

# ‘Does your training rule out respecting women?’

## Protests rage on demanding punishment of harasser cop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protests continued against the harassment of Tejgaon College faculty member Lata Samaddar by a police officer for wearing teep for the second day yesterday.

At a rally in Shahbagh, Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNS) and Jonouddyog demanded punishment of the harasser.

Shahnaj Sumi, deputy director of BNS, said communal forces’ ill-attempts have long been in place to impede women’s free movement, in the form of hurling abusive comments for their attire.

Horendra Nath Singh, assistant organising secretary of National Adivasi Forum, also spoke.

Meanwhile, 16 eminent citizens issued a statement condemning the incident.

“Does the training rule out respecting women?” asked the statement to the top brass of police.

The statement mentioned that a central minister of the Ayub Khan government in the 1960s made scurrilous comments on Bangalee women for wearing teep.

“The repetition of such an incident in independent Bangladesh is unfortunate.”



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Protesting the harassment of a teacher, for wearing a teep on her forehead, by a police official, a group of women form a human chain in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday. At the programme, they also put teep on protesters’ forehead to show solidarity with the teacher.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Sweden, TIB sign 5-yr grant deal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aiming to strengthen the existing cooperation in preventing corruption, Sweden Embassy in Dhaka and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) signed a five-year grant agreement yesterday.

Under the agreement, TIB will implement its core project “Participatory Action against Corruption: Towards Transparency and Accountability” (PACTA) during 2022-2026, says a TIB press release.

Sweden will contribute around \$5.34 million or 50 million Swedish Kronor for the project. TIB is supported by the Foreign, FCDO of the UK and the Swiss Development Cooperation of Switzerland in the project.

The event was held at Swedish embassy with Head of Development Cooperation at the embassy in Dhaka, Christine Johansson and TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman, as signatory parties.

## Don’t hold exam on Easter Sunday

### Urges Christian Association

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Christian Association yesterday urged the authorities not to hold examination on Easter Sunday.

They demanded that the day be declared a general holiday, said a press release. Nirmal Rozario, president of the association and Hemanto Ai Koraiya, secretary general, said they came to know that the examination has been scheduled to be held on April 17, the day the Christian community celebrates Easter Sunday.

“We’ve long been urging the government to declare the day as general holiday, though it is now an optional holiday,” it said.

PRAYER TIMING		APRIL 5			
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:29	12:45	4:45	6:20	7:45	
JAMAAT 4:39	1:15	5:00	6:30	8:15	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					
SEHRI, IF TAR TIMING					
RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IF TAR		
3	5			6:20	
4	6	4:24		6:20	
5	7	4:23		6:21	

# Small vehicles BIG PROBLEMS

Public transport in a shambles, as bikes, cars dominate roads

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Fewer than three percent of registered vehicles in Dhaka city are buses and minibuses, exposing the poor public-transport situation of the capital, where over two crore people live.

In contrast, around 70 percent of registered vehicles comprise motorcycles and private cars, which are considered as major reasons behind traffic congestion and road crashes.

The picture is grimmer in other parts of the country, shows government data.

Only 1.51 percent of registered vehicles across the country are buses and minibuses. This has led to a boom of illegal and unsafe small vehicles, like easy-bikes and locally-made three-wheelers.

Over 70.15 percent of the country’s vehicles are motorcycles, while 7.54 percent are private cars, show data of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

Traffic congestion is a perennial problem for Dhaka city, but it has intensified, as the capital returned to normalcy after the Covid-19 situation improved and all educational institutions reopened. Following the start of Ramadan, commuters are suffering even more.

**SMALL VEHICLES: ROOT CAUSE OF JAMS, CRASHES**

Transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque said small vehicles are a major reason behind traffic congestion in Dhaka city. If the number of such vehicles can be reduced, buses and minibuses will get more space on the roads, leading to more trips.

Instead of discouraging small vehicles, the government policy actually encourages them, he said.

The government has halved bike registration fees and is providing loans to its officials for buying cars. Cars are also being procured under different projects,



Fewer than 3pc Dhaka’s vehicles buses, minibuses; 1.51pc across country

Dhaka’s traffic consists of 70pc motorcycles, private cars

Lack of public transport behind boom of illegal, unsafe three-wheelers

Discouraging use of small vehicles, increasing buses, minibuses the solution, say experts

said Prof Shamsul, former director of Buet’s Accident Research Institute.

In this situation, Dhaka’s traffic jams will not reduce but increase, he said. Increasing the number of buses without reducing the number of small vehicles will not improve traffic.

