

Mother, son killed in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman and her son died in a road accident in the city's Pallabi area yesterday.

The dead were identified as Kalemam Begum, 45, and her son, Mohammad Jamal, 30, of Birulia village in Savar upazila. They died on the spot.

The accident occurred at around 1:00pm near Mirpur Water Development Board as the driver of an Ashulia-bound pick up van lost control over the steering while giving side to another vehicle coming from opposite direction.

The van skidded off the road, hit the victims who were cutting grass beside the road and then fell into the Turag river.

The driver and helper of the van however managed to flee.

Billions face water shortage

REUTERS, Canberra

A third of the world is facing water shortages because of poor management of water resources and soaring water usage, driven mainly by agriculture, the International Water Management Institute said on Wednesday.

Water scarcity around the world was increasing faster than expected, with agriculture accounting for 80 percent of global water consumption, the world authority on fresh water management told a development conference in Canberra.

Globally, water usage had increased by six times in the past 100 years and would double again by 2050, driven mainly by irrigation and demands by agriculture, said Frank Rijberman, the institute's director-general.

Billions of people in Asia and Africa already faced water shortages because of poor water management, he said.

"We will not run out of bottled water any time soon but some countries have already run out of water to produce their own food," he said.

"Without improvements in water productivity ... the consequences of this will be even more

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30 hurt as BNP factions clash in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least 30 people including two journalists and two policemen were injured yesterday in a clash between two factions of BNP at Chhatarpala Bazar under Senbagh upazila.

The supporters of Senbagh upazila BNP's former General Secretary Kazi Mofizur Rahman and the present general secretary along with Senbagh Municipality Chairman Shah Alam Chowdhury clashed while Kazi Mofizur Rahman and his followers were attacked by their rivals on their way

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Prayer Timing		
August 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-38	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Jamaat to work Ershad issue in its favour

Plans to twist BNP arms to clinch nominations in 50 seats

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Jamaat-e-Islami is now threatening its ruling partner BNP with putting up candidates in 40 seats against those of the alliance in the next election if BNP includes Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) in the coalition.

With this strategy Jamaat wants to confirm at least 50 seats, including the 31 of the last election, for itself in the next poll, sources said.

"We will seek at least 60 seats in the next election as our party is more strengthened now and we have enough good candidates," Jamaat Joint Secretary General Muhammad Qamaruzzaman told

The Daily Star Monday.

Jamaat is very much serious against the possible inclusion of JP-Ershad in the coalition. "We think the four-party coalition is strong enough to win the election," Qamaruzzaman said.

Sources said Jamaat is now utilising its local and foreign lobbies to prevent BNP's plan to include Ershad's JP in the coalition.

Already informed of the Jamaat initiative, the BNP high-ups want to face any foreign pressure by using JP chief Ershad's so-called Middle East link, sources said, adding that the two sides in a secret deal agreed to face this jointly.

Ershad will visit Saudi Arabia in the last week of this month.

Qamaruzzaman, however, said Jamaat does not allow any foreign interference in its politics.

Besides seeking 60 seats in the next election, the Jamaat high command has selected at least 40 seats where the incumbent lawmakers were elected from the BNP: Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) and Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP). It has asked its leaders to continue their activities in these constituencies for the next election.

"Our leaders and candidates are working in their areas but the

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Ershad won't compromise on seats in JP strongholds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad will not compromise on the parliamentary seats in the JP strongholds while negotiating with the four-party alliance.

In an interview yesterday with a private TV channel, Ershad denied the speculation that his wife and JP Presidium Member Roushan Ershad's meet on Monday with the prime minister was for submitting JP's demand for 50 seats in the upcoming election.

Ershad himself would handle the parliamentary seat sharing deals with the ruling BNP. "I myself am handling that," the deposed dictator said.

However, the JP chairman

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Wastes dumped in Gulshan Lake near Gulshan-Badda bypass road contaminate the lake water making it a source of stench.

PHOTO: STAR



A poacher puts up a snare to catch deer in the Sundarbans.

PHOTO: STAR

One jailed for 17 yrs for carrying bombs

UNB, Gaibandha

A court here yesterday awarded 17 years' rigorous imprisonment to a man for possessing bombs and detonators.

The court fined the convict, Anisur Rahman, Tk 10,000, in default, he is suffer another year in prison.

Anisur hails from Abdullahpara in Saghata upazila of the district.

Railway police held Anisur Rahman on a local train at Bonarpara Station on November 12, 2004 with 24 bombs and 144 detonators.

After investigation, CID police submitted charge sheet to the court.

Khelafat Majlish activists go on rampage

Vandalise 30 vehicles

UNB, Dhaka

The activists of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish, a component of Islami Oikya Jote, yesterday went on the rampage in the city's Muktangan area and damaged

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14 fuel depots about to run out of diesel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC)'s 14 fuel depots including Baghabari depot with 3.82 crore litres capacity are about to run out of diesel.

