

10 killed, 74 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least 10 people were killed and 74 others injured in separate road accidents in Faridpur, Bagerhat and Meherpur yesterday.

Our Staff Correspondent reports: A pushcart puller was killed in a road accident at Tejgaon in the city early yesterday.

The victim, Abdul Mridha, 40, was seriously injured when a truck hit his pushcart at Nabisco on Tongi Diversion Road from behind at around 4:30am.

Locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Police seized the truck, but its driver managed to escape.

Our STAFF CORRESPONDENT from Sylhet adds: A retired Insurance official was killed in a road accident in the city's suburb Tetli area on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway Saturday night.

The accident took place as a Dhaka-bound passenger coach from Sylhet collided head on with a private car.

Former DGM of Jiban Bima Corporation Abdul Matin Chowdhury, 62, who was on his way to Sylhet from Moulvibazar by the car died on the spot while the driver

sustained serious wounds.

The driver was admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. Matin hailed from Kotwalpur of Golapganj upazila under Sylhet district.

BDNEWS from Faridpur reports: Three people were killed and at least 30 others injured in a road accident near Maligram Bazar of Bhanga upazila in Faridpur early yesterday.

Sources said a Dhaka-bound passenger night coach coming from Barguna fell into a roadside ditch while making room to another bus coming from the opposite direction.

Liza, 10, Rakibul Islam Sabuj, 35, and an unidentified old man aged about 65 died on the spot.

Of the injured, 12 were admitted to Bhanga upazila health complex. One of the passengers Abdul Majid filed a case in this regard.

UNB from Bagerhat reports: A private car dashed a rickshaw van in Fakirhat upazila on Mongla-Khulna highway yesterday killing three and injuring four others.

The deceased were identified as van puller Abdul Ali Kazi, 40, of Naihati village of Rupsa upazila, and Safiullah Selim, 45, and Rubina Parveen, 30, officials of a local NGO Nabalok.

Police said a Khulna-bound private car hit the rickshaw van from behind at Mohish Khamar area at about 1:00pm killing the three on the spot and injuring four car passengers.

The injured were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Traffic movement on Mongla-Khulna road was snapped for two hours as the angry mob put up barricade on the road protesting the accident.

Another report from Meherpur adds: Two people were killed and 40 others injured

in separate road accidents in the district yesterday.

Two people were killed and 30 others injured when a bus rammed a roadside tree in Gangni upazila at noon.

Police said the Kushtia-bound bus from Meherpur rammed the tree at Banshbaria Bazar when the driver lost his control over steering, killing helper Fakir and conductor Babu on the spot.

The injured were admitted to Meherpur General Hospital and Gangni health complex.

In another mishap, 10 passengers were injured when a bus skidded off the Meherpur-Kathuli road.

UDICHI TRAGEDY 7th anniversary programmes begin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A two-day programme began in Jessore yesterday to observe the 7th anniversary of Udichi tragedy.

Ten cultural activists were killed and over 100 people injured in a bomb blast at the 12th National Conference of Udichi Shipi Gosthi at Jessore Town Hall Maidan on the fateful night of March 6, 1999.

Since then, the cultural activists of Jessore have been observing the day as the Day of Protecting Culture.

The programme of the inaugural day included poetry recitation, discussion and blood donation.

Today's programme includes mass-song and candle procession.

Meanwhile, Udichi Bomb Blast Case is still continuing even after the expiry of seven years.

Hearing of the case is being held at the court of Special Tribunal Judge Abul Hossain Bepari.

The judgement will be announced after the hearing, said court sources.

PM addresses Dinajpur meet tomorrow

BDNEWS, Dinajpur

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will address a public meeting at Baramath Gora Shaheed ground in Dinajpur tomorrow.

Her visit in the northern district comes within 10 days of the 14-party grand rally in which leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina addressed.

Non-govt teachers reiterate demand for salary hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE) yesterday urged the government to immediately meet their eight-point demand including 10 percent salary increase.

Their other demands include dearness allowance, festival allowance, promotions, pension facilities and adequate house rent.

