

6 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least six people were killed and 17 others injured in separate road accidents in Cox's Bazar, Mymensingh and Barguna yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Cox's Bazar reports: Three people were killed and 10 others injured in a road accident at Kharoliya under Ramu upazila in Cox's Bazar yesterday. Police said the accident took place at around 7:30am when driver of a Cox's Bazar-bound jeep from Eidgao lost his control over steering. The jeep fell into a ditch breaking the railing of a bridge near Kharoliya Bazar, leaving three passengers dead on the spot and ten injured.

Police seized the jeep but its driver managed to escape, sources said.

Of the dead, two were identified as Mafizur Rahaman, 40, son of Sayed Ahmed of village Rashed Nagar under Ramu upazila and

Obaidul Hoque, 22, son of Abdul Karim of village Kharoliya. The identity of another aged about 30 could not be known immediately.

Our Correspondent from Mymensingh adds: At least two people were killed and seven others injured, two of them critically, in separate road accidents at Muktagacha and Phulpur upazilas yesterday.

The victims were identified as Bajendra Chandra Das, 50, of village Payer Kandi at Muktagacha upazila and Basir Uddin, 22.

Police said the accident occurred when a speeding truck bound for Mymensingh hit a tempo on Mymensingh-Tangail highway at Maizbari in Muktagacha, leaving tempo passenger Bajendra Chandra Das dead on the spot and two other passengers injured. The injured were admitted to Mymensingh Medical college Hospital (MMCH).

Meanwhile, tempo driver Basir Uddin was killed and five other

passengers were injured when a Phulpur-bound truck collided head-on with the tempo on Mymensingh-Haluaaghat road at Chandpur under Phulpur upazila yesterday.

The injured were admitted to Phulpur Upazila Health Complex.

The bodies were sent to MMCH morgue for autopsy.

UNB from Barguna says: A septuagenarian was killed in a road accident at Patharghata upazila yesterday.

Police and witnesses said Jabbar was injured when his motorcycle collided with another motorcycle coming from opposite direction.

He was rushed to the local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 9:00am.

The accident took place when Jabbar of Nizlathimara village in Patharghata was returning home from Patharghata town by a hired motorcycle.

TARIQUE'S DEFAMATION SUITS Judicial probe against AL secretary begins Jan 18

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The judicial probe into the defamation suit filed by BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman against Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil will begin on January 18 while the case against Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader on January 23, 2007.

But the date of judicial probe into the case against AL Chief Sheikh Hasina is yet to be fixed.

Two metropolitan magistrates yesterday fixed the dates after scrutinising the case file and relevant documents.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rouf Khan will conduct the judicial inquiry of the case against Jalil while Mizanur Rahman against Quader.

Magistrate ABM Abdul Fatah will fix the date and conduct the probe into the case against Hasina.

Earlier on November 26, CMM Jalal Ahmed directed three metropolitan magistrates to conduct judicial probe into three separate defamation suits.

Tarique filed the cases with the CMM's Court on November 19 for conducting 'malicious campaign' against him.

After hearing the petitioner, Metropolitan Magistrate AJM Abdullah Baqui ordered judicial inquiry into all the three cases without taking the matter into direct cognisance.

In the complaint against Hasina, Tarique mentioned that she (Hasina) told a public meeting at Paltan Maidan on November 3, "The son of 4-party alliance chief drives Tk 2 crore car, wears suit worth Tk 1 lakh and squanders thousands of crore of taka in gambling abroad," and "a syndicate of 2 lakh and 86 thousand crore taka is being run at Hawa Bhaban."

In the charge against Quader, the complainant said he (Quader) at a press briefing on November 4 said "The New York Stock Exchange has awarded Tarique Rahman with a medal. How much taka is needed to get it, what is the source of this money, people want to know."

Quader also said "People want to know what Tarique carried in 435 suitcases and bags on his trip to Saudi Arabia for performing the Umrah? Why and how the Malaysian government has confiscated the money of Tarique?"