The government has to discourage usage of small vehicles and quickly introduce the bus franchising system, he added.

He said lack of public transport is a reason behind the boom of illegal and unsafe three-wheelers, which is a major reason behind the rise in road crashes.

According to Road Safety Foundation, at least 589 people were killed and 647 injured in 458 road crashes during the last

month, which means 19 people were killed every day on average.

Bikes were involved in 22 percent of accidents, while locally-made three-wheelers were involved in 16.12 percent of crashes, the organisation said yesterday.

The more alarming fact is that bikes were involved in 37.52 percent of accidents that resulted in death, it said.

A total of 5,084 people were killed in 5,472 road crashes in 2021, 30 percent higher than the previous year, according to a police report.

Road safety organisations put the figure much higher.

**POOR SHOW OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

A total of 51.10 lakh vehicles have been registered with BRTA across the country till February this year, of which only 49,673 (0.97 percent) are buses and 27,617 (0.54 percent) minibuses. In contrast, 35,85,488 bikes (70.15 percent) and 3,85,113 (7.54 percent) private cars have been registered.

In Dhaka, 18.10 lakh vehicles have been registered till February, of which 37,593 (2.08 percent) are buses and 9,891 (0.55 percent) minibuses. A total of 9,14,817 (50.53 percent) bikes and 3,17,509 (17.54 percent) private cars have been registered, shows BRTA data.

In the first two months of this year, only 315 buses and 72 minibuses were registered across the country, in contrast to 84,583 bikes and 3,123 private cars.

Contacted, BRTA Chairperson Nur Mohammad Mazumder said people are buying more private cars as their financial condition is improving and they are getting easy loans from banks.

Meanwhile, ride-sharing services are the reason behind the rise of bikes in the city, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Procuring vehicles for government employees is nothing new, he said, as the

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## Can’t extract sand from Meghna: SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday stayed a High Court verdict that allowed a local Awami League leader, Selim Khan, to extract sand from the Meghna river in Chandpur.

The stay order means that no sand can be extracted from the river in the district, and if Selim Khan or any other person does it further, the local administration can take legal action against them, Deputy Attorney General Kazi Mynul Hassan told The Daily Star.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the SC’s Appellate Division, passed the stay order following a petition filed by the state seeking cancellation of the HC directive.

The judge also sent the petition to its full bench for hearing on April 25.

Following a petition, the HC on April 5, 2018 allowed Selim Khan, now chairman of Chandpur’s Laxmipur union and also the Awami

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## Easy bikes cannot run on highways

### SC passes order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday allowed three-wheelers, known as easy bikes, on roads in rural areas across the country. The apex court order means such vehicles cannot run on the highways.

The Appellate Division of the SC passed the order, modifying a High Court directive.

The HC on December 15 last year had directed the government to identify illegal three-wheeler easy-bikes plying and to take necessary steps to remove them.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities to explain why their inaction in restraining import of illegal three-wheeler easy bikes and their manufacturing in the country should not be declared “illegal”.

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## MOTIVE BEHIND SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

## HC set to hear 10-year-old rule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court is set to hold a hearing soon on a 10-year-old rule over the government’s move to identify the motive behind the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

The Bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Ahmed Sohail yesterday ordered the officials concerned to include the matter in its hearing list. It passed the order following a prayer moved by petitioner’s lawyer Manzill Murshid.

Murshid told The Daily Star that the HC may start hearing on the rule within a few days as it will be added to today’s cause list.

Following the petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, the HC on February 28, 2012 issued the rule asking the government to explain within two weeks why it should not be directed to identify the motive behind the murders of Sagar and Runi and bring the killers to justice.

Murshid told this correspondent that the authorities concerned of the government are yet to reply to the HC rule.



Almost half the length of a bundle of steel rods dangle out the back of a pickup truck. At any point, an accident can occur if the vehicles behind do not notice the rods. Though illegal, such a risky way of carrying construction materials continues due to indifference of authorities concerned. This photo was taken at Science Lab intersection.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Star journo injured in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jagaran Chakma, a staff reporter of The Daily Star, was critically injured when a truck rammed him on the capital’s Airport Road on Sunday night.

He is currently undergoing treatment at Square Hospitals in Dhaka.

The accident took place when he was going to Uttara on a motorbike with Mahfuz Ullah Babu, a journalist of The Business Standard.

Jagaran’s right leg got fractured and he was shifted to the ICU (general). Babu received minor injuries.

They were rescued by airport police.

Contacted, OC Aslam Uddin of Airport Police Station, said they were yet to identify the truck or the driver.