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Road accidents kill 11 in three districts

At least 11 people were killed and 40 others injured in four road accidents in different parts of the country yesterday, reports UNB.

Of them, five were killed in Pabna, four in Khulna while one each in Tongi and Narayanganj.

In Pabna, five people were killed and 15 injured at Dani Sardia near the town on Nagarbari-Pabna highway when a Pabna-bound bus from Santhia ploughed through a group of people pulling up a truck from a roadside ditch in the morning.

Of the victims, Jahangir Hossain, 20, Abdul Karim, 20, Rubel, 10, and Rina Khatun, 9, died on the spot while Ranjit, 50, died in Pabna general hospital soon after admission.

The accident occurred when the driver lost control over the vehicle in thick fog.

WHO campaign flame comes to town tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The South East Asian Flame, part of the World Health Organisation's tobacco free initiative, will arrive in Benapole, Bangladesh, on February 1, 2000.

Launched in New Delhi on January 7, 2000 by Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, the director general of the WHO, the flame will travel through Asia for a year. It will remain in Bangladesh for eight weeks.

The flame symbolises life, youth and victory of good over evil in many cultures. The SEAT Flame symbolises freedom from tobacco dependence and the ability of man to achieve his goals. The program will enlighten policy makers and the public about the dangers of tobacco use and seek a political commitment to enhance tobacco controls at the national level.

There is an alarming rise in tobacco consumption worldwide. The WHO estimates the tobacco epidemic will claim three lives every second by 2030 if consumption continues to increase at current levels.

According to a 1997 WHO study, about 20 per cent of Bangladeshis smoke. The number of women who smoke has jumped from 1 per cent to 15 per cent since 1980.

According to Cancer Society of Bangladesh, about 30 per cent of all deaths from oral, larynx and pharynx cancer are related to smoking.

Earlier he had, identified Shahinor as one of gang members.

Matin was asked to identify the accused brought in the court custody along with others at about 1:30 pm. The identification of the accused was conducted in front of Metropolitan Magistrate A K M Amir Husain.

Rana and Din Islam who were earlier placed on CID remand for 12 days and 14 days respectively were sent to the jail yesterday after the end of their remand.



The 11-party alliance observed a token hunger strike at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting passage of Public Safety Bill in parliament. — Star photo

Nikunja murder Rickshawpuller identifies 2 more accused

By Court Correspondent

The test and identification parade of two accused in Nikunja Bihari Debnath murder case was held in the court custody of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka yesterday.

Debnath, joint secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development was stabbed to death by muggers near Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University on January 11.

Top leaders of the 11-party alliance joined the token hunger strike. They included Nimol Sen, Manjurul Ahsan Khan, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Rashed Khan Menon, Azizul Islam Khan, Abdullah Sarker, AFM Mubbul Haq, Pankaj Bhattacharyya, Mujahedul Islam Selim, Dilip Barua, Morshed Ali, Bazlur Rashid Firoz and Siddiqur Rahman.

Addressing the hunger strikers, alliance leaders urged President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed not to assent to the "black law".

They said government's activities in last three and a half

Opposition protest

From page 1

and activists led by Khoka and other leaders including Abdullah Al Noman, Shahjahan Siraj, Fazlur Rahman Patal MP, Amanullah Aman MP, and Nazimuddin Alam MP brought out a procession that paraded streets in Naya Paltan, Bijoynagra, Topkhana Road and Jatiya Press Club areas. The processionists also chanted various anti-government slogans.

A huge contingent of police followed the procession.

Three other alliance partners -- Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jot -- also held separate rallies and brought out processions.

Party's vice-chairmen, members of the National Executive Committee and the Chairperson's Advisory Council, secretaries and joint secretaries general staying in Dhaka, presidents and general secretaries of central and city committees of all front organisations, city BNP convenor and joint convenors have been asked to attend the meeting.

BNP and Jatiya Party will bring out separate torch processions while Jamaat and Oikya will bring out processions in the city today in support of the countrywide hartal.

Rights groups join Khaleda in protesting 'black' law

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia has termed the Public Safety Act "a fresh black law" and said the government formulated it to "brutally suppress the Opposition."

The government, being isolated from the people and scared of the Opposition's current movement, has passed the black law unilaterally and ignoring protests from all quarters, she said in a statement yesterday.

The ruling Awami League, when in power in the past, had introduced the 'black' Special Powers Act in 1974, Khaleda recalled.

The BNP chief called upon the people to observe the Opposition-called 36-hour hartal from 6 am on Wednesday and

build up strong resistance against the government and topple it from power immediately.

Various other political parties have also protested passage of the Public Safety Act and termed it a "black and repressive" law.

They said this black law is against democratic, fundamental and human rights and it is intended to repress and oppress opposition leaders and activists.