BPC Northern Regional Control Room (RCM) sources yesterday said a supply of only 47 lakh litres of fuel is expected to reach Baghabari River Port in Sirajgonj soon and that may last only two days considering the present demand in 16 northern districts.

Severe drought in the area has triggered higher demand for diesel

and worsened the situation, a RCM official said.

The present average daily demand for diesel reached to 20 lakh litres as opposed to about 10 lakh litres during the last Aman season, said a senior BPC official.

Surrounding areas of greater Rajshahi and Rangpur districts have been going through the diesel crisis for the last seven days, the official added.

Around 74,000 shallow tube wells and 4,915 deep tube wells are the primary consumers of diesel in 16 districts including Bogra.

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Hard times for people in a waterlogged land

SHARIFUL ISLAM

back from southwest region

Grim-faced Dashrath Tikedar sits idle in his grocery shop on the lone dry spot at Dumurtola in waterlogged Abhoynagar upazila in Jessore. Helpless, he watched his sale fall drastically as the waterlogged people barely earn their living.

Father of two sons, Dashrath owns one acre of land and one year's yield can meet the need for rice for his four-member family for two years. But, for the last three years, he could not cultivate his land as it remains submerged.

"The times are very hard now," Dashrath lamented. He said his eldest son Kanoj used to run the shop and youngest son Manoj studied at HSC level at Noapara College.

Now Kanoj goes to a distant village to sell labour and Manoj has gone to Dhaka for three months, abruptly halting his studies in search of a job.

Like Manoj, many join the exodus of locals heading for cities and towns looking for work.

Hundreds of men are switching their professions. They are either earning their livelihoods catching fish in the wetlands or working as

cargo handlers at a nearby river port in Noapara town in Jessore.

At Keshabpur, Monirampur and Abhoynagar upazilas in Jessore cross sections of people said almost all male members of every family, who once earned their living working on their farmlands, now go to nearby towns and dry areas to work as labourers.

Pronab Bairagi, a teacher of Khulna Impress Ideal College said, "Around 70 percent people from the waterlogged areas go to distant places in the morning to work as day labourers."

Besides, many families are

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Israel sends mixed signals on pullout

UN works on plans for strong Lebanon force

REUTERS, Beirut

Israel said yesterday it would stop withdrawing from south Lebanon unless Lebanese troops move there within days, as diplomats worked on plans for a stronger UN force to bolster the truce with Hizbollah guerrillas.

The Lebanese cabinet will order an immediate army deployment in the south when it meets later in the day, a senior political source said, adding that a 15,000-strong force

would start taking up positions south of the Litani River, about 20km (13 miles) from the Israeli border, today.

French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, holding talks in Beirut, urged Lebanon to send the army south rapidly to move alongside UN peacekeepers into areas vacated by the Israelis.

"The withdrawal of the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) within 10 days is dependent upon the

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Hindu devotees bring out a rally in city to celebrate the birthday of lord Krishna yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Tamil targets bombed as Lanka goes back to war

AFP, Kathmandu

Sri Lankan war planes bombed Tamil Tiger positions yesterday as troops hunted rebel infiltrators in northern Jaffna peninsula after resisting a guerrilla advance, officials said.

Three daylight attacks by Israeli-built Kfir jets hit Tiger targets inside the rebel-held Wannu region, just south of the Jaffna peninsula, military officials said, adding they had no immediate details of casualties.

"Several targets were taken by the air force, but we don't have details yet," a military official here said.

Troops and police across the country were on alert and schools nationwide remained shut as the government feared rebel reprisals

for a deadly air raid which killed dozens of children on Monday.

In Jaffna, soldiers in full battle gear carried out searches for rebel infiltrators along a front line within the peninsula where heavy fighting broke out Friday, officials said.

The defence ministry said troops were consolidating control in the district amid sporadic long-range firing and none of the close-quarter fighting seen in previous days.

Military spokesman Athula Jayawardena said the situation in Jaffna had returned to normal after fighting died down Tuesday, but searches continued.

The military said it killed at least 24 rebels Tuesday on the eastern edge of the peninsula.

A curfew in the area was eased briefly and then re-imposed after the military distributed rice and

lentils to civilians who had been trapped by the fighting, a military official said.

The UN refugee agency said more than 135,000 people have fled since the renewed fighting in Sri Lanka erupted in December.

"Continued heavy fighting in the north and east of Sri Lanka has sent several thousand more civilians fleeing their homes in the last few days," UN High Commissioner for Refugees spokeswoman Jennifer Pagonis said in Geneva.

There was no immediate reaction from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to military claims that troops beat back a guerrilla offensive Tuesday against the town of Jaffna, 400 kilometres (250 miles) north of the capital.

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