

5 killed, 21 hurt in road accidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least five persons were killed and 21 others were injured in separate road accidents in the country yesterday.

One Syed Ali, 40, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the morning. Ali was admitted to the hospital with serious injuries after a speedy truck had hit him at Mirretok in the city early hours yesterday.

In another incident one Shamim, 20, was killed on the spot when a minibus ran over him on the Airport Road at about 10:30am.

Meanwhile, six persons including four women were injured in a road accident near Syedabad in the city at about 3 am Saturday.

The accident occurred as a truck hit a tempo which was loaded with passengers.

The injured identified as Biswanath, 60, Narendra, 35, Rupsari, 50, Pulsari, 45, Lalita, 50 and Khuki, 35 were admitted to the DMCH.

UNB adds: A young man was killed and 10 others were injured in a train-bus collision at the Shardah level-crossing of Charghat thana in Rajshahi district yesterday.

The dead was identified as Delwar Hossain, 21, of Tangail. Seriously injured Azizur Rahman, 38, was admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Witnesses said the Rajshahi

bound passenger bus met the accident when a Chapainawabganj-bound train from Ishardi returned into it at Shardah rail crossing, 600 yards from the Shardah railway station at 6 am.

Local people said the level crossing remained open and no gateman was on duty at the time of the accident.

Police seized the bus but the driver managed to flee.

High officials of Paksey Railway station visited the spot.

In another accident, two people were killed and five others injured in separate road accidents in two thanas of Jhenidah district yesterday.

Witnesses said Akram Hossain, 33, died on the spot and five people were injured when a Faridpur-bound truck hit a rickshaw van near Hat Gopalpur on Jhenidah-Magura road in the morning.

The injured Bacchu, Chad Ali, Diraj, Ershad and Kota were admitted to Sadar Hospital.

Sirajul Islam of Kushadanga of Mohepur thana died on the spot when a truck knocked him down from behind near Kushadanga on Jibonnagar-Mohepur road.

The drivers fled the scene with their vehicles. Separate cases were filed with the local police.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia talking with some schoolgirls about their studies at Parshuram in Feni district yesterday. — PID photo

Seminar on Copenhagen summit told Explore common base for a poverty-free world

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a workshop on the upcoming World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) yesterday called for exploring a common base to make the world a poverty-free planet.

The call of the hour is not just reducing poverty. The question is if global efforts can eradicate it, the speakers said.

Removal or alleviation of poverty is the central focus of all development efforts and unless a broad agreement is reached between the North and the South, the aspiration for a 'global village' would be a far cry, they observed.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman attended as chief guest the workshop titled 'Road to Copenhagen: The Social Summit'.

The Khan Foundation organised the workshop at Sonargang Hotel in Dhaka.

UNICEF Representative Rolf C. Carriere and Charge d'Affaires of the Danish embassy Knud Kjaer Neilsen attended the function as special guests.

TNDP Deputy Representative Michael Constable, members of Parliament from the BNP Farida Hossain, Akhter Hamid Siddiqui and Dr AKM Qamaruzzaman, Awami League leaders Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Suranjit Sen Gupta, Workers' Party Secretary General Rashed Khan Menon, MP and Dr Saleemul Huq of the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies took part in the discussion.

Planning Secretary Dr. Mohammad Haroon Rashid presented a key-note paper at the workshop. Planning Minister Dr A. Mueen Khan was in the chair.

Speaking on the occasion, the Foreign Minister said the Bangladesh delegation would go to Copenhagen, the venue of the WSSD, with high hopes.

However, he pointed out that continuous review would be needed to see how good the nations could translate into action various commitments made during the Summit.

"I have attended the Rio Summit on Environment, the Vienna Summit on Human Rights... I have seen the Agenda-21 signed and conveniently shelved," he said.

The Planning Secretary Lailatul Qadr

happy, prosperous and democratic society.

Begum Zia said Islam is a religion of equality, brotherhood, justice, humanity and welfare. She said the holy Quran teaches us to engage ourselves in personal and social life for welfare in this earth and the earth these after.

She said Islam encourages us to establish social justice, peace and stability through self-restraint, self-purification and tolerance.

On the occasion of the Shabe-e-Qadr, Begum Zia wished mercy of Allah for the overall welfare of the Muslims.

Trade accord

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Xinhua said. The United States had been demanding, among other things, that China shut down 29 southern factories turning out an estimated 75 million pirated compact discs per year.

