

780 killed in road mishaps in 5 months

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed told the Jatiya Sangsad in Dhaka yesterday that 780 persons were killed and 1065 others injured in 1467 road accidents between January and May, 1992, reports BSS.

He said, there is provision of insurance compensation for the victims of road accidents.

The minister said, several cases of compensation for those killed and injured are under process with Sadharan Bima Corporation. He said, there is legal provision of paying Taka 20,000 to the claimant of each death while Taka 10,000 for claimant of each seriously injured. He said, the families of the victims of road accidents get compensation from either owners of motor vehicles or insurance companies.

He was replying to questions from Sharfuddin Khasru (JP-Sylhet).

Communications Minister also told the Sangsad that there were 362 buses in the BRTC fleet.

Replying to a question from Shajahan Khan (AL-Madaripur), the Minister said of the total number of BRTC buses, 200 were plying on different routes while the rest 162 were under repair. Taka 5.67 crore would be required to repair the buses, he pointed out and said the buses could be repaired in six months.

Replying to supplementary

the Minister informed the House that in addition to passenger bus fleet, the BRTC has been operating 240 trucks, of which 189 were in running condition while the rest under repair.

82 train mishaps since Jan '90

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that 27 persons were killed and 264 injured in 82 train accidents between January 1990 and May 1992, reports BSS.

He said, of those killed compensation money has been paid to eight claimants. The question of compensation of the rest is in progress, he said.

He said, among the injured the compensation of six has been settled. He said this in reply to a question from Md Abu Bakr (Jamaat-Natore).

Oli Ahmed also told Sangsad that there were 292 passenger trains in operation in the country carrying on an average 43.56 lakh passengers a month.

He said, at present 559 officials and 55,635 employees are working with the railways. He said, during 1991-92 Taka 182 crore has been spent for salary and allowances for the officials and employees of railways.

The Minister was replying to questions from A K M Abu Taher (BNP-Comilla).

BCCI relaunching

No response from world liquidator over claims

By Inam Ahmed

The Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) is likely to be refloated without solving some of the financial issues with the international liquidator, according to Finance Ministry sources.

They said Bangladesh had claimed from the international liquidator a portion of the global liquidity that the major shareholder in Abu Dhabi had contributed for reformation of the bank.

The contribution of the shareholder is about two billion US dollar. It was chalked out that the recovery of deposits of all the branches of the BCCI all over the world would be pooled together. This along with the contribution of the Abu Dhabi-based shareholder would be earmarked for distribution among the depositors of the BCCI.

The international liquidator has not yet responded to the Bangladeshi demand, sources said.

Bangladesh has also claimed the assets of the BCCI deposited in foreign branches and banks. Sources say the government is yet to receive affirmation of the liquidator on these assets.

Meanwhile, sources said the BCCI would be refloated even without any response on these issues from the liquidator.

Blasts rock AJM

From Our Correspondent

Adamjee Jute Mills was once again rocked by bomb blasts on Monday morning creating panic in the mill No-1 areas, police sources said.

The situation was calm but tense as BDR and police remained deployed in the mill compound. The trouble erupted on July 4.

Air-link accord with Lanka signed

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka yesterday signed air services agreement for establishment of air-link between the two SAARC capitals — Dhaka and Colombo, reports BSS.

Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism Habibur Rahman and Sri Lankan Secretary of Ministry of Defence S C Ranatunga signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments at a simple ceremony here.

Biman Managing Director Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, Chairman, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Air Commodore Azharul Haq, Chairman and Managing Director of Air Lanka M G D Jayawardene and Director, Sri Lankan Civil Aviation M L U De S Malalgoda were present on the occasion.

Opposition to press for withdrawal of case against RU students

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League-led Opposition announced yesterday that they would mobilise public opinion, both inside and outside parliament, in favour of their demand for withdrawing the case against 60 students of Rajshahi University (RU).

Briefing journalists in the conference room of the Leader of Opposition, Mohammad Nasim, the Chief Whip of the Opposition, said that a delegation of RU students held a meeting with leaders of different opposition parties. The students requested intervention of the opposition leaders so that the case filed against them by Jamaat-Shibir could be withdrawn, he added.

Ashura observed

Holy Ashura, the 10th of Muharram, was observed throughout the country Sunday with due solemnity and religious fervour, reports BSS.

The day was observed in commemoration of the supreme sacrifice made by Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), the grand son of Prophet Muhammad (SM), for establishing truth and justice and upholding values and cause of Islam. The Muslims all over the world remember with grief the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (RA) and his followers.

Different religious and socio-cultural organisations held milad mahfils, seminars and discussions highlighting the significance of Ashura.



Hindus working on a promised temple to Lord Rama Sunday in Ayodhya as Babri mosque stands in the background. — AFP photo

Rohingya camps

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The refugees need not mix up with the local people. This may create problems, he said.

Meanwhile, refugees interviewed said that the fences were being raised to prevent their fleeing the camps to dodge repatriation to Myanmar.

Voluntary relief workers say, at least 6,000 refugees have left the transit camp at Rangikhal. They were found missing last week when the refugees from this transit camp were being transferred to other camps.

Government relief officials, however, insist that this has occurred either because of double registration by refugees or it may have so happened that some of the Rohingyas who stayed back during the 1978-79 exodus registered themselves as new refugees.

Ordering an investigation into the case of disappearance, the authorities are now making a fresh headcount of the refugees. This has also prompted the government to step up security for the camps, now patrolled by security guards round-the-clock.

Travel agents

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and chaired by Dhaka District Manager S M A Rashid, was attended by some of the travel agents who reportedly promised to repay the money but later responded poorly.

The new Manager who took over on April 31, on detecting the anomalies ordered transfers of all but one sales promotion officer to other sections with the approval of the Managing Director.

When contacted over telephone the District Manager admitted the incident and said that "About Taka two crore is outstanding."

He said that the authorities were trying to realise the money and that "the agents responded positively." He declined to elaborate.

Another source said that the defaulting agents were given special incentives to make the repayments easy but that small amounts had so far been realised. On reports that some of the agents have shuttered their business houses and left the country, Biman authorities expressed their ignorance.

Extortionists gouge out eyes of businessman

By Staff Correspondent

Extortionists gouged out the eyes and amputated a wrist of an Abdul Haq (30), a businessman, at Jhawtola, Kamrangir Char under Keraniganj Police Station at around noon Sunday.

While fleeing, the miscreants, numbering around 15, also looted Taka 15,000 in cash from the victim, a contractor.

Allahabad HC refuses to stay temple construction

LUCKNOW, July 13: A special bench of the Allahabad High Court here today refused to grant a stay on the construction activities going on around the disputed Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid complex, reports PTI.

By a 2-1 verdict the bench dismissed a writ petition by Mohammad Hashim seeking to stop digging around the disputed site at Ayodhya saying that the petitioners apprehension to the safety of the disputed structure due to the digging operations had no basis.

The petition challenged the acquisition of land by the Uttar Pradesh government around the disputed site fearing that the "large scale digging" would result in water logging which may cause damage to the disputed structure resulting ultimately in its collapse.

Justice S C Mathur and Justice Brijesh Kumar of the bench gave the majority judgement where the third judge, Justice S H A Ras dissented.

Meanwhile, the Home Minister Mr S B Chavan today said the Uttar Pradesh government had "prima facie" violated the court orders by permitting construction work on the acquired land near the disputed structure in Ayodhya.

However, the final decision of the Supreme Court would have to be awaited on the subject, he told the Lok Sabha.

The centre has asked the Chief Minister, Kalyan Singh to suspend the construction work till such time as the issue is resolved either amicably by discussion or through a court verdict, the Home Minister said.

Chavan, who visited the disputed site yesterday, said in a statement that the UP Chief Minister had reaffirmed the state government's commitment to protect the Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid structure.

The Home Minister said he had tried to use "all persuasive reasoning" with the Chief Minister to suspend construction work around the disputed complex pending final decision on the proceedings in the Supreme Court.

He assured the agitating members that the government would continue to pursue these efforts and would keep a close watch on the situation.

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Tariff raise

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value was newly fixed increased from 1,250 to 2,300 out of a total of over 5,000 items imported into the country annually.

The tariff value on the 2,300 items accounted for 25 per cent of the total value of imports, he added.

He pointed out that the advantage of tariff value fixation was stabilisation of revenue, pre-assessment of duties on imported items and simplification of administrative procedures. "There would be no significant impact on the increase of revenue" through the set tariff value, he said in reply to a question.

Dr Rahman said that the tariff value in 'most cases' was less this time compared to the one fixed earlier. The biggest slab was between 45 to 75 per cent and the increase in tariff value was 'mostly' limited to between eight and 10 per cent.

However, the NBR Chairman defended tariff value increases on several items while noting that recent price-checks found 'significant' underpricing of a number of imported items last year.

He cited, as an example, that the Indian export value per ton of menthol for Sri Lanka was set at 14,000 US dollars while invoices for Bangladesh showed the amount to be 4,201 dollars. Thus, he added, tariff value for menthol imported from India was fixed at 7,000 dollars per ton.

He also pointed out similar underpricing in the imports from different countries of caustic soda, magnesium sulphide, aluminium sulphide, soda ash and grey portland cement.

He acknowledged that there was a "mistake in classification" in fixing the tariff value on manganese dioxide.

Dr Rahman refuted allegations that tariff on Indian items had been kept below those of other countries. He pointed out that for 61 items the tariff on Indian commodities was lower while on another 59 items it was higher than on those imported from China and Singapore.

The tariff value on some Indian items may be lower because of flexible transactions, smaller consignments and the ease of transportation through Benapole.

Replying to a question, the NBR chief said that the duty reductions on certain items would take time to translate into benefit for the consumers. However, he added that the government needed to ensure the supply position and in the long term the consumers would benefit.

On the reduction of the rebate on income tax on export earnings, Dr Rahman pointed out that the provision for 100 per cent exemption on export earnings laid down in the export policy was never given any legal effect.

4 killed, 50 hurt in road mishaps

By DMCH Correspondent

Four people were killed and at least 50 others injured in four separate road accidents in and out side the city during last two days.

A pedestrian, Fazlu Mia (35) was killed when a passenger-bus ran him over at Azampur at Uttara, in the city at around 3:45 pm Monday.

Fazlu Mia died on the spot and his body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

In another accident, a pedestrian, Belayet Hossain (25) was run over by a passenger-bus Sunday night as he was crossing the road at Fuliar Kona in Tangail.

PM

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Begum Zia's deliberations with her Pakistan counterpart are expected to strike a breakthrough in the repatriation but how far they would go on asset-sharing is sceptically pondered on by analysts.

Dhaka believes that Islamabad owes it a sum of about Tk 5700 crore — Tk 2446 crore as the former's contribution to the United Pakistan's development efforts and investments spent for the country's western part that now forms Pakistan and Tk 3240 crore as reparations for damages done by the Pakistan army during the nine-month bloody War of Independence. These figures are estimated at the 1971 price level.

Islamabad has constantly evaded the issue.

The two prime ministers would also discuss decreasing trade. The two-way trade between the two countries came down to Rs 2918 crore in 1990-91 from the previous year's Rs 3109 crore.

During the visit, concerned sources say, Pakistan would try to woo Dhaka officials into resuming talks on the controversial ship deal.

Dhaka suspended the deal, under which Bangladesh was to buy two container vessels from Pakistan, after allegations of inflated rates quoted for the vessels. They were priced at 22 million dollars each.

Bangladesh had agreed to procure the vessels, now under construction at the Karachi dockyard, under a 50-million-dollar loan provided by Pakistan.

Officials of the two countries would also discuss an exchange of land in respective diplomatic enclaves on a reciprocal basis for construction of embassy complexes.

Dhaka earlier rejected a piece of land offered by Pakistan citing its poor quality while the one offered by the former was much better.

Bilateral issues apart, the two leaders would also deal with international and regional ones, especially the crisis-ridden South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The mantle of the regional body's leadership falls again on Dhaka when the city hosts the seven-nation organisation's summit again this December after the opening one in 1985.

Hasina

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wards parliament and maltreatment with opposition MPs on different occasions.

The opposition leader criticised government's procrastination on the question of repealing the Indemnity Ordinance in line with the 19th November joint declaration of the three alliances to bring an end to the politics of killings, coup and conspiracy.

5 to die

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Mofizuddin remained absconding until the time of verdict on Monday.

The case in brief is that the victims Raju, Almas, Shaheed, Ishaq, Siddique and Habibullah were killed in the village Kandi under Gargaon thana of Mymensingh district on October 14, 1989 by the accused and their accomplices.

Shaheed's father Abdul Jabbar, who escaped the massacre, filed a case with the police against the persons involved.

Public Prosecutor Shamsuddin Ahmed (Suruj Mian) stood for the plaintiff while A S M Nazmul Huda pleaded for the defence.

Gulistan clash

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disperse the mob and bring the situation under control.

Our DMCH correspondent reports : Six of the injured were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Three of them sustained bullet injuries during the clash. Khalilur Rahman (60), Senu Mia (65), M Jalil(20) M Yunus Rahman(20), Jahir (26) and Iqbal Hossain (22) were admitted to the DMCH.

Ripon 16, and two others, who could not be identified, were admitted to the Pongu Hospital.

One Humayun Kabir (16) succumbed to his injuries at the hospital, where eight other injured were also admitted soon after the accident.

The critically injured are : Faruk Mia (20), Bipul (12), Abdur Razzak (25), Anar (35) and Ayetunnesa (45).

The driver and the helper of the bus escaped soon after the accident.

The body of the dead was taken to the hospital for autopsy.

A case has been lodged with the Kishoreganj police station in this connection.

The Midnight File

Violence leaves 12 dead in Turkey

ANKARA, July 13: Twelve people were killed in political violence in southeastern Turkey and 126 suspected terrorists arrested nationwide during the weekend, officials said today. The 12 included four Kurdish rebels, three pro-government, village guards and five civilians, two of whom were children. Two of the rebels were killed in a clash with Turkish security forces near Silopi near the Syrian border, reports AFP.

Move to set up SAARC airlines association

COLOMBO, July 13: Officials of nine airlines in South Asia meet in Colombo next week to discuss setting up an association, Sri Lanka's carrier Air Lanka said on Monday. Senior officials from Sri Lanka, India (which has three airlines), Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives are meeting in Colombo on July 20 and 21, reports Reuters.

Furore in JS

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Inspector of Police took away the national flag from one of his supporters and tore it before his eyes.

He also denied that he had had any conversation with the SP about the incident but added that the SP apologised to him.

Razaque urged the Speaker to form a Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on the incident and said that if his statements were not true he would accept anything.

Razaque's reply prompted the Home Minister to add that he was not ready to believe that police would not show respect to the national flag. He insisted that the incident did not occur.

The Home Minister's remark infuriated the Opposition members and most of them rose in protest. Some of them were seen trying to stage a walkout.

To cool his colleagues Samad Azad stood up and said that the Home Minister was responsible to Parliament and he was a BNP-elected minister.

Explaining the situation Samad Azad said that what Razaque had said was about an individual member of the police force and was in no way applicable to the force as a whole. He also narrated the contribution of the police force during the War of Liberation and quipped "I don't know where the Home Minister was at that time."

Samad Azad also repeated the Razaque's demand for an inquiry committee.

As Samad Azad finished, Speaker Razaque Ali requested the members to give notice as per the Rules of Procedure and said "In that case the Speaker will definitely act and it is my duty to consider."

He expected that members would refrain from making such statements.

As the Home Minister finished his deliberations Razaque sought leave to give a personal explanation.

The Speaker, Shaikh Razaque Ali, failing to get the point, refused to allow Razaque to speak. Rashed Khan Menon and others of the Opposition voicing support came to his rescue.

Giving a personal reply Razaque claimed that what the Home Minister said was not true. Throwing a challenge to the Minister Razaque said that Shawkat Ali, Sub-

Rabin

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negotiators outside the formal negotiating framework, even though they live under occupation, an hour's drive or less from Jerusalem.

Rabin also repeated past Israeli invitations to the heads of state of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon to come to Jerusalem for peace talks. "In the service of peace, I am prepared to travel to Amman, Damascus and Beirut today, tomorrow," he added. Every Israeli prime minister has made this offer. But it appeared to gain added weight, given the overall stress that Rabin put on peacemaking.

Promising "vigorous steps" to end the conflict, Rabin said he would order Israel's negotiators "to step up the talks."

He proposed that the Palestinians of the occupied territories suspend anti-Israeli violence during negotiations for their self-government, the first step of the peace process.

Suggesting room for compromise on autonomy, he told the Palestinians: "You will not get everything you want. Perhaps neither will we."

He urged them to seize his offer. "Don't lose this opportunity that may never return. Take our proposal seriously," he said.

Rabin said the collapse of the communist bloc required Israel to find a new place in the world.

"No longer are we necessarily a people that dwells alone," and no longer is it true that "the whole world is against us," he said.

"We must overcome the sense of isolation that has held us in its thrall for almost half a century. We must join the international movement toward peace, reconciliation and cooperation that is spreading over the entire globe these days — lest we be the last to remain, alone, at the station."

Arafat

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Palestinians after he had won the election.

Rabin has said he would make peace and security his top priorities, but has been vague about a settlements freeze and the degree of autonomy Palestinians would have in the occupied territories.

By softening his approach, Rabin has been able to broaden support for his left-leaning coalition. The Israeli right-wing opposes a settlements freeze and favours only a weakened form of autonomy.

Arafat described Rabin, a former army chief of staff, as "one of the Zionists who want to strengthen their presence in the occupied territories."

It was Rabin who conceived the settlement policy for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, according to Arafat, and "it was him who annexed Jerusalem."

He reminded his audience that it was Rabin who as Defence Minister ordered the brutal suppression of the 1987 Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories, instructing soldiers to "break the bones" of protesters.

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