Tarique quoted AL general secretary as telling the newsmen on November 16, "Apu, APS of Tarique, met the inspector general of police (IGP) and pressurised him for the posting of 15 BNP men as officers-in-charge (OCs) to the police stations of Gopalganj, Faridpur, Shariatpur and Madaripur."

The petitioner said all these widely published and telecast statements of the AL leaders are false and baseless aiming to undermine his political image.

2 die in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two people including a one-year-old boy died in two separate incidents here yesterday.

Ruhi, son of Md Ismail, died after falling down from the rooftop of a three-storey building at Pannapara under Double Mooring Police Station in the morning.

He met the tragic end when his father took him to the rooftop and became engaged in taking care of some orchids and plants there.

In the other incident, a day labourer was knocked down by a Chittagong-bound passenger bus on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Kadam Rasul area under Sitakunda upazila at around 7:00am.

He was identified as Mohammad Ali, 25, son of Md Ibrahim.

The victim was admitted to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at around 10:30am.

Obituary



Tanim Sajeed Hossain, son of Prof Dr M Monwar Hossain, director of Students' Welfare of Buet, passed away on November 30 at the age of 26,

says a press release. On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at Buet Central Mosque after Asr prayers on Friday.

Friends, relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the mahfil.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Mehedi Ibrahim Nizami, an Awami League leader, will be held at his residence at 25/8 A, South Piriabagh near Old Market at Mirpur in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Mehedi, also a social worker, passed away at his residence at Piriabagh in the city on December 3 at the age of 62.

He left behind his two sons and a daughter to mourn his death. Relatives and friends have been requested to attend the qulkhwani.



PHOTO: STAR

BNP-led Four-party alliance stages a demonstration at Nayapaltn in the city yesterday protesting countrywide blockade and anarchy by 14-party combine.

Advisers acting as AL underlings

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Bhuiyan said they would not accept EC reconstitution if the initiative hampers electoral process. Power has to be handed over to an elected government after completing the election within 90 days, and there is no alternative to it, he added.

"We will take to the street if you (CG) do anything for any particular party," the BNP stalwart warned. Criticising the CG, he said, "It is acting as a lackey of the Awami League and this is why it took no action nor arrested a single person when this party enforced a blockade programme."

The former LGRD and cooperatives minister again resented continued transfers of government officials and asked the CG to stop the process. "Don't transfer officials with no links to holding of election," he said. Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General and former minister Ali Ahsan Mujahid said CG advisers should not act like 'B-team' of the AL.

On the proposed EC reconstitution, he said "You (CG) must not ask any election commissioners to go on leave. If you try to do so, we will enforce programmes to halt it."

Former minister Mirza Abbas alleged that the advisers are trying to implement AL's agenda, and threatened to keep them 'confined' if

they do not give up such move. Aman Ullah Aman said the advisers are echoing the views of AL President Sheikh Hasina.

Chaired by Mayor and city BNP President Sadeque Hossain Khoka, the rally was also addressed by BNP leader Gayeshwar Chandra Ray, Jamaat leader Delowar Hossain Saidee and Bangladesh Jatiya Party leader Shamim Al Mamun.

Saturday's programme: The BNP secretary general yesterday announced that the four-party will hold rally at the city's Muktagong and bring out processions at district headquarters on that day.

Fair polls not possible without correction of voter list

FROM PAGE 16
election and told them that a free and fair election is still not possible under this prevailing situation," AL President Sheikh Hasina's political secretary Sabir Hossain Chowdhury told reporters after John Gastright concluded his meeting with AL President Sheikh Hasina at Sudha Sadan.

Emerging from an hour-long meeting with Hasina, Gastright said that all political parties should stay flexible with an open mind and creative ideas in the interest of holding a free, fair and non-violent election in Bangladesh. The visiting US secretary appreciated the AL-led 14-party alliance for calling off its non-stop country wide blockade programme and hoped that they would not impose the programme again. "We do not support any political violence," he added.

