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People head for their destinations on foot as the city saw an acute shortage of public transport due to massive gridlock centring an Awami League rally at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday. **Top right**, a procession of Ramna Thana unit of Mahila Awami League marches towards the rally venue through Shahbagh intersection. **Bottom right**, bikers encroach on a footpath near the intersection adding to the suffering of pedestrians. **Left**, vehicles of VIPs take the wrong side of the road at Karwan Bazar to go to the rally.

PHOTO: STAR

People suffer for hours

Processions, road restrictions for AL rally cause traffic chaos

STAR REPORT

Thousands of commuters suffered long delays yesterday as they had to endure gridlocks on different city roads due to a grand rally of the ruling Awami League at the Suhrawardy Udyan.

The roads leading to the meeting venue were choked with processions by

AL activists. The party organised the rally to mark the Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The gridlock on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue was so bad that even the motorcade of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had to take the wrong lane on way to the meeting venue around 3:00pm as the left lane was clogged

with vehicles, said witnesses.

Residents use the road to commute between the northern and southern parts of the city. Traffic on the road was halted when the PM's motorcade used it to get to and from the venue. The halt in vehicular movement ultimately affected the traffic in other parts of the capital.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

RAMU MAYHEM Main accused held in Dhaka

OUR CORRESPONDENT, COX'S BAZAR

Law enforcers yesterday detained the chairman of Bandarban's Naikkhangchhari upazila in connection with the 2012 arson attacks and vandalism at Buddhist temples in Ramu.

Tofail Ahmed, who is a charge-sheeted accused in two cases filed after the incident, was arrested at Hotel Sundarban of Karwan Bazar in the capital.

A team of plainclothes men identifying them as the members of Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) picked up Tofail from his room around 2:30am, said Abul Kalam Azad, chairman of Ali Kadam upazila in Bandarban.

Azad said he along with Tofail had gone to Dhaka to take part in a workshop organised by the LGRD ministry.

Tofail stands accused in 11 cases.

Sources said he was a leader of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, when he was a student of Chittagong University. He had later got involved in Jamaat



Tofail Ahmed

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

3 killed as prison van rams 3-wheeler

Accident sparks protest; van torched

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

At least three passengers of a rickshaw-van were killed and five others injured yesterday when a prison van rammed it in Rangpur Sadar upazila.

Agitated locals then set fire to the vehicle of Rangpur Central Jail and blocked the Rangpur-Dinajpur highway, where the accident took place, for an hour from 6:00pm.

The pickup was heading to Rangpur city from Saidpur upazila in Nilphamari district as it hit the rickshaw van at Shaleasa under Sadar upazila, leaving three people dead on the spot, police and witnesses said.

The deceased were identified as Jesmin Begum, 25, and Anar, 7, of Shaleasa, and Chhafur Uddin, 65, of Kharuabada village of the upazila.

Four other passengers of the rickshaw van

and its driver were hurt. Their identities could not be known immediately.

Local people rescued the injured and admitted them to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Agitated people then torched the prison van.

Anwar Hossain, assistant superintendent of highway police in Rangpur, said that being informed of the accident police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Additional police have been deployed in the area to avert further violence, he added.

Ratna Roy, superintendent of Rangpur Central Jail, told The Daily Star that she and Abdul Quddus, jailor, had come to Dhaka to take their divisional examination scheduled for today but hearing of the incident, they headed to Rangpur.



Where humans are caged!

MAIL ONLINE

Tourists and predators have switched places at a zoo in China, where visitors are paying to be locked in a cage and stalked by big cats and bears.

Lehe Ledu Wildlife Zoo in Chongqing city is giving people the chance to get up close with some of the world's most ferocious animals -- who they can even feed by hand.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Cleared, finally

Court acquits four Adama Bangladesh staff of human trafficking charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four members of non-profit organisation Adama Bangladesh were yesterday relieved of human trafficking charge brought against them around four months ago.

Judge Mohammad Salauddin Ahmed of the Fourth Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression passed the order following police's appeal.

Rampura Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Mahbubur Rahman, also the investigating officer of the case, appealed to the court on October 19 to relieve the four youths of the charge after a police investigation found them innocent.

Later on that day, the four -- Arifur Raihan, Hasibur Rahman, Zakia Sultana and Firoz Alam Khan -- were released on bail from Dhaka Central Jail.

"With the court's decision, it will now be much easier for us to overcome the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

JP MP's men assault teacher

He denies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some Jatiya Party men led by lawmaker Syed Abu Hossain Babla allegedly assaulted a school headmaster in the capital yesterday.

Babla and his followers attacked Aatur Rahman, headteacher of Dholaipar High School, over formation of the new school managing committee, teachers said.

The JP MP from Dhaka-4, who is also president of the party's Dhaka South unit, former president of the school committee Nazrul Islam, local councillor Habibur Rahman and some 50 people entered the headmaster's room around 12:30pm.

