

9 killed, 31 injured in road accidents

Nine people including a minor boy were killed and 31 others injured in separate road accidents yesterday in Savar, Comilla and Magura, reports UNB.

Four people, including a minor boy, were killed in two road accidents on Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday.

Police said, Bashir 7, was crushed under the wheels of a Dhaka-bound bus at Ballapur in the morning.

In another accident one Abdus Sattar, 40, was killed when a bus hit him near Savar thana bus stand at about 10 am.

Besides, an unidentified old man was crushed under the wheels of a running bus at Olail at about 2 pm.

Police said an unidentified middle-aged woman was killed when a bus knocked her down from behind near Savar Dairy Farm at about 6 pm.

In Comilla two people were killed and 29 others injured when a passenger bus fell into a road side ditch near the Sadat Jute Mills in Chandina thana on Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday.

Of the dead, one was identified as Murtuza Ali, 30, a worker of the Sadat Jute Mills while identity of the other could not be known.

Witnesses and police said the Dhaka-bound bus met the accident while it was trying to overtake a truck near the Jute mills at about 4.30 pm.

The injured were admitted to the Chandina Thana Health Complex and Sadar

15 houses gutted

By Staff Correspondent

Some 15 tin-shed houses were gutted at the Shantibagh area under Ramna thana in the city yesterday morning.

Fire service sources said that the fire broke out from a gas stove at 8/2 Shantibagh at about 10 am.

Advisers fire Nirmul convenor

By Staff Correspondent

Begun Mushtari Shahi has been relieved from the charges of the convenership of both the Ekatturer Ghatak Dalai Nirmul Committee's central working council and Chittagong district unit.

This was announced at a press conference organised by the central advisory council of the Nirmul Committee at Taher Auditorium in the city yesterday.

Reading out a statement at the conference, Prof Kabir Chowdhury, president of the advisory council, said she was relieved for patronising 'Sadek-Hashem clique'.

It was also declared at the press conference that 11 members of the Nirmul Committee including Sadek, Hashem and Rasha, who had been suspended for their anti-organizational activities in May this year had also been ousted from the Nirmul Committee.

Prof Kabir Chowdhury said, Mushtari Shahi was served with a notice on August 15 to show cause for her taking side with the 'terrorists Sadek-Hashem clique', but, she did not reply.

However, Prof Chowdhury hoped that despite these encumbrances, the movement that late Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam enkindled three and a half years back, would continue.

Among others, advisory council members, Showkat Osman, Barrister Shaikat Ali Khan, Moulana Abdul Awal, acting convenor of the Nirmul Committee Shahriar Kabir were present at the press conference.

Basten

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In his long struggle to return to the game, he gave no further details but the player has called a news conference at the club's headquarters at 1600 GMT today.

Van Basten, 30, who began his career at Ajax Amsterdam and was European footballer-of-the-year three times, has not played since the 1993 European Cup final in Munich when Milan lost 1-0 to Olympique Marseille.

That appearance was part of an abortive three-match comeback by Van Basten following an operation on his troublesome right ankle in December, 1992.

More surgery followed but the specialists were unable to repair the damage done by more than a decade of heavy tackles from defenders determined to halt one of the greatest strikers of the modern era.

The Dutchman had been widely expected to announce his retirement from soccer a few months ago. But he delayed the decision, hoping further treatment over the summer would allow him to carry on playing.

DU to celebrate Platinum Jubilee Sept 21

By Staff Correspondent

The Platinum Jubilee programme of the Dhaka University and the reunion of the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) have been shifted to September 21 from September 7.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the DUCSU held at the official residence of the Vice Chancellor yesterday afternoon.

DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman, MP and GS Khairul Kabir Khokon, among others, attended the meeting with the VC Prof Emajuddin Ahmed in the chair.

UN disarmament chief in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Aug 17: UN disarmament chief Rolf Ekeus arrived here today for talks with Iraqi officials who have offered to reveal secret of their country's weapons programme after the defection of a key minister, reports AFP.

Armed attack

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At this point the attackers started firing at the gate, the first and the second floors from outside the building.

During the rampage a stray bullet pierced the right chest of Sarkar who was working near a second floor window. He died of his injuries shortly thereafter.

Meanwhile, the indiscriminate firing broke glass windows and a piece of flying glass hit Rafique in his head. He was under treatment at the DMCH till last night, medical sources said.

Police from Shabujbagh thana were deployed in the factory premises. No one was arrested till last night.



Nepalese UNPRO soldiers (L) joke with Bangladeshi comrades at Pleso air base in Zagreb, Croatia Wednesday, as the first group of about 120 peace-keeping troops leaves Croatia in the withdrawal announced following the Croatian recapture of the rebel Serb-occupied Krajina, formerly a UN 'protected zone'. — AFP/UNB photo

Hasina : Maijbhandari

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When contacted last night, Maijbhandari told The Daily Star that he deserted the AL as the party was not helpful in his pursuit of religious activities and that it had 'derailed' from the ideals of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Explaining his decision he further said: 'The AL in the name of secularism has abandoned religion and shaken hands with the anti-Liberation Jamaat-e-Islami, despite its claim of upholding the spirit of the Liberation War'.

He also disclosed that there was pressure from his followers to quit AL.

He expressed his gratitude to Begun Mushtari Shahi for giving him honour which, he said, Hasina failed to do.

Maijbhandari told this correspondent that bomb attacks were made on his Uttara residence in the city yesterday and blamed AL activists for the attack.

Maijbhandari, an MP from the Chittagong-4 constituency, had resigned from Parliament along with 146 other opposition lawmakers on December 28 last year.

UNB adds: Several hundred Awami League supporters yesterday gheraoed the house of Nazibul Bashar Maijbhandari at Fatikchhari to protest his aspersive comments on the party while crossing road into BNP.

A press release of Fatikchhari thana Awami League said thousands of people gathered at Bibirhat in the afternoon.

1299 fake certificates seized

From Our Correspondent

COMILLA, Aug 17: Police seized 1299 fake certificates of National University, Chittagong University, Comilla Board and Madrasah Education Board from a house at Hrapukur Par, Dakshin Charkha here early hours today.

Acting on a tip, a police team led by CID ASP Khasrul Haq, raided on the house of one Mokbul Ahmed at 12:35 am and recovered the certificates of SSC, HSC, MA, MCom and MSc degrees.

Mokbul's wife told the police that her brother, who is a master roll employee of the Comilla Board brought the certificates from his office.

Meghna threatens Barobazar

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Port Officer of IWTA at Chandpur said, 'I have forwarded a letter requesting the higher authorities to place a pontoon at the port side last week. I am yet to get any response.'

The traders themselves are in trouble finding a new place to set up their business. The Railway authorities, who leased the land next to the station to the traders for years, recently asked them not to set up new sheds near the station for reasons best known to the authorities.

Some traders who lost their sheds due to the recent erosion wanted to continue business by erecting new sheds by the station site. This was initially okayed by the Railway authorities but later, the traders allege, police were sent to dismantle those. 'If we don't stay near the station, transportation of the fish crates would be severely hampered,' said one trader, Babul Sikdar. The trains carry cargo of fish worth Tk 70 to 80 lakh everyday from Chandpur station to different parts of the country, mainly in Mymensingh, Sylhet, Sherpur, Dhaka etc. Cargo carrying is virtually the main business carried out by the Railway at Chandpur but hardly any facilities are offered to the fish traders, other than the land leased to

them, traders said. Fish worth crores of Taka is transported from here to the rest of the country.

The railway authorities, however, made a temporary arrangement asking the traders to use a portion of the station shed on the western side. Although trading continues, but the volume is much lower than usual. 'Business has fallen by at least 50 per cent here because of the erosion,' said one trader, Bishu Miah. The space is too crowded. Too many people are to carry out business in a small place, he added.

The Chandpur railway station, about 200 to 300 yards from the bank of the river Meghna, meanwhile, has to be shifted. A portion of its shed was washed away last month while the main station area faces threat of erosion. When contacted, the Assistant Station Master said, the authorities have already reviewed the matter and are yet to give any decision.

Meanwhile, there seems to be no preparations to shift the station. The traders are more worried than the Railway officials. 'We depend heavily on train cargo services. Wherever they move, we have to follow them, said the Secretary of the Fish Traders Association.

The traders have very limited facilities. Since there is no bank at the station site, traders have to go to the main town to deposit the money. They allege that security for them is inadequate although there is a small police camp near the station. Besides, Foreign buyers cannot make phone calls due to absence of public phone.