Along with enforcing existing regulations, the United States also wants China to enact more stringent laws on copyrights and other intellectual property.

Other countries also have complained about illicit copying of their products.

US-Chinese trade last year totalled 45 billion dollar. Most of that was Chinese exports to the United States, worth 37 billion dollar.

listed the key issues that are to be discussed and negotiated at the Summit and hoped that the meeting would seize the opportunity to work out a new vision of people-centered development.

Implementation of the Programme of Action of the WSSD would be the real challenge for the national governments and many would have to reorient national budgets towards social development, he said.

The Danish Charge d'Affaires said the process which started with the Rio Summit on Environment and Development has reached its final phase of creating a global village.

Necessary preparations for smooth holding of the Social Summit in Copenhagen have been completed, he said.

Michael Constable said that against a widening gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', world leaders would have to agree in Copenhagen on charting some specific issues so that the pronouncements on poverty alleviation, productive employment and social integration are materialised.

Addressing the workshop, Abul Hasan Chowdhury said the countries like Bangladesh would have to live on hopes.

He said, the world community must act after commitments are made in international forums such as the WSSD and the developing countries pursue the policy of who does what after the conference.

Rashed Khan Menon said that without identifying the reasons of poverty, all efforts for creating the global village would be in vain.

He also called for democratising the UN system.

Dr Saleemul Huq said that a separate convention on poverty alleviation was needed so that a pro-active programme could be planned to link between development, environment and other social issues.

27 new CIPs selected

By Staff Correspondent

The Industries Ministry has selected 27 persons as Commercially Important Persons (CIPs) for the year 1995 for their distinguished contribution in the country's industrialisation, according to sources.

The select notaries will be considered eligible for inclusion in policy formulation committees of the government in addition to enjoying other privileges allowed CIPs.

They will also be invited as guests at national programmes and given priority when picking official delegations for foreign tours in connection with their respective fields of interest.

Like VIPs, the CIPs will also enjoy priority with regard to train, bus, aeroplane, hotel reservations and admission in government hospitals.

Those bestowed the special honour are Khurshid Alam, Chairman of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), Aminul Huq, Sohail of the National Small and Cottage Industries Association of Bangladesh, Obaidul Karim of Kohinoor Chemical Company, HR Khan, MP of Monno Ceramic, AQI Chowdhury of James Finlay Plc, Kamaluddin Ahmed of Ashraf Textiles, KM Mujibul Huq of Shah Jute and Plastic Process-

ing Industries Ltd, Mizanur Rahman Sinha of Acme Laboratories, Abul Hasanat Khan of Bangladesh Oxygen Ltd, SY Bakht of the Chittagong Jute Manufacturing Company, Syed Manzur Elahi of the Apex Group, Syed Rezaul Karim of Hoechst Bangladesh Ltd, Abdul Monem of K Rahman and Company, Mahbub Jamil of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Agha Ahmed Yusuf of Alpha Tobacco, Mohammad Ali of the Dhaka Vegetable Oil Industries, Ali Hussain Akbar Ali of Bangladesh Steel Re-rolling Mills Ltd, Kutubuddin Ahmed of Tamizuddin Textiles, AK Shamsuddin Khan of AK Khan Jute Mills, Mojibur Rahman of BRB Cables, Nurul Islam Patwari of Sonali Ansh Industries Ltd, Rashid Wali Mohammad Tabani of Mirpur Ceramic Works Ltd, Mozammel Huq of Tallo Spinning Mills Ltd, Samson H Chowdhury of Square Pharmaceuticals, MA Samad of Bangladesh General Insurance Company, Mohammad Shahjahan of Shah Fateh Ullah Textile Mills Ltd and Alhaj Shaikh Sohrab Ali of Sohrab Vegetable Oil Refinery Ltd.

The CIPs will enjoy their facilities and privileges until December 31, 1995.

UN forces prepare for pullout Somali militiamen fight outside airport gates

MOGADISHU, Feb 26: Somali militia men fought fiercely outside the gates of the UN-controlled airport in Mogadishu today, report Reuters, AP.

They fired bursts of anti-aircraft gunfire at each other and some bullets whizzed over the heads of US and Italian troops inside the airfield, witnesses said.

It was not clear what the fighting was about, but tension mounted today as crowds of Somalis and gunmen congregated around the airfield gates as the countdown began for the withdrawal of UN forces.

Li Gen Anthony Zinni, a top US military official, predicted the withdrawal operation would be ready sometime today.

"That doesn't mean we are going to start then, but I tell you we have finished up the last details," he told pool reporters at a UN military base just outside Mogadishu.

More than 2,000 US

marines and Italian soldiers are expected to sweep ashore at some point during the next week to secure part of Mogadishu's port and airport facilities. They will form a rear guard for the withdrawal of about 2,400 Pakistani and Bangladeshi troops.

The forces were joined Friday by the USS Lake Erie, a destroyer and one of the most potent ships in the Navy.

Zinni said he was pleased with preparations for Operation United Shield, 23 ships will involve seven nations, 23 ships and more than 14,000 troops.

He said he expected few major problems except for looters trying to steal equipment. Such problems have beset UN forces in their final days.

"I don't see right now that there's any major threat looming," Zinni said Thursday. He said his forces are ready for assaults by clan militias, a possibility they don't expect but clearly have the force to repel.

PM tours Feni

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ter who addressed 17 gatherings during her hectic tours.

The Prime Minister met the people and addressed them at Darmapur, Kazirbagh, Bandua Daulatpur, Munshir Hat, New Munshir Hat, Fulgazi, Chitalia, Mirzanagar, Porsuram, Box Mahmud, Amjad Hat, Chandgazi, Chhagalnaiya, Darogarahat, Muhuriganj, Radanagar and Pathanagar.

Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Mahbubul Alam Tara, Mrs Halima Khatun MP, and district BNP leaders Abul Hashem, Shahibuddin Ferdous, Abdullah Chowdhury and Jalaluddin Majumder accompanied the Prime Minister during her visit.

JP: Agitation

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HM Ershad.

The party also criticised the government for its failure in checking the price spiral of essentials and condemned the police action against the workers of jute and textile mills during their recent blockade programme.

Raushan Ershad also attended the emergency meeting of the party presidium.

Sources said, Raushan was brought to the JP leadership on a directive from party chairman Ershad, who is now in the Dhaka central jail.

"It is part of a move to make her party chief," said a presidential member on condition of anonymity.

3MPs report

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from their experiences during visits to the British Parliament.

"Why should the government run a cosmetics or toiletry factory? Running a film studio (FDC) cannot be a state priority," L K Siddiqui told reporters at the publication ceremony of the report.

The government needs to look at the 'business' it is involved in and decide whether at all it should be in it, the report says, adding that 'the state must be rolled back'.

The government's executive functions should branch out to various agencies, wherever possible, and the private sector should be allowed to participate in creating a competitive atmosphere, the report says.

However, the government should ensure that the ordinary people get the maximum benefit from the different agencies as their fundamental right, they said.

"Transparency cannot be ensured in a government of such huge size," said the leader of the team speaking on the occasion.

About the role of parliament, the report says, the function of Parliament is not to govern the country but to control the government.

Citing a recent example — the import of diesel by a private company — it emphasised the need for a parliamentary scrutiny of such matters.

The team members comparing the parliamentary practices in England — the 'mother of parliaments' — and Bangladesh, said, "We need to adopt a parliamentary culture."

Amendments to the parliamentary rules of procedure and a code of conduct for the MPs have also been proposed.

The report also suggests that an Ombudsman should be appointed immediately and efforts made to encourage openness in government.

Laws restrictive of the media should be abolished and the press should self-regulate itself through a code of ethical practice, the report notes.

The members of the team admitted that in the UK, journalists are allowed to be present at meetings of parliamentary standing committees on different ministries.

Unlike Bangladesh, most of the committees in Britain are headed by opposition members. "The chair of the House of Commons Speaker is more secured than that of our country," they said.

The team members said that local government should be established at all tiers of administration and the MPs should be given expert support, including staff and office, to increase their efficiency.

The members said they have placed the recommendations before their respective parties and hoped the leaders would give serious thought to the issues and proposals.

In reply to a question, Matiya Chowdhury said that there is no precedence of any continuous parliamentary boycott in Britain but some members boycotted a committee meeting for a considerable period of time.

She fumbled while answering another question as to how a Parliament could become effective if the opposition parties start boycotting proceedings to press their own demands just after the formation of that Parliament through elections.

In reply to another question, Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury said they had visited the UK as members of Parliament but since 9:10pm of December 28, 1994 he was no longer an MP.

The Midnight File

Curfew clamped on Kashmir town

Srinagar, Feb 26: A curfew has been clamped on a southern town in the troubled state of Kashmir after the killing of Hindu holy man by Muslim militants sparked widespread protests, police said here today. Kashmir police chief Manohar Nath Sabharwal said an indefinite curfew was imposed late Saturday in the town of Kishtwar, in Hindu-dominated Doda district, "as a precautionary measure," reports AFP.

36 arrested in Karachi

KARACHI, Feb 26: Pakistani police arrested 36 Islamic activists in a crackdown today as the port city of Karachi mourned the death of 20 worshippers in attacks on mosques on Saturday, police said. Pakistan's largest city of more than 12 million, the capital of the southern province of Sindh looked deserted after shops pulled down shutters as a mark of mourning, witnesses said, reports Reuter.

Illegal arms in city

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Of late, many youngsters are finding the temptation of joining the racket of either using illegal weapons or trading in them difficult to resist. The unfortunate consumers have been that many are dying in gang wars or personal feuds among partners or are suffering severe penalties meted out under the Arms Act.

In most cases, the worried parents of such wayward youths haven't the faintest inkling of the dangerous, merciless a world their children have either knowingly or unknowingly stepped into.

In a span of just ten days this month, police in the city has unearthed three illegal weapons manufacturing factories and recovered a sizeable quantity of fire-arms and spare parts.

They have also arrested five young men for alleged gun running.

One of those accused of being involved in this racket is only a teenager — a student of Class Ten — who had allegedly concealed the weapons in his study table and between books.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) officials feared that the recovery they have made so far was only the tip of the iceberg. They fear a huge quantity of arms was still in circulation across the city.

In one such case, a special team of the detective police unearthed an illegal weapons manufacturing factory at West Islambagh of Lalbagh area and recovered three stenguns, two locally made revolvers, one foreign revolver and 17 rounds of live bullet.

They also seized four big knives, steel pipes, springs, butts, barrels and other spares used in making guns from the house.

In the second case, Lalbagh police on February 15 seized four locally made revolvers, six magazines, five revolver hammers, 25 high-tension springs, eight barrels and other spares from a house at Rahim Box Lane in Dhaka.

In another case, police recovered one country-made pistol, six pistol butts, two magazines, two revolver hammers and a manufacturer's catalogue on fire-arms, titled 'American Rifle Man'.

Possessing illegal weapons has become a way of life for many young men in Dhaka," commented a senior DMP official who spoke on condition he would not be quoted.

Initially, these youths step into the 'strong-world' for sheer excitement and an urge to emphasise their importance, he said. By the time he makes his 'bone' in the racket, all doors back to normal life are closed for him, he said.

Giving a picture of Dhaka's illegal weapon trading, the DMP official said most of the time these weapons are used for political purposes.

The young men are also lured into the dangerous world of gun totting for money by different vested interests such as rival factions within a section of political parties and trade unions, different extortionist groups and toll collectors and hoodlums involved in robbery, hijacking and mugging.

Sometimes, innocent teenagers go for possessing weapons for self-defence in the face of threats from local rival groups, the official said.

Explaining why illegal weapon manufacturing takes place in the older parts of the city or in Mirpur area, an official of the Lalbagh police told The Daily Star that innumerable machine tools manufacturing workshops in these areas are often used for the production of weapons.

Any skilled lathe machine operator can manufacture any part of pistol, revolver, shotgun or even automatic weapons like stenguns, if he is provided with a catalogue," he said.

Sometimes, these machine-men try manufacturing these weapons also to satisfy his creative zeal, or a challenge to prove his craftsmanship. DMP sources said, A good number of weapons are also smuggled from India and Pakistan, they pointed out.

An official of the Detective Branch of the DMP said that the stenguns they recovered from Islambagh were as good

2 murdered

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Abul Kalam Azad, an M Com final year students of the college and also general secretary of the Khulna city unit of the JCD, the student front of ruling BNP.

The JCD blamed the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing the Islami Chhatra Shibir for the murder. It also accused the police of not taking action against the killers.

The JCD has called for a half-day hartal in Khulna city tomorrow to protest the killing.

A ward commissioner of the City Corporation was shot dead in broad daylight on Saturday by unidentified assailants.

Sources said, a group of youths suddenly attacked Abul Kalam at the college gate at about 1.30 pm and opened fire from a pipe-gun.