"The government has so far not implemented its election pledge of increasing the salary of non-government teachers by 10 percent rather it withdrew various facilities of the teachers," said NFTE Convenor Qazi Faruq Ahmed at a press conference at its office in the city.

The government is hatching conspiracy to cancel Monthly Pay Order (MPO) facilities of five thousand teachers of 87 colleges and 72 secondary schools across the country on lame excuses, he alleged.

NFTE announced different programmes including rallies, processions, seminars, mass-contacts to press their demands.

Azizul Islam, Asadul Haque, MA Sattar and Mohammad Shahjahan were also present at the press conference.

UTPAL KILLING One arrestee confesses involvement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Suman, arrested in connection with college student Utpal killing, confessed his involvement in the occurrence that took place at the United Nations Park in the port city on Saturday evening.

Suman, reportedly a local scoundrel, made the confessional statement under 164 before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Moksedur Rahman yesterday afternoon.

Suman, of Ahmedur Rahman Commissioner-er Bari of city's Shulak Bahar area, said he along with his 12 other accomplices, stabbed Utpal to take revenge of stupidity of the victim reportedly did with him.

The incident ensued when Utpal smoked before Suman prompting the latter slap him several months back, Suman was quoted as saying in the confession.

Following this Utpal instigated his friends to attack Suman several times accusing him of abduction to fuel enmity further, Suman alleged.

He also said he along with his friends attacked Utpal on that evening to teach him a good lesson when two of his friends Ibrahim and Raisul directly stabbed Utpal that lead to his death.

Utpal Barua, 18, son of Sushil Kumar Barua, was a first year student of Chittagong Metropolitan Commerce College.

Police arrested Suman on the spot when the victim's father filed a case with the Panchlaish Police Station on the same evening.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Bangladesh Garments Sramik Federation stage demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding compensation for the fire victims of Chittagong garments factory.

Hold open trial to prove JMB chief 's arrest not drama

Jalil asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday demanded of the government to arrange an open trial of JMB chief Abdul Rahman allowing him to speak with the media and quiz the ministers and MPs who sheltered the militants to prove that his arrest was not a staged drama.

"The government staged the drama on the eve of US President George Bush's visit to India and Pakistan to mislead the international community about the rise of militants in Bangladesh under the shelter of the government," he said at a press briefing at the AL central office in the city.

"We believe that it is the duty of the government to make it clear to the nation that the arrest of Abdul Rahman was not a staged drama," Jalil added.

Referring to Saturday's press briefing of BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Jalil said, "Whatever he had said, it is crystal clear that the arrest was a staged drama by the government to distract peoples' attention from the oppositions' reform proposal on electoral process, power outage, fertiliser crisis and price hike of essentials."

Jalil, also coordinator of the 14-party opposition line-up, put forward a total of 10 questions to Mannan Bhuiyan to explain government's position on the arrest of Abdul Rahman. These included:

How could Rahman travelled different cities including the capital in last eight months along with his family without taking any camouflage when law enforcers were hunting him?

Why he was not allowed to talk to the media after surrendering to law

enforcement agencies?

Why did Rahman choose Sylhet for his safe heaven and what was the role of Sylhet intelligence?

Why Rab and Police are giving different statement over the recovery of his cell phone?

Why the government is hiding the books of Golam Azam and Moududi that were found at the den of Rahman and by whose directions the name of the books were withdrawn from the seizure list?

Will the government arrest the patrons of Rahman and Bangla Bhai who tried to hide the militants saying it was a creation of media?

The press briefing was attended by AL leaders Abdul Razzak, Motia Chowdhury, Obaidul Quader, Akhtaruzzaman and Haji Mohammed Selim.

NOISE POLLUTION RISING RAPIDLY

City dwellers trapped in sound level twice than tolerable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City dwellers have been putting up with two times more sound volume than the tolerable level of volume set by the Environment Preservation Regulation 1997, a study on the degree of noise pollution revealed yesterday.

The study measuring the degree of noise pollution in 20 different areas of the city found that people in most cases have to bear 13-40 decibel more sound volume in silent zone, residential area, mixed zone, commercial and industrial areas than the degree of volume set by the law.

Work for Better Bangladesh (WBB) and The University of Asia and Pacific conducted the study.

