

3killed in city road crashes

Mob damages 40 vehicles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were killed in separate road accidents in the capital yesterday, sparking violent crowd protests in Fulbaria and Malibagh areas.

A speeding bus knocked down Abul Hossain, 35, an employee of a shop in City Super Market at Fulbaria under Motijheel Police Station early in the morning. He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died, sourcesaid.

Angry shopkeepers of City Super Market took to the street at about 9:00am protesting Abul's death. Transport workers of Fulbaria bus stand pelted brickbats at the procession, prompting a series of chase and counter-chase between shopkeepers and transportworkers,localsaid.

However, transport workers alleged that shop employees indiscriminately pelted at them from market rooftop, injuring at least 13 people and damaging around 40

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PHOTO: STAR

Transport workers and employees of Fulbaria City Supermarket clash in Fulbaria after a staff of a market shop died in a road accident early yesterday. The violence left windshields of around 40 vehicles damaged.

Filipino FM promises support for ARF berth

UNB, Dhaka

Philippines Foreign Minister (FM) Delia Domingo-Albert has extended her country's strong support to Bangladesh for its membership of the Asean Regional Forum (ARF), a greater platform comprising the countries from Southeast Asia and beyond the region.

The Filipino FM gave the assurance when she called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday.

The ARF, established in 1994,

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Manmohan says Indo-Bangla partnership key to foreign policy

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the importance of India-Bangladesh partnership remains a cornerstone of his government's foreign policy.

The new Indian premier made the remark in a letter to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, which was received here yesterday.

"My government is committed

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Prayer Timing		
June 1		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

BTRC acts to end telecoms interconnection hitch

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Telecoms watchdog Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has prepared a guideline to resolve the nagging interconnection issue blamed for stunting the growth of 'standard telecommunications' in the country.

The guideline has been sent to the authorities concerned for gazette notification, the chairman of the telecoms regulator said.

Standard telecommunications, according to UN telecoms body International Telecommunications Union (ITU), means mobile phones that allow

subscribers access to fixed phones side by side with cell phones of other operators.

"It was a vital issue to resolve the interconnection problem before the new PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) operators launch their service," BTRC Chairman Syed Marghub Murshed told The Daily Star yesterday.

PSTN is a technical jargon for fixed phone connectivity.

The proposed guideline recommends that every incumbent fixed and cell-phone operator should have adequate interconnection from the commencement of service.

About 90 percent of the coun-

try's 2,300,000 cell phone connections only offer 'mobile-to-mobile' access due to lack of interconnection, a system that enables one telecoms operator to connect its subscribers to another through an exchange.

Bangladesh's teledensity is the lowest in South Asia with only 1.56 of 100 people having access to telecoms facility, according to the ITU. The figure rises to 2.15 per 100 phone if mobile-to-mobile connections are included. A standard phone should have both cell-phone and mainframe fixed phone connectivity, according to ITU criteria.

The interconnection regime

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VAGRANT CENTRE

2 die, 50 sick after food poisoning

UNB, Narayanganj

Two inmates of government vagrant centre at Godpail died and 50 others fell sick due to food poisoning on Sunday.

The dead, Smriti, 20, and Halima, 28, were buried on the premises of the centre without autopsy or informing the higher authorities, sources said.

On receiving the news, Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid rushed to the centre yesterday and expressed dissatisfaction at the quality of food served to the inmates.

The minister formed an inquiry

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Power supply returns to normal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The severe power crisis that crippled the country apparently ended, as operation at the 450-megawatt Meghnaghat Power Plant, which remained closed last week, restarted yesterday.

Against a peak demand of 3,600mw, the power supplies yesterday rose to 3,557mw that almost met the entire demand. In the last four days, there happened to be a power supply shortfall of up to 600mw.

Power Development Board (PDB) officials said they expected that the Meghnaghat plant will be able to generate 250mw power by evening. A day before, the 360mw Haripur plant resumed operation after a few days' temporary suspension.

Experts warn against centralised school student assessment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Educationists yesterday expressed concern over the potential pitfalls, including dropout, of a centralised evaluation system the primary and mass education ministry plans to introduce to the students of classes III and V.

The ministry that organised a workshop on the issue at the Directorate of Primary Education believes the centralised evaluation system like SSC and HSC examinations will raise the quality of primary education.

