

Road crashes kill 5

STAR REPORT

At least five people, including two ansar personnel, were killed and 47 others injured in separate road accidents in Dhaka, Rangpur, Tangail and Sirajganj yesterday and on Friday.

Our staff correspondent adds: A garment worker was killed as an army vehicle ran over him at Pallabi in the city on Friday night, witnesses said.

The dead was identified as S Alam, 30, a worker of a sweater factory at Pallabi.

Police said a speeding army vehicle knocked down Alam when he was crossing the road near the Mirpur-12 bus stand at around 8:15pm.

Local people rushed injured Alam to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar where he succumbed to his injuries at around 11:05pm.

Alam's aunt Firoza Begum filed a case with Pallabi Police Station accusing the driver of the vehicle without mentioning any name.

Our correspondent from Rangpur reports: Two ansar personnel were killed and two others injured critically in a road accident on Rangpur-Bogra highway at

Kashimpur under Mithapukur upazila yesterday morning.

Police said a truck hit a Lalmonirhat-bound microbus carrying the dead body of ansar platoon commander Shamser Ali for his ancestral house from Dhaka at about 4:00am.

The microbus fell into a roadside ditch. Ansar personnel Delwar Hossain, 40 and Habib, 30, succumbed to their injuries on the spot while ansar personnel Emdadul and Meher Ali were rushed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in critical condition.

Delwar is a resident of Bhanga upazila of Gopalganj district and Habib is the resident of Kamarkatchna of Rangpur.

They were working at Ansar headquarters in Dhaka and going to hand over the body of Shamser Ali to his relatives in Lalmonirhat.

A case was lodged with Mithapukur police station in the district yesterday.

Witnesses said the accident took place at around 4:00pm when a Tangail-bound passenger bus from Sagardighi collided head on with a jackfruit-laden speedy truck coming

from the opposite direction at Bangra under Basail upazila, leaving six people of both the vehicles including the truck driver seriously injured.

They were rushed to Tangail General Hospital where the truck driver succumbed to his injuries.

On information, police received the body and sent it to morgue for autopsy.

The identity of the truck driver could not be known immediately.

Our correspondent from Sirajganj adds: An old man was killed and 40 others were injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Bogra highway near Soydabab approach road in the district early yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred at midnight when a Dhaka-bound bus collided head on with another bus coming from opposite direction, injuring at least 41 passengers of both the vehicles.

Of the injured, an unidentified old man, aged around 65, died on the way to hospital, while the rest were taken to Sadar hospital and different clinics in the town.

HIV-positive sex worker dies in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An HIV-positive sex worker died at Banishanta in Dakop upazila on Friday afternoon.

Marufa Begum, 30, was under treatment at the Upazila Health Complex when she died.

Marufa, who was a sex worker in Mumbai, India, died of HIV-related illness, said Civil Surgeon of Khulna Dr AKM Abdus Samad Mian.

Although she returned to her home village at Banishanta in October 2005, she was diagnosed as having the deadly disease in March last year when her blood tests carried out in Khulna General Hospital and Bangabandhu Medical College Hospital showed that she was infected with HIV.

Since then Marufa had been under treatment with the financial support from the World Vision, a non-government organisation.

Estranged from her husband, a day-labourer, while in Mumbai, Marufa became a sex worker to earn a living.

She left behind a 10-year-old daughter.

India HIV cases likely to fall

Says UNAIDS

AFP, New Delhi

India will report new estimates of HIV/AIDS infections next month that could show a sharp drop from earlier surveys that left the country with most cases worldwide, a UNAIDS official said yesterday.

Previous estimates from India's National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) have put the number of HIV cases at 5.2 million, while the United Nations AIDS arm in 2006 estimated 5.7 million cases -- the highest in the world.

NACO, UNAIDS and other organisations are now compiling data collected last year in what they termed the most detailed effort to count those infected with HIV, the virus that leads to fatal AIDS, in the nation of 1.1 billion.

"Most probably the figures will be lower than we thought," Dennis Broun, country director for UNAIDS India told AFP Saturday, without specifying a number.

"When UNAIDS gave the estimate of 5.7 million in India we said it could as low as 3.4 million and as high as nine. That is a very broad range. It might be that it could be even lower."

A report in India's Hindustan Times daily yesterday said the new estimate could be around 3.5 million but Indian officials working on the new numbers said it was too early to tell what the final tally would be.

The officials said the figures would be the most accurate yet, with vastly more data available from a larger number of testing sites used as markers for the presence of the disease in low and high-risk groups.

More than 1,100 such sites were used compared to 700 in previous years, said NACO's epidemiologist Ajay Kumar Khera.

"With HIV it is very difficult to find out the numbers -- you have to make a guess. This year it will be a better guess," Khera told AFP.

The numbers will also include the findings of a wide-ranging population health survey that tested 100,000 adults randomly between December 2005 and August 2006.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Selim Ahmed, founder president of Prantik Sangeet Bidyalaya, Shobdaboli group Theatre and Barisal Sangskriti Sangathan Samannaya Parishad, passed away due to old age complications at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital on Friday night at the age of 70.

