

Bombs, mortar

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from home and abroad have made their strong bases in the unprotected border area.

According to an estimation of the government, 17 large and small terrorist groups are active in Naikkhongchhari, Alikadam, Lama and Thanchi areas in Bandarban.

In Chapainawabganj the BDR seized 75 powerful explosives weighing eight kilograms from a truck carrying imported Indian wheat at Kansat border Thursday night.

The explosives of different sizes found in 10 packets are powerful enough to blow up large buses or houses if primed with detonators, BDR officials said.

The truck, released from Sona Mosque land port at Shibganj upazila, was loaded with 16 tonnes of wheat from Venus Traders in India, imported by Hasan Traders in Bogra through a clearance and forwarding (C&F) agent Prime Enterprise in Chapainawabganj, sources said.

BDR arrested Masud and Shamim, employees of Hasan Traders, Asir Uddin, the truck driver, and his helper Shamsur Rahman.

Masud told BDR that he was bringing the explosives for Jewel, the owner of Hasan Traders, who intended to use them as firecrackers during his (Jewel's) wedding ceremony.

An Indian citizen gave him the explosives describing them as mild firecrackers and asked him to get them to Jewel, Masud added.

The consignment consisted of 20 ice cream cone shaped explosives, 30 stick shaped explosives, six 1.5" x 10" explosives, six 0.75" x16" explosives, 13 other explosives of different sizes and many wicks in a container.

The C&F agent and the wheat trader went into hiding after the news of the seizure spread.

The explosives were sent to Dhaka for chemical tests and a case was filed under the Explosives Act.

Meanwhile, Chapainawabganj police recovered a shutter gun and two bullets from a cowed at Bholahat upazila Friday night and arrested a police source Babul, and his accomplices Muktar and Abdur Razzak in this connection.

In Chittagong, a powerful bomb was recovered yesterday morning from a water drain in front of a Kindergarten School in the city's West Madarbaria area under Doublemooring Police Station. Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) later defused it.

Police could not identify the origin of the bomb or the persons who planted it.

Police sources said two Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) sweepers, Parimal Das and Monjur Alam, found the bomb while they were cleaning a drain in front of MA Baten KG School on an alley at Mogultuli in West Madarbari at about 11:30am.

Being informed, a team of police led by Assistant Commissioner (port zone) Ziaul Kabir and Officer-in-Charge of Doublemooring PS Miah Kutubur Rahman went there, cordoned off the area and informed Rab officials of the matter.

A bomb disposal unit of Rab arrived at the scene, recovered the bomb, submerged it in water, took it to an open field and defused it at about 2:00pm.

Sergeant Shahid, a bomb expert of Rab, told journalists that the powerful bomb was made of high-capacity

explosives and it was timed with a clock for detonation.

"Fortunately, the bomb did not explode as there was no battery in the clock," he said.

The Assistant Commissioner (port) Ziaul Kabir could not identify the origin of the bomb. He said they would seek help from bomb experts of the army to know more about it.

Some local people however, believed that the bomb might have been planted by JMB activists for carrying out sabotage after Eid festivities.

A case was filed in this connection with the Doublemooring PS.

Traffic control

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November 7-11, and Nakhalpara Road during November 7-12.

Only the vehicles with Saarc sticker will be allowed to ply the road from Sheraton crossing to Minto Road-Hare Road crossing from 8:00am of November 10 to 2:00pm of November 14.

The heads of state and government of the Saarc countries and their entourage will land at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on November 11. During the time of their movement, both sides of the street from ZIA to Sheraton Hotel will remain off-limit to regular traffic.

"In fact, the road will remain off-limit to vehicles almost all day long as the delegates will be arriving at different times that day," Deputy Commissioner (MCJ) of Traffic (North Zone) Firoz Al Mujahid told The Daily Star last night.

The DMP has asked people to avoid the ZIA-Sheraton Hotel road and use the Gabtoli Embankment Road, Ashulia-Tongi Diversion Road, Progoti Sarani, Biswa Road and Rampura Road during the time. The DMP has also requested motorcyclists to keep away from using the road.