In separate statements, leaders of these organisations said that the fresh black law is not necessary to check terrorism and other criminal activities because the existing laws are enough to curb those.

They urged President Sha-

habuddin Ahmed not to assent to the "black law" and called upon the people to build a mass movement and resistance against the government.

Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and general secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, in a joint statement, said introduction of this new "black law" has created a black chapter in the history of the country.

They said this law would not help Awami League cling to power and called upon the people to unitedly resist it.

BSD Convenor Khalequzaman said the present rulers have introduced this law to suppress political opponents and stay in power in an autocratic way.

APAC Khulna unit yet to be formed

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 30: All-Party Action Committee could not be formed till 8-30 pm today due to difference between Jamaat-e-Islami and Jatiya Party.

The meeting which began at 11 am at hotel Royal International with a one-hour lunch ended at 7 pm without any agreement. Presided over by city BNP president M Nurul Islam, the meeting was attended by leaders of allied opposition parties.

The tug-of-war between Jamaat and Jatiya Party for the posts of convenor and member-secretary of both city and district action committees marred the meeting prospects.

PM: Brussels

From page 1

of trade, commerce and investment between the two countries.

"The visit will reinforce our ties with the European Union and help in enhancing a positive image of Bangladesh in Europe," he added.

Replying to a question Safi Sami said, "We have no problem with European Union," a regional body which is a major trading partner of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh exported nearly 2.5 billion US dollars worth of goods to the EU countries during the last fiscal and received 8.5 billion US dollars in grants and loans from member states since the Liberation, the briefing was told.

To another question, he said President Clinton's visit to Bangladesh will certainly take place in March and the date of his arrival will be announced jointly.

UK to consider opening consul office in Sylhet

The British government will consider Bangladesh's request to open a consul office in Sylhet to facilitate visa services for the people of the area who comprise majority of Bangladeshis community in Britain, reports UNB.

Visiting British Minister of State for Europe in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Keith Vaz MP said this while addressing a select audience at Hotel Sheraton yesterday.

He said he would visit Sylhet today to see the feasibility of having such an office there, as desired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during talks with her British counterpart Tony Blair in July last year.

The British High Commission here issues some 60,000 visas every year, 70 per cent of whom coming from Sylhet.

The British minister felt the need for improving visa services in Bangladesh.

"British government sees Bangladeshi community in Britain as an asset. It's an asset for both you and us," the Labour Member of Parliament for Leicester East said.

Keith, an Indian origin, recognised the position of least developed countries (LDCs) including Bangladesh in the Seattle meeting of World Trade Organisation (WTO) that ended in failure in December last year.

"More importantly, I think, you felt marginalised in the conference, while a core group of mainly developed countries thrashed out deals in the so-called green room," said Vaz reiterating EU's stand for a new round of trade negotiations which would benefit both developed and developing countries.

Elephant Road incidents Cops fail to nab burglars

By Staff Correspondent

Police have not yet arrested anyone in connection with the recent burglary in which valuables and cash worth Tk 19 lakh were taken away from two houses in New Elephant Road in the city on Friday evening.