Fish from as far as Maheshkhali, Swandip islands, Barisal, Patuakhali and Barguna and local catch arrive at the market. The catch, in ice crates, are mainly exported to India, Middle East, UK, Indonesia, Malaysia.

According to officials of the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) the entire Puran Bazar area, where the fish market is situated cannot be saved unless a permanent solution is planned and implemented. They say the current of Meghna is extremely strong and it directly hits the area. 'This is why erosion in Barobazar area is so fast,' said an engineer of the BWDB.

At the moment, blocks measuring 45 cmx45cm are being dumped at the site of erosion. This has, however, failed to check erosion, even temporarily. Many blocks were washed away by the strong current. Even the nylon nets did not work.

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The Midnight File

16 hurt in Paris blast

PARIS, Aug 17: Sixteen people were injured, three of them seriously, when a bomb packed with nails and bolts exploded in a crowded tourist area of Paris today, police said, reports AFP.

Congress to welcome Rahul

NEW DELHI, Aug 17: The Congress-I would welcome if Rahul Gandhi decides to join politics. 'The decision is upto him. He is welcome', the party spokesman, VN Gadgil, told newsmen, reports PTI.

BNP leader killed in Jessore

JESSORE, Aug 17: A BNP leader of Jessore Kotwali thana was abducted and killed by some unknown assailants in the early hours today, reports UNB.

He was identified as Shaif Kadar, 31, organising secretary of BNP's Churamankathi union unit.

Police said a band of armed youths kidnapped him while he was returning home from Churamankathi Bazar and later slaughtered him with sharp weapon at village Nishechintapur.

Police recovered his body from a bush of the village in the morning.

Seats for women

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members of Parliament, media personnel and NGO leaders took part.

Sigma Huda of the Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights presented the keynote paper in the discussion on 'Broadening Women's Representation in Elected Office'.

In her paper, Sigma Huda called for full commitment and belief in the equality concept amongst not only politicians but also families, schools and administration.

Addressing the meeting Farida Rahman MP said the women community was advancing making position in political arena and decision-making level.

Ayesha Khanam of Mahila Parishad suggested direct election of female members to ensure their individuality and competence in politics.

Salma Khan of Management Development Centre performed the duty of the moderator in the discussion which was also addressed by Kamruzzaman, MP, Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui, MP, Barrister Ziaur Rahman, MP, DP Barua of BSS, Bajlur Rahman of Sangbad, Rousan Kadir and Rashida Ameen.

Dhaka, Beijing

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further strengthen the ties of friendship between the two countries.

He called Bangladesh 'a good political partner of his country in all regional and international forums'.

Tang Jiaxuan said the talks, lasting four and a half hours in two sessions, covered the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan led a 10-member local team at the talks.

The meeting focused on international problems, including the tragedy in Bosnia-Herzegovina and developments among the SAARC countries.

US forces

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leader Saddam Hussein.

'Has this scoundrel (Perry) forgotten Iraq's steadfastness in the 'Eternal Mother of Battles?' asked the official AL-Qadissiya newspaper in reference to the 1991 Gulf War in which a US-led force drove Iraqi troops out of Kuwait.

US defence officials said they were keeping one air craft carrier longer than planned in the Gulf and sending another to the eastern Mediterranean to deal with possible Iraqi threats to Jordan following the Iraqi defections.

Iraq has ruled out using force against Jordan and described US statements in this direction as a 'hallucination'.

Qadissiya said Perry's show of muscle 'would further close the ranks of Iraqi people and their heroic armed forces behind their dearly beloved leader'.

Iraq's Women's Federation said this week that Saddam's daughters left Iraq against their will.

'They were under an anaesthetic,' said a statement by the federation, which has sent messages to women's federations elsewhere in the world concerning the daughters, Raghad and Rana.

The anti-Perry remarks came as the United States, Britain and France warned Iraq on Wednesday not to set deadlines for UN arms officials to complete their work in ridding Baghdad of weapons of mass destruction.

Floods

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Goalunda is likely to rise by 5 cm today and may flow 50 cm above the danger mark while at Bhagyalakul it is likely to rise by 8 cm and may flow 68 cm above the danger level.

