

11 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least 11 people were killed and 47 others injured in separate road accidents in Keraniganj, Sirajganj, Rajshahi and Patuakhali yesterday and on Friday night.

UNB from Keraniganj adds: Four people were killed and 20 others injured when a bus plunged into a roadside ditch at Nekrojbagh in old Keraniganj on Nababganj-Dohar highway yesterday.

Local people said the bus left Nababganj for Dhaka at about 7:00am with 60 passengers on board.

The accident occurred when the bus turned upside down and fell into a roadside ditch at Nekrojbagh area in Keraniganj at about 7:45 am as its driver lost control over the steering, leaving a passenger dead on the spot and 23 others injured.

Of the injured, three succumbed

to their injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately. Others were rushed to Mitford Hospital.

Our Correspondent from Sirajganj: At least three people, including children, were killed and 12 others injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Bogra highway at Chandaikona near Sarkerbari Bridge at Raiganj upazila in Sirajganj on Friday night.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place at 9:00pm when a Dhaka-bound goods-laden truck from Bogra hit a Nasim (locally made auto-tempo) from behind, leaving three passengers dead on the spot and 12 injured.

Of the dead, one was identified as Shahidul Islam, 52, of Nandigram upazila of Bogra while two others' could not be known immediately.

The injured were taken to Raiganj, Sirajganj and Bogra hospitals.

Police sent the bodies to Sirajganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

RU Correspondent adds: Two people were killed and 15 others injured when a bus knocked an auto-rickshaw at Mouhopur upazila of Rajshahi yesterday.

Of the injured, eight were rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in critical condition and rest to the Mohonpur Upazila Health Complex, locals said.

Police said a Naogaon-bound BRTC bus from Rajshahi knocked an auto-rickshaw coming from opposition direction at Khoiramor under Mohonpur Police Station. The auto-rickshaw passenger Wazan, 38, died on the spot while another passenger Anwar, 42, succumbed to his injuries at a local hospital, sources said. Police

seized the bus but the driver managed to escape.

Our Correspondent from Patuakhali adds: Two people were killed in road accident at Ghatkhali area under Amtali upazila on Patuakhali-Kuakata road yesterday.

The victims were identified as Kartik Chandra, 65, and his nephew Poresh Chandra, 40, of Churikata village under Amtali upazila.

Of the victims, Kartik Chandra died at the spot and Poresh succumbed to his injuries on the way to Amtali upazila health complex. The accident occurred at about 11:00am.

Witnesses said the accident occurred when a Patuakhali-bound passenger bus hit the motor cycle of Poresh and Kartik from behind while they were going to Patuakhali from Amtali.



PHOTO: STAR

The Centre for Policy Studies organised a discussion on 'Sovereignty, democracy and election' at Hotel Sonargaon in the city yesterday. From right are former IGP Ashraf Huda, Dr Yusuf Ali, Justice Abdur Rouf, Abdus Shaheed Nasim and Dr Mahbub Ullah.

'Stop intervention of external forces in resolving problems'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The move taken by the caretaker government to bring corrupt people to book has created an opportunity to strengthen the economic base and democracy and to safeguard sovereignty of the country, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

They also called for forestalling the intervention of external forces, saying that the internal problems should be resolved by the leadership within the country.

The Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) organised the discussion on 'Sovereignty, democracy and election' at Hotel Sonargaon in the city.

A good economy cannot be

achieved unless the filthy rich who amassed huge wealth through plundering the state and foreign money are held in check. Prof Mahbub Ullah said, adding that the success of the caretaker government in doing so will be the beginning of a new economy.

He also called on the patriotic people to unite to resist the intervention of external forces.

Prof Mahbub Ullah said the issue of privatisation of the Chittagong Port is now being raised very strongly. "But who will take the responsibility for the security if it is handed over to foreign companies?" he asked.