At a press conference titled "Noise Pollution: Topsy-turvy Public Life and Our Duty" at the Jatiya Press Club in the city, the speakers said the noise pollution causes hearing impairment, headache, bad temper and inattentiveness and badly affects the patient of heart diseases and students of different school and colleges.

Project Manager of WBB Amit Ranjan Dey presented the summary of the study. He urged the government to finalise the draft regulation to control noise pollution and to implement it.

They also said the tolerable sound volume is set at 45 decibel in city's silent zone, but it is quite double in the areas, especially in front of the schools and colleges.

In residential areas the degree of volume is set at 50 decibel from 6:00am to 9:00pm, but the average volume recorded in the study was at 71 decibel in Dhanmondi and 80 decibel in Kalyanpur.

On the other hand, the sound volume should be 60 decibel in the morning and 50 decibel at night in mixed areas, but the average level is 78 decibel in Mohammadpur and Science Laboratory, 82 decibel in Sadarghat and 81 decibel in Mouchak area.

The average sound volume is 78 decibel in Motijheel commercial area and 81decibel in Tejgaon industrial area during daytime, which sometimes goes up to 97 decibel from morning to noon.

The study recommends that effective law should be enacted and mass-awareness campaign be launched against the havoc of noise pollution through mass media and penalty be meted out to those who honk horns for nothing.

The study further recommends that a cell should be formed to take the complaints and to monitor the

total traffic system, and drivers should be trained so that they don't hoot horns unnecessarily and specific time should be allocated for construction work, which creates much noise pollution.

"Research or analysis on economic loss for noise pollution is yet to be carried in the country, but it is important as the hearing capability of people has been decreasing and a correlation is needed to find out if it has any impact on people's earning capability," said Prof Muhammad Jubair Bin Alam of BUET.

Prof Vice Chancellor of Asia Pacific University Dr MR Kabir was also present.

IUBAT convocation March 9

International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) will hold its second convocation on Mar 9 at 11:00am at China-Bangladesh Friendship Convention Centre in the city, says a press release.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, the chancellor of the university, and Education Minister Dr Osman Faruk will be present at the convocation ceremony.



Sonali Bank Managing Director M Tahmilur Rahman hands over a cheque for Tk 20 lakh to Dhaka Ahsania Mission President Kazi Rafiqul Alam at the bank's head office in the city yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Old students of Rajshahi University stage token hunger strike at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting killing of RU professor Dr Taher by Jamat-Shibir and communal forces.

Angry people lay siege to Wasa station in Ctg: Six hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Angered by persistent water crisis, people laid a siege to Wasa station in Chittagong and roughed up three Wasa men including an engineer yesterday.

Sources said, over one hundred consumers of Beparipara, Panwalapara, Mollapara, Hajipara, Monsurabad and Ashkarabad laid a siege to Wasa station at Agrabad at around 11:00am to protest the acute water crisis that they have been facing since last week. At one stage of the agitation, the consumers attacked the Wasa staffs on duty and injured Sub Assistant Engineer Harunur Rashid and two Wasa men identified as Abdus Sattar and Maksudur Rahman.

On information, police rushed to the spot and rescued the Wasa men.

Police also charged baton on the consumers leaving three of them injured, sources added.



Death anniversary

Today is the first death anniversary of Farida Sarkar, wife of former power and energy minister Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, says a press release.

A Fullbright scholar, former news caster of Voice of America, and former English teacher of The North South University, Farida passed away due to cancer at the age of 48 last year.

On the occasion, prayers will be offered at the orphanage where food will be distributed among the orphans.

Friends, relatives and admirers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature.

Highest temperature 33.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 14.8 degree Celsius at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:04pm today and rises at 6:16am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.2	22.0	76	60
Chittagong	31.5	22.6	55	73
Rajshahi	32.5	17.5	80	45
Khulna	28.0	20.5	86	71
Barisal	29.5	20.0	87	91
Sylhet	31.0	18.8	54	57
Cox's Bazar	32.6	22.0	58	62



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Chhatra Moitri forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding adequate supply of electricity during the examinations of SSC.