

## Three killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Chattogram, two persons -- including a police constable -- were killed as a motorcycle carrying them and a vehicle collided on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Foujdarhat area of Sitakunda.

The victims -- Alamgir Hossain, 24, the constable; and Shahidul Islam, his relative -- were from Cumilla, said police.

The accident occurred in the morning, said Abdul Awal, officer-in-charge of Bar Awlia Highway Police Station, adding that the vehicle was yet to be identified.

In Jhenidah, a motorcyclist was killed as a microbus and the motorbike collided in Kighshook Brick Kiln area

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## Couple held for fake savings certificates worth Tk 9 crore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police arrested a couple in Khulna for allegedly faking savings certificates worth Tk 9 crore.

HMA Barik alias Badal alias Hawlader alias Mostak Ahmed and his spouse Murshida Afrin were arrested from Khalishpur area on January 7, Faruk Hossain, additional superintendent of CID, according to at a press briefing at CID headquarters in Dhaka yesterday.

The Economic Crime Squad of the Organised Crime Unit of CID arrested the couple for misappropriating Tk 8.65 crore from two private banks by faking identities and amassing loans, the CID official said.

"The ring has 21 members who embezzle money from banks by showing fake savings certificates with the help of bank officials," said the CID official.

This gang has been engaging in fraud since 2004 and there are seven cases against them filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission, he added.

The arrested couple has Tk 2 crore in the bank and three multi-storey buildings in the capital's Gulshan, Uttara and Uttarkhan areas, he added.

"Mostak was absconding in India and Malaysia after a warrant was issued against him. Returning to the country in 2011, he continued the same fraud," the CID official added.

The CID said the kingpin of the ring is an industrialist and he had business in Dhaka Stock Exchange.

Process is underway to bring him under the law, the police official added.



President Abdul Hamid handing over certificate to a graduate at the first convocation of Jagannath University yesterday. PHOTO: BANGABHABAN

BY-POLLS TO CTG-8 TOMORROW

## BNP concerned, AL confident



Left, Awami League candidate Moslem Uddin Ahmed campaigning in Chandgaon. BNP's Abu Sufian distributing leaflets in Boalkhali.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

With the by-polls to Chattogram-8 (Boalkhali-Chandgaon) set to be held tomorrow, BNP is expressing doubts whether the election will be free and fair.

Awami League, on the other hand, is confident of winning the polls by a huge margin.

Yesterday, the Election Commission (EC) organised a mock voting through electronic voting machines (EVM) in all 170 polling centres of the constituency.

While visiting polling centres in Chandgaon and Panchlaish areas, this correspondent saw a significant number of people gathering to cast votes.

"I have come here to learn how to cast vote through EVM," said Jamal Uddin, a resident of Chandgaon who was waiting outside a polling centre at Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) School. "I don't think using EVM will be complicated," he said.

BNP candidate Abu Sufian also cast his mock vote there.

"Apparently, it seems easier to cast vote through EVM," he said. "But what good is a machine if the person operating it is not being transparent. There is scope of manipulation here," Sufian added.

He, however, admitted that people were enthusiastic to use EVMs.

"The ruling party activists have been threatening our supporters not to come to the polling centres on

Monday," he said, adding, "If people go to the polling centres defying all obstacles, I will win."

Sufian, also convener of Chattogram south district unit of BNP, alleged that law enforcers were raiding homes of their probable polling agents in Boalkhali upazila.

Denying the allegations, Awami League candidate Moslem Uddin Ahmed said the BNP candidate has made it "a habit" to complain against AL activists.

"Actually, he has realised that people will not vote for him. That's why he is spreading propaganda

Voters	4,75,988
Candidates	6
Polling Centres	170

against us, police and the EC to make the polls controversial," he said.

Moslem, president of Chattogram south district unit of AL, expected that people in droves will go to the polling centres on the polls day to cast their votes without any fear or intimidation.

"I expect to win by a big margin as I have received massive support from voters during my campaign," he said.

Contacted, Mohammad Hasanuzzaman, regional election officer in Chattogram and returning officer (RO) of the by-polls, said the EC is all set to hold the polls on

Monday.

"A control room has been set up in the gymnasium of MA Aziz Stadium. Ballot papers and all electoral items will be sent to the polling centres today, he said. "Eighteen members of law enforcement agencies will be deployed at each centre," said the official.

Besides, 14 mobile teams comprising of police, Ansar and Armed Police Battalion; six striking forces; six patrol teams of Rapid Action Battalion and five platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh will be deployed to maintain law and order, said the RO.

Asked about the number of risky or important polling centres, he said all 170 polling centres are important.

Apart from AL and BNP candidates, four candidates from Bangladesh Nationalist Front, Islamic Front Bangladesh, National Awami Party and an independent candidate are vying in the polls.

A total of 4,75,988 voters are expected to exercise their franchise through EVMs, said Election Commission officials.

The constituency fell vacant due to death of lawmaker Moin Uddin Khan Badal on November 7. Badal, also executive president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, was elected lawmaker with the "boat" (Awami League) symbol from the constituency in three consecutive polls, between 2008 and 2018.

## Night blindness below 1pc in country

Zahid Maleque says while inaugurating Vitamin A campaign at Dhaka Shishu Hospital

Bss, Dhaka

Health and Family Planning Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said night blindness rate is below 1 percent in the country due to regular administering of Vitamin A capsules.

"We want to prevent childhood blindness by administering Vitamin A-plus capsules. Blindness has been reduced significantly. Now the rate of night blindness is below 1 percent," he said.

He was this while inaugurating Vitamin A campaign at Dhaka Shishu Hospital, said a press release.

The rate of night blindness was 3.76 percent in 1974 when this campaign was launched, said the minister. He said a child who ingests the capsule will be safe from night blindness, their immune system would be boosted, eyesight would be perfect and natural growth would be ensured.

Vitamin-A plus campaign has been observed across the country, with an aim to feed children, aged between six months and five years, the capsules.

Health workers and volunteers fed the capsules to around 2.1 crore children at 1.20 lakh permanent and 20,000 makeshift centres from 8am to 4pm.

Some 25 lakh children, aged between six and 12 months, were fed blue capsules while around 1.95 crore children, aged between one and five years, were given red capsules.

## Another driver of auto-rickshaw killed in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Six days into a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver's murder in Narayanganj, another driver was found killed in the district yesterday.

The deceased -- Majir Uddin, 47 -- was from Keriya area in Rupganj, said police.

On information from locals, the law enforcers recovered the body from a crop field in Purbachal Sector-2 area of Rupganj.

He was gagged and his hands and legs were tied with a muffler, said Farid Uddin, sub-inspector of Rupganj Police Station. The body also bore injury marks in the head, he added.

Majir Uddin might have been strangled, said the SI.

He left home with his vehicle at 11pm on January 9, the police officer

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PHOTO OF THE DAY

RASHED SHUMON

As Sylhet took its first step towards becoming a cleaner city with no overhead cables last week, the situation in Dhaka remains as bad as ever. This cobweb of cables was spotted at Bir Uttam AK Khandakar Road in Mohakhali.

## Liberation War organiser Ahmed Ali passes away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Advocate Ahmed Ali, a Liberation War organiser and first administrator of greater Cumilla (Brahmanbaria, Chandpur and Cumilla), died at a Dhaka hospital early yesterday. He was 97.

He breathed his last around 1:47am.

Also a veteran politician, Ahmed Ali left behind five daughters, four sons and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

Ahmed was the first president of Chhatra League of greater Cumilla in 1953.

On December 8 in 1971, he hoisted Bangladesh flag at Cumilla Town Hall. He stopped being involved in politics after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.

## a2i launched eight digital public services in 2019

Bss, Dhaka

With a view to enabling people to access different government services including utility bills and fees payment facilities through digital means, Access to Information (a2i) introduced eight major digital public services and platforms last year.

In line with the government's vision to transform the country into "Digital Bangladesh", a2i -- under ICT Division with the support of the Cabinet Division and UNDP Bangladesh -- launched those services.

Three digital one-stop services -- ekSheba, ekPay and ekShop -- with the theme "Contribution of digital Bangladesh: All solutions under one umbrella" were launched to enable people to access different government services, utility bills and fees payment facilities and e-commerce.

Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy inaugurated the three digital one-stop services at an event organised by the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division at ICT Tower in Dhaka's Agargaon area on October 20 last year,

a2i officials told the news agency.

The one-stop service centre -- ekSheba -- will act as the platform for providing all digital government services. Currently, a total of 172 government services of 7,149 offices have been brought under the platform while service seekers have been divided into three categories -- citizens or institutions, businessmen, government officials and employees, the officials said.

Gradually, all services (around 2,800) will be connected to the digital platform, which would play a vital role in establishing e-governance by creating ways for online applications and receiving services.

Any service seeker will be able to submit an online application by paying the fees online and check the latest status of the application as well.

The "ekPay" brings the benefits of paying numerous bills from a single platform. It is a one-stop payment platform for easy and hassle-free payment of utility bills, educational fees and all other fees.

By registering with the ekPay's

website or mobile app, all people of the country can pay their required utility bills at any time through debit card, credit card, mobile banking, digital wallet, internet banking, digital centre or any agent point.

With around 99 million internet users and an increasing GDP, Bangladesh is holding a big possibility for the expansion of e-commerce industry.

The "ekShop" is one of the first rural assisted e-commerce platforms in Bangladesh, which would be able to quickly deliver essential products to the doorsteps of people.

Through "ekShop", products ranging from T-shirt to television can easily be bought and sold, rural producers can easily upload specifications and photos of products to all e-commerce sites and buyers of different e-commerce sites would be able to purchase those products.

In addition, over a million essential products, including medicines, books, clothing, will be accessible from any part of the country. More than 4,000

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