



University buses, cars and vehicles of high officials and influential people drive on the wrong side of city streets against the traffic as if the central reservations on streets do not mean anything. Even police vans and prison vans are doing it. Sometimes, police escort influential people on the wrong side of the roads while the traffic policemen at intersections stop vehicles to let them through. The photos were taken at Ruposhi Bangla and Moghbazar intersections, and on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Bijoy Sarani and Minto Road of the capital a week ago.

PHOTO: STAR



## Wrong side?

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 Asked, a traffic constable said they had to do it to avoid retribution.  
 It was the same picture on Hare Road, at Tejaon flyover end at Bijoy Sarani, Farmgate Police Box and Moghbazar and Bangla Motor intersections.  
 Double-deckers of Dhaka University are frequent violators of the

traffic rule.  
 DU Vice-chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said they were aware of the allegation.  
 "Some drivers claim that the students compel them to do it when the buses get stuck in traffic. The university's transport section is handling the matter. Drivers have been strictly instructed to follow traffic rules and

not to pay any heed to the students' illegal demand," he said.  
 "Tough action will be taken against the driver if found breaching traffic rules," the VC added.  
 A week ago, a double-decker carrying employees of the Supreme Court was seen crossing the Ruposhi Bangla intersection through the wrong lane.  
 Contacted, Syed Aminul Islam,

registrar general of the SC, said he was unaware of the matter and that they would take action upon receiving the allegation.  
 On June 14, this newspaper took photos of similar traffic rules violation by government officials at Bangla Motor, Paribagh and Bijoy Sarani intersections and on Minto Road.  
 Admitting that ministers and law-

makers' vehicles often ply through the wrong side, a top DMP official of the traffic division said they were helpless.  
 "If those who make laws are found to be violating laws, then what can we do?" he said, asking not to be named.  
 Contacted, DMP Joint Commissioner (traffic) Mosleuddin Ahmed said they filed cases against

traffic rules violators and also forced vehicles travelling on the wrong side to get back to the right lane.  
 The police also prepared a list of offenders and sent it to the offenders' higher authorities for action.  
 Asked about traffic rules violation by police vehicles, the joint commissioner said he would look into the matter.

## Pesticide in litchi kills kids, again

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 Though parents of the deceased children were in the dark about the reason behind the deaths, Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) confirmed that pesticides, which were found in their blood samples, led to their deaths.  
 "We have found high density of pesticides in the blood samples collected from their bodies," said Professor Dr Mahmudur Rahman, director of IEDCR.  
 Prof Mahmudur said an IEDCR team collected blood samples of a total of 46 children including the deceased 11 from Dinajpur's litchi growing areas and found pesticides in their blood samples.  
 He said one did not necessarily

need to eat a litchi to fall fatally sick; a child would inhale pesticides if he had just roamed in and around the litchi orchards where pesticides are heavily sprayed.  
 "In any case, examining the samples we have found that in 88 percent of the cases those children consumed litchis and we are certain that they died from the deadly effects of the pesticides," he said.  
 Pesticides were already there in their blood. They died when it crossed their tolerable limit, said the professor.  
 Visiting the families of some of the deceased, it was found they all lived in close proximity to litchi orchards. Besides, some of the dead children's fathers were workers at the orchards.

Take, for example, the location of the small hut of Robichan. It is surrounded by litchi gardens on three sides. Swapan used to play in and around the orchards most of the time along with his friends.  
 Payar Ali and Masum, two school friends of Swapan, still remember how cheerful they had been before Swapan fell sick. "We ate lots of litchis together," said Masum.  
 12 children, including Swapan, aged between two and six years, were admitted to the hospital. Nishi, 3, daughter of Khairul Islam of Purbo Sadipur village under Kaharol upazila, is the lone survivor among them.  
 "Though Nishi survived, she can't talk now," said her mother Parvin Akter.  
 Salma Begum, mother of deceased

Shamima from New Sengram under Birganj upazila, said her daughter had eaten litchis two days before she fell sick.  
 Shamima died at the hospital on May 30 and her father is a season worker at a litchi orchard.  
 Earlier in 2012, 12 children had died eating litchis contaminated with pesticide.  
 Professor Mahmudur Rahman said children should not be allowed in the litchi gardens during this season as they are repeatedly falling victim to pesticide during this time of the year.  
 Many locals in the orchard area complained that the orchard leaseholders used some pesticides secretly.  
 Dr Wares, head of pediatrician

department of Dinajpur Medical College Hospital, said all the patients were children aged between 2 and 6 years and they were hospitalised between May 30 and June 20 with severe fever and convulsion; some were unconscious as well.  
 "Besides, these children have been suffering from malnutrition," he said.  
 In a different test, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) has examined seasonal fruits and found high quantity of pesticide like Organophosphorus in the samples from Dinajpur.  
 "We have detected pesticides in 14 percent of the litchi samples that came from Dinajpur [this season]," said Syed Nurul Alam, chief scientific officer of BARI.  
 Farmers do not need to use

Organophosphorus on litchis, but they still do it on instructions from pesticide dealers, he said, adding that chemical residues remain in fruits for 10 to 12 days after application.  
 The Daily Star carried a report a few days ago that litchi orchard owners were using pesticides on litchis.  
 When asked, Dr Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said the government does not take responsibility for people's health.  
 Though it has been reported in media about the health hazards of pesticides for a quite a long time now, no step on the government's part is visible yet, he said.  
 "The government should have control and a monitoring mechanism over the use of pesticides," he said.

## Bangladesh more peaceful Wave of terror attacks

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 published recently.  
 The IEP is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit think tank dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well-being and progress. It has offices in Sydney, New York and Mexico City.  
 Iceland has retained its place as the most peaceful country in the world, followed by Denmark and Austria, while war-ravaged Syria remained at the bottom of the rankings.  
 The report ranked 162 nations according to 23 indicators that gauge the absence of violence or the fear of violence. The factors include level of violence and crime, involvement in conflicts and degree of militarisation.  
 The United States is in the bottom half of the index, thanks to the level of militarisation, homicides and fear of violence persisting in the country. It's ranked 94th, 10 spots behind Bangladesh.  
 "The world is becoming increasingly divided with some countries enjoying unprecedented levels of peace and prosperity while others spiral further into violence and conflict," the reports states in its assessment.  
 European countries dominated the list of most peaceful nations.

**GLOBAL PEACE INDEX 2015**

**81** countries turned more peaceful, **78** deteriorated since last year

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**15** of the **20** most peaceful countries are in Europe

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Middle East and North Africa least peaceful regions

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**180,000** killed in internal armed conflicts in 2014, rising from **49,000** in 2010

SOURCE: INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMICS & PEACE

"Europe maintained its position as the most peaceful region in the world, supported by a lack of domestic and external conflicts," it says.  
 In South Asia, Bhutan has been identified as the most peaceful country, followed by Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.  
 Individual composite scores of most countries in the region worsened, with just Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh registering gains, the GPI 2015 says.  
 Globally, Bhutan ranks 18th, Nepal 62nd, Sri Lanka 114th, India 143rd, Pakistan 154th and Afghanistan 160th.

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 Some of the wounded are in a critical condition," health ministry communications chief Chokri Nafis said, revising an earlier toll of 28 dead.  
 The Islamic State group, which on Monday marks the first anniversary of its "caliphate" straddling Iraq and Syria, said it was behind the Kuwait bombing.  
 During Friday prayers, a suicide bomber struck Shia mosque Al-Imam al-Sadeq in the Kuwaiti capital, as the Gulf state declared an "all-out confrontation" with terrorism, reports AFP.  
 The bomb killed the mosque with smoke and left dead and wounded scattered on the carpet, according to witnesses and videos posted online.  
 Health Minister Ali al-Obaidi told the state-run Kuwait Television the number of dead had risen to 27 in addition to 222 wounded in the first ever suicide attack on Shiite mosques in the oil-rich emirate.  
 The toll in the attack, carried out in the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan, is one of the largest in Kuwait's history.  
 The cabinet announced after an emergency meeting that all security agencies and police have been placed on alert to confront what it called

"black terror".  
 "The cabinet stresses that it will take whatever measures necessary to root out this scourge, and declares a relentless all-out confrontation with these terrorists," said a statement after the meeting.  
 It also declared a day of mourning today.  
 The IS-affiliated group in Saudi Arabia, calling itself Najd Province, said militant Abu Suleiman al-Muwahhid bombed the mosque which it claimed was spreading Shiite teachings among Sunni Muslims.  
 IS, a radical Sunni group, considers Shias to be heretics.  
 The Najd Province group has claimed similar bombings at Shiite mosques in Saudi Arabia in recent weeks.  
 After the attack, a security official said "it is a suicide bombing", and witnesses said a suicide bomber entered the mosque during weekly noon prayers.  
 In a message circulating on social media, the Islamic State called the suicide bomber "one of the knights of the Sunni people."  
 The three strikes came at roughly the same time, and just days after the Islamic State, the militant group also known as ISIS or ISIL, called for such

operations during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.  
 "It appears to be an effort to launch and inspire a wave of attacks across three continents, reminiscent of al-Qaeda's simultaneous multiple attacks of the past," said Bruce O Riedel, a former CIA officer who is a counterterrorism expert at the Brookings Institution in Washington.  
 While investigations continued in each of the countries, the quick succession of the attacks raised the possibility that the Islamic State, which has seized control of territory in Iraq and Syria, has successfully inspired sympathizers to plan and carry out attacks in their own countries.  
 "Muslims, embark and hasten toward jihad," said the Islamic State's spokesman, Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, in an audio message released this week. "O mujahedeen everywhere, rush and go to make Ramadan a month of disasters for the infidels."  
 US intelligence and counterterrorism officials were scrambling on Friday to assess the connections, if any, between the attacks in France, Kuwait and Tunisia, writes New York Times.  
 Col Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman, called the attacks "heinous" but would not speculate on

possible linkages between them.  
 "It's too soon to know whether these attacks were all coordinated or whether they were all just completely separate," Colonel Warren said. "We just don't know yet."  
 The grisly attack near France's second city of Lyon "was without doubt to cause an explosion. It was a terrorist attack," said Hollande in Brussels, cutting short an EU summit to chair emergency meetings in Paris.  
 The victim was found with Arabic inscriptions scrawled on him and Islamic flags were also found on the site at the small town of Saint-Quentin-Fallavier, some 40km from Lyon.  
 The head of the victim, a 54-year-old local businessman, was "hung onto the fence surrounded by two Islamic flags bearing the Shahada, the profession of (Muslim) faith," said French prosecutor Francois Molins.  
 The attack was the first instance in France of a beheading during an attack -- which has become a trademark of the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria.  
 The gruesome killing came nearly six months after the Islamist attacks in and around Paris that left 17 people dead, starting with a shooting at satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo.