



A man smokes a cigarette on Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) premises, in front of a sign that says this hospital is a smoking-free zone. Though consumption and sale of tobacco products within 100 yards of schools and hospitals are prohibited, such practices go on uninhibited. The photos were taken recently at CMCH.



## Cigarette sales rampant near schools, hospitals

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

In gross violation of the tobacco control law, sale of cigarettes is rampant on the peripheries of hundreds of schools and hospitals in Chattogram, a research shows.

The Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, formulated in 2005, prohibits consumption and sale of tobacco products within 100 yards of educational institutions and hospitals.

Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA), an NGO, monitored 41 wards of the port city between September and October last year and found 5,536 shops selling tobacco products within 100 yards of 885 schools and 162 hospitals.

Out of 16,059 shops surveyed, 11,462 did not have licenses from the city corporation. At least 646 underage boys and girls were engaged in the business, according to the study.

BITA assigned 10 teams who talked to shopkeepers and hawkers selling tobacco products, said Sisir Dutta, executive director of BITA.

"What we found is gross violation of the law. We even found people smoking inside hospital wards. The government aims to make Bangladesh a smoking free nation by 2040 but it is not strictly enforcing the law," Sisir said, urging the authorities to keep a watch on public places and penalise lawbreakers.

The city corporation must come forward as it runs most of the educational institutions in Chattogram, he opined.

Chairman of Chattogram Education Board Prof Shaheda Islam said the BITA findings has come as a worry trigger. "I personally wrote to the police commissioner

**THE GRIM PICTURE**  
(SALE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS WITHIN 100 YARDS)

**SCHOOLS 885**  
**HOSPITALS 162**  
**SHOPS SELLING THE PRODUCTS 5,536**

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

## Amid demo, counter-demo, four lives lost on roads

STAR REPORT

Bus owners and workers in Barishal yesterday observed a six-hour strike, demanding release of a bus driver while college students demonstrated in the town seeking his punishment and safer roads.

Students in Jashore also blockaded a road, demanding road safety and compensation for schoolgirl Nipa Khatun, who lost her leg in a road accident on Thursday.

Amid such protests and demonstrations, at least four persons were killed and another was injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday.

### PROTEST, COUNTERPROTEST

In Barishal, bus owners and workers enforced the strike from 6am while students of Government BM College brought out a procession and blocked the city's Nathullahad bus terminal from 10:30am to noon.

On Friday, seven people, including a student of the college, were killed and six others injured in head-on collision between a bus and three-wheeler in Banaripara upazila. Later, police arrested the bus driver, Abdul Jalil, from Babuganj upazila.

Talking to journalists, Jahangir Hossain, secretary of Bus Workers' Union, said, "We called off our strike around noon on administration's request. We demand immediate release of our fellow driver."

Aditi, a student of BM College, said, "We demand trial of the driver, responsible for the accident."

Around noon, students withdrew their

blockade when Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah visited the area and announced to take necessary steps.

Due to the strike and demonstration, commuters had to suffer immensely.

"I had an important meeting today at Gourmadi upazila but I missed it due to transport crisis," said Nasima, an NGO employee.

Meanwhile in Jashore, students blockaded Benapole-Jashore highway, demanding compensation for sixth-grader Nipa.

Students put up barricades and burnt tyres, halting vehicular movement from around 9am. Around 3pm, they withdrew the blockade, following assurance from administration and police that necessary measures would be taken for Nipa's treatment, said OC Mosiur Rahman of Sarsa Police Station.

### 4 KILLED IN 3 DISTRICTS

In Joypurhat, at least two people were killed and another was injured in a head-on collision between two motorbikes at Panchbibi upazila around 2pm yesterday.

The deceased are Mahfuz Hossain, 26; and Tabibar Rahman, 60, -- residents of the upazila, said OC Bazlar Rahman of Panchbibi Police Station. Tabibar died on the spot while Mahfuz succumbed to his injuries at a local hospital.

In Munshiganj, a sixth-grader was killed when a bus hit him in Medinimandal area on Dhaka-Mawa highway. The victim is Antar, 12.

A bus of Bonoful Paribahan, plying the

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Awardees with guests during a ceremony at International Convention City Basundhara Hall in Dhaka yesterday, marking the 10th anniversary of the daily Bangladesh Pratidin. The newspaper recognised the individuals -- Farida Akhter Babita, Sabina Yasmin, Hanif Sangket, Sarah Begum Kabori and Shamsur Rahman -- for their contributions to arts and literature.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Passengers exposed to high risk

### Auto-rickshaws use household gas cylinders in Barishal

M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL and MD FOISAL AHMED

Many auto-rickshaws in Barishal city are using household gas cylinders, exposing passengers to high risk of accidents, according to the Department of Explosives (DoE).

"Vehicles cannot use such cylinders; they are for household use only. Moreover, it's against the law," said Mohammad Shamsul Alam, chief inspector of DoE.

"CNG cylinder is specially manufactured for use in vehicles, but LPG [liquefied petroleum gas] cylinders are not suitable for such use as its regulator is fitted for domestic purposes only," he said.

"It's dangerous to use LPG cylinder in a three-wheeler as the regulator might become loose due to jerking and gas may leak out, resulting in a fatal incident," he added.

Also, household cylinders contain simple regulators and are not supposed to be tilted or left in a horizontal position, said the chief inspector.

The three-wheelers keep those underneath passenger seats, he added.

The cylinders heat up if kept next to engines, and eventually may explode, he said.

About 22 LPG cylinders exploded last year with eight people being killed and 50 injured.

Despite the risks, around 200 such auto-rickshaws are plying the city streets.

These auto-rickshaws were registered with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Barishal between 2014 and 2016 and got route permit from Barishal City Corporation (BCC), said Debashish Biswas, assistant director of BRTA, Barishal.

"BRTA stopped issuing fitness certificate to those vehicles since 2016," he said.

"Also, we did not renew certificate of any three-wheeler without its cylinder being converted to LPG first."

"But many owners install those cylinders [LPG] when they bring vehicles for fitness certificate renewal and after getting the document, they replace those," Biswas said.

The BRTA assistant director said due to manpower shortage, they could not monitor it properly.

"Also, we don't have a lab or proper instrument for testing. There is no authorised LPG



An auto-rickshaw using a household gas cylinder. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

conversion centre in Barishal."

Asked why Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and Barishal City Corporation allowed the vehicles to ply the streets before, Biswas said he could not comment on it, since he joined office in 2016.

Visiting the city areas recently, this newspaper spoke to a number of auto-rickshaw drivers. Some of them feigned ignorance regarding the risks, while others avoided the topic altogether.

Many, however, said use of domestic cylinders is increasing because there is only one LPG filling station in the district and they have to pay a high price for it.

"I use household cylinder because it's available everywhere and it's cheap," said Rafiqul Islam, driver of a three-wheeler.

Meanwhile, many city residents are unaware of the risk as well.

"We did not know we were travelling in such a risky way," said Sonia Akter, a student of Barishal Mohila College.

Many of her classmates echoed her.

Engineer Amir Hossain, director of a polytechnic institute, said, "These vehicles are like ticking time bombs. The authorities should take immediate steps in this regard."

Contacted, Khairul Hassan, chief executive officer of Barishal City Corporation, said, "We are taking steps to stop these auto-rickshaws from plying the streets."

"BRTA is responsible for checking fitness or issuing licence to these vehicles," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We are conducting mobile court drives regularly. I will also speak to the mayor to ensure strict monitoring with the help of all departments concerned," he added.

## No one will be spared

### Top KMP official tells anti-drugs meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

People involved in any kind of drug-related activities will be brought under trial, said Sarder Rokibul Islam, acting commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP), yesterday.

He was addressing a "Meeting against Narcotics and Terrorism" at the city's Rayermahol Govt Primary School.

KMP is maintaining a "zero tolerance" policy against contraband drugs, he said, adding that nobody -- including addicts, traders, investors or their helpers -- will be spared.

In this regard, he sought help from residents and Community Police.

Community Policing Committee of ward-14 organised the meeting as part of KMP's initiative to make people aware of contraband drugs in every ward.

Over 1,000 students, teachers and staff members from various educational institutions participated in the meeting.

A procession was also brought out in the area. Sufia Rahman, panel mayor of Khulna City Corporation; Mosharaf Hossain, the ward councillor; Mollah Zahangir Hossain, deputy commissioner (north) of KMP, and Sonali Sen, additional deputy commissioner (north), spoke on the occasion.

## Bangladeshi girl at GCIMUN

CITY DESK

Swastika Gargi Chakraborty, a fifth grader at Daffodil International School, will represent Bangladesh at Global Classroom International Model United Nations (GCIMUN) for the first time in mid-level (grades five to eight) section, said a press release.

GCIMUN will be held at United Nations Headquarters between March 28 and 30. This is an educational flagship programme under the UN.

Gargi said, "I am very happy and excited as I'm going to the US to represent Bangladesh."

About 4,000 young leaders from 250 primary schools and 50,000 high schools of 28 countries will be participating in GCIMUN.

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মূল্য সংযোজন কর আইন, ১৯৯১ ও মূল্য সংযোজন কর বিধিমালা, ১৯৯১ অনুযায়ী প্রত্যেক নিবন্ধিত ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক নির্দিষ্ট করমেয়াদে তার করদায়িত্ব নিরূপণের সুবিধার্থে ত্রয় হিসাব পুস্তক (মুসক-১৬), বিক্রয় হিসাব পুস্তক (মুসক-১৭), চলতি হিসাব (মুসক-১৮) পুস্তকসহ বাণিজ্যিক দলিলাদি সংরক্ষণ করা এবং প্রত্যেক বিক্রয় (সরবরাহ) এর বিপরীতে মুসক চালান (মুসক-১১/মুসক-১১ক) ইস্যু করে তা বিক্রয় হিসাব পুস্তকে (মুসক-১৭) এন্ট্রি করার বিধান রয়েছে। এটি পরিপালনে ব্যর্থ হলে তা একই আইনের ধারা ৩৭ অনুযায়ী শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ হিসেবে বিবেচিত।

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**ঢাকা।**

জিডি-৫৩৮

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০২। বর্ষিত পরিস্থিতিতে সকল মুসক নিবন্ধিত করদাতাকে নিয়মিতভাবে প্রতি মাসের দাখিলপত্র সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ সার্কেল অফিসে নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে দাখিলের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। নির্ধারিত সময়সীমার মধ্যে যে সকল করদাতা বিদ্যমান বিধান মোতাবেক দাখিলপত্র পেশ করতে ব্যর্থ হবেন, তাদের বিরুদ্ধে উল্লিখিত আইনের ধারা-৩৭ মোতাবেক আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

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**ঢাকা।**

জিডি-৫৩৯