Former inspector general of police (IGP) Ashraf Huda said 90 percent of people have given their support to this caretaker government and appreciated its various activities.

There is no hurry to hold the election right now because it is more important to prepare the ground for a free and fair election, he said, adding that the government should take more initiatives for political reforms. "Only arresting some political leaders is not enough."

CPS Chairman Justice Abdur Rouf said foreigners pay special attention to Bangladesh as it is a resourceful country. "Therefore, we must be aware of it and should not ask the external forces to help resolve our problems. Otherwise, our sovereignty will be threatened," he said.

He said 80 percent of the problems facing the nation would be resolved if discipline could be restored.

Bringing back discipline is possible through creating a national database of the people, he said, adding that such a database will help hold fair elections, curb crimes and resolve many problems.

Justice Abdur Rouf, also a former chief election commissioner, said data collection for the purpose of creating a database would not take much time if the authorities are sincere about it.

He also suggested introducing national ID cards for all.

Prof Umar Ali of Manarat International University, Barrister Abdur Razzak, Green University Vice-Chancellor Dr Yusuf Ali, Prof Habiba Khatun, Naya Diganta Editor Mohiuddin Alamgir, Islamic TV Managing Director Lt Col (retd) Mostafa Anwar, former additional secretary Abdul Kader Mia and journalist Ruhul Amin Gazi also spoke.

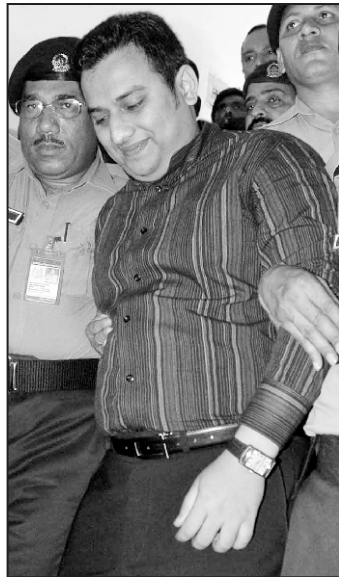


PHOTO: STAR

Barrister Amir Helaluddin, son of former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, is being taken to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the city yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, 2nd from right, and science fiction writer Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, 2nd from left, launch a commemorative book on Shahadat Chowdhury, founder-editor of Shaptahik 2000, a Bangla weekly magazine, at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair at Bangla Academy in the city yesterday while Acting Editor of the weekly Golam Mortozzo, middle, looks on.

Start election process: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the caretaker government to start the election process soon.

She said this while exchanging views with the central leaders of Bangladesh Awami

Swachhchasebak League as they met her at her Dhanmondi office.

Appreciating the current drive against corrupt people and terrorists, Hasina said the masterminds of terrorism and the great thieves have not yet been arrested.

She urged the caretaker administration to arrest those identified

corrupts and terrorists who amassed wealth by plundering public property in the last five years.

The AL chief welcomed the government's step to reform the Election Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), and described it as a positive sign.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind may occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Noakhali and Comilla at the end period.

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

Highest temperature 31.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 12.2 degree Celsius at Sirimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:59pm today and rises at 6:24am 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	30.0	16.3	54	43
Chittagong	30.6	16.5	80	58
Rajshahi	30.5	14.3	79	54
Khulna	30.0	16.4	83	62
Barisal	30.0	15.1	83	65
Sylhet	31.3	15.7	57	57
Cox's Bazar	29.4	16.5	80	77

'Bhut O Parir Galpo' launched

Speakers at a book launching ceremony said literature has a great role in shaping the minds of children, says a press release.

There is no alternative to children's literature to develop their creative minds and to help them materialise noble plans for their future life they added.

The function was organised yesterday at the Boibazar of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) to unveil the cover of a book titled 'Bhut O Parir Galpo' written by Raushan Ara Noor.

It was presided over by DAM President Kazi Rafiqul Alam and poet Samudra Gupta unveiled the cover of the book.