The victim fell down and attending doctors declared him dead when he was rushed to the General Hospital.

In reaction, JCD activists went on the rampage in city, damaging several vehicles and setting fire to some computer service centres and the city office of the Jamaat-Shibir.

Some 30 computer service centres were set afire at about 3 pm. Fire brigade personnel, however, rushed to the spot and brought the blazes under control.

Drive to seize unauthorised rickshaws on

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka City Corporation's (DCC) drive to seize unauthorised rickshaws and punish the illegal pullers continued yesterday.

The DCC began the drive on February 22 in association with the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) as part of its programme to ease traffic congestion and check accidents in the city.

The drive, led by a magistrate, was undertaken at the Malibagh-Mouchak intersection yesterday. The Deputy Commissioner (Traffic) Mustaque Hossain supervised the drive.

Twenty seven, unlicensed rickshaws were seized

Protest against price-hike of fertiliser

SIRAJGANJ, Feb 26: Some several hundred people including local farmers and students of Rajshahi thana today (Sunday) put up blockades on the Bogra-Nagarbari highway near Bhuyagati protesting abnormal price hike of fertiliser, reports UNB.

The protestors during the agitation halted four trucks loaded with fertiliser plying on the route and sold the urea bags among the local farmers at the government rate of Tk 230.

They later refunded the money to the owners of the fertiliser. Fertiliser Traders Association confirmed the news.

Fertiliser is being sold in the local markets at Tk 330 per bag.

Fall in water levels

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While the crisis is generally attributed to the withdrawal of water from the upstreams, including at Farakka, Md Abu Hena, Chief Hydrographer of the BIWTA, said massive discharge of river water by low-lift pumps for irrigation purposes is another major reason.

He suggested massive digging of silted water bodies under the Food For Work programme to store water for dry season irrigation to reduce pressure on river water.

As the crisis in the waterways kept aggravating, the BIWTA has drawn up a seven-year master plan for dredging important river routes.

Some 50 important routes, crucial for navigation and irrigation, have been identified for dredging under the seven-year plan which is now under the scrutiny of the Planning Commission.

A proposal for purchase of 8 additional dredgers are also in the plan to cope with the situation. While the dredging demand is tremendously rising, the BIWTA is seriously short of dredgers.

The organisation has now a slim fleet only eight dredgers. All are old, three of them aged 30. Moreover, four of the dredgers usually remain occupied at the Aricha point alone in dry season.

Abu Hena, however, argued that dredging is a very costly option and, therefore, "not the answer for Bangladesh".

Instead of 'ambitious' dredging plans, he said, selective and well-coordinated dredging of crucial waterways, as envisaged in the proposed master plan, is the best option at the moment.

Simultaneously, Hena said, maintenance of depth of small canals and rivulets with manual labour is another good idea.

Jute sector reforms

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and the closed mills. In a wrap-up meeting with government officials on February 23, the Bank mission expressed its disappointment and concern over the slow pace of capacity reduction, privatisation and asset disposal of the closed mills, official sources said.

The World Bank team, however, was satisfied with the progress in restructuring the outstanding bank debts of the jute sector.

The remaining five of the targeted jute mills are yet to be closed while none of the mills have been privatised and efforts to sell off the assets of the closed mills have failed. Furthermore, the retrenchment programme continues to remain stalled.

The government side, at the meeting, pointed out to the 'practical' problems being faced in privatising and selling off the assets due to the poor response from prospective buyers, the sources added.

On the other hand, they noted, lack of funds, labour militancy and the current political problems were also contributing to the slow pace of the closure and retrench-

ment programmes. Pointing out the unexpected surge in export demand this year, the jute ministry officials also argued against the closure of the five jute mills. The public sector jute mills are reportedly booked with export orders upto July while those in the private sector upto May.

In an earlier meeting in April last year, the World Bank, however, had countered that increased export demand could easily be met by increasing production of the more efficient mills in the private and public sectors. The Bank contended that even with the closure of the nine mills and downsizing two others, production of six lakh tons is possible from private and public mills by working in 2.5 shifts.

The tenders for privatising four of the jute mills floated in October last year by the Privatisation Board drew poor response, forcing the extension of the deadline twice. Even then bids were received for only one of the jute mills.

Similarly, tenders for selling off the assets of the four closed jute mills have also failed to attract buyers.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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