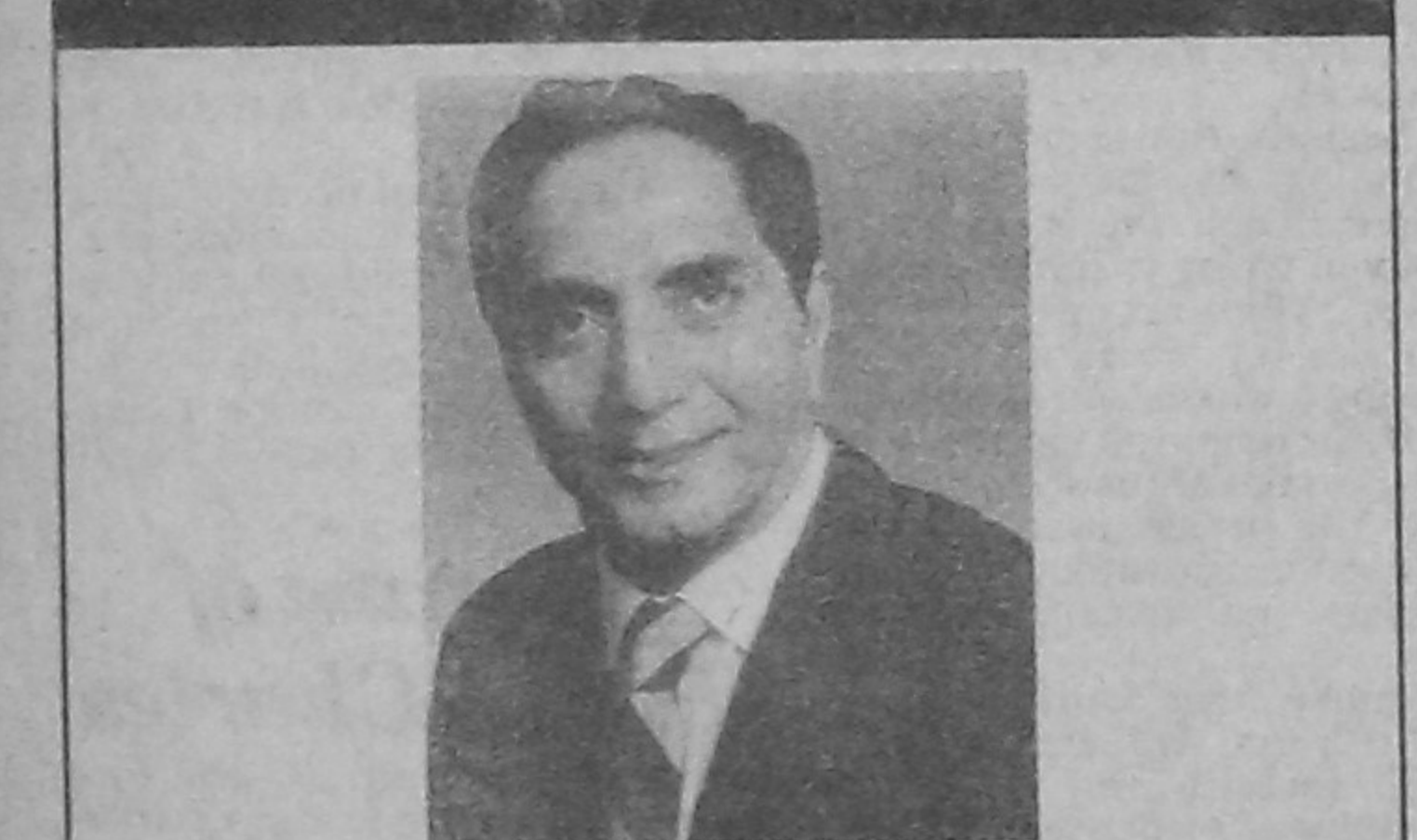
A gang of about 10 entered houses of Monir Hossain Kajol and Nazrul Islam at about 6:00 pm, tied up the residents at gun point and looted the valuables.

The gang first looted the residence of Kajol on the first floor of the house and then went to his brother Nazrul Islam's house in the upstairs and took away valuables and cash.

The gang broke open five almira's and took away 250 tolas of gold ornaments and cash worth about Tk 71 thousand along with other valuables, the victims complained in the FIR.

Giasuddin, the guard of the house at 76 Elephant Road, was earlier tied up by the gang at gun point.

WE REMEMBER



On his 7th death anniversary today, we profoundly remember our Founder Managing Director & Chairman LATE ABDUL AZIZ H. A. SATTAR and request all relatives, friends, colleagues & admirers to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

All members of GMG GROUP

'Don't back terrorists, muggers'

From page 1

President's New Year address.

Alaying opposition's fears about possible misuse of the law as a weapon for political persecution, she repeatedly assured that in no way would it be used on political grounds.

"There is a provision of punishment in the law to ensure that it is not abused, none is harassed and none files false case out of vengeance," she said. "The government would arrange whatever training and institutions needed for impartial application of the law."

"We want the rule of law, security and fair justice for the people. We'll ensure public safety according to our commitment to the nation."

Brushing aside the opposition allegation that the law was framed to repress political adversaries of the government, Hasina said next elections would be held in 2001 and "if people do not vote for us, we will go to the opposition. But why this law would be used against us if we don't commit such offences?"

Ridiculing the critics of the new legislation for fanning fears, she said those who commit these crimes might be scared of the law but those who want peace in society do not need to be concerned.

Hasina explained the nature of each offence and provision of punishment, as envisaged in the Public Safety Act, clause by clause in the House.

The prime minister repeatedly shot questions as to how a law could be branded "black law" if it prescribes punishment for mugging, toll-taking, tender tampering, breaking cars, damaging public and private property, obstruction to traffic, kidnapping for ransom and unleashing terrorism.

Defending the new legislation, Hasina told the House that terrorists have a budget for dealing with their cases in the court. They spend money to bribe investigating officer, weaken the cases against them through various ways and get out through loopholes of law and delayed trials. Even many terrorists threatened over cellular phone to kill witnesses testifying against them.

Saying that during her government's three-year rule many terrorists have been arrested and cases filed, she questioned how many trials were completed and how many of them were punished. "Many notorious terrorists were released after arrest."

Citing an example, she said a

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