



PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of people throng South Jatrabari area after a bus hit a rickshaw and pedestrians on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, killing three persons on the spot. They went on the rampage and set the bus (left) afire.

Bus kills 3 at Jatrabari, set afire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A mob set fire to a bus as it hit a rickshaw and pedestrians at South Jatrabari in the city yesterday morning, killing three persons and seriously injuring seven.

The dead are Enayetullah, 45, a businessman, Saiful Islam, rickshaw-puller and Akther Hossain, a rickshaw passenger. They died while being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Demra police said the tragic incident took place as the Dhaka-bound bus, Godhuli Paribahhan (Khustia-Ba-05-0005), came on the sidewalk of the busy Dhaka-Demra road during the morning rush hours.

Hundreds of people from surrounding areas rushed to the spot and sent the injured to DMCH. They include Abdul Khaleq, Shamim, Aklasur Sheikh and Abul Haq.

At one stage, the mob torched the bus. Police charged batons and lobbed teargas shells to disperse the mob and clear the road. Some people were also injured in the police action.

Police took the burnt vehicle to the police station.

Demand for council grows louder in JCD

ABUL KALAM AZAD

The voice for a council of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) is getting louder in the organisation's rank and file. Many of the leaders, activists and supporters of the ruling BNP's student front have become frustrated over the long non-holding of a council and moratorium on activities of its central committee.

The last council of JCD was held in 1992. Since then the student body is being run with central committees formed by the BNP leadership. The latest committee with non-students Nasiruddin Pintu and Shahabuddin Laitu as president and general secretary was formed by BNP chief Khaleda Zia on December 23, 1999, which sparked sharp reaction and demonstrations by activists protesting alleged involvement of the two leaders in terrorism.

She suspended activities of the central committee on November 17 last year following a fierce gunfight between two factions at Dhaka University.

Talking to this correspondent, many JCD leaders and activists at Dhaka University demanded immediate holding of the long over-due council to revive activities of the organisation. They also demanded formation of JCD

units at all levels with dedicated student activists. This is important because their rival, Bangladesh Chhatra League, is coming up with a 'new face' after its council today, many of them said.

After BNP's return to power, there is enormous scope for formation of new JCD committees with dedicated, honest and student leaders. This will boost the image of both JCD and BNP, they said, adding, many of the BNP policymakers are also thinking of bringing changes in the JCD leadership through holding a council.

Getting frustrated because of the moratorium, many of the leaders and activists are now looking for alternatives including business. Many of them are passing time leisurely on the campus, awaiting their fate in the organisation.

Statements by several BNP leaders earlier not to accommodate non-students in JCD leadership has prompted some former leaders of the central committee to undergo various academic courses in the university.

The crisis in JCD began with formation of the Pintu-Laitu central committee. Most of the JCD activists then

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Low-lying areas in Ctg flooded: Lightning kills 2 in Sitakunda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two persons were killed by lightning in Sitakunda of the district yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as Rina, 12, a student of class six of Barabkunda High School, and Helal, 25, a day-labourer.

Both were struck by lightning at West Syedpur under Syedpur union of the upazila at around 9:00 am, police said quoting witnesses.

Meanwhile, the port city yesterday experienced a heavy shower accompanied by squally wind in the morning.

The shower lasted an-hour inundating low-lying areas in the city's Katalgonj, Chawkbazar, Kapashgola, Badurtala and Bohaddarhat.

The local Met office at Patenga recorded 48mm rainfall yesterday.

People now hostage to terrorists of BNP-Jamaat coalition: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday blamed the government for deterioration of law and order in the country and said the people are now hostage to the "terrorists of BNP-Jamaat coalition."

The Leader of the Opposition was addressing newly elected office-bearers of the students' union of Bhawal University College and Chhatra League leaders, who met her at the Awami League central office in the city.

Hasina asked AL leaders and workers to build up united resistance against the government-backed terrorists who, she alleged, launched a "cleansing operation" to eliminate her party.

She said the people have become frustrated with the misrule of this government. "Extortion and terrorism have become order of the day. Toll collection is going on even in government-owned BRTC bus services."

Referring to the brutal killing of schoolboy Shihab Ahmed in the city's Bhasabo area, Hasina said the killers slashed the innocent boy into pieces and sought

ransom even after the killing.

Pointing to the upcoming City Corporation polls, Hasina said notorious criminals are contesting the elections. The Chief Election Commissioner had once said the wicked have fled away, but "he (CEC) is now allowing the criminals to participate in the election," she added.

Out of 90 Commissioner candidates backed by BNP, Hasina said, 45 are terrorists. She said and alleged that many candidates were forced to withdraw their candidature.

She urged her student and party workers to resist distortion of history and disgracing the portrait of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina congratulated the newly elected BCL leaders of the Bhawal College and said the victory of AL supported panels in 58 bar elections including Dhaka had reflected the will of the people.

BCL president Bahadur Bepari, general secretary Ajay Kar Khokon, Gazipur district BCL general secretary Abul Kashem also spoke on the occasion.

All for leadership

ABUL KALAM AZAD

Frontline student leaders of both Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) are trying to stretch their student life beyond normal duration.

Sources said the reason is that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina have expressed their intentions to see genuine students at the helm of the student wings.

Khaleda and Hasina have categorically said on many occasions in the past that student politics is for the students and no terrorists or non-students have a place there.

A dozen of leaders from JCD and BCL, student fronts of ruling BNP and opposition Awami League respectively, have already got admissions to Dhaka University while many others are on way.

These student leaders have already completed their Honours and Masters degrees under various disciplines.

The sources mostly BCL leaders stretched their studentship in the hope of being picked up by the AL policymakers at its council scheduled for today at the Patlan Maidan.

Sources said some of the student leaders are aspiring to do diploma, MS and M.Phil at the Institute of Health Economics and some other newly introduced departments and institutes at the university to continue study.

Of them, eight BCL leaders have been admitted to the Institute of Health Economics. They are Joint Secretary Liaquat Shikder, Organising Secretary Ashraful Azim Ruban, Organising Secretary of the BCL DU chapter Delwar Hossain, central members Iqbal Hossain, Mihir Kanti Ghoshal and Bipul Sarkar, Jagannath Hall unit General Secretary Pankaj Saha, and Saimullah Hall unit Vice-president Jamal Uddin Khan Ripon.

Another BCL leader, Vice-president Sujit Roy Nondi is doing a diploma in marketing.

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BCL national council today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 27th national council of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of opposition Awami League, will be held at Patlan Maidan in the city today.

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the council as chief guest at 10:00am.

Later, a new central body of the student organisation will be formed in the council session scheduled to be held at Mahanagar Natya Mancha.

A total of 2025 councillors from its 81 district level committees have already arrived in the city to attend the national council, BCL sources said.

The next BCL committee will be formed with 201 members instead of 101, sources added.

The last national council of BCL was held on October 22, 1998, although there is a provision to hold the council every year according to its constitution.

Bahadur Bepari was made president while Ajay Kar Khokon general secretary.

Intra-party rift widens

BNP expels 'rebel' mayor candidate in Rajshahi

ABDUL WADOOD AND ANWAR ALI, From Rajshahi

Rebel ruling BNP mayor candidate for Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) polls and district BNP General Secretary Quamrul Munir was expelled from the party on Monday on charge of breaching discipline.

According to a BNP press release, Munir's primary party membership has also been cancelled.

Munir, also an advocate, is running the race against incumbent Mayor and the BNP-led four-party alliance nominee Mizanur Rahman Minu, MP.

Another rebel candidate Ekhlak Hossain, an advocate and president of the Rajshahi city unit of BNP, earlier withdrew from the fray in favour of Minu.

Sources and political analysts say Hossain's withdrawal has greatly boosted Minu's chances for a third term in office. However, Munir is going to put up a good show against Minu, they predicted.

Meanwhile, Munir's candidacy has created a distinct rift this time in

the local BNP, sources said. The internecine conflict in the BNP may create new polarisation in Rajshahi politics.

The feud, in fact, dates back to 1991 when Minu, the then Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal leader, became Mayor of the newly established RCC. Soon he established his own group both in local and central politics challenging the dominance of BNP stalwart Kabir Hossain, MP. In the course of time, the local BNP was virtually split into two factions in the early 1990s.

Another influential central BNP leader and Minister from Rajshahi Aminul Haque has been favouring Minu from the very beginning though he never become involved in the feud.

The feud became starkly exposed just before the last general election when both Kabir and Minu contested for the four-party alliance ticket in Rajshahi-2 constituency comprising Poba upazila and the city corporation area. Kabir had been elected to the parliament from the constituency on BNP ticket in 1991 and 1996. But Minu got better

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National Disabled Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The fourth National Disabled Day will be observed in the country today.

The theme of the day is "Participation of the Disabled Persons in National Development".

President AQM Badrudduja Chowdhury in a message on the eve of the day said people with disabilities are integral part of society and they should be integrated with the national development process in a planned way.