Gayana Bitroni published the book, which is the tenth publication of the writer.



PHOTO: STAR

Begum Ramiza Khatun, wife of slain former additional IGP Lutful Kabir, speaks at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday.

President visits Justice Habibur Rahman at CMH

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed visited ailing former Chief Adviser Justice Habibur Rahman at the

Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city yesterday.

The former CA suffered serious injuries in his left thigh joint as he slipped onto the floor at a Chittagong hotel on Thursday morning.

An official release said the president stayed there for some time and inquired about his treatment. Iajuddin also prayed for his early recovery.

Consultant Surgeon of the Armed Forces Major General Ali Akbar apprised the president of the treatment of Justice Rahman.

Iajuddin gave directive to the hospital authority and physicians concerned to take "necessary steps for the better treatment" of Justice Rahman.

Military Secretary to the President Major General M Aminul Karim, President's Secretary M Sirajul Islam, Chief Physician of the CMH Brig General Rabiul Hossain, Commandant of the CMH Brig General Toufique Islam and personal physician of the President Brig General

Sheikh Bahar Hossain were present.

DU urged not to invite Yunus as convocation speaker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Student organisations and a section of teachers yesterday urged the Dhaka University (DU) authorities not to invite Nobel laureate Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus as the convocation speaker to the 43rd convocation of the university scheduled for February 28.

A group of teachers, mostly loyal to Awami League (AL) and left-leaning parties, met Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz yesterday and threatened to boycott the convocation if the authorities do not pay heed to their demand.

Leaders of Chhatra Sangram Parishad, a combine of 14-party-backed student organisations, and left-leaning progressive students' alliance also met the VC separately to place the same demand. They told the VC that Prof Yunus, as the leader of a newly formed political party, has no moral right to be the convocation speaker.

"We can't allow the leader of a political party to use the convocation of Dhaka University as a platform for his politics," said Prof Harun-or-Rashid, dean of social science faculty.

He said, "We have no reservations about the Nobel laureate who was nominated as the convocation speaker earlier. But the situation has changed and he is now the leader of Nagorik Shakti, a political party. We are concerned that he might use the university platform for political purposes."

He also said that in the past, those who delivered the convocation speech at DU were non-partisan and acceptable to all. "But Dr Yunus has already made himself controversial by floating the political party," he added.

The university will also confer 'Doctor of Laws (honoris causa)' on Dr Yunus at the convocation ceremony. Asked about it, Prof Harun said, "We have no objections to it."

Meanwhile, a group of students yesterday held a press conference at Madhu's Canteen where they vowed to prevent Prof Yunus from taking part in the convocation as the main speaker.

Khomeni Ihsan, a fourth year student of Mass Communication and Journalism Department, read out a written statement at the press conference.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, in a statement on Friday, also opposed the decision to invite Prof Yunus as the convocation speaker.

Workshop on gender begins

A two-day training workshop on 'Gender: Concepts and Issues' for Upazila women affairs officers began on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, says a press release.

Dr Najma Chowdhury, founder-chairperson of the Department of Women and Gender Studies, DU, inaugurated the workshop organised by the department.

The main objective of the training is to sensitise the newly recruited Upazila women affairs officers to the concept of gender and other vital issues, such as, patriarchy, gender relations, roles, needs, equality, violence against women and women's empowerment.

The resource persons of the training are Dr Nazmunnesa Mahtab, Dr Sadeka Halim, Fowzia Khondhker, Runa Laila and Soma Dey.

Seminar
Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco will hold a seminar on Role of Unesco in restoring indigenous languages'. Venue: Academy for Planning & Development. Time: 3:00pm.

Roundtable
The Hunger Project will hold a roundtable on 'Poverty, discrimination and stability of the country'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

Memorial meeting
Coalition of Local NGOs, Bangladesh will hold a doa mahfil and a memorial meeting to mark the 'Martyrs Peacekeepers' Day'. Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity. Time: 10:30am.

