

Road accidents kill 7, injure 22

STAR REPORT

At least seven people were killed and 22 others injured in separate road accidents in Gazipur, Faridpur, Khagrachhari, Comilla, Rajshahi and Barisal yesterday and on Monday.

A correspondent from Gazipur adds: An unidentified woman was killed and two others were injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Tangail highway at Gazipur Sadar yesterday.

The accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound minibus hit a truck standing in front of Bhawal Badre Alam Government College, leaving a woman, aged about 24, passenger of the minibus, dead on the spot.

The injured were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

Officer in charge (OC) of Joydevpur Police Station Mizanur Rahman said a case was filed with Joydevpur Police Station in this regard.

A CORRESPONDENT from Faridpur reports: A woman was killed and eight others were injured in a road accident at Bhanga upazila of Faridpur yesterday.

According to police, the accident occurred at about 7:00am when a passenger bus coming from Dhaka for Moksdepur turned upside down on Bhanga-Mawa

highway and fell into a roadside ditch in Brahmanpara area of Bhanga as its driver lost control over the steering.

The dead was identified as Salta Rani Das, 30, wife of Uttam Kumar Das of Moksdepur upazila of Gopalganj. The injured were admitted to Bhanga hospital.

Our correspondent from Khagrachhari adds: One person was killed and two others were injured in a road accident at Thalipara under Mohalchhari upazila in Khagrachhari district yesterday.

The dead was identified as truck driver Amzad Hossen, 29, son of Soharab Hossen of Chongrachhari village under Mohalchhari upazila. The injured are Abul Hossen, 23 and Babu, 16.

Police said the accident occurred when a Mohalchhari-bound truck loaded with banana turned upside down and fell into a ditch as its driver lost control over the steering near Thalipara, leaving Amzad dead on the spot.

The injured were released after first aid, they said. The body was sent to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

A CORRESPONDENT from Comilla reports: At least two people, including a BDR member, were killed and 10 others injured in a road accident in Kalakochua area on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in

Burichang upazila on Monday night.

The deceased were identified as Md Abdul Malek Biswas, 38 a BDR man of Chowbaria village of Pangsha upazila in Rajbari district and Shahidul Islam, 35, of Bonogon village in Gopalganj district.

Police quoting local people said the accident occurred at about 10:30pm when a Dhaka-bound passenger bus collided head-on with a Chittagong-bound goods-laden truck, leaving two people dead on the spot and 10 others injured.

The critically injured were sent to Burichang Health Complex and Comilla Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

A case was filed with the Burichang police. The bodies were sent to the Comilla Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile, One person was killed in a road accident the same day in Shetolia area near Mirabazar in Choudagram upazila.

The accident occurred when a passenger bus collided head-on with a motorcycle, leaving the motorcyclist dead on the spot.

The dead was identified as Farhan Uddin, 30, son of Abdur Rahman of College Road in Majdee upazila in Noakhali district.

Police seized the bus but its

driver and helper managed to flee. Police also recovered the body and sent it to Comilla Medical College hospital for autopsy.

RU correspondent adds: An old man was killed in a road accident in Nawhata bridge area in the city on Monday evening.

Police and locals said the accident occurred when a speedy truck hit the old man when he crossing the bridge.

The deceased was identified as Nader Ali, 60, of Barabari village in Rajshahi.

Local people rushed Nader to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Police seized the truck but driver managed to escape.

Our correspondent from Barisal says: Halimunnesa, 70, succumbed to her injuries at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) early yesterday morning.

A bus hit Halimunnesa in the Gournadi bus stand area on Monday morning.

Local people said the elderly woman, a widow without any spouse, became homeless by her relatives and engaged in begging in the area.

She was buried at her family graveyard at Nandanpotty village yesterday afternoon after namaz-e-janaza.



Former state minister for labour and employment Amanullah Aman, left, and former state minister for communications Salahuddin Ahmed, right, were produced before the court in the city yesterday.