The DMP has also asked people to avoid the Gabtoli-Savar National Mausoleum road and use the Abdullahpur-Ashulia-Bypail-Nabinagar road or the Abdullahpur-Gazipur Intersection-Kaliakoir road, from 6:00am to 11:00am on November 12 as the Saarc leaders will visit the National Mausoleum in the morning.

Vehicles will be off-limits from Agargaon-Zia Udyan Crossing-Lake Road from 8:00am to 2:00pm and from 5:00pm to 11:00pm on the same day as the Saarc leaders will visit the grave of former president Ziaur Rahman.

The DMP has requested people to use Agargaon IDB Bhaban-Shyamoli Shishu Mela-Manik Mia Avenue-Farmgate road.

For programmes at the state guest-house Padma, no vehicles except for those with Saarc sticker will be allowed to ply the Old Airport Road, Mansur Ali Sarani and part of Holy Family Hospital road from noon to 8:00pm (until the end of the function) on November 12.

For programmes at the state guest-house Jamuna the next day, traffic will be off-limit from Minto Road, Hare Road and part of Bailey Road from 8:00am to 1:30pm (until the end of the function).

All vehicles except for those with Saarc sticker will be off-limits from the Nakhalpara Road during 1:00am-7:00pm for programme at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre on November 13.

CID Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Abdur Rashid produced them before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka with a 10-day remand prayer yesterday.

The IO, in the remand prayer, said the primary investigation revealed their links with the August 21 grenade attack.

The IO petitioned that the detainees need to be further quizzed during remand to find out the vital clues to the case and the whereabouts of their accomplices.

Twenty-one people have been arrested in the case so far, among them Saibal Saha Partha and 11 others were granted bail by the High Court.

The August 21 grenade attack left 22 leaders and workers of AL dead, including Ivy Rahman, and 200 others injured. Hasina narrowly escaped the attack.

Fire burns

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They claimed there were 82 shops in the market, but the fire service numbered them at 70. Abdur Razzak, president of the market committee, claimed the fire burnt all his 13 shops, damaging around Tk2.5 crore.

The state minister for food and disaster management visited the spot yesterday and assured the most affected traders of giving Tk 25,000 each as compensation from the ministry.

JMB threatens

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threatening him and his family. The letter to the UNO mentioned Milon, Nabi, Golam, Shanto, Gopal, Dhiren and Robi as JMB cadres assigned to blow up Dumuria Police Station, Rangpur Union Police Camp and to kill the UNO and the OC along with their family.

The letter was signed illegibly by a person who claimed to be a commander of JMB.

The UNO and his family were provided with police guards following the threats. The OC fled a general diary yesterday afternoon.

In a hand-written letter received on October 28, JMB threatened to blow up Rupsha Police Station and kill the officers including the OC.

Five killed

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Mirpur police, from Manipur on Friday evening.

The body bore cut marks on the neck, said DMCH morgue sources.

Taslima was going to a friend's house from her Shewrapara residence at 7:00pm on Eid day when two men-Shahar Ali and Hazrat Ali--picked her up and took her to a nearby place where they chopped her to death, the victim's sister Kulsum alleged.

Police could not arrest anyone in this connection.

In another incident, Khilgaon police recovered the body of Fancy, wife of Shahid Ullah, from her apartment at 372/B, Khilgaon, in the early hours of Friday.

The DMCH morgue sources said the body bore bruises on the face and the preliminary examination indicates that she was strangled.

Anwar Zahid Tulu, the victim's brother, told reporters that Shahid killed his sister for dowry.

Police arrested Shahid. Shyampur police recovered the body of an unidentified woman from Afsar Karim Road in Jurain yesterday morning.

Police said the victim was slaughtered. No one came to identify the body last night at DMCH.

Earlier on Thursday afternoon, Aiyub Ali, security guard of Rabeya Plaza in Kuril of Badda, hit on the head of Rashed with an iron rod, suspecting him a thief.

The boy was taken to a local clinic where he died.

Police sent the body to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

The locals caught the security guard and handed him over to police.

A case was filed with the Badda Police Station.

Rickshaws

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Market was made off limits to rickshaws last year. Besides, rickshaws were also banned in the stretch between Gabtoli and Russell Square since December 20, 2002.