He was buried at Barisal Muslim Gorosthan after namaz-e-janaza on the Aswani Kumar Hall premises. Different socio-cultural organisations and personalities, including Surlahori, Prantik, Shobdaboli, Kheyal, Udichi, Barisal Natok, Brojomohon Theater, Projommo, Shahid Altaf Mahmud Sangeet Bidyalaya, Khelaghori and Sangskriti Sangathan Samannaya Parishad, condoled the death of Selim Ahmed.

Farida Shahid

Farida Shahid, wife of Md Sanaullah Shahid, chairman Electra group, passed away due to prolonged illness at a city hospital on Friday, says a press release.

She was buried at the Azimpur graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Gulshan Azad Jame Mosque the same day.

She left behind her one son and one daughter to mourn her death.



PHOTO: AL Awami League President Sheikh Hasina talks to reporters in front of her Shudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

'Withdraw expulsion of LDP leader'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vice-president of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Feroz M Hassan yesterday demanded immediate withdrawal of the expulsion order against the publicity secretary of the party.

ATM Kamal was expelled on June 4.

Protesting the decision, Hasan said the expulsion is unlawful as it was not done as per the provisions of the party constitution and not discussed even at the national executive committee.

"The expulsion was a unilateral and autocratic decision taken by the president, executive president and secretary general without any regard to democratic norms," he said.

The charge against Kamal is based on the facts that he had the audacity to raise his voice in favour of reforms and against certain corrupt militants who have joined the LDP, Hasan claimed.

"Kamal, I believe, was singled out and targeted so that other vocal pro-reform leaders in the party are silenced," he alleged.

Hasan urged party president, executive president and secretary general to refrain from, what he said, undemocratic behaviour and indulgence in corrupt practices, instead of fulfilling the promises they made in the past two years.

Wild storms continue to lash Australia: Six dead

AFP, Sydney

Six people were confirmed dead and another two were missing yesterday as wild storms continued to lash Australia's east coast, smashing boats, flooding roads and cutting power to 200,000 homes.

The Hunter Valley and Central Coast regions north of Sydney were declared disaster zones after being pounded by gale-force winds and torrential rains for a second day.

Massive seas ran aground at least 12 pleasure craft moored in Sydney Harbour, although fears eased that a massive coal freighter stranded at Newcastle would break up and create an environmental disaster.

Police put the official death toll at six, including a couple in their fifties whose car was washed off a bridge.

Searchers also found the bodies of four members of a family of five carried away when a highway collapsed.

The four bodies found were an adult female and three children -- a nine-year-old boy, a three-year-old girl and a two-year-old girl. The children's bodies were recovered.

Search teams were still looking for one more family member, believed to be an adult male.

The Australian Associated Press news agency reported that the adult body found, a 30-year-old woman, was the mother of the children and the missing male, a 30-year-old, was the father.

A Newcastle man was also missing after falling down a stormwater drain late Friday, police said.

With Australia beginning a long holiday weekend, officials advised motorists to scrap plans to travel to popular tourist spots in the state's north, saying a number of major roads were closed.

Power utility EnergyAustralia said 200,000 homes had no electricity and could remain blacked out until late next week.

"This is the worst storm and the worst damage our electricity network has seen for more than 30 years," EnergyAustralia network general manager Geoff Lilliss said.

Hundreds of people were evacuated as floodwaters rose, including 65 elderly residents of a Central Coast nursing home.

The Bureau of Meteorology said the storm dumped 300 millimetres (12 inches) of rain on some areas, with winds peaking at 120 kilometres per hour (75 miles per hour).

It said conditions had eased slightly Saturday morning, granting a reprieve to emergency services struggling to cope with more than 5,000 calls for assistance.

But meteorology bureau forecaster Julie Evans said that after causing extensive flooding in Newcastle, the storm was likely to intensify as it moved south towards Sydney before heading out to sea.

"It will be the sting in the tail in the system before it moves off to the east," she told Sky News.

Sydney ferry services were suspended for a second day amid huge swells.

Officials said at least a dozen recreational boats in Sydney Harbour had broken their moorings and run aground or were towed to safety, while a beachside wharf collapsed into sea.

But the 30,000-tonne vessel Pasha Bulker, which ran aground Friday when the storm first hit, appeared to be structurally sound and there was no sign that its 800 tonnes of oil and fuel was leaking.

Fake Rab man arrested in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a fake Rab member from city's Steel Mill Bazar near the Rab 7 Chittagong headquarters on Friday afternoon.

The arrestee was identified as Mohammad Tareq, 34, of village Paikandi under Balikandia upazila in Rajbari district.

On information, a squad of the Rab 7 raided the Steel Mill Bazar under Patenga Police Station at around 2:00pm and arrested Tareq.

After interrogation, Tareq confessed that he was involved in collecting extortion identifying himself as a Rab member at different areas of the port city.

One Omar Faruk of city's Colonel Hat lodges a written complaint against Tareq on June 1 mentioning that Tareq demanded extortion from him identifying himself as a Rab member.

Besides, Mohammad Ali filed complaint against Mohammad Selim at the Rab headquarters. Tareq demanded a handsome amount from the both parties to settle the dispute among them as a Rab member.

Shamunnay will hold a view exchange on the current budget with noted economist Dr Ataur Rahman in the chair.

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