4 policemen suspended for setting gold smuggler free

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four policemen were suspended yesterday on charge of setting a suspected gold smuggler free along with three gold bars that he was carrying with him in exchange for Tk 1.5 lakh in the city recently.

They are Sub-Inspector Asaduzzaman, Assistant Sub-Inspector Shahidul Islam and Constables Sakmal Hossain and Sabdar Ali of Mirpur Police Station.

The suspension came after a primary investigation found their involvement in the incident.

Although the four policemen were not on duty, they in plain clothes nabbed Nurul Alam, a suspected gold smuggler, from Technical Crossing in Mirpur on September 28 following a secret information.

Later they set Alam, a resident of Chapainawabganj, free after taking away the gold bars weighing about 30 tolas from him.

The policemen neither deposited the gold bars to the police station nor informed the high-ups of the matter.

However, the matter was leaked out on Monday when they returned the gold bars to Alam in exchange for Tk 1.5 lakh.

"The incident came to our notice when Alam took back the gold bars from the policemen giving them Tk 1.5 lakh," Officer-in-Charge of Mirpur Police Station Mohiuddin Mahmood told The Daily Star.

"Soon the matter was informed to higher authorities who instantly suspended the four policemen and initiated a departmental inquiry," he added.

Prof Najma Chy made Rokeya Chair

BSS, Dhaka

University Grants Commission (UGC) nominated Professor Dr Najma Chowdhury, a teacher of Department of Women and Gender Studies of Dhaka University, as Rokeya Chair to commemorate the contribution of Begum Rokeya to education, empowerment and development of women in the country.

The approval was given at a meeting of 'Rokeya Chair' nomination committee at the UGC Bhawan with UGC Chairman Professor Nazrul Islam in the chair recently, says a UGC press release.

Rokeya Chair will be attached to Department of Women and Gender Studies of Dhaka University. The holder of the chair will be a distinguished scholar and the incumbent will draw Tk 23,000 as remuneration per month with other allowances of Tk 25,000 per year.

The Chair will prepare a research report annually and present at least two seminars. The tenure of the position is two years.

Reforms to ensure sustainable democracy

BSS, Dhaka

The caretaker government has been taking essential reform measures with a view to holding a meaningful election by December 2008 in order to establish sustainable democracy. Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain said yesterday.

It is important to evaluate the fact that in the present situation only elections would not guarantee democracy, he said at a function celebrating the Day of German Unity at the German Embassy in the city.

German Ambassador Frank Meyke, political leaders, diplomats and newspaper editors attended the ceremony.

Adviser Mainul Hossain said the political parties have responsibilities to prepare themselves to allow democracy to function besides seeking cooperation from friends abroad.

The support of Germany and other members of the European Union for the efforts of the present caretaker government is gratefully acknowledged, he said, mentioning the friendly relations of Bangladesh with Germany.

The Bangladesh's export to Germany in the last financial year stood at US\$ 19,955.38 million and the import was only

US\$ 394.10 million that indicated a fruitful partnership between the two countries, he added.

The two countries share similar views on issues like democracy, good governance, human rights, peace and development activities, the adviser said, adding that the important aspect of the relations between the two countries is bilateral trade.

Mainul thanked the German government for its firm support for providing duty and quota-free access for Bangladeshi goods to the European Union and for its grants for development activities of Bangladesh as its fourth largest development partner.

He also appreciated Germany for its assistance in achieving the millennium development goals in the fields of basic health, family planning, HIV/AIDS, economic reforms, market economy and energy.

The German ambassador said Germany supports the efforts of Bangladesh to strengthen democracy and protect human rights.

Bangladesh-Germany development cooperation now encompasses 34 years of commitment of the German government to Bangladesh, he said.

IIUC graduate develops humanoid robot

DU CORRESPONDENT

With a view to provide helping hand to man in doing different complicated and risky jobs, a private university graduate is developing a humanoid robot which will be equally efficient but less costlier than other humanoid robots.