Babla and Nazrul asked

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

HAJJ POLICY OKAYED

Each pilgrim has to pay Tk 3.6 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hajj pilgrims will have to spend Tk 3.6 lakh each for performing the holy hajj under government management this year.

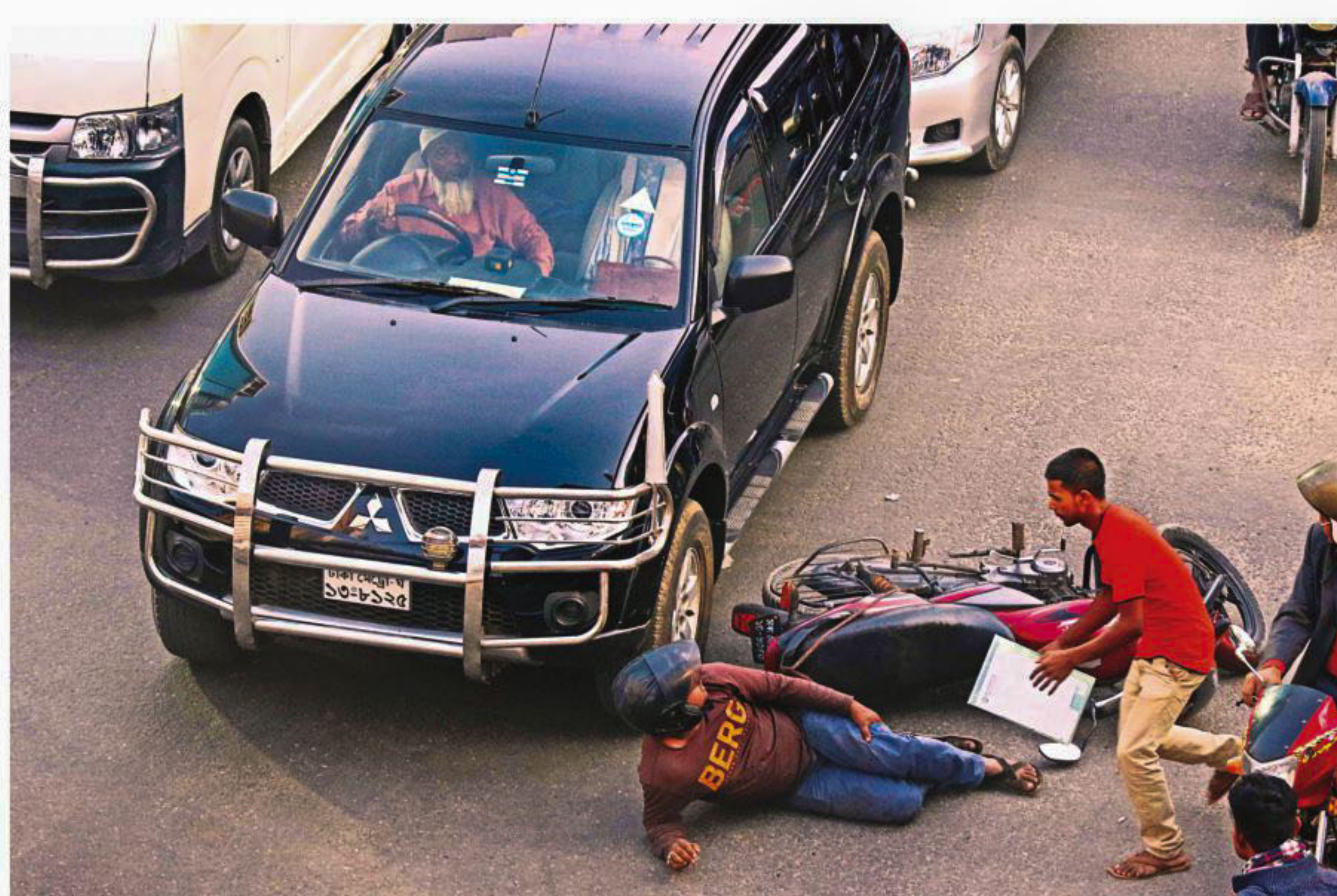
The decision came at the weekly cabinet meeting at the secretariat yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiul Alam said the amount was fixed while approving the draft of the National Hajj and Umrah Policy 2016 and Hajj Package 2016.

Besides, the amount is Tk 3.05 lakh for the pilgrims performing the ritual without the cost of sacrificial animal, he said.

The cabinet secretary said there would be a hike of Tk 5,274 and Tk 7,740 for the two packages respectively due to a rise in US dollar in the local market.

He said a total of 1,13,868 hajj pilgrims would perform the hajj this year. Of them, 5,000 pilgrims would go under



A biker falls on the ground after he hits another vehicle at Bangla Motor intersection on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital yesterday. Vehicles waiting at the intersection start moving carelessly whenever the traffic lights there go green, throwing traffic management into disarray and causing accidents. PHOTO: AmRAN HoSSAIN



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PRAYER TIMING
JANUARY 12

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AzAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:36 7:00
JaMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:40 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION