

Six killed, 100 hurt in separate road accidents

BRAHMANBARIA, May 2: Four people were killed and 35 injured as a night coach plunged into a roadside ditch at Ekrampur in sadar thana early Sunday, reports UNB.

Police said, the Chhatak-bound coach from Dhaka met with the accident at about 3.30 am when a front wheel became inoperative. Harun, 32, Arku Mia, 22 and two other unidentified passengers died on the spot.

Of the injured, 11 were admitted to sadar hospital. The rest were given first aid at the hospital.

Driver of the bus managed to flee away. A case was filed with local police in this connection.

Another report from Habiganj adds: Two people were killed and 30 others wounded, six of them seriously, in a road mishap at Kutirgaon in Chunarghat thana of the district early Sunday, police and hospital sources said.

The accident occurred on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway at about 4.30 am when a mini-bus carrying 60 passengers from Chandina, Comilla, to the Urs of Hazrat Shah Jalal (R) in Sylhet, rammmed against a wayside tree.

Tajul Islam, 20, of village Birkhan under Chandina thana of Comilla district died on the spot while Abdus Sobhan of village Hatbaria under Kachhupara thana of Comilla, succumbed to his injuries at Habiganj sadar hospital.

Seriously injured six persons were first admitted to the sadar hospital and then shifted to Comilla Medical College Hospital. The rest of the wounded were released after being given first aid at the sadar hospital.

Two persons had died in another accident on the same highway on Saturday.

Another report from Faridpur says: At least 35 people including three women and two babies were injured, 15 seriously, in a bus accident at Bahirdia, eight kms from the town on Faridpur-Daulatdia highway Friday morning.

According to police, the Dhaka bound bus coming from Alphadanga fell into a 15-foot deep ditch when the driver tried to save a rickshaw van coming from opposite direction.

The seriously injured were admitted to Faridpur General Hospital. A case has been filed with the police.

Girl stabbed to death

NARSINGDI, May 2: A girl student of Kudalirchar village in sadar thana of the district was stabbed to death for refusing a love proposal Wednesday night, reports UNB.

According to family sources, the victim, Ratna Akter, 14, a student of Class Eight of the Madhabdi Girls' High School turned down the proposal of one Amzed Hossain, 22, of the same village some days ago.

Amzad along with his 10 to 12 armed accomplices forcibly entered the house of Ratna and tried to kidnap her. At this when the girl raised alarm and cried for help, the miscreants stabbed her to death. Hearing the hue and cry the villagers rushed to the spot and caught Amzad.

He was later handed over to police and a case has been lodged with sadar thana police. The body was sent to the Narayanjan hospital morgue.

Another report adds: Police recovered 402 bottles of Indian phensidyl from a house at Bhehanagar area in the town Tuesday.

Mongla Port needs more development, says Speaker

May 2: Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shaikh Razzaque Ali has called for united efforts to bring about a balanced development of the country, says BSS.

He was speaking at a function arranged under auspices of Mongla Port Users Coordination Committee here Wednesday.

Presided over by the President of the organisation Mostafid Ali, the function was also addressed, among others, by Abdul Khaleq Talukder MP, Harunur Rashid MP, Mostafa Rashid Shuja MP, BNP City Committee President M Nurul Islam, BNP District Committee Vice-President Golam Sarwar Jamadar, Khulna Development Coordination Committee President Abu Mohammad Ferdous and President of Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry S M Rab.

The speaker said Mongla Port had been playing a vital role in the socio-economic development of the country, particularly of entire southern and northern regions of the country.

Huge areas of R&H department under illegal occupation

KISHOREGONJ, May 2: Illegal occupation of vast areas of land under Roads and Highways Department by some influential people is causing immense sufferings to the public, reports UNB.

Local people alleged that an organised and influential quarters have occupied most of the land in and around the district town with the collaboration of some dishonest officials.

