

7 killed, 22 hurt in road mishaps

By Staff Correspondent

At least seven persons died and 22 others injured in three road accidents yesterday.

A four-month old boy, Nayeem, and an unidentified person were killed when a minibus (Dhaka Metro Ch-5597) skidded off the road on the Dhaka-Demra Highway near Shanir Akhra at about 1:30 pm. Ten of the 20 injured persons were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), reports our DMCH Correspondent.

In another accident, a pedestrian, Shahjahan, was

killed on the spot when he was run over by a bus at Mutuail, Demra, at about 10 am.

A Jessore report says four people of a bridal party, including the bridegroom and his elder brother, were killed in a tragic road accident when a BRTC truck crashed on their baby taxi, according to UNB.

The mishap occurred at around 4 Sunday afternoon at Khanpur when the auto-rickshaw was carrying the bridal party to a wedding ceremony at village Kanduppur in Keshabpur upazila.

MPs' remuneration

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Parliament, Speaker and Deputy Speaker and Whips of the Treasury bench and the Opposition. Both the amendments moved in the House were accepted unanimously.

Under the Members of Parliament (remuneration and allowances) (amendment) Bill, 1992 passed yesterday, the MPs will get their enhanced remuneration and allowances with retrospective effect from July 1, 1991 while the clause relating to the pension of the MPs will come into effect from April 4, 1991.

The MPs will begin receiving the pension of Taka one thousand per month after the five-year term of the present Sangsad is over.

Incidentally, the Bill regarding remuneration and allowance was scheduled to be considered in the House last Wednesday, the day it was introduced in Parliament.

But MPs of both the Treasury bench and the Opposition expressed bitter reaction to the Bill with no provision of pension for the MPs.

The Bill could be passed unanimously yesterday only after an understanding between the two sides under which the opposition was allowed to move an amendment

regarding the pension.

This understanding could pacify the MPs of both sides resulting in the passage of the bill unopposed.

BSS adds: The House also passed unanimously two amendments brought by the Whip, Mahbubul Alam Tara Mia of the Treasury bench, substituting the explanations relating to import of duty-free car and an allowance of Taka 1500 per annum for maintaining an office in their respective constituencies.

After the amendment passed by the House Article 3c of the 1973 Act reads as: "A member shall be entitled to import free of customs duty, sales tax, development surcharge and import permit fee during the whole of his office, one car or jeep of such specification, and on such conditions, as the government may specify in this behalf."

"Explanation. In this Article, 'member' shall include the Prime Minister, the Speaker, the Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the House, the Deputy Speaker, the Chief Whip, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Ministers of State, the Whips and Deputy Ministers who are members of parliament."

Shaheed Day

From page 1 Col 8

Bengali and Urdu to be made the official languages of the new state.

There were also some powerful contributions from non-Majlis people in the booklet. For instance, Abul Mansur Ahmed, editor of the Calcutta-based Bengali daily, 'The Itihad' wrote:

"If Urdu is made the state language of Pakistan then the educated community of East Pakistan would overnight become 'illiterate' and 'unfit' for government jobs."

Perhaps the most far-sighted observation came from Dr. Kazi Motahar Hossain of Dhaka University. According to Badruddin Umar's three-volume 'East Bengal's Language Movement', Dr.

Hossain wrote in the booklet:

"If attempts are now made to impose Urdu as state lan-

guage on Bengali Muslims and Hindus, then it will fail, because smouldering discontent cannot be kept under wraps for long. In that case there will be a danger of an end to the relationship between East and West (Pakistan)."

The year was 1947. From there on, Tamuddun Majlis played a prominent role in the movement that gathered pace after Dhirendranath Dutta's proposal of Feb. 23, 1948 that Bengali should be a state language, was rejected by Liaqat Ali Khan and Khwaja Nazimuddin.

The Majlis, along with the East Pakistan Muslim Chhatra League, the Gonaatrick Jubo League, Gano Azadi League and various student hall unions, took the initiative to hold a meeting on March 2 at the Fazlul Haq Hall.

The meeting, attended by Abul Kasem, Sardar Fazlul Karim, Ranesh Das Gupta, Tajuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Toaha, Ajit Guha, Shahidullah Kaiser, Oli Ahad, Lily Khan and others set up a State Language Action Committee (SLAC) with Shamsul Alam of the Majlis as the convener.

The province-wide hartal of March 11, 1948 was the result of this committee's decision.

However, Tamuddun Majlis's role in the movement was to become increasingly controversial as time progressed and the battle took on other dimensions.

An indication of such a turn was given as early as the March 2 meeting, when Abul Kasem prevented Ajit Guha from becoming a member of SLAC on the grounds of Guha's religion.

Guha, a representative of the progressive Writers Forum argued, to no avail, that the language movement was a democratic one and communal division had no part in it. Time was to prove Guha right and Kasem wrong.

According to Umar, the real motive behind Kasem's objection to Guha was to keep the progressive Writers Forum out of the Committee. In later months and years, such narrow and divisive tactics of the Majlis became more pronounced and frequent, causing the group to rapidly fade from the nerve-centre of the movement in particular and the political mainstream of the country in general.

PM: trouble makers

From Page 1 Col 4

capital a clean city, the Prime Minister said that local people would be involved with the efforts of the authorities. She also requested the city dwellers to maintain cleanliness to remove the problems like water-logging and mosquito menace.

This government has given emphasis on the growth of small industries and it is ready to provide all-out assistance to such industries, Begum Zia told the inhabitants of Dholakhal, the old city area which has witnessed remarkable development of small and cottage industries over the years.

She also called for setting up more small and cottage industries all over the country for the growth of national economy. But the quality of the products must be ensured in order to compete with foreign goods, she pointed out.

BSS adds: Mirza Abbas said that all the roads of Dhaka city would be repaired by the year 1992.

Sadek Hossain called for ensuring civic amenities of the old city.

Mir Shawkat Ali suggested constituting a task force to tackle the various problems of the Dhaka city. Tanvir Siddiky said that development of Dhaka metropolis should be carried out in a planned manner.

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The ill-fated bus that skidded off the road near Shanir Akhra in Demra yesterday. Two persons were killed in the accident. — Star photo

Discontent snowballing in Kashmir

Star Special from Mariana Baabar

NEAR LINE OF CONTROL (Pakistan side), Feb 16: The snow is still visible on the mountains though it is spring elsewhere in the region and it hasn't stopped raining since Tuesday night, making the weather bitterly cold with minus zero temperatures at night.

On Wednesday the road became slippery and filled with slush as a result of the erection of barricades by the Pakistani authorities on the route which the Kashmiris are using to reach the line of control.

The morale of the Kashmiris bent upon crossing the line is high. Even though five Kashmiris were shot at by Pakistani forces today and as many as 25 received bullet wounds.

These Kashmiris called the JKLF are determined to keep marching on despite the heavy odds against them. Two youngsters who have left their homes without telling their parents are amongst the huge mass of humanity on the road since this past week.

It appears that nothing could stop them now. "We have just heard that they have stopped Amanullah and arrested him. Do you think that this will stop us?" said 14 year old Ali.

In fact the Pakistan government and the Azad Kashmir government appear to have done everything humanly possible to discourage these marchers. On the way to Chahkot only 15 kilometers short of the border the roads are filled with huge trees felled recently.

Huge boulders have also

been rolled down and at places huge craters have appeared filled overnight on Wednesday with mud and slush.

There appear to be land-slides in some places which the Kashmiris claim have been made by the authorities with the help of dynamite.

But this has not daunted the freedom fighters who on Wednesday used bulldozers to clear the area.

Rukhsana Wasim who is 24 and amongst the women and children who have joined the men said, "The Pakistani forces are stopping us and killing our boys. Despite the fact that even the UN has discouraged any killings it is the Pakistanis who have killed the freedom fighters. Our ambulances carrying the wounded have been stopped. These women together with the men have climbed the mountains and with children in their arms have trudged along without complaint."

In their pocket are 'chaannas' or roasted lentils and dried dates they keep munching.

As one entered Muzaffarabad on Tuesday, the capital of Azad Kashmir, there is complete strike everywhere and some of the media men who had been brought in by the local authorities were put up in a hotel also run by the government as the rest are all closed.

Pakistan's renowned human rights activist, Ansar Burney is present here. He said on Wednesday after seeing the Kashmiris being killed, "We have always been in the forefront in our fight for human

rights. Now we cannot tell the difference between the Indian and Pakistani forces. It is indeed shameful for the Pakistanis to be killing the Kashmiris in front of the Indians like this."

The situation is fast deteriorating and what the Pakistan government cannot afford at the moment is the hatred mounting against it from the Kashmiris.

Along the villages just short of the line of control women are seen standing outside their homes flasing the V-sign.

When asked what it meant they replied that they don't know but they have seen it on TV whenever the freedom fighters are shown passing.

The women are also worried as to how to cope with the injured who are finding it impossible to be transported either to Muzaffarabad or elsewhere near by clinics.

The ambulances are getting stuck in the ditches and holes dug up by the authorities.

"Lay kay rahay gein azadi" meaning that we will not rest till we gain freedom, is the shout coming from all around.

The caravans have so far crossed 80 hurdles and the last one was the one where they would have to face the Pakistan army barrier.

On the other side the Indian army has passed electricity on the wire fencing and laid mines all around.

But this and the fact that Amanullah and 150 leaders of the JKLF have been arrested does not appear to stop them.

The youngsters have headbands with the 'Qalma' written on it and many of them wear

death shrouds meaning that they are ready to die for their cause. The youngest who was seen marching along on Wednesday afternoon was only six years old.

Though the authorities have now brought in the Punjab and Frontier Constabulary. These soldiers suffer from disadvantages. Since they do not know the area well they are being ambushed by the freedom fighters and many have had their weapons snatched from them. The freedom fighters in some areas came from behind the mountains.

The atmosphere remains very tense and as the casualties have a chance to increase. The authorities are now questioning the measures so far taken to contain the marchers.

Amanullah on Wednesday late evening was only four kilometers short of the line of control before his arrest.

Everywhere around him the movement was gaining momentum and those in hiding have been asked to replace him—amongst those killed it is now known are two policemen.

On Wednesday night many women and children went back to Muzaffarabad as they were ordered by the men that the situation is bound to be worst on Thursday. But some have refused to return. Posh Mahal a teenager said that they were also looking for some lost women and children.

The rain which still has not stopped is making it difficult for the search parties. Many of the injured are children who received injuries while falling en route.

The Midnight File

Teresa released from hospital

ROME, Feb 16: Mother Teresa, 82, has been released from Rome's Gemelli Hospital where she was admitted last week to be checked following heart surgery in the United States, a hospital spokesman said today. She was admitted to the hospital after arriving on February 4 from the United States, reports AFP.

Hezbollah chief killed

SIDON (Lebanon), Feb 16: Israeli helicopters killed Hezbollah chief Abbas Musawi today by firing rockets into his motorcade in South Lebanon. Muslim fundamentalist sources said, reports Reuter.

Oil slick moving towards Indian coast

NEW DELHI, Feb 16: The Indian coastguard today were closely monitoring an oil slick in the Bay of Bengal which is moving towards the Indian coast, a local newspaper reported, reports AFP.

French charity volunteers refused permission

Bangladesh has refused permission to a French charity which was scheduled to arrive in Dhaka yesterday to conduct relief work for Rohingya refugees.

An official source told The Daily Star Sunday, the refusal to Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF), came under a government policy of not allowing any new foreign NGO volunteer in relief operation for an estimated one lakh refugees who fled Arakan into Bangladesh.

He added that the government would 'gladly' accept any relief materials from foreign organisations and distribute them among the Rohingyas refugees.

"We have enough manpower to conduct relief operations in the refugee camps, but we urgently need an adequate supply of relief materials," he said.

However, he noted that the foreign volunteers and NGOs already operating in the refugee camps would be allowed to continue relief work.

Earlier, agencies reported that the French NGO, Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF) announced in Paris last Friday that a team of its volunteers with food and medicines was scheduled to fly to Chittagong Sunday.

French embassy Charge de Affairs Monsieur Penaud, when contacted over telephone, told The Daily Star that the embassy was informed by the foreign office that the Bangladesh government did not want any foreign NGO or volunteers to intervene in the area but would accept any international relief materials for the refugees.

He said that a 10-member MSF team, consisting of four physicians, two nurses and four relief organisers, were waiting in Paris for the 'green signal' from the government to enter Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, two MSF volunteers arrived in the city Sunday, after being granted visas by the Bangladesh embassy in France, the Charge de Affairs said.

They will join the 4-member MSF team already working in the area.

Trawlers looted

BARGUNA, Feb 16: Pirates attacked trawlers at Sonarhar, 64 km south off here and looted goods worth Taka two lakh early this morning.

Top-officials

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Secretary Ayubur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

Congratulating the newly promoted officials the Prime Minister said the present democratic government wanted that all officials join the hands with the government in all the activities for the progress of the nation.

She said the government would continue the process of removing the back log in the promotion of officials. She assured that skill, eligibility, experience and merit would be given due consideration in the cases of promotion.

The Prime Minister said the government wanted to ensure maximum utilisation of the local resources to overcome the disgrace of dependence on others.

She said "it is indeed regrettable that we are bearing the disgrace of dependence even after achieving freedom."

The Prime Minister said with the changing scenario in the socio-economic conditions of the world no nation could now sustain economically on foreign aid.

She said "we now do not have any scope to hear allegations of ineffectivity against the government machinery anymore". She hoped that bureaucracy would always uphold the image of skillfulness and a dynamism.

The Prime Minister called upon the officials to practise punctuality in attending their offices. She said the higher officials should remain honest and dedicated to their services so that their 'junior' could follow them.

She also called upon the officials to expedite disposal of files to bring momentum to the development activities.

Textile quota

From Page 1 Col 5

of many conditionalities. Bangladesh was able to make good use of US assistance. He said as the country was attaining self-sufficiency in food production, food aid was drying up. Donors were approached to buy foodgrains locally for utilisation in food assisted development work, he pointed out and said the US government could examine this possibility.

The US Deputy Assistant Secretary was told that the Bangladesh government had initiated measures for deregulation and privatisations. The private sector was yet to take full advantage of these liberalisation measures.

Kimble was of the view that ways and means must be found for the success of the privatisation measures. She referred to the success of privatisation programme in the distribution of fertilizer in Bangladesh.

Prof Ainun Nishat of Water Management Department of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) said that the salinity level goes very high during the dry season and comes down when the monsoon starts.

However, he pointed out that the residual effect of the dry season is ultimately leading to an overall rise in the salinity level. According to Prof Nishat, the only solution to the problem lies in making a flow of at least 10,000 cusecs of water through the Gorai river.

UNHCR to appeal for help

From Page 1 Col 7

Makeshift camps are being converted into proper shelters by the local administration, but the DC admitted that UNHCR's taking over of the relief operation was an immense relief.

"We started building without any guarantee of money," he told The Daily Star, "but now at least we can count on the UN."

Of the camps, Dachua-palang-1 is so far the best managed, with 47 sheds and five tubewells for some 500 families.

The camp at Dachua-palang-2 is disorganised and unsanitary, housing an estimated 42 thousand people.

The UNHCR officials voiced their concern over fire hazards in the thatched huts with plastic sheet roofs.

Wijeratne said "In 12 years of ICR experience, I have rarely seen such an emergency, in terms of malnutrition and shelter and in terms of the persecution these people have faced." He added that immediate international response to the issue was imperative.

"We may have 200,000 people on our hand soon," he said. This would make Bangladesh the site of one of UNHCR's largest operations.

Wijeratne expressed admiration at the swift reaction of local authorities. "In a country with such limited resources this is quite an achievement," he said.

The UN team went on to a crossing point at Teknaf this afternoon where refugees could be seen entering Bangladesh at the rate of three boat-full an hour. A reception centre was built at the crossing point.

The UNHCR officials also spoke to a number of Rohingya refugees who were frightened return to their homeland without any international guarantee. According to a student Abdul Rashid, a member of the Rohingya Refugee Relief and Welfare Committee, only 40 per cent of the refugees regis-

tered with the government camps, for fear of being sent back.

The HCR made arrangements for a truck to ferry the refugees from Teknaf to the nearest camps.

"We must get transport, because they are our responsibility from the minute they set foot in Bangladesh," said Wijeratne.

With an initial allocation of US dollar 100,000, the UNHCR plans to launch an appeal to donors for funds. As Bari puts it, "Our role is to provide the refugees with basic human amenities which include food, medicine and education."

This entail coordination with other agencies like Gana Shasthya Kendro and Medecins Sans Frontieres already working in the area. The UNHCR team meets with concerned organisations and the officials of the district administration tomorrow (Monday).

Bari told The Daily Star that repatriation of the refugees was the only solution envisaged by the UN at the moment.

International awareness of the severity of the situation will possibly put political pressure on the Myanmar government.

Meanwhile, refugees stream across the Naaf river. Many of the women are widowed or rape victim or both. In a list made at the Marichliya camp, out of 423 families, 275 are headed by the widowed women.

Children are being born in the camps to mothers too malnourished to breast feed. Malaria, scabies and diarrhoea raged unimpeded.

The UN team returns to Dhaka Monday to consult with the Home Ministry and the Foreign Ministry. A UNHCR back-up team will also arrive next week to form a local office and monitor the construction and organisation of the camps.

Our Staff Correspondent in Dhaka adds: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on Friday expressed deep concern about the 'tragic' conditions in Myanmar that are forcing people to flee at the rate of 400 to 600 a day.

According to a UNHCR press release, High Commissioner Sadako Ogata, while expressing her gratitude to Bangladesh for "its generosity towards the refugees", said that the UN is rushing an emergency team to Bangladesh to help more than 60,000 refugees pouring across the border from Myanmar.

Noting the increasing influx of refugees from Myanmar into other countries in the region, the High Commissioner said "no one seeking asylum would be forcibly returned."

The statement went on to add that the government of Bangladesh on Friday provided UNHCR to provide immediate help to the refugees from Myanmar when the influx reached such proportions that the government's resources were "stretched to the breaking point".

The request followed an offer of emergency assistance from the High Commissioner during a meeting with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the OIC summit in Dakar last December.

The High Commissioner immediately allocated and initial 100,000 US dollars for the emergency fund for urgently needed supplies for the refugees, most of whom are women and children, the statement noted.

UNHCR is working closely with WFP, UNICEF, Bangladesh Red Crescent, and MSF to arrange food, water, shelter, sanitation and health services in the border areas inundated by refugees.

Senior UNHCR staff members are already in Bangladesh and the Deputy Director of the Asia Bureau is flying to the area

from Geneva this weekend.

Within the next few days, UNHCR will deploy additional field staff, a water-sanitation engineer and a site planner in the Cox's Bazar area.

Once a comprehensive assistance programme has been mapped out, substantial additional amounts from the emergency fund will be released followed by an appeal to donors, the statement added.

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Gallery

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Sekhar Halder.

The MPs probably wanted to sleep the session through. If not, they were not as serious as they are. Casual mood was the order of the day.

As things were being negotiated behind the screen, the Speaker granted leave to move the bill on remuneration and privileges of the members. The heat, generated by the bill earlier, was absent. The Treasury benchers were quiet, the opposition members were expecting the gift. Even before the Speaker could say that there was an amendment, the Law Minister stood up and said, "My friend Asaduzzaman has an amendment." The amendment was moved providing pension to the members.

The Law Minister was seen giving a copy of the proposed amendment to Asaduzzaman, but it did not reach the Speaker in time. And he had difficulty in ascertaining what was there. So, Mahbubul Haq, Whip of BNP Parliamentary Party came to the rescue of the Speaker saying because of the hurry it could not be given to your office."

The casual feeling also infected JP member Fazle Rabbi who prefers to shout on any point. But he was seen trying to stop his mate, Manirul Hoq Chowdhury, from opposing the bill by putting his hand over his mouth.

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