Firoz Ahmed Siddiqui, a graduate of Dhaka campus of International Islamic University Chittagong, said the robot IRobo would take one year more as 90 percent of its mechanical work and 40 percent of intellectual input have so far been completed.

On full completion, the humanoid robot would comply with different verbal commands in English for doing household jobs like staiting objects and cleaning floors, said Firoz at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday.

In a comparison with the Japanese humanoid robot Asimo, he said, "The work efficiency of the IRobo is equal to Asimo, or in some cases, it shows better performance than Asimo."

Chief Adviser of Firoz's IRobo project Shamsul Alam, an associate professor of IIUC, and adviser Shafiqur Rahman of IIUC, were present at the press conference.

They held a demonstration of the robot before the journalists when the IRobo walked down the floor for quite few minutes and greeted them saying, "Hello guests, I'm IRobo. Welcome you all here, and soon."

"The IRobo, which has total four joints in the body- one each in neck and elbow and two in wrists- is intelligent, can identify human voice and match in different situation and environment," said Firoz.

IRobo has a vision system with two cams, three fingers to grip objects and automation system by three wheels, he added.

Feroz started the project as a research and development project and gave the robot a shape of human body this year.

The IIUC has provided Feroz with a laboratory to do the work, but fund constraint is hampering the rest of the job.

He said to finish his work, a financial assistance worth Tk 2,00,000 is needed.

Feroz sought help from government and private organisations for full implementation of the project.

"If fund is available, I am confident I can finish the work on time and it will be one of the best robots of the world," he claimed.

Feroz said an Australian software firm Tichhands wanted to provide fund for the project, but it also wanted the copyright of the robot.

"Sowerefused them," he added.

Polish priest caught driving 11 times over drink limit

AFT, Warsaw

A Polish Roman Catholic priest is facing a holy war after he was caught at the wheel following a drinking spree that left him 11 times over the limit, police said yesterday.

"Father Antoni M., 54, had a blood-alcohol level of more than 2.2 grammes per litre," Warsaw police spokeswoman Anna Kedzierzawska was quoted as saying by Poland's PAP news agency.

Officers arrested the priest in the early hours of Tuesday after spotting his car zigzagging through the centre of Warsaw, police said.

He could face two years in prison for breaking Poland's drink-driving limit of 0.2 grammes of alcohol per litre of blood.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

The two persons circled in the photo are pedestrians, not accused in any case. But Focus Bangla provided the photo with circle marks on Monday, inadvertently identifying them as accused. The caption of the photo, published in The Daily Star yesterday, was 'former public works secretary SM Jafarullah, former Rajuk chairman Shahidul Alam and Iqbal Hossain and Rajuk official Golam Nabi are being taken to jail after they surrendered to a court in connection with a graft case'. Focus Bangla regrets the inadvertent error.

WATER PILFERAGE

40 Ctg establishments fined in Sept

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A mobile court in the port city in its month-long drives against water pilferage fined 40 different establishments Tk 36 lakh for pilfering Wassa water last month.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Munir Chowdhury led the drives titled 'Operation Save Wassa' through out the month of September at different places in the city with the help of the officials of engineering and revenue departments of Chittagong Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa).

The court fined 40 different establishments, including 12 residential and non-residential hotel and restaurants, 19 residential and commercial buildings, three salt factories, two ice factories, two building construction firms, one community centre and one plastic factory, said the sources.

During the drive the court also fined five Wassa officials and staffs Tk 1 lakh on charges of helping these firms evade taxes. It also seized 400 feet long GI and plastic pipe and seven meters with different capacity.

During the drives the court found that the authorities of these establishments pilfered water through illegal underground pipeline, tempering metres, digging unauthorised deep tube-well, expanding Wassa main line illegally and collecting water from Wassa line through setting pump.

The court also found that some of the commercial firms paid the bills at residential rates. It found that Wassa water was being wasted through using in construction works.

When contacted, Magistrate Munir, who is also acting as Chittagong Wassa Magistrate as an additional duty, said the incidents of pilferