

3 killed, 21 hurt in Mymensingh road accidents

UNB, Mymensingh

Three people were killed and 21 others injured in two separate road accidents on Dhaka-Mymensingh and Mymensingh-Haluaghat Highways yesterday.

Two people were killed and 21 others injured when a Dhaka-bound bus was hit by a truck from behind near KNK Textile Mills on Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway at around 1 pm.

One unidentified person, aged about 22, died on the spot while another unidentified passenger, aged about 35, succumbed to his injuries at the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH).

Of the injured, seven people were admitted to Bhaluka upazilla health complex.

In another accident, a septuagenarian, identified as Rahimuddin, died on the spot when a bus ran over him at Barabila on Mymensingh-Haluaghat Highway at around noon.

Hearing of 1996 share scam cases begins today

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

Three and a half years after filing of petitions by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) against a High Court judgement, the Appellate Division will begin today hearing of the sensational 1996 share scam cases.

The capital market regulators on July 25, 1999 challenged a High Court judgement delivered on June 23, 1999 regarding 11 share scam cases.

The cases are against Abu Tayeb, Rakibur Rahman and ASM Sahidul Haque Bulbul of Chittagong Cement, Mustaque Ahmed

Sadeque, Sharif Ataur Rahman, Syed Mahub Murshed, Hemayet Uddin Ahmed and Ahmed Iqbal Hassan of HMMS and Associates, Nurunnabi of Rupon Oil and Feeds, Imtiyaz Husain of Imtiyaz Husain & Company and Rijwan Bin Farouk of First Capital Securities.

In the wake of widespread allegations of market manipulation, the SEC, after investigation, had filed 15 cases with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrates Court on March 27, 1997 against 35 directors of different publicly traded companies and stock market brokers. The cases finally landed in the High Court through various legal processes.

Thousands of small investors lost their savings after share markets nose-dived to an unexpected low after hitting unreasonable heights.

Seven cases were filed against brokerage firms and their officials and eight were filed against listed companies and their directors.

Five of the cases were stayed by the High Court after the companies moved for quashing those. The companies and their accused directors are: A Rouf Chowdhury, Mashur Rahman, S Chowdhury

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DPRK asks IAEA to remove surveillance cameras from nuclear sites

AFP, Tokyo

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has said it received a request from North Korea to remove seals and monitoring cameras from all its nuclear facilities.

In a letter to the Vienna-based UN nuclear watchdog, North Korea also informed the IAEA of its decision to reactivate nuclear facilities frozen under a 1994 agreement with the United States, according to a statement issued from Vienna late Thursday.

The letter from Ri Je Son, director general of North Korea's general department of the atomic energy, said North Korea would "resume operations of these facilities for power generation," the IAEA statement said.

"The DPRK's (North Korea's) letter requests that the IAEA remove seals and monitoring cameras on all of its nuclear facilities," the IAEA said.

In response, IAEA Director General Mohammed ElBaradei said North Korea should "act with restraint in this tense situation and not to take any unilateral action" that might further complicate the IAEA's job for nuclear safeguards.

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PHOTO: STAR

A woman scavenges junk from the garbage site on the Dhaka Flood Protection Embankment yesterday. The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) dumps tons of solid waste every day, mostly at landfill sites, posing serious health hazards.

Unplanned, unhygienic Waste dumping in densely populated city areas poses public health hazard

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is dumping waste in an unplanned way at various densely populated areas of the city.

The absence of an adequate number of dumping grounds and the lack of initiative to implement the waste recycling project are responsible for extremely unhygienic garbage disposal in the city.

The DCC is dumping about 5000 tons of solid wastes every day at different places, and the largest of the unplanned dumping is taking place in Mughdapara, to fill up low-lying areas. That poses a serious public health hazard and a nuisance to the people of the area.

The southern side of the proposed cricket stadium, running parallel to the Biswa Road, has become filthy and stinky owing to regular dumping of garbage by the DCC. Farid Ahmed, a resident of Mughdapara, said that activities related to waste dumping continue throughout the day and make life unbearable for the residents. The Mughdapara area is densely populated and due to the presence of such a nuisance, many residents are thinking of moving away from there.

"I have decided to shift my house from here because of the garbage and rubbish all around my house," Farid said.

Sarwar Hossain, another local, termed the DCC's

waste dumping at Mughdapara irresponsible. "It shows that they have no concern and respect for the tax payers. My family members are insisting every day to shift to another place," he said.