It is reported that scores of sheds, semi-pucca and pucca stalls have sprung up beside the roads and streets in the district during the last few years.

Moreover, a number of big buildings have also been erected in the district town and other places narrowing the roads. This also further impedes the traffic movements, the source added.

On the other hand, a major portion of roads in the heart of the town has been occupied by the truck owners causing hindrances to the movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

It is alleged that some individuals have illegally managed to occupy a vast tract of Roads and Highways land for agriculture and pisciculture purposes.

Some of the occupants of the land informed that some

staff members of the department realise money from them as yearly rent without giving any legal document.

While talking to UNB, an officer of Roads and Highways Department admitted that he also received such allegations. He also informed that they had already submitted a list of unauthorised occupants to the district administration with a request to evict them immediately.

Mushroom growth of hotels and restaurants in all the 13 thana headquarters and district town is posing health hazard to the inhabitants causing concern among the conscious people.

Local people alleged that most of the hotels and restaurants are dirty and uncleaned. Food is prepared and stored in most unhygienic conditions at these hotels and restaurants, they added.

Moreover, stable and adulterated foodstuffs are being sold in these restaurants under the very nose of the law enforcers.

It is alleged that some dishonest health officials allow the unscrupulous hotel owners to carry on their illegal practice by taking bribe on monthly basis.

The people complained that an organised group of businessmen are selling adulterated edible oil including ghee, coconut, soyabean and mustard oil to the whole sellers openly.

They urged the concerned authorities to look into the matter and take legal action against the dishonest businessmen immediately.

Telephone subscribers of the district headquarters have been facing great inconveniences due to poor and inefficient service and alleged malpractice of some T&T employees for quite a long time.

At present the local exchange has a capacity of 400 telephone lines while about 800 applicants have been waiting to the subscribers for a long time.

Local subscribers alleged that most of them receive inflated bills while some of them get undue facilities of having small amount of telephone bills with the collaboration of some dishonest operators.

The telephone lines and sets remain dead or disrupted most of the time and many sets frequently receive wrong calls, they alleged. But at the end of every month they receive inflated bills of huge amount of money, they added.

Local elite, business community, professionals and government officials informed that they have been facing great difficulties in maintaining communications with the capital and other parts of the country timely due to faulty telephone system.

They urged the concerned authorities to take proper steps on emergency basis to mitigate their sufferings by increasing the present exchange capacity.

Unauthorised consumption of electricity in the district has raised its system loss as high as 30 per cent.

Unofficial sources said, unscrupulous consumers in collaboration with a section of dishonest officials of PDB had drawn more than 1,000 illegal connections increasing system loss in some grids of the district.

They (consumer) are "paying PDB employees a fixed amount for their illegal connections", said an angry young man who preferred not to be named.

Local people alleged PDB did not take any step to investigate into the allegations to check illegal consumption despite repeated appeal by the local elite.



AGRI-VARSITY: Professor Dr M Azizul Haque handing over a copy of a magazine to Vice Chancellor of the university Dr Shah M Faruk at the publication ceremony of the magazine at the Teacher-Student Centre recently. — BAU photo

'Constructive steps taken to rehabilitate Chakma refugees'

KHAGRACHHARI, May 2: The President of Chittagong Hill Tract Jumma Refugee Welfare Association, Upendralal Chakma recently said the constructive steps undertaken by Bangladesh government in the rehabilitation of Chakma returnees would inspire other tribal refugees, now in transit camps in the Indian state of Tripura, to return home, says BSS.

He said, this after visiting some resettlement areas of tribal people here on Thursday.

The tribal refugee team headed by Chakma also included a three-member government officials of the Tripura state, on official hand-out said.

Upendralal Chakma exchanged views with the returnees during the visits and became convinced at the economic rehabilitation process for the tribals.

He told the returnees that he would inform the tribal refugees at Tripura of the on-going affairs and progress of rehabilitation process after going back to them.

District roundup

KUSHTIA
12 injured in road accidents
May 2: More than a dozen people were injured, two of them women, in two separate road accidents here Saturday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said, two employees of CARE were injured when a microbus of Local Government Engineering Department knocked them down in front of the police line at about 4:00 pm.

The CARE staff, Shipra, 28 and Shahina, 30, were riding in a motor cycle. They were rushed to sadar hospital in a critical condition.

The driver of the microbus (Dhaka Metro-02-0985) fled from the scene, but police seized the vehicle.

In another accident, about ten people were injured when a speedy bus knocked them on the road at Kanabil in Mirpur thana of the district at about 6:30 pm.

Of the injured, Khowaz, 35, Aziz, 30 and Shahin, 25 were admitted to sadar hospital.

Another report adds: At least 10 people were injured, two seriously, in a series of clash between two groups of people at Battail here Saturday.

Critically injured Shahadat 30 and Azim 25 were admitted to Kushtia sadar hospital. Other injured were given first aid.

Police and witnesses said the clash ensued between the two groups over leasing of a rice market at Battail in the town at about 10 am. Sporadic clashes later occurred a number of times.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. They also detained one Ekram from the spot.

BARGUNA
45 development projects nearing completion
May 2: At least 45 development projects under Food for Works Programme in five thanas of the district are nearing completion, says UNB.

According to official sources, the projects include construction and reconstruction of roads, bridges, culverts, levelling of school grounds, clearing of bushes and jungles, earth filling and cleaning of silted drains.

Of the projects, 11 are being implemented in sadar, 14 in Amtali, nine in Betagi, six in Banna and five in Patharghata thanas of the district.

Official sources said, some 700 metric tons of wheat have been allocated for implementing the projects.

PATUAKHALI
Crops over 3000 acres of land under flood water
May 2: At least seven villages of Lahalia union in sadar thana have been badly affected by the recent flash flood and rain water, says UNB.

According to farmers, rabi crops over 3000 acres of land went under water causing losses to them. The water logging has created serious problem in the absence of embankment.

They said, Water Development Board took up a programme to construct an embankment in the union in 1989. But the programme was not implemented due to unknown reasons.

Instead, an embankment was constructed around Jainkati and Kamalapur unions near the Lahalia union, they said, adding, as a result, flash flood and water logging cause extensive damages to the seven villages of the Lahalia union.

It is learnt that due to recent flash flood heavy down-pour about 10,000 people of the villages were affected badly.

PABNA
2000 bottles of phensidyl recovered
May 2: The Narcotics Control Department here has recovered 2,000 bottles of smuggled phensidyl from Gachhpara area of the town Saturday, official sources said, reports UNB.

Badal Ali, 23 and Ektar Mondal, 26, both residents of the Godagari area of Rajshahi town were arrested in this connection.

The contraband was recovered from the possession of Badal and Ali who were going to Dhaka from Rajshahi by bus.

Meanwhile, the Narcotics department hauled 2,050 bottles of phensidyl from the town earlier.

MANIKGANJ
5 highway robbers held
May 2: Patrol police on the Dhaka-Aricha highway arrested five alleged robbers from Shaturia here Thursday night, reports UNB.

They chased a autorickshaw carrying the robbers and caught them with lethal weapons at Barbaria bus-stand at about 2 am.

Another report said that the Jatiyatubadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) had called for a seven-hour hartal from 6 am in Singair thana protesting the arrest of two JCD leaders.

Singair College VP Monir Hossain and another JCD leader Khokon were arrested April 23 after a case was filed against them with Singair thana by the local Palli Bidyut Samity.

The samity authorities has filed the case following a clash between its employees and the students of the college over power supply.

NARSINGDI
Valuables worth Tk 6 lakh looted
May 2: A gang of armed dacoits raided a house at a village in sadar thana and looted cash and valuables worth over Taka six lakh last week, police said Friday, reports UNB.

The robbers, numbering about 15, entered the house of Iqbal Hossain after breaking the door in Birampur village on April 11 at dead of night.

The robbers looted cash Taka two lakh, 20 tolas of gold and goods and belongings valued about Taka four lakh from the house at gun point.

A case has been filed with local police but none was arrested yet.

Another report adds: A teenage girl at a village in sadar thana allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself, police said Saturday.

Kalpna Shaha, 18, daughter of Mirmal Shaha of Fultali village, hanged herself from the ceiling of her house last week. The cause of her suicide could not be known immediately.

BRAHMANBARIA
Timber worth Tk 12.15 lakh seized
May 2: The BDR men seized 215.6 cubic feet of smuggled timbers worth about Taka 12.15 lakh from a truck at Balla border area on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip, a BDR patrol party of 32 Battalion challenged the truck driver at Amrut Bazar near Chunarughat.

On information, a contingent of BDR from the Balla border post rushed to the spot and recovered the segun wood smuggled out to India through Balla border.

The BDR jawans also arrested truck driver, Bachu Miah and a case has been filed with the local police.



Jean-Pierre Arroucau, Deputy Head of the French Embassy inaugurating a multipurpose cyclone shelter in Sandvip Island recently. The cyclone shelter was constructed with the financial and technical assistance of the French government. He later talked to the local people.

Announces Demand Day Hasina blasts govt for poor economic growth

NARSINGDI, May 2: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina Sunday announced 'Demand Day' on June 12 throughout the country in support of the party's 'Save Industry, Save Workers' campaign to build a self-reliant economy, reports UNB.

Addressing a huge workers' rally Saturday afternoon at Palaish Cooperative Jute Mills ground in observance of the May Day, she called for halting retrenchment of workers, reopening close mills, increasing production and export, and establishing labour-intensive industrial units.

Hasina, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, said, some 4,500 industries were closed, investment came to a freezing point, thousands of workers lost their jobs due to the government's inefficiency and indecision as well as terrorism during the three-year rule of BNP.

She criticised the Prime Minister and her cabinet colleagues for claiming production in industrial and agricultural sectors and questioned if closing down industries, sacking workers and smuggling of foreign goods mark the politics of production.

Criticising the ruling party's claim for development and production in the country, the opposition leader said BNP's claim for production is confined to only TV screen but the

actual situation of the country is reverse.

"If you listen to television news, you will hear the Prime Minister clamouring only for tide of production everywhere," she said, adding "The Prime Minister could only see tide of production over her head but she cannot see the flow of ebb below her foot-step."

Hasina criticised the government to sacking industrial workers and employees without arranging alternative jobs for them. She also rebuked the government for not implementing the accord signed

Shocking!

HABIGANJ, May 2: A prisoner, shocked at the rejection of his bail petition by the District Magistrate court, died Monday on way to hospital.

Sources in the district jail said, Kashem Miah, 35 of Petua Kandi village in Ajmirganj thana was arrested on April 16 following a case filed under Section 326 BPC and sent to jail.

The bail petition was filed on behalf of the accused on April 25. But the District Magistrate rejecting the prayer ordered the police to send him to jail again.

At this, Kashem Miah became shocked and suddenly fell unconscious in front of the jail gate.

with SKOP.

Referring to the rule of post-75 regimes, the Awami League chief alleged that there has not been any investment or new industrial units in the private sector. The public sector was also crippled during the period, she said.

Hasina said, the post-independent government of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman rehabilitated abandoned industries in the public sector and gave incentives to the private sector to attain a self-reliant economy.

Describing the BNP government as a promise-breaker, Hasina said, the present government had failed to fulfill its commitment made to students, teachers, workers and professionals.

The opposition leader alleged that many ministers and ruling party MPs have amassed illegal wealth through corruption and looting bank money. The corruption of ministers could easily be unveiled if their property are assessed before and after assumption of their ministerial jobs.

The workers rally was also addressed by Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Akhtaruzzaman Akhtar, Rahmat Ali Chowdhury, Mosehuddin Bhuiyan, Rahmat Ali Chowdhury, Abdul Matin Master, Nurul Majid Humayun and Hasanul Huq Hasan. Abu Siddique Mia presided.

Dhanshi-a gift of nature

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, May 2: Dhanshi — a new kind of crop grows naturally in abundance in the vast coastal areas of Barguna district. It is mainly used as an alternative food to rice by hundreds of poor people of the areas.

The crop was discovered by the poor people of that areas during the 1974 famine. 'Dhanshi' is a paddy like grassy plant, grows in plenty also in the vast coastal belt of Sundarban during the month of June—July. Seeds are naturally found and available in the lowlying coastal areas which germinates naturally and after two and a half month, the crop attains full size and flowers.

Primarily 'Dhanshi' was found in the forest range of Amtali and Patharghata thana areas of Barguna district but now it is expanding its area covering nearly five thousand acres of land.

The flowers of the crop after one month produces grains.

In the month of September or in first half of October the crop is matured. The plants normally grow up to a height of three to four feet with no branches. People can procure 20 to 25 kgs of Dhanshi rice from 45 to 50 kgs of unhusked crops. Naturally it is brown in colour, seems to be a variety of Chinese IRRI.

'Dhanshi' crop may be a new kind of rice which is going much popularity particularly among the poor people of that areas as this crop can be produced free of cost being the 'gift of nature'. Saline water, it is observed, helps the crop to grow in plenty along the vast coastal belt of the southern region of the country.

'Dhanshi' may be the alternative food to the poor people of that area if properly utilised. On the other hand, government also can earn foreign currency, if it can be used as an export oriented crop.

Strong protest against price hike of gas

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, May 2: The recent rise in the prices of gas has erupted a strong resentment among the people in Sylhet. The people have protested the government's decision in this regard through meetings, processions during the last few days.

The Sylhet Poura Nagorik Audhikar Bastobayan Parishad arranged a rally at the Bandar Bazar area with Advocate Naoshad Ahmed Chowdhury in the chair. The rally was also addressed, among others, by Ohidul Islam Tofa, Ashfaq Ahmed, Advocate Misbahuddin Shiraj, Mujibur Rahman Shahin, Sujat Ali Rafique, Syeda Jebunnessa Haque, Syed Mostafa Kamal and Jafar Chowdhury. Ex-minister, Dewan Farid Gazi spoke as the chief guest.

The speakers said that, the government had suddenly raised the price of gas without considering the economic condition of the people in general. They also called upon all not to pay the gas bill, till withdrawal of the government's decision. The government had raised the price of gas ahead of the new budget, they added.

Other organisations like, Greater Sylhet Ganadabi Parishad, Sylhet Gas Consumers' Association, Awami League, Ganatantri Party, Jalalabad Gas Consumers' Action Committee, District NAP have also condemned the government decision. Besides, Sylhet Gas Fields Limited (SGFL) Workers' Union Federation, and Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution Systems Limited Sramik-Karmachari Union also criticised the rise in the gas price at a press conference.

It can be mentioned here that, all the three gas supply organisations, Bakhrabad Gas, Bazar area with Advocate Naoshad Ahmed Chowdhury in the chair. The rally was also addressed, among others, by Ohidul Islam Tofa, Ashfaq Ahmed, Advocate Misbahuddin Shiraj, Mujibur Rahman Shahin, Sujat Ali Rafique, Syeda Jebunnessa Haque, Syed Mostafa Kamal and Jafar Chowdhury. Ex-minister, Dewan Farid Gazi spoke as the chief guest.

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SYLHET: Dewan Farid Gazi, former minister speaking at a meeting of Sylhet Poura Nagorik Audhikar Bastobayan Parishad held in protest against the recent rise in the price of gas. — Star photo