Listing several development initiatives for the disabled people, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in a message appealed to the members of the civil society and voluntary organisations across the country to assist government in this regard.

The Social Welfare Ministry, Social Welfare Directorate, National Disabled Development Foundation and National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) have jointly chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day.

As part of the programmes, a colourful procession will be brought out from in front of the Engineers Institution at 4.30 pm.

A discussion will be held in the National Museum auditorium at 5 pm. The discussion will be followed by a cultural function.



PHOTO: STAR

Low-lying areas in Chittagong City went under water following heavy rain yesterday. The picture was taken from Katalganj residential area.

Poachers killed 10 elephants in CHT, Cox's Bazar in last 3 yrs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Poachers have killed at least ten elephants since 1998 in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and Cox's Bazar.

Despite the Wildlife Conservation Act, 1974 that bans the killing of elephants, the poachers kill them to collect their tusks, bones, nails and skins, which are sold at home and abroad at a high price, sources said.

Sometimes the elephants are trapped at a young age to be tamed for circus shows and hauling logs.

Five elephants were killed in 1998-99 at Manikchhari, two -- one of them a baby -- at Eidgah in Cox's Bazar in 1998, two in the Yangchalama Reserve Forest in the last two years and one at Bangalhalia of Chandraghona last year.

A baby elephant named Sultana died at the Dhaka Zoo in 1999 after it was brought to the zoo in October, 1998 when forest department guards found her stuck in the mud below a hill in Ramu, Cox's Bazar. Its mother was presumed poached and killed, as elephants never give up their suckling babies.

Despite such examples of poaching, the forest department thinks there is no "poaching of elephants in the CHT forests, so the question of taking action against poachers did not arise".

This was stated by the forest department in a rejoinder to a Daily Star report on the death sentence for a killer elephant on March 20. The department declared a wild elephant rogue.

The elephant with its leg still shackled had killed three persons, including a soldier of the Bangladesh Army at Ramgarh on January 23.

The forest department declared two elephants 'insane', the rejoinder said, after they killed a number of people and damaged houses and crops in 1996 in the Kassalong Reserve Forest.

The clearance for the killing of the elephants was given in 1996 at the request of the local administrative authorities. The elephants could not be killed, though.

This year, the same elephant has killed few people in the CHT and both the local civil and army authorities requested the Ministry of Environment and Forest to take necessary steps to kill the 'insane'

elephant, said the rejoinder. But it did not explain why the elephant became insane or rogue and how its one leg had been chained.

Wildlife experts said the chain indicates that the elephant had been poached.

The elephant managed to break free though with part of the chain around its leg and set itself against humans.

The forest department did not carry out any investigation to deter

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Ctg port workers postpone today's strike

UNB, Ctg

Following a fruitful meeting with the Chittagong Port Authorities, port workers yesterday postponed their 4-hour strike scheduled for today.

The strike called to protest the construction of a private container terminal was postponed after CPA Chairman Commodore Golam Rabbani assured the workers of reviewing the matter.

The CPA chairman also assured the workers' leaders of considering the logical demands of the port workers who had earlier placed 11-point demand before the authorities.

Kidnapped schoolboy rescued in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

An abducted schoolboy was rescued unhurt from bordering Rangapanchhari area of the district on Monday night, police said.

A group of 12 armed hoodlums, stormed into the house of Bikash on March 28 and abducted him at gunpoint. They also took away Tk 50,000 and gold ornaments from the home.

Later, the gang demanded Tk 12 lakh ransom to Bikash's father.

Immediately after the incident, police conducted a massive hunt to rescue Bikash and arrested five suspects. According to their statements, police raided Rangapanchhari area and rescued Bikash.

Tayebur under fire for fielding 'own men'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna city BNP leaders have condemned mayoral candidate Sheikh Tayebur Rahman for fielding his own supporters in the ward commissioner election in disregard for the decision of the central high command.

The leaders called upon Tayebur Rahman to shift away from his unilateral decision and ask his men to pull back from electioneering by today, honouring the decision by the party high command.

At 11.00am yesterday, the city BNP held an emergency meeting where leaders and activists of all thana and ward committees belonging to the Manju group were present.

M Nurul Islam MP, president of the city BNP, presided over the meeting that continued until 1.30pm with Whip Ashraf Hossain as chief guest.

As decided unanimously at the meeting, candidates of the four-party alliance for the ward commissioner election will be given full support.

A 101-member 'election conducting committee' has been formed with

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