While the sufferings of the people continue, the DCC is yet to take any step to launch the waste recycling plant. Although Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka has time and again pledged to commission the recycling project, sources said that apart from holding 'one or two' meetings, nothing concrete has so far been done.

Director (technical) of the Department of Environment (DoE) Reazuddin said that they have received some proposals from some organizations on waste recycling. They also held some meetings, but due to lack of enough information they could not take any decision.

"As it is a good initiative, we are planning to encourage recycling throughout the country," he added.

The Ministry of Forest and Environment is reported to be doing nothing with at least half a dozen proposals to recycle household wastes and produce energy.

The conservancy department officials said that they are desperately looking for new dumping grounds.

An official of the department said that in the face of

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PHOTO: STAR

Members of the Sammilito Sangskritik Jote perform at a cultural function in the inaugural session of a Victory Day programme at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday to celebrate the spirit of independence and recall the fateful memories of 1971. (Story on page 1)

KCC commissioner, N'ganj Jubo League, BCL leaders arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces yesterday arrested Khulna City Corporation (KCC) Ward Commissioner Hafizur Rahman and his "armed cadre" Tunin from United Club in Khulna city.

Sources said Hafizur, commissioner of Ward No 17 and wanted in several criminal cases including that for murder, was absconding since the anti-crime began on October 17. The joint forces also arrested Abdur Raquib Mallick, chairman of Senhati Union Parisad under Digholia upazila in Bagerhat district.

In Dhaka city, the joint forces raided several houses at Farashganj, recovered nine firearms with 16 bullets and arrested two persons.

In another raid the joint forces arrested a young man and handed him over to Tejgaon police. Police said the young man was handed over to them in an unconscious condition and they sent him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in a "critical condition". Hospital sources identified the young man as Jalil but Tejgaon police could neither confirm his identity nor say whether he was involved in criminal activities.

In Narayanganj, army arrested

district Jubo league president Abdul Qadar and district Chhatra League president Qamrul Islam from their residences in the town. They were handed over to police and sent to the jail.

Our Barisal correspondent reported that the joint forces arrested two "listed criminals" from the C & B Colony in the town. They are Alal Khalifa, 23 and Jhahidul, 27. The joint forces also raided several residential hotels in the town.

Our Pabna correspondent reported that three persons including a "listed criminal" were arrested yesterday. They are Mohammad Rahman and Anwar Hossain,

arrested from Iswardi, and Jahedul Islam, arrested from Kashinathpur. Jahedul is accused in a murder and an arms case, sources said.

In Bagerhat, joint forces picked up Jubo League workers Habibur Rahman and Masud Molla from Bashabati in the town. They were handed over to police.

Eight alleged criminals including a "listed criminal" have been arrested from different areas of Feni district, our correspondent reported.

They are Fulgazi thana Jubo Dal Joint Secretary Aktheruzzaman Azim, Chhatra League activist Omar Faruq, Sarkar Datta, Nurul Islam, Abdul Mannan, Jasim Uddin,

Abu Taher and Mintu.

In Rajbari, army arrested "listed criminal" Mizanur Rahman Titu, district Jubo Dal joint secretary, from his residence yesterday morning.

Source said he was accused in several cases including that for murder.

During the last 24 hours ending at 8 am yesterday, the army arrested 129 people including 23 "listed criminals" from different areas of the country.

They also seized 25 firearms including two pistols, five revolvers

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15 killed in West Bengal bus mishap

AFP, Kolkata

At least 15 people were killed and 60 injured when a bus carrying Nepalese workers fell into a roadside ditch in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal yesterday, police said.

Fifteen of the injured are in serious condition, state police inspector general Chayan Mukherjee said.

The bus rolled down from a railway over-bridge into the ditch at Rangamat village in the northern district of Jalpaiguri, 600 kilometers (374 miles) from the state capital Kolkata early yesterday, Mukherjee said.

The bus was carrying Nepali workers from Kakrabitta in Nepal to Shilong, the capital of the Indian state of Meghalaya.

Chopra gets Phalke Award

PTI, New Delhi

Noted director-producer Yash Chopra was on Friday chosen for the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2001, the top most honour given in the film industry.

Chopra's most memorable films are Dhool Ka Phool, Waqt, Ittefaq, Deewar, Kabhi Kabhi, Trishul, Silsila, Chandni, Lamhe and Dil To Paagal Hai.