Gastright, accompanied by Patricia A Butenis, the US ambassador in Dhaka, also hoped that the EC would spare its best effort to produce a best possible election acceptable to the people of Bangladesh. Sabir reiterated the 14-party alliance's stand and said an election before implementing their demands that they had placed before the members of the advisory

council, cannot be acceptable to the people or to the friends of the country.

The alliance's demands include reconstitution of the EC, a fresh polls schedule cancelling the one already announced and updating the voter list again as per the Supreme Court directive, he added.

About Gastright's recommendation for being flexible, Sabir said they could be flexible with strategy, but not with policy.

They did not give the EC a time frame to prepare the updated voter list and put emphasis on the process of the updating, Sabir explained.

AL leaders Abdur Jalil, Salman F Rahman and former high commissioner Ziauddin were present at the meeting.

MEETING WITH CEC
US Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs John Gastright yesterday discussed with the acting chief election commissioner (CEC) how to bring corrections on the updated voter list.

"The Election Commission has undertaken seven days plan to correct the voter list and to get that list in the best possible shape for the election day," said Gastright. He was talking to journalists

following his meeting with acting CEC Justice Mahfuzur Rahman in his office.

"They (EC) have seven days plan," Gastright said adding, "They have got intensive efforts to correct the voter list."

"What we need now is a detailed plan to move forward to get the list in the best possible shape for the election," he added.

He also said the EC is working on the plan and he is impressed by it. "We will see progress within the next few days."

The US deputy assistant secretary and the acting CEC also discussed a recent survey report on the updated voter list by National Democratic Institute (NDI), a US based organisation.

NDI on last Saturday unveiled the survey report where it said 1.22 crore names registered on the updated voter list are either excess or duplicates.

About working with NDI, he said the EC planned to target those areas that had been identified in the survey as having the largest number of duplicate voters.

Gastright also spoke about the EC's plans and programmes as well as its efforts to prepare 35,000 polling stations and over two million poll workers to carry out a successful and credible election peacefully.

Democracy Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The main political parties, including BNP and Awami League, will observe 'Democracy Day' today.

On this day in 1990, the then autocratic regime stepped down in the face of a mass upsurge, paving the way for restoration of democracy in the country.

In a message on the occasion, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia paid glowing tributes to the martyrs for their supreme sacrifice during the anti-autocratic movement for establishing democracy.

She prayed for salvation of the departed souls and conveyed her sympathy to the people who were injured or tortured in many ways during the nine-year democratic movement.

"The democracy-loving people will always remember their contributions with a great respect," she said adding, "Today, democracy is again at stake as conspiracies are on to destroy the democratic process."

Khaleda said election is a prerequisite to democracy, but the old enemies of democracy are trying to impede the election process so that people cannot exercise their democratic rights.

"We've to resist them and foil their evil designs," she said, urging the people to work together to give the hard-earned democracy a strong footing.

In a separate message, AL President Sheikh Hasina described the day as very significant in pulling down the then autocratic government and restoring democracy.

She hoped that democracy would be ever lasting, voting rights of the people would be established and the people would get rid of all evil forces.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



A helpless father has appealed for financial assistance to save the life of his minor child.

To wishik Raian Khan, a one-year-old boy, has been suffering from Acute Myeloblastic Leukemia (Blood Cancer).

Tushik, son of Md Tarek Imtiaz Khan, is now undergoing treatment at Haematology Ward of Dhaka Shishu Hospital under the supervision of Prof Syed Khauil Amin.

Doctors are now giving Tushik chemotherapy along with blood transfusion to keep him alive.

They said after chemotherapy, a bone marrow transplantation may be needed. This will cost Tk 30 to 35 lakh, they added.

Tarek, an official of Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation, is not in a position to afford this expensive treatment.

So he has appealed for help from the generous people of the society.

Contributions can be sent to Md Tarek Imtiaz Khan, Savings Account No-84303, Janata Bank, Purana Paltan Branch, 22 Purana Paltan, Dhaka. Mobile No-0152399360.

