supply of sacrificial animals in the capital, most of the buyers complained about the soaring prices. But cattle traders said they had to pay an additional Tk 10,000 to Tk 15,000 to buy a middle-sized bull.

Anisur Rahman, a resident of Gendaria who came to visit a local cattle market at East End Club field, said the prices of cattle were very high compared to the previous year.

CCTV AND FAKE NOTE CHECKING MACHINE

Like previous years, the authorities of cattle markets, with the help of Dhaka Metropolitan Police and different banks, have set up CCTV and fake note detecting machines at several points and counters of the markets.

EXTORTION

Although the cattle traders did not complain about extortion or hassle from the law enforcers on their way to the capital, they claimed they had to pay additional amount to some brokers of Daulatdia-Paturia and Mawa-Kewrakandi ferry ghats.

"I had to give Tk 2,000 to brokers at Daulatdia ghat to cross the river

though the official fee is Tk 1,060," said Sujon Ali, a truck driver who carried bulls from Jhenidah to the Sadeque Hossain Khoka playground by Dholai Khal road yesterday morning.

Even the BIWTA staff at the ticket counter asked him to buy tickets from the brokers, he added.

Mohammad Murad, a truck driver who brought bulls from Faridpur, also complained of giving extra money to some brokers at Mawa and Kewrakandi ghats.

"Apart from the ferry charges, I gave Tk 400 at Kewrakandi and Tk 200 at Mawa ghat on the way to East End Club field," he said.

Shafiqul Islam, manager (commerce) of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) at Daulatdia ferry ghat said they have set up weighbridge at the ferry ghat to measure the weight of goods-laden trucks and that they are taking extra money only for the additional weight the trucks are carrying.

He said they charge Tk 1,060 for a medium size truck which is eligible to carry 20 tonnes while a big size truck which carries 23 tonnes has to give Tk 1,460. However, Tk 120 is charged for each tonne of additional weight, he added.

Kumari Puja

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hours today. Though Bijaya Dashami will be celebrated today, Puja organisers in the capital have decided to immerse the idols tomorrow.

From early morning, people of all ages gathered at Ramkrishna Mission and Dhakeswari Temple in Dhaka to observe Kumari Puja.

According to Ramkrishna, the divine mother manifests herself more in Kumari, a pure-hearted girl.

Devotees of all ages offered flowers at the feet of the girl Goddess Durga. Arati was performed. It is customary to offer the girl gold, silver and clothes, which is considered as a pious act.

Sandhi Puja was held last night during the last 24 minutes of Ashtami Tithi and the first 24 minutes of Navami Tithi, which is called Sandhi (threshold) Time.

Devotees also observed fasting and recited hymns while attending the puja ceremonies at mandaps and offered flowers to seek blessings from Durga, the saviour of mankind from all evils.

Additional law enforcers were deployed around the puja venues to ensure security during the festivities.

People crowd trains

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said businessman Shahin Ahmed of Kahal of Bogra.

Truck drivers falling asleep in jams also contribute to tailbacks.

Broken down vehicles is one of the major reasons for the jams. "It is very tough to send a tow truck to the spot due to the narrow highway and the situation turns worse when several vehicles breakdown at the same time," Superintendent of Police Saleh Mohammed Tanvir of Tangail told The Daily Star.

Mujahidul Islam, traffic and security manager at Bangabandhu Bridge, said the number of the vehicles crossing the bridge in the last 24 hours hit a record 20,899. Usually, 10,000 vehicles cross the bridge a day, he added.

Many bus passengers yesterday had to wait for hours at Gabtoli Bus Terminal for their trips home because buses were very late on their incoming trips.

Bus operators say buses coming from districts got stuck on Dhaka-Tangail highway putting their schedules in disarray.

At Sadarghat, passengers complained of vessels overloading when Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan visited the terminal yesterday evening.

When the minister went inside the launch Glory of Srinagar heading for

Bhola, it was packed, including the roof, which is illegal.

He ordered the BIWTC officials not to allow anyone to travel on the roofs, but many launches left the terminal overcrowded.

The minister said ferries would be used for carrying passengers to reduce the pressure on launches when the Eid rush peaks.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday decided to deploy police at launch terminals across the country to prevent vessels from overloading.

There were no traffic jams on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway but vehicle movement was slow yesterday, making the journey long.

Delwar Hossain, a government employee, boarded a bus to go to Sylhet at 3:05pm. Contacted at 7:30pm, Delwar said he had just crossed Ashuganj.

"There was congestion on the way ... If everything goes well, it will take another two and half hours to reach Sylhet," he said.

There was no major disruption in vehicular movement on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway.

Ferry and launch services at Paturia-Daulatdia and Mawa-Kawrakandi were normal. The authorities yesterday deployed two additional ferries at Mawa-Kawrakandi.



Kamal heavily bleeds as he is being taken to a local hospital under police custody in Jessor on Wednesday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Innocent faces cop brutality

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registrar of Thoracic surgery department of NICDH.

Kamal, a 45-year-old shopkeeper in Jessor, was unconscious as of filing this report at 10:30pm yesterday.

On Wednesday afternoon, the BNP-led 20-party alliance organised a human chain in front of Jessor Press Club on Mujib Sarak in protest at Posts and Telecommunications Minister Latif Siddique's derogatory comments on Hajj.

A clash ensued as the opposition activists resisted police's attempts to detain several BNP leaders from the spot.

Amid running battles, the cops beat up people indiscriminately, injuring activists, passersby or journalists. At one stage, they started firing shotgun shells.

According to witnesses, police were firing so recklessly that even a cop suffered pellet wounds.

Sensing danger, Kamal came out of his garment retail shop, "First Craze", within 30 yards of the spot, and started closing the shutters.

Before he could realise anything, cops pounced on him, kicked him to the ground. And one of the policemen shot him, holding the muzzle of the gun against his left chest, witnesses said.

Critically wounded, Kamal was detained by police and rushed to Jessor Medical College Hospital around 4:00pm.

Doctors asked the family members to take him to the capital as his condition worsened. But it was delayed for several hours as police cited legal bar, saying Kamal was involved in the violence.

After repeated requests, family members were allowed to take Kamal to Dhaka with a four-member police team. They reached the NIDCH at Mohakhali around 3:00am yesterday.

Meanwhile, Tariqul Islam, a standing committee member of BNP, said at a press conference at Jessor Press Club that Kamal is not an activist of their party.

But Enamul Haque, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said

a case was filed yesterday morning against "126 activists including Kamal, who was present at Wednesday's protest programme".

Contacted, Jessor Superintendent of Police Anisur Rahman said, "Kamal and constable Motiur suffered injuries from shots fired by the protesters, not police."

He said primary investigation found that Kamal is an activist of the BNP. "Investigation is going on. If he is found innocent, we will withdraw his name from the case."

Kamal's maternal uncle Sirajul Islam Sikdar said, "Kamal has never been involved in any criminal activities. He used to work under an NGO project in Nilphamari. He came back to Jessor a year ago after the project tenure was over."

Kamal, the eldest among four sons of freedom fighter late Rezaul Haque Sardar, is a resident of Newtown under Jessor Sadar upazila. Married to Merina Khatun, he is father of six-year-old daughter and three-year-old son.

SIM buyers

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activating the SIM (subscriber identification module) cards, he added.

The meeting discussed mobile banking and decided to set an upper limit to such transaction, mentioned the minister.

On the exodus of Eid holidaymakers from the cities, he said police will be deployed at launch terminals to check overloading of vessels.

Amu said Law Minister Anisur Haque assured the meeting of taking steps to ease the huge backlog of cases in courts by disposing of lawsuits in speed trial tribunals within stipulated time.

The meeting instructed police to submit final reports to courts in cases where witnesses and accused could not be traced for long.

Meeting sources said a committee will be formed soon to implement the decisions of the meeting.

