METROPOLITAN/NEWS

6 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and 120 others injured in separate road accidents in Sirajganj, Barisal, Meherpur and Jessore in the last

Three of them were killed and 80 others, including five policemen, injured in Sirajganj road accidents yesterday, reports our correspondent in Sirajganj

Police said Dulera Khatun, 36, wife of Khairuzzaman of Kajibari village in Mithapukur, Rangpur, and an unidentified child, aged about 7, died on the spot when a speeding bus hit another bus from behind on Jhaoil bridge amid dense fog at about 5:00am.

At least 15 people were injured in the accident. They are now undergoing treatment at Sirajganj General Hospital.

Another accident took place at 6.00am on Dhaka-Bogra highway at Kuthirchar in Kamar Khanda upazila as two tempos collided head-on, killing one driver identi-fied as Helal Uddin, 17, and injuring five people. The injured were admitted to Kamar Khanda Health Complex in a critical condition.

In another incident, at least 15 people were injured when a Dhaka-bound coach of Hanif Paribahan and a coach of Ananda Paribahan collided head-on at

20 injured as villagers clash in Sirajganj

BDNEWS, Sirajganj

At least 20 people were injured and seven houses destroyed during clashes between two rival groups of villagers in Sirajganj municipal area over a trifling matter on Friday. They chased each other and pelted brickbats during the clash.

Police and locals said the clash ensued over a marble playing between the people of village Akdala under Sirajganj Municipality and those of the neighbouring village Gayala.

Police arrested one person from the spot in this connection.

Additional policemen were deployed in the area.

Five policemen were injured, two of them critically, when a pickup van of Sadar Police Station skidded off the road and fall into a roadside ditch as the driver lost control over the steering at Bazar station area in the town.

In another accident, at least 40 people were injured when two buses collided head-on amid dense fog at Mulibari.

Our correspondent in Barisal adds: Two passenger buses collided head-on on Barisal-Dhaka highway at about 9:30am yesterday, killing the driver of a bus.

Thirty-five passengers were also injured in the collision between arisal-bound night coach of Druti Paribahan and Dhaka-bound coach of Sakura Paribahan, witnesses said.

The accident took place near Gournadi Fire Service Station and both the vehicles hit roadside trees after colliding with each other. Fire Service men, police and

local people rushed to the spot and rescued the victims. Md Hanif, 50, driver of Druti

Paribahan, died at Gournadi pazila Health Complex. Five injured people, including Delwar Hossain, 45, driver of Sakura Paribahan, were sent to Barisal

Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in a critical condition. Traffic movement remained suspended for over an hour due to rescue operation and protests by people. The police brought the

Our correspondent in Jessore reports: A hide trader was killed

At least 40 people were injured in

separate clashes over land disputes

Police said two groups of villag-

in Alfadanga, Faridpur, on Friday.

ers were locked in a clash at Kamar,

leaving 20 people injured. Both the

groups used country-made weap-

BDNEWS, Faridpur

ons during the clash.

40 injured in clashes

over land disputes

situation under control at about

and six others were injured in two road accidents in Jessore.

A private car met with an accident on Jessore-Magura road at Shimakhali at around 10:00am yesterday, killing Khokon, 35, a hide trader from Dhaka, and injuring businessman Javed, 34, and driver Hiru, 30.

The traders were coming from Dhaka to buy hides and skins of sacrificial animals from Rajarhat market in Jessore.

In another accident on Friday, a private car of a bridal party hits a roadside tree when the driver lost control over the steering on Jessore-Narail road at Bhangura, injuring four people -- Shikdar Khalid, a sub-editor of the daily Loksamaj, his wife Swarani, Khairul, 7, and his sister Muslima,

BDNEWS adds: A university student was killed and another injured in a road mishap at Bámunpara on Meherpur-Mujibnagar highway yesterday.

The dead was identified as Tapash Kumar Patra, 19, a first year student of BBA at the University of Development Alternative (UODA)

Sources said Tapash, son of Sahadeb Kumar Patra, a jeweller, and Sunny, 19, a student of Dinajpur Medical College, were travelling in a motorcycle when a bus of Dolna Enterprise hit them on Meherpur-Mujibnagar highway Bamunpara, leaving both of them injured.

Later, Tapash succumbed to his njuries on the way to hospital. Sunny was admitted to a clinic in

In a separate incident, two

The injured were admitted to

Two separate cases have been

groups of villagers clashed over

land in a char area at Panail

Satbaria village, leaving at least 20

the Alfadanga Upazila Health

Rab ignores gypsies' demand to arrest goon

BDNEWS, Savar

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) had to fire in the air to clear their way barricaded by about 200 gypsies at Savar yesterday.

The members of the nomadic clan surrounded the elite force demanding arrest of Hanif, a notorious criminal in the gypsy colony, when they (Rab) went there to arrest another alleged criminal Mintu Mollah at noon.

The gypsies staged demonstration, demanding arrest of

At one stage, the Rab members fired blank shots to disperse the agitating gypsies.

Later, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under Police have been deployed in

the gypsy colony to avert any untoward incident. 91st death

anniversary of Sir Salimullah tomorrow

Bss, Dhaka

The 91st death anniversary of Nawab Khwaja Sir Salimullah Bahadur will be observed tomorrow in a befitting manner.

Different socio-cultural organisations have chalked out an elaborate programme to observe the death anniversary of Sir Salimullah.

National Writers' Forum will organise a seminar on "Nawab Salimullah: Today's Bangladesh' at 3:00pm tomorrow at the Jatiya Press Club (JPC).

Besides, Qurankhwani, milad and special munajat will be held at the mazar of Sir Salimullah on the occasion. Sir Salimullah Muslim Orphanage will also hold a milad mahfil on the orphanage



Preparations for the Bishwa litema, the second largest congregation of the Muslim Ummah after the holy Hajj, have been going on in full swing on the bank of river Turag at Tongi. The three-day event will begin on January 27.

'Govt pledge-bound to construct Padma Bridge'

Information Minister M Shamsul slam yesterday said the government had always extended all out cooperation to the victims of natural disasters, including river ero-

Speaking at the gathering of the victims of river erosion at Hasail-Banri and Phanchgaon unions in Tangibari upazila in the district, he said all measures have been taken to protect riverbanks from erosion. The minister distributed relief

materials among the victims.

Deputy Commissioner of the district Mohammad Anis Uddin Manzur, Chairman of Hasail union council Kamruzzaman Bachchu and chairman of Mirkadim pourasabha Mohammad Hossain Renu also addressed the gatherings.

Shamsul Islam said the government has been implementing a number of projects to reduce the damage by the river erosion.

He said the four-party alliance government under the léadership of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is pledge-bound to construct the proposed Padma Bridge. He hoped that the erosion of the river Padma in the area would be controlled after the construction of the bridge.

Referring to the various development programmes implemented by the present government in the last four years, he said massive development works have been done across the country.

Shamsul Islam called upon the people to keep a sharp eye on the people who are involved in hatching conspiracy to hinder the devel-opment of the country through explosion. He said a certain section had launched the bomb attacks on the innocent people in the name of Islam in a planned way just to hinder the ongoing development activities in the country.

He said, however, there is no alternative to the BNP government for bringing about development of the country.

He said the heinous conspiracy has been foiled due to the stringent action by the government.

The information minister said Islam does not allow the killing of innocent people through acts of terrorism.

The minister distributed 300 bundles of corrugated iron sheets, Taka 1.30 lakhs and nine metric tons of rice among the victims of

different activities including bomb STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

KUJ will bring out a mourning procession from the Khulna Press

Club at 11:00am followed by a rally Khulna Press Club will also hold a discussion at its VIP auditorium.

take out a mourning procession at 3:00pm today from the press club and lay wreaths on the place where he was killed on January 14 in 2004 at Choto Mirzapur Road.

discussion at 4:00pm at the press club auditorium.

murder case leaving godfather out of the charge sheet.

THIRD ROUND OF INDO-PAK TALKS ON KASHMIR

Militants demand independence

Give up demand for implementation of UN resolution

Ahead of commencement of third round of Composite Dialogue between India and Pakistan, a conglomerate of Pakistan-based terror groups has reportedly decided to give up its demand for implementation of UN resolutions for settling the Kashmir issue, in support of ideas of "independence and demilitarisation.'

The Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC) headed by Chief of Hizbul Mujahideen Sayed Salahuddin has decided to support the idea of an 'independent Kashmir and demilitarisation" of the state, Pakistan's Daily Times newspaper reported quoting an unidentified leader of an MJC-affiliated group.

"A consensus has been evolved among the MJC leaders not to oppose the idea of an independent Kashmir and its demilitarisation,' he said, adding that MJC was of the view that an "independent" Kashmir was the most viable solution as UN resolutions failed resolve the issue.

According to the newspaper, the MJC leader said it was a major shift in the group's stance because earlier it had always supported the solution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN resolu-

"The UN resolutions on Kashmir have become irrelevant because Pakistani and some Kashmiri leaders have come up with new ideas to resolve the

Admitting that change in Pakistan's stand on UN resolutions necessitated the MIC to shift its stand, he said that the idea of an "independent" Kashmir was more viable than the "United States of Kashmir" and self-governance being floated by moderate Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq with the tacit backing of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf.

Musharraf had said in an interview recently that he was opposed to the idea of independence as an option to resolve Kashmir issue.

The change of stand of the MJC came after reports in the media here that Salahuddin was due to meet hardline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, a strong proponent of implementation of UN resolutions, during the Haj pil-

Significantly the new MJC stand came ahead of the Foreign Secretary-level talks between the two countries to start the third round of the Composite Dialogue process in New Delhi on January

The Hizbul and MJC, backed by Pakistan's Jamat-e-Islami party

maintained an ambivalent stand on the India-Pak initiatives to start the bus services and initially even opposed them. The new stand of the MIC was

apparently being tailored to shift away from UN resolutions and move it close to independence option being advocated by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) leader, Yasin Mallik who toured Pakistan extensively twice in the recent past.

The MJC also backed demilitarisation of Kashmir an option floated by Gen Musharraf and rejected by India, which said it would consider it only after Pakistan completely stopped infiltration and rolled back infrastructure of terrorism like training camps.

Musharraf while floating the demilitarisation of three key cities in Jammu and Kashmir, including Capital Srinagar has been indirectly advocating a "tandem" approach to scale down infiltration and demilitarisation of the Kashmir valley

Pakistan was expected to put forward its ideas on self governance and demilitarisation at the New Delhi talks beginning next Tuesday.

yet to elaborate on what they

meant by self governance.

Pakistan as well as Farooq were

Nine killed in Afghan clashes

REUTERS, Kabul

US-led and Afghan government troops have killed about eight insurgents in the latest clashes in Afghanistan, the U.S. military and Afghan government said.

Two insurgents and an Afghan government soldier were killed early on Saturday in the southeastern province of Paktia, the Defense Ministry said.

Two soldiers were wounded in the fighting that began with a guerrilla attack on an army position, the ministry said in a state-

Earlier, the US military said about six insurgents were killed in a battle that erupted when gunmen fired on what it called an offensive patrol in the restive central province of Uruzgan on Friday.

"An estimated six enemy fighters were killed; the remainder fled the area," the U.S. military said in a statement. Taliban insurgents, battling US

and Afghan troops since US-led forces ousted the Taliban government in late 2001, launch frequent raids in the province. The US military, which said no

Afghan or U.S.-led troops had been hurt in the clash in Uruzgan, said its offensive patrols were aimed at rooting out insurgents and disrupt-

ing supplies. "Such patrols are being conducted through the winter months to deny the enemy sanctuary and hinder the enemy's supply efforts,"

A US airstrike in neighboring Pakistan on Friday targeted al Qaeda's number two, Ayman al-Zawahri, but it was unclear whether he had been killed, US sources knowledgeable about the

The Taliban and their Islamic militant allies are mostly active in the south and east, close to the border with Pakistan.

About 20,000 US-led troops are battling the insurgents and hunting their leaders. NATO has about 10,000 peacekeepers concentrated in Kabul, the north and west.

More than 50 US soldiers were killed in clashes and bomb attacks last year, the bloodiest period for US forces since the Taliban was

Manik Saha's 2nd anniversary of death today Mastermind of killing still at large

Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ) and Manik Saha Smriti Parishad will observe the second death anniversary of journalist Manik Shah today.

Manik Saha Smriti Parishad will

Smriti Parishad will also hold a

Meanwhile, journalists of Khulna strongly condemned the delay in fair investigation of the

25 houses gutted in Comilla

UNB, Comilla

A devastating fire gutted 25 houses at Rajganj under Kotwali thana here on

nated from the kitchen of a house in the area at 9:00pm and soon engulfed the adjacent houses. Seeing the devastating fire, an old man identified as Janu Mia, 60, died of heart attack.

Local people said the fire origi-

rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze with the help of local peo-Police and fire service men esti-

On information, fire fighters

mated the extent of damage at about Tk20lakh. The affected people have been passing their days under the open

They urged the government to extend financial help to rebuild their

Tarique launches village march in Natore

UNB, Natore

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman yesterday launched the village march programme from Haatpara of Sadar upazila to inform the people about the developments made by the government during the last

The campaign, planned across the rural Bangladesh, is obviously intended to gain support of the people in the next general elections due by the end of this year.

Natore district BNP President Ruhul Ouddus Dulu MP. also a deputy minister, led the march that went round the villages. The marchers stopped at important points where leaders spoke of achievements of the government.

Several local leaders demanded development of roads, culverts, schools, and bazars. A section of villagers demonstrated with lamp and lantern expressing annoyance at scarce supply of electricity. The party leaders assured the villagers of resolving their problems.

At places villagers welcomed the marchers and demonstrated hospitality by offering foodstuffs to the tired and hungry party activists. Party leaders said a good num-

ber of Awami League activists joined BNP during the march.

Obituary

BSS, Manikganj

Renowned lawyer and veteran politician Advocate Abdul Matin Biswas (Naim Biswas) passed away due to cardiac arrest at his house in the town yesterday at the age of 75.

Matin Biswas, son of a food minister in then Pakistan Abdul Latif Biswas, was a former president of Manikganj district lawyers' association.

He left behind his wife, two sons

He was buried at his family graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza there. Chief Whip Khondkar Delwar Hossain, lawyers, political leaders and people of all walks of life attended the

The district lawyers' association condoled the death of Matin Biswas

and a host of admirers.

Alfazuddin Joarder **UNB,** Dhaka

Alfazuddin Joardar, father of former national footballer

Mamun Joardar, died at his Chuadanga house yesterday morning at the age of 90. Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) expressed shock at the death and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul, said a press release.

A woman makes a quilt in the yard of her house at Savar yesterday as a spell of shivering cold sweeps the country.

Moderate to thick fog likely UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm

Bazar and lowest 8.5 degree Celsius at Srimangol

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country during late night till morning, Met Office said, predicting slight rise in night temperature Highest temperature 30.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's

The sun sets in the capital at 5:33pm today and rises at 6:44am tomor-

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.4	11.7	94	74
Chittagong	29.8	13.8	84	55
Rajshahi	23.4	11.4	97	85
Khulna	27.0	12.4	90	81
Barisal	26.5	10.3	90	78
Sylhet	24.5	12.2	91	72
Cox's Bazar	30.2	15.4	63	68

15 injured in Manikganj clash

BDNEWS, Manikganj

At least 15 people were injured in a clash over ownership of land yesterday morning at Louhadaha village under Sadar upazila in the

Police said the feud over owner-

ship of the land of a mosque has

been continuing for long between

the mosque authorities and one Salimuddin, who claimed the ownership of the land The clash began when Salimuddin prevented the authorities of the Louhadaha Madrasa from fencing the land yesterday

In the clash, at least 15 people were injured.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) rushed to the spot, recovered four seriously injured, including a woman and sent them to Manikganj Sadar Hospital in criti-