But Professor Moniruzzaman Miah, chairman of the National Education Commission, told the inaugural session of the workshop: "Policymakers should make sure these examinations do not become

the biggest cause of student dropout at the primary level."

"The exams should aim at evaluating whether students achieved desired qualifications at the primary level," said Professor Miah, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, adding the objectives of the two examinations need clarification.

"The failure of students in exams discourages their parents from sending them to school, especially in rural areas."

He doubted whether the existing primary education management would be able to hold such large-scale examinations across the country.

"We need to consider whether teachers can hold such public

examinations across the country," said Rasheda K Chowdhury, director of the Campaign for Popular Education, a non-governmental organisation.

"Before going for public exams at the primary level, the government should ensure five teachers for as many classrooms in every primary school," she added. She also emphasised the need for keeping educational institutions out of politics for better education.

Nazrul Islam, director general of the Directorate of Primary Education, said: "If we fail to raise the quality of education in rural areas, education will be urban-centred."

Speaking at the workshop as the

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2 GIs, 2 Iraqis die in attacks

AP, Kufa, Iraq

US troops clashed yesterday with Shia militiamen in fighting that killed two US soldiers and strained a ceasefire called last week around the holy cities of Kufa and Najaf. In Baghdad, a car bomb exploded near US coalition headquarters, killing at least two people and injuring more than 20.

Two other American soldiers died over the weekend in separate attacks, the US military said.

Ambulances rushed to the scene of the blast in Baghdad's Harithiyah district, about half a

mile from where the head of the Governing Council, Izzadine Saleem, was assassinated in a car bombing May 17. It was not clear whether yesterday's bombing was caused by a suicide attacker.

The blast showered the area with debris and bits of human flesh. At least one body lay on the street, covered with plastic sheets. US troops fired into the air to disperse the crowds.

"It felt like our house was lifted into the air and came down with a bang," said resident Faleh Hassan.

Hours later, US troops blocked a

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Crusaders observe anti-tobacco day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tobacco use is the 'fourth most common risk factor for diseases' in Bangladesh as well as in the world and its economic impact is also 'devastating', anti-tobacco activists said yesterday.

In Bangladesh, tobacco alone is responsible for about 80 per cent of lung cancer and that tobacco use is increasing, especially among the young generation, they pointed out.

Developing countries like Bangladesh will bear the 'brunt of a

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday distributes food among poor children at Karwan Bazar marking the 23rd death anniversary of president Ziaur Rahman.

Why keep cops when pvt force takes law into own hands?

Hasina says on Bangla Bhai outfit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia handed over power to criminals to run the nation as her administration was totally non-functional.

"Why police and other law enforcement agencies use the taxpayers' money when a private force takes the law into its own hands?" she asked, pointing out the emergence of Islamist outfit Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) in the northwest to exterminate outlaws.

Hasina, also president of the Awami League (AL), was addressing the opening session of the triennial conference of Dhaka district Jubo League, youth front of

the main opposition party, at Mahanagar Natya Mancha in Dhaka.

Pegging the government as 'communist terrorists', she said: "The entire country is now hostage to criminals patronised by the government."

She accused the BNP-Jamaat coalition of transforming the peaceful country into a land of terror.

On the recent demand for arrest of JMJB operations commander Bangla Bhai by Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami, Hasina said, "It's nothing but a drama."

"Bangla Bhai is their own activist -- an activist of Shibir and a cadre of Jamaat. He is now killing people under police patronage."

Another shot dead in Kushtia

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

A local leader of Awami Secchashebok League (ASL) was shot dead yesterday morning, hardly 30 hours after the killing of eight alleged outlaws in Kushtia.

Family members of the slain said the incident occurred when Matiur Rahman alias Nakshatra, 30, joint convener of Kushtia district ASL, was brushing his teeth in front of his house at Chaler border area, adjacent to the Milpara Police Camp in the town.

Witnesses said at about 8:30am a gang of three who allegedly belong to 'Akhter Bahini', came by a motorbike, shot Nakshatra point blank and made a swift escape. Nakshatra died on the spot.

Police went to the spot hours later and sent the body to general hospital for autopsy.

Police suspect the killing might be the result of rivalry between 'Hamidul group' and 'Akhter