Discussion
Forum for Secular Bangladesh will hold a discussion on the current political situation in the country. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar
University Grants Commission and others will hold a seminar 'Strengthening child rights as an academic discourse in South Asia'. Venue: Biam foundation.

Launching ceremony
The launching ceremony of a book titled 'Agony of development' organised by Empowerment through Law of the Common People will be held. Venue: RC Mojumdar auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Prize giving ceremony
The prize giving ceremony organised by Amra Kuri will be held. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy. Time: 5:00pm.

Photo exhibition
Nagorik Sanghati organises a photo exhibition titled 'People and environment of waterlogged Bhobdaho region'. Venue: TSC auditorium of Dhaka University. Time: 11:00am.

Production at Sangu gas field resumes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Production resumed at Sangu gas field yesterday evening after completion of drilling work at a new well successfully.

The production began at around 8:00pm around 44 hours after the production was suspended on Thursday midnight, sources at Sangu said.

It was suspended for 48 hours from 12:00 midnight to begin the drilling work of a new well.

Different gas-based industries, including Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Limited (CUFL) and Raozan power plant, will be able to start their production again with the restoration of gas supply from Sangu.

Sources in Bakhrabad Gas Systems Limited (BGS) said they will be able to start the supply as soon as they receive gas from the offshore gas field of Sangu.

Australia to consider national mother language day on Feb 21

BSS, Dhaka

Australian parliament will consider to include International Mother Language Day in its permanent calendar.

This was stated by Annette Ellis, member of Australian Federal Parliament, during her speech at a programme at Bangladesh High Commission in Canberra, Australia, yesterday marking the Language Martyrs' Day and International Mother Language Day.

She also thanked the Bangladeshi people for taking the leadership in defending their own mother language and promoting the mother languages of other people.

Speaking on the occasion, John Hargreaves, minister for housing and multicultural affairs, ACT government, promised that he will also speak to Chief Minister John Stanhope to observe the International Mother Language Day in ACT in a suitable manner, according to message received in Dhaka.

Earlier, Bangladesh High Commissioner M Humayun Kabir requested Annette Ellis and John Hargreaves to consider taking some initiatives to declare February 21 as National Mother Language Day in Australia.

Dr Darrell Tryon, director of Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies of ANU, said that like biodiversity, we should also think of linguistic diversity with equal importance.

Bangladesh-Australia Association Canberra Inc, PrioAustralia.com and Bangla Academy Australia joined hands with the high commission to organise the programme.

Sweepers blast RCC mayor for not allocating any CI sheet in 5 yrs

RU CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of sweepers yesterday blasted the mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) for not allocating even a single corrugated iron (CI) sheet as test relief during the last five years for the renovation of their colony.

They told the newsmen that Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu visited their colonies several times in last five years and assured them of providing CI sheets for the rehabilitation of the sweepers.

But this assurance was never materialised, they added.

The sweepers said their colony was established during the British period and more than 1500 people of their community have been living there in thatched houses.

Ranok Roy, a sweeper of Hatem Khan colony, said they are to suffer a lot during rainy season when rainwater penetrates into their rooms through the leak of worn-out CI sheets.

Haru Dutta, another resident of the sweeper colony, alleged that they had applied to the mayor several times for CI sheets but did not get any response from him.

Talking to newsmen, local Ward Commissioner Bilkis Banu also expressed her anguish as Minu failed to distribute relief materials among the needy and poor people. "After being elected in 2003, I could distribute only some rice and dates donated by the corporation for distribution among the poor," she lamented.

The mayor could not be contacted for his comment.

Meanwhile, the sweepers have urged the government to allocate to them the CI sheets recovered from the houses and party offices of different political leaders in the city.

In recent days, the joint forces have recovered huge CI sheets from the houses and cow-sheds of different city BNP leaders at Rajpara, Naohata and Kantakhali.