

Road accidents kill 5 in N'ganj, Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people were killed and 44 others injured in separate road accidents in Narayanganj and Rajshahi yesterday.

Of them, three were killed in Narayanganj and the rest in Rajshahi.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent reports, three persons were killed and 40 others injured in two separate road accidents here yesterday.

The first accident occurred at Jalkuri under Siddhirganj upazila at around 7 am when two buses collided head on, leaving one person dead and 39 others injured.

The dead was identified as Abdul Latif, 45, owner of Ajmere Hotel in Bhuighar area under Fatullah Police Station.

In the early hours of yesterday, two persons were killed when a microbus collided with an autorickshaw 'Aukhabo area on the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway under Rugganj police Station at about 4.30 am.

The dead were identified as Chandra Sarkar and Sohag. The victims were returning home in the autorickshaw from their work place at Mohammad Ali Dyeing Factory in Narayanganj.

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Innate disparities make JS bodies ineffective

Lawmakers across benches dissatisfied, veterans feel embarrassed to work under juniors, Kader ponders legal move

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Lawmakers from both treasury and opposition benches have expressed dissatisfaction at the recent formation of parliamentary standing committees on different ministries, saying innate disparities made the bodies ineffective.

They said inexperienced deputies gained chairmanship over veterans in some bodies, opposition legislators were marginalised or assigned to less important bodies and a vocal member did not find a place in any of the committees.

They pointed out that chairmanship of the bodies on education, local government, rural development and cooperatives, health, information, environment and forest ministries went to young legislators.

"They will not be able to exert any authority in bringing accountability in the ministries, run by their seniors," a veteran legislator said.

Opposition deputies said they were not only denied chairmanship of every committee, but also placed in less important bodies.

Speaking on the 'marginalisation of senior members', some veteran deputies from across the floor said they felt embarrassed to be members of the committees chaired by their juniors.

Some senior deputies of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), who aspired to be chairmen of the bodies -- failing to get berths in the jumbo cabinet of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia -- now find the juniors shatter their hopes.

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Police evict hawkers from Sadarghat launch terminal yesterday as part of the drive to establish order in waterways in the wake of the capsizing of MV Nasrin-1 in the Meghna on July 8. Launch sinkings are often blamed on lax law enforcement, neglect of safety regulations, structural faults and poor weather monitoring.



PHOTO: STAR



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Bangladesh Scouts stage a colourful procession in Dhaka yesterday to raise people's awareness about dengue fever.

Blair under fire, denies leaking Kelly's name

REUTERS, Hong Kong/London

British Prime Minister Tony Blair angrily denied suggestions yesterday that he allowed David Kelly's name to be leaked to media in a row over the Iraq war which apparently drove the scientist to suicide.

As opinion polls showed his personal rating being hammered, Blair told reporters during a flight to Hong Kong he believed he had done nothing wrong.

"Emphatically not. I did not authorize the leaking of the name of David Kelly," he replied sharply

in response to reporters' questions. "I believe we've acted properly throughout," he added.

Kelly, a government scientist and weapons expert, was found dead in woods near his home last Friday. He had bled to death from a slashed wrist.

He had been forced into the media spotlight after telling his Defense Ministry bosses he may have been the source behind a BBC report which claimed Blair's government had exaggerated intelligence about banned Iraqi weapons to make a case for war.

The ministry then confirmed Kelly's identity to journalists who inquired. The BBC, which had consistently refused to name its source, only confirmed Kelly as the source on Sunday, after the scientist's death.

Blair made his case for war against Iraq by saying President Saddam Hussein had to be disarmed of weapons of mass destruction, but months after military action

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Two killed in road mishap in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people including a young boy were killed in separate road accidents at Kaola near airport and Kalyanpur in Mirpur yesterday.

A bus ran over Farid, 30, at Kaola near Airport Police Station at about 6:30 am when he was crossing the Airport Road. He died on the spot.

Farid's body was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Son of Mujibur Rahman, Farid hailed from Ablarchar village of Fulchari upazila in Gaibandha.

Meanwhile, Sagar, 16, who sustained critical injury in a road accident, died at DMCH at 8:00 am yesterday.

Sagar, a domestic help in a Kalyanpur residence, was run over by a passenger bus while crossing the Mirpur Road at about 11:45 pm on Monday.

Star, Alo editors get bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A court in Dhaka yesterday granted bail in a defamation case to The Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam and Motiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiq Anwar passed the order upon a bail petition submitted by the defence lawyers.

The court fixed August 25 for hearing on the discharge petition and the petition for exempting the two editors from personal appearance in the court.

Prime Minister's Parliamentary

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4 Saddam allies, US soldier killed

REUTERS, Mosul

US troops stormed a house in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul yesterday and said they killed four high-ranking allies of Saddam Hussein.

Some 200 soldiers blasted the villa with machineguns and rockets during a four-hour battle before storming in to find four bodies, US officers said.

They declined to identify them or comment on local rumours Saddam's sons might have been present.

The US forces have been conducting an intensive hunt for the fugitive former dictator himself, spurred on by guerrilla attacks they

blame on his die-hard supporters. Another American soldier was killed on Tuesday, the sixth in just five days.

He died as a trio of US appointees prepared to address the Security Council in New York, the first Baghdad delegates to return to the United Nations since Saddam fell in April.

"Individuals of very high interest to the coalition forces were hiding out in the building," Lieutenant Colonel William Bishop of the 101st Airborne Division told the news agency in Mosul.

"This morning we went to the building and surrounded it."

Major Trey Cate, spokesman for the division, said four "high-value targets" were found dead after the battle. A fifth Iraqi also died in the fighting.

Locals said there had been rumours that the troops were hunting Saddam's sons. The younger, Qusay, was one of his father's most trusted lieutenants. Uday was famed and feared throughout Iraq for his cruelty and playboy lifestyle.

Witnesses said US soldiers were fired at by people inside the house as they approached. The house -- a large villa -- sustained considerable damage.

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Ctg snatcher held with pistol

BSS, Chittagong

Detectives of the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday arrested a snatcher in Mohammadpur area under Panchlaish police station and recovered a pistol and some explosives from his possession.

The snatcher was identified as Azadul Haque alias Azad of Khalilabad under Raozan upazila in

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Dhaka welcomes formation of Iraqi governing council

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday welcomed formation of an interim governing council in Iraq as a positive development towards ensuring security and sovereignty of the country.

A spokesman of the foreign ministry said the formation of the governing council is a positive move and hoped that this would be the first step towards ensuring security, stability and sovereignty of Iraq.

"It is also in conformity with the UNSC Resolution 1483," the spokesman said.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 23		6-46 pm
July 24	5-23 am	

Prayer Timings		
July 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: STAR

Shushila Sangma and her son, driven out of their home by a gang of land grabbers, drift from place to place in a Khasia village in Kulaura in Moulvibazar.

Khasia villages under grabbers' grip

PINAKI ROY, back from Kulaura

A gang allegedly led by a ruling BNP leader grabbed part of a Khasia village and a betel farm and abducted three indigenous people in Kulaura in Moulvibazar on July 13.

The land-grab by non-indigenous people in the latest in a series of such moves against the Khasia community has left at least eight families landless, setting off a wave of fear among villagers.

Over the last 30 years, the Bangalee occupiers have grabbed parts of at least 30 Khasia villages, leaders of the indigenous community alleged.

On July 13, the gang attacked the 40-acre betel farm in Narsari punji (village) and abducted three Khasia

people. One of them -- Aalek Ghagra -- was released three days later, but the other two Shiba Sangma and Danesh Marang could not be traced as yet.

Lehan Potham, the village headman, filed a case with the Kulaura Police Station against eight people -- Abdul Khaleque, Salu Miah, Abdul Kalam, Badsha Miah, Fazlu Miah, Saheb Ali, Nuruddin Miah and Liton.

The villagers accused the local administration of not doing enough to arrest land grabbers, toll takers and other criminals that always home in on indigenous people.

But M Mokhesur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Moulvibazar, said that if the Khasia

people had filed specific complaints, he would have taken proper action. He claimed that he did not get any allegation of land grab or abduction from the Khasia people.

The occupiers built a house on the grabbed land and deployed Fazlu Miah, an accused, to keep a watch on the Khasia people.

They are now trying to manage forged documents by bribing land settlement officials to justify their occupation move, alleged the indigenous families.

The headman said the grabbers are threatening the families to stay off the occupied farm.

A group of journalists and lead-

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