The Meghna at Bhairab Bazar is likely to rise by 8 cm today and may flow 9 cm above the danger mark and the Buriganga at Dhaka is likely to rise by 10 cm and may flow 46 cm below the danger level.

The Brahmaputra is likely to record rise by 4 cm today and may flow 14 cm below danger level, while at Bahdurabad it is likely to rise by 5 cm and may flow 14 cm above the danger level.

With the rise in water levels of major rivers, new areas in Shibganj and Nawabganj thanas of Nawabganj district, Godagari and Charchat of Rajshahi district, Lalpur of Natore district, Sujanagar, Bera and Santhia thanas of Pabna district are likely to be inundated. Other fresh areas like Sonatola, Saraiakandi, Dunat of Bogra district, Kazipur, Taras and Belkuchi of Sirajganj district and Saghata and Gobindganj of Gaibandha district are likely to come under the grip of flood waters, the forecast added.

However, the flood situation in north eastern region may remain unchanged as the Surma and the Kushiayara are likely to fall at all points, reports BWDB.

Sceptic tank

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dead silence in the seven-foot well. Mosharrif, Habibur and Anjal jumped into it one after another to rescue Ali and all were dead.

Firemen came in at about 11 am and flushed out the dead by filling the tank with water.

Fire Service sources said the firemen could not go down the tank as they had no gas-mask.

Police and firemen apprehended poisonous gas formed in the tank as it was closed for a long time.

Additional Police Super Fakhruul Islam visited the spot.

Child labour

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will be sought during the survey,' the MOU added.

The questionnaire to know the number and socio-economic situation of the working children in the factories have been drafted by the BGMEA and will be approved by the Steering Committee in its next meeting, scheduled to be held on Wednesday, competent sources said.

The terms of reference (TOR) for the surveyors which was drafted by the UNICEF is also likely to be vetted by the committee in its next meeting, sources added.

Each team would comprise at least three surveyors representing one from each contracting party. They will make surprise visit to fill up the questionnaire, said an authoritative source in the ILO.

'We hope that the survey would be completed by mid-October. Twenty five teams will survey 4 units daily, so the existing 2000 units will be covered in 20 days,' hoped the official.

The fund for caring out the survey will come from the contribution committed in the MOU, sources said.

According to the MOU, the ILO will contribute upto a maximum of 250,000 US dollars per year for three years. The UNICEF will provide 175,000 dollars this year while the BGMEA will donate 50,000 dollars each year.

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Female share only 5pc

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eracy rate has improved to 36 per cent from 24, the daily calorie supply per capita has exceeded 200 and 95 per cent of the one-year olds have basic immunisation, the report says.

But, it says, there are deprivations also. More than half of the rural and nearly four-fifths of the urban population are in poverty, 62 million people are without health services and nearly 5 million children are out of primary school.

The female life expectancy has increased by nearly 30 per cent during the same period and the adult female literacy rate has increased by 85 per cent, the female enrolment rate by 138 per cent and at the secondary level by 142 per cent.

The report focuses on the gender issues in the context of the upcoming Beijing Conference saying that women in many countries are closing the gap with men in education and health. The gender gap in education has more than halved in developing countries between 1970 and 1990.

But out of 1.3 billion people living in poverty around the world, 70 per cent are women and two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women and their economic and political clout is virtually non-existent compared with that of men.

The report, prepared by an independent team led by Special Adviser to the UNDP Administrator Dr Mahbubul Haq, says, worldwide women hold an average of only 10 per cent of parliamentary seats and 6 per cent of cabinet positions in national governments.

The conclusions of the report draws are 'a major indictment of the continuing discrimination against women in most societies,' says UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth in a foreword to the report.

In addition to the Human Development Index, which ranks 174 countries by a measure that combines life expectancy, educational attainment and basic purchasing power, the Report includes for the first time two new scales to determine the status of women in different countries.

These are the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) which reflects gender imbalances in basic health, education and income and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) which evaluates a nation's progress in advancing women at political and economic level.

This year, Canada, USA and Japan lead the rankings on overall human development, while Cyprus, Hong Kong and Barbados rank first among developing countries.

Bangladesh ranks 80th in GEM among 116 countries and 108th in GDI among 130 countries.

As per both the GDI and GEM, Sweden, Finland,

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The Mahanagar Serbajanin Puja Committee brought out a procession in the city