JP (Ershad) won't contest polls with fake voters

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party (Ershad) will not participate in the upcoming general election without exclusion of 1.22 crore fake voters, reforms in the election commission and creating a congenial atmosphere.

It was announced at a rally at Panthapath in the city yesterday as part of the party's simultaneous movement of laying siege to the Election Commission.

Expressing anxiety over the current political impasse, speakers at the rally said the country will face a serious crisis unless the caretaker government takes steps to reform the election commission.

Presided over by Dhaka city president Syed Abu Hossain Babla, the rally was addressed by party leaders Nasim Osman, Tajul Islam Chowdhury, Anwar Hossain and Prof Iqbal Hossain Raju.

BNP men vandalise business house in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A group of local BNP cadres yesterday vandalised the business house of a journalist in the district town damaging valuables worth Tk 2 lakh and injuring two people on the spot.

The injured were identified as Md Manir Hossain, 25, son of Manik Mistri of Masterpara village and Chhutan Barua, 28, an employee of Munna Library.

They are undergoing treatment at Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital.

Sources said while local journalists were sending their news in the evening from 'Penguin Computer Centre' owned by Nurul Azam, staff reporter of Dainik Shamokal, a group of BNP cadres appeared in the scene and vandalised the business house.

The group comprising 40 to 50 local hoodlums led by BNP activists Millat, Mahfuz, Absar, Abdus Salam, Ashraf, Mamun, Nurul Alam, Riaz Uddin Ripan and Saidul Islam took part in the attack, sources said.

Locals alleged that the group earlier vandalised a number of other business houses also.

The incident sparked resentment among the local journalists who demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the persons involved in the attack.

Local Awami League leaders condemned the incident.

Ensure people's right to vote: CPB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Manzurul Hossain Khan yesterday said democracy in the country cannot be ensured by only keeping the rich's interest in the name of creating 'level playing field'.

Reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC) is a must to ensure people's participation in the level playing field, he said.

He urged the caretaker government to reconstitute the EC by cancelling the 'fake' voter list and ensure all people's right to vote including indigenous, religious minority and slum dwellers.

The CPB President was speaking at a rally at Muktagong in the city as part of their ongoing movement. Addressing the rally, Manzurul said the idea of army deployment would not resolve the prevailing crisis. The crisis must be resolved democratically, he added.

Referring to the US Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs John Gastright's visit in the country, he said the US wants to make the country a subordinate state.

Presided over by Ahsan Habib Lavlu, General Secretary CPB Dhaka Committee, the rally was also addressed by central leaders Dr Dibalok Singha, Ruhin Hossain Prince and Mahbulul Alam.

As a part of the ongoing movement, CPB will hold a rally and bring out a protest procession in front of its central office at Paltan in the city today.

Begum Rokeya Day Dec 9

Citibank, NA Bangladesh will observe "Begum Rokeya Day" on December 9, says a press release.

In line with Begum Rokeya's vision and life long effort for women education and empowerment, Citibank will present books to the top fifty girls' schools and colleges of the country.

The programme is likely to be attended by the leading women of the country from different fields including current and former advisers of the caretaker government, ambassadors of different diplomatic missions, economists, lawyers, NGO personalities, media and cultural personalities and the principals of different girls schools and colleges across the country.

Citibank's corporate client Summit Power Limited will partner with Citibank in this regard.

This is part of Citibank's philosophy in making the communities at which it has a presence a better place bringing people together.



Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country, it added. Highest temperature 29.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 10.8 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5.11 pm and rises at 6:29am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in celsius	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.1	15.1	77	74
Chittagong	27.8	14.5	77	65
Rajshahi	26.8	12.7	71	78
Khulna	27.5	14.8	79	75
Barisal	27.7	14.2	86	87
Sylhet	28.4	14.5	83	71
Cox's Bazar	29.0	15.2	56	72