His films have won five national awards and various other awards. The award, instituted in 1969 to commemorate the outstanding contribution of the late Dada Saheb Phalke to the industry, carries a cash prize of Rs two lakhs, a shawl and a swarna kamal.

Born in 1932 in Jalandhar in Punjab, Chopra started his career as an assistant to his brother and went on to direct over 20 very successful films under his own banner Yash Raj Films and other banners.

He has also produced and presented nine films. Chopra has been instrumental in tapping the potential of Indian films in the international market, thereby helping in placing Indian cinema on the world map.



PHOTO: STAR

Joint forces of the anticrime operation seized illegal firearms and contraband at Farashganj in Old Dhaka yesterday.

Bank swindle case in Khulna: OC closed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Tozammel Hossain, officer-in-charge of Khulna thana where the swindle case involving the Sundarban Foods Ltd (SFL) was filed, has been closed to the police lines with effect from 2:00pm on Thursday.

An official order of the police commissioner said the decision has been taken for greater public interest. But a reliable source of the Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) said the OC has been fired for helping the SFL chairman escape from her residence on Wednesday night to avoid arrest in connection with the Sonali Bank's 80 lakh taka swindle case. The chairman is wanted by police as a suspect in the case, which has created a sensation in the metropolitan city's banking circle.

Sources alleged that SM Abul Hossain, the managing director (MD) of SFL and its chairman are involved in swindling out Tk 80 lakh from the corporate branch of Sonali bank at Khulna on December 4.

A high official of the bank alleged that the SFL MD and his close relatives carried out the swindle in a planned manner, adding that the

same group of people including the MD's brother were involved in past financial scandals in connection with the shrimp export trade. The MD's brother SM Amjad Hossain is the managing director of Lockpur Fish processing Ltd. Amjad Hossain is the husband of the absconding SFL chairman, said the investigation officer (IO) of the case.

The IO is already under heavy police pressure to tamper with the case so that the outcome is in favour of SFL, said a reliable source of KMP.

Meanwhile, corporate branch of Sonali Bank has stopped any further payments to SFL for the time being. According to DGM Abul Bashar Akhand of the corporate branch of Sonali Bank, SFL authorities did not inform the bank about the missing cheque before the money was swindled out, adding that the SFL authorities should have also informed the bank before filing a GD with the Rupsha thana. He however said the bank did not get a copy of the so-called GD lodged with the police on December 4 nor did anyone from the SFL contact the bank about the matter.

The SFL authorities however said a copy of the GD was sent to

the bank through Katakhal branch of the Central Courier Service. But chief of central courier service Amal Kumar Dey denied receiving any copy of the said GD from the Southern Foods Ltd till Thursday.

The OC of Rupsha thana denied that any GD about the missing cheque was filed with the thana, adding that the copy of the GD being shown to police is definitely a forged one. Termining the accused as professional swindlers, he alleged that their version of the incident is a concocted story.

None from the Khulna branch of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association (BFFEA) have so far come forward in support of SFL authorities. The vice president of BFFEA Belayet Hossain said the real culprits must be punished.

Meanwhile, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate has placed four out of the five accused in the case on a two-day remand with effect from yesterday. The accused are SFL cashier Musfiqur Rahman, chief cash officer Yakub Ali, senior officer Apurba Kumar Roy and cash officer Mostafa Ekramul Azad.

The CMM however rejected police's prayer for remand of SM Abul Hossain, the SFL MD.

Cherigate moves on despite Blair's challenge to newsmen

AFP, London

Yet more allegations against Cherie Blair headlined the British press on Friday, the day after her husband British Prime Minister Tony Blair attempted to sweep the affair under the carpet.

Apart from the Financial Times, every British broadsheet focused on allegations on the front-page of Thursday's Scotsman newspaper

that Mrs. Blair was more closely involved with coman Peter Foster than she has acknowledged.

Most papers merely reported Blair's challenge to journalists to put up or shut up after the latest allegation that his wife had improperly reviewed legal documents relating to Foster's deportation case.

But The Sun tabloid offered an exclusive -- allegedly based on

taped telephone conversations between Foster and his mother -- that the Aussie fraudster was attempting to cash in and sell his story to the press.

"I may as well get something out of this," he said, according to The Sun.

The tabloid alleged he had asked the Daily Mail -- the paper that

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