The government, added the sources, is also mulling over increasing the number of judges in speed trial tribunals and utilising the less-burdened tribunals in each districts to the full extent.

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan and State Minister for Home Masuduzzaman Khan were present.

I won't quit

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2017 which are at the centre of the ongoing confrontation between demonstrators and the Beijing-backed city authorities.

In a concession Leung said he would appoint Chief Secretary Carrie Lam to lead discussions with the Hong Kong Federation of Students, one of multiple groups involved in the ongoing demonstrations.

On August 31, China said Hong Kongers would be able to vote for their next leader but that only two or three candidates vetted by a loyalist committee would be allowed to stand.

Demonstrators have dismissed the decision as "fake democracy" and have vowed to keep people on the streets for as long as it takes.

Loud boos and jeers echoed across the main protest site as Leung's words were relayed through a series of loudspeakers, AFP reporters said.

However, Leung's offer of talks appeared to have mollified protest leaders, who had vowed to escalate their occupation of major sites if their demands were not met.

"It is the first time since August 31 that a minister has agreed to talk to students and citizens. This is a critical moment," student leader Lester Shum told the crowds, according to the South China Morning Post, as he called on protesters to avoid confrontations with police.

Occupy Central, the main protester group, said it welcomed the offer of talks with students, adding it hoped they would "provide a turning point in the current political stalemate", but reiterated its calls for Leung to step down.

Earlier tensions had soared around the besieged government headquarters, after police were seen transporting tear gas and rubber bullet rounds, causing widespread alarm and anger within the crowds.

Police meanwhile warned protesters late yesterday that anyone rushing their cordon or attempting to break into the besieged government offices would meet "resolute enforcement actions".

China has strongly backed Leung and pledged support for Hong Kong police over the protests, which pose a huge political challenge at a time when

the Communist Party is cracking down hard on dissent on the mainland.

In an editorial to be published Friday People's Daily, the Communist Party mouthpiece repeated Beijing's unbinding response to calls for free elections.

Beijing's latest comments came after China's foreign minister issued a stern warning to the United States not to meddle in its "internal affairs".

Some analysts say it is unlikely Leung will step down, in what would be a massive loss of face for the establishment.

"If Beijing forces him to resign, they will be seen to be buckling under pressure from the protesters," said Willy Lam, a China scholar at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Around the world the city's protest movement has been dubbed the "umbrella revolution" -- a nod to the umbrellas they have used to protect themselves against pepper spray, the sun and torrential downpours alike.

No large-scale public backlash has met protesters, although disruption in the last 48 hours has been minimised by a two-day public holiday.

Doping gangs

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Sources at DMCH said over 200 people became victims of doping gangs in last month. The hospital has treated 40 such victims in last one week, including five yesterday.

According to DMP statistics, 54 incidents of drugging people were recorded last month, which left 58 dead or injured. Many victims even do not visit hospitals as they are not seriously ill.

Unidentified criminals allegedly poisoned Shohag Mia, 20, to death in the capital's Sayedabad on September 22.

Jatrabari police, who took Shohag to DMCH, said the victim was found unconscious in a bus at Sayedabad Bus Terminal.

Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner of DMP, said a drugging gang usually operates in two small groups of four to five members each.

The first group would target a person and leave him unconscious. Then the thugs would either leave

the spot or mix with a crowd, he added.

The second group, said the cop, would steal the possessions of the victim.

Detectives last month rounded up 27 members of drugging gangs. Of them, 13 including two ringleaders were arrested on Tuesday in the capital's Motijheel area.

Cops on September 28 arrested another drugging gang of seven people in Jatrabari and seized 280 pieces of sedatives, Noctin 5mg, from their possession. The seven were detained in a bus while preparing to commit a crime.

Prof Dr Mujibur Rahman of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College said they often find victims doped with high-powered sedatives like benzodiazepine, which make people unconscious quickly.

"Excessive doses of sedatives may lead to cardiac arrest and subsequent death of a victim," he mentioned.