There is a plan to ban rickshaws from the stretch of Progoti Sarani, Rampura to Mouchak, from Bangla Motor, New Eskaton Road, Moghbazar, Malibagh, Mouchak to Rampura and from Rokeya Sarani to Farmgate in phases, according to sources.

Mufti Hannan

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The forwarding report of the case submitted before the court said the information derived from Hannan during remand was being verified and he needs to be kept confined in jail custody until the investigation completes.

DB Inspector Abdur Razzak, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted a petition to the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon to show Hannan arrested in the Rajuk blast case and sought a 10-day remand for interrogation.

The forwarding report of the Rajuk blast case said Hannan was directly involved in the blast in Rajuk area and he needs to be quizzed to find out vital clues to the bomb blasts and the whereabouts of his accomplices.

After the hearing, the magistrate sent Hannan on a seven-day remand. The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members took Hannan, wearing a helmet and a bulletproof vest, to the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon, sources said.

Mufti Hannan was arrested at Madhya Badda in Dhaka on October 1 after hiding for several years. He was later shown arrested in three bomb blast cases filed with Tejgaon and Ramna police stations and taken on 30 days of remand in five phases.

Fun tragedy

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"One of the 18 boxes suddenly developed some technical faults and started to turn upside down. My sister, colleague Azad and relative Aziza Islam screamed for help, but there was no operator to stop the wheel. As it reached the highest altitude at around 50 feet, it turned completely upside down and the three fell down straight on the ground," Saiful said.

The three with serious head injuries were immediately taken to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH), where the doctors declared Sufia and Azad dead.

Aziza, still in a critical condition, was undergoing treatment, hospital sources said.

Meanwhile, following the incident, the park staffs and employees fled the scene. The visitors stopped the Ferris wheel and rescued 64 other riders.

Deputy General Manager of the park Zakaria Chowdhury denied any technical fault and claimed that it was Sufia Khatun's saree that caused the accident.

"A part of her saree suddenly got stuck in the box of the Ferris wheel and when she leaned over the box to release it, the box turned upside down and they fell on the ground," he said.

Sources said Sylhet forest official Azad from Natore came to Chittagong to celebrate the Eid with family members residing in the port city.

Sufia Khatun also came to Chittagong from Joypurhat to celebrate the Eid with her two younger brothers.

HuJi kingpins

FROM PAGE 1
1991 from Kishoreganj-3.

In an interview a few years back, Habibur Rahman disclosed those names, with whom he had travelled to Afghanistan via Pakistan in 1988, visited some Taliban militant camps and also met al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

But, a top-ranking police official argued not every one in HuJi was involved in militant activities and said if they receive any specific charge of terrorist act against any HuJi member, they will take steps accordingly.

The government banned HuJi on October 17, with a home ministry note stating, "Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami is a self-proclaimed terrorist organisation. Its activities are very sensitive and it is identified as a terrorist organisation... The government is declaring Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami and all its activities banned on the basis of information received so far."

It may have some significance for the apparent government reluctance to go tough on HuJi members that on October 6, eleven days before the ban came, Shaikhul Hadith and Habibur Rahman had met Prime Minister Khaleda Zia posing as 'Islamic scholars'. The two were accompanied by Moulana Obaedul Haq, IOJ lawmaker Mufti Shahidul Islam, Ashraf Ali, Abdur Rab Yusufi, Yusuf Ashrafi, Nezamuddin, Mohammad Humayun Kabir and Tafazzul Haq Aziz.

REVEALING INTERVIEW OF HABIBUR RAHMAN
The names of the prominent HuJi-linked people can be found in a bulletin titled 'Islami Biplob (Islamic revolution)', published on August 20, 1998 from Sylhet with the express purpose to celebrate "the total victory of Taliban and establishment of an Islamic state in Afghanistan".

The bulletin in its front page ran an interview of Habibur Rahman, in which he gave a detailed account of his visit to Afghanistan in 1988. He said, "An invitation from Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami made it possible for me to make the fortunate trip to Afghanistan... Those of us who visited the Afghan war-fields during that trip were Shaikhul Hadith... Aataur Rahman Khan... Sultan Jaok... Abdul Mannan... Habibullah... and myself--in total nine people."

In Pakistan, leaders of the local chapter of HuJi greeted the nine members of the Bangladesh team and took them to the HuJi Karachi office. Habibur said HuJi Pakistan chief Saifullah Akhtar and a Bangladesh Mujahedin Abdur Rahman Shahid drove them to an Afghan Mohajir (literally, refugee) camp on the Pak-Afghan border. They stayed at the camp and visited some injured Mujahedins and an Islamic cadet college, where the cadets received them with a guard of honour.

Abdur Rahman then drove them to the residence of top Mujahedin leader Abde Rabbir Rasul Saiaf, the narration goes on. The house was defended like a fort with anti-aircraft cannons and armed guards.

While still in Pakistan and on their way to Afghanistan, the next day the Bangladeshi team visited a special Mujahedin training camp and met about a dozen Bangladeshi young Mujahedins led by one Abdul Quddus. They watched youths from different countries taking military training on a mountainous terrain. The arms they were being trained to operate included rocket launchers.

That night Habibur Rahman shared his meal of dry cold bread with "a handsome young Arab". He said, "When I inquired after his identity, I was told he was Osama bin Laden, a son of one of the richest Saudi families."

The next day they entered Afghanistan and arrived at a Mujahedin cantonment on a mountaintop. They visited an armoury inside a tunnel. They were informed that some Russian forces were in position nearby and that every one must prepare to fight.

"All of us were given Kalashnikov (AK-47) rifles," he said, adding they stayed the night at the camp, while a Mujahedin team advanced towards the enemy position and engaged in a skirmish. The following day they started their return journey.

In the interview, Habibur asserted that the only way to change the fate of Bangladesh was the Taliban one.

Habibur is also the convener of

Sahaba Sainik Parishad and founding principal of Jameya Madania Islamia, a madrasa at Kazir Bazar, Sylhet.

TRACOF HUJI IN BANGLADESH
HuJi made its first public appearance in Bangladesh in April 1992 through a press conference organised by a group of Afghan war veterans. However, HuJi says the first Bangladeshi Mujahedin group had been formed in 1984 by Commander Abdur Rahman, who later died in the Afghan War in 1989.

Intelligence reports to the government in late 2000 named some of the HuJi leaders. One of the reports said HuJi Dhaka City chief Shawkat Osman alias Sheikh Farid is a brother of Khulna City IOJ Member Secretary Mufti Shakhawat Hossain. At that time -- January 1999 -- Shawkat Osman was in Dubai at a safe haven. The report also mentioned Chittagong IOJ leader Mufti Ejaharul Islam's link with HuJi. Ejaharul was then absconding in Pakistan.

Law enforcers and intelligence officials involved in investigations into terrorist activities told The Daily Star that although HuJi has been banned, they are yet to receive any specific directive from the government to arrest any HuJi leader.

Inspector General of Police MA Qayyum tried to justify the inaction, saying, "Not every one in HuJi was involved in militant activities. We are gathering information about those who have been involved with HuJi and with terrorist activities."

"If we get any specific charge of terrorist act against anyone [of HuJi], we will take appropriate measures," he said, adding, "if someone was involved in terrorist acts in the past, there definitely will be cases against them. We are also looking for such cases."

Sources said Mufti Hannan, operations commander of HuJi Bangladesh, was arrested on October 1 of not made for his HuJi connection. He was but as one of the prime suspects for the August 17 orchestrated bomb blasts across the country. He is now under police remand.

Hannan was reportedly trained in Peshawar in Pakistan and went to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet occupation forces. A diary of Hannan's brother recovered by law enforcers also indicates HuJi having links with Pakistan.

There are four cases filed in 2000 against Mufti Hannan -- two with Gopalganj Police Station (PS) and two with Kotailpara. He was convicted for life-term imprisonment in one of the cases filed with Gopalganj PS under the Arms Act. He is also the prime accused for the plot to assassinate the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina by launching a bomb attack on her meeting at Kotailpara.

Among all the Islamist militant groups in Bangladesh, HuJi was the highest-ranking one due to its vast international links. It had a countrywide Qaomil madrasa-based network and an estimated 15,000 to 25,000-strong manpower.

National

FROM PAGE 1
freed the then army chief Major General Ziaur Rahman from captivity in Dhaka Cantonment.

The day has been declared a public holiday. All government, semi-government and autonomous institutions will remain closed on the occasion.

President Prof Dr Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia gave separate messages on the eve of the day.

The ruling BNP, founded by Ziaur Rahman, will observe the day in a befitting manner. It has arranged a discussion meeting at Mahanagar Natya Mancha in the capital.

Its front organisations and affiliated socio-cultural bodies have also chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate the day. These include discussions, seminars, madal mahfil, Quran Khwani, video shows and cultural functions.

The national and party flags will be hoisted at offices and installations in the morning across the country.

Leaders and activists of the BNP and its front organisations, including President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, will visit the grave of Ziaur Rahman to offer Fateha and place floral wreaths.

Nation celebrates

FROM PAGE 1
other and expressed greetings.

They also visited relatives, friends and exchanged greetings on the day. The city wore a festive look as thousands of delighted people came out of their houses and took part in various enjoyment activities.

The amusement centres, parks, Mirpur National Zoo, museums and open spaces were full of visitors.

Children in colourful dresses with their parents went to the parks and relatives' houses.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia hosted separate receptions to exchange Eid greetings. Diplomats, high officials, journalists and elites of the society attended the receptions.

The prime minister also exchanged Eid greetings with cross sections of the people on the day. Large number of people including women and children came from far-flung areas to see her and exchange Eid greetings.

The main Eid congregation in the city was held at the National Eidgah on the high court premises attended by the president and senior ministers, elites, religious and social leaders.

Several Eid jamaats were held at the Baitul Mokarram National Mosque from the early morning. The biggest Eid congregation was held in Solakia in Kishoreganj where over

Khaleda first

FROM PAGE 1
Dhaka.

She became the chairperson of the association for the first time at its 7th summit held in Dhaka on April 10-11 in 1993 during her first tenure as the prime minister of Bangladesh (1991-96). She is also the first woman head of the government in the country.

Dhaka is the birthplace of Saarc, which hosted its first summit held on December 7-8 in 1985 when its charter was formally adopted by the heads of states and governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The association provides a platform for the countries of South Asia to work together in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding. It aims to promote welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life through accelerated economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region.

Bangladesh will be hosting the summit of the international body of the most populous region of the world for the third time.

The host country is picked in alphabetical order, member countries organise the summit annually on rotation. At the first summit, the draft charter proposed a summit every two years.

The erstwhile Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi suggested that the summit be made an annual event and the rest of the summit leaders endorsed it. But only 12 summits have taken place in 20 years. Eight other summits could not be held due to various reasons.

Except for Bhutan, all members of Saarc organised two summits each and Bangladesh is the first country to host it for the third time.

Having made hectic preparations, Dhaka keenly waits for the twice-postponed event to take place.

The 13th Saarc summit was originally scheduled for January 9-11, which was cancelled after last December's tsunami disaster that battered three Asian nations India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Rescheduled for February 6-7, it was postponed again at the last minute after India pulled out citing security concerns in Bangladesh and the Royal coup in Nepal.

The founders of Saarc envisioned economic self-reliance for the member countries where poverty is a persistent problem. With a combined population of over 1.5 billion, the economically developing region faces multifarious problems. Every fifth man or woman on the earth is a South Asian.

The upcoming summit in Dhaka will review Saarc's two decades thoroughly and take initiatives for better quality of life for an average South Asian.

The Saarc Secretariat in a statement yesterday said, "Given the gravity of the terrorism issue, the leaders in the region are urgently required to make additional commitments in the forthcoming 13th Saarc summit regarding implementation of the recommendations regarding control of terrorism in the region as was stipulated in the 43-point declaration drawn up by the 12th Saarc summit."

Collective commitment of the leaders in the region will further strengthen regional solidarity against terrorism, the statement added.

Manmohan

FROM PAGE 1
Bangkok on the sidelines of the Bimstec summit in 2004.

When asked about the issues that might come up during the meeting, Foreign Affairs Advisor Reaz Rahman told reporters that concerns of both Bangladesh and India, including how to keep the momentum of the existing friendly relations, might be discussed.

Khaleda will also hold bilateral meetings with other Saarc leaders on November 12 and 13. Saarc leaders will also hold bilateral meetings with one another during their stay in Dhaka.

Riots fan

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France's image abroad, forcing Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin to cancel a trip to Canada, while Russia and the United States have warned their citizens to avoid Paris' troubled suburbs.

Villepin has combined a call for an end to the riots with dialogue with community leaders, youngsters and local officials, and has promised an action plan for 750 tough neighbourhoods.

"I'll make proposals as early as this week," the weekly Journal du Dimanche quoted him as saying.

But it remained unclear what could stop the violence, though some opposition parties have suggested a symbolic measure -- the resignation of Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy. Accused of stoking passions by calling troublemakers "scum," Sarkozy has ignored calls to quit. A survey published yesterday indicated his public image was holding up, even if many disapproved of his strong language.

Villepin also has ambitions to be the right wing's presidential candidate in 2007 and has tried to position himself as a much more consensual figure than Sarkozy; the effect on the crisis in his ratings is still unclear.

With no end in sight to the nights of wailing sirens, acrid smoke, stone-throwing and destruction, residents from all ethnic backgrounds are tiring of the unrest.

"My kids can't sleep at night," said a mother named Samia in Aulnay-sous-Bois. "They hear explosions, they see fires and they think they're in a war. When the slightest thing happens, they get anxious and say 'Mama, what's going on?'"

Road accidents kill

FROM PAGE 1
Shapahar upazila.

Critically injured Sharifa Begum, 25, wife of killed Babu, was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Day-labourer Korban Ali died in another accident on the Bogra-Santahar highway yesterday.

In the capital, six people including a former football player were killed and six others injured in two separate accidents.

Mosharaf Hossain Tutul, 42, a former football player and nephew of Awami League leader Tofail Ahmed died when a jeep bumped into the road divider and turned upside down on the other side of the road and hit the motorbike carrying him at the Banani Chairman Bari in the capital on Friday afternoon.

Debashis Vodro, another passenger of the motorbike, was injured in the incident.

Three people including a girl also died in the city in last two days as public buses ran over them while they were crossing the roads. The dead are Manik from Mirpur, Bappi from Demra and Toma Rani from Joydevpur.

Moazzem Khan and Shibli Shaheed were killed when two microbuses collided at Shah Ali Bagh cross dam under Turag thana in the capital, reports BDNEWS.

BNP city unit General Secretary Abdus Salam's daughter Shaon, 18, injured in the accident, is undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Our Chittagong office reports: Three people were killed and three others injured in separate road accidents at Patiya and Sitakunda in the district on Friday.

The dead are Nizam Uddin, 30, Rafiqul Islam, 45, and Monir Hossain, 20.

A speeding bus knocked a CNG-run auto-rickshaw at around 7:30am at Jungle Khain area in Patiya, killing Nizam on the spot and seriously injuring the auto-rickshaw driver along with two other passengers.

At around 9:05am the same day, a Chittagong-bound coach and a Feni-bound microbus collided head-on at Choto Kumira on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, killing Rafiqul Islam, a custom inspector and Monir Hossain, the microbus driver, on the spot.

BDNEWS reports: Four people were killed and 32 others injured in two accidents on Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

When a passenger bus hit a covered van at Kutumbapur of Chandina in Comilla district on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, Abul Kashem, 35, died on the spot while Rasheda Begum, 35, on way to the Comilla Hospital.

Saarc Summit

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emphasising both poverty alleviation and enhanced intra-regional trade, which is less than 4 percent at present.

Officials said Dhaka would propose substantial fundraising for implementation of Saarc projects, mainly to take measures for poverty alleviation. Initiatives will be taken to streamline various proposed funds into a single fund with an initial capital of \$300 million.

The proposed "South Asian Poverty Alleviation Fund" will have social, economic and other wings. Already existing South Asian Development Fund has \$6 million in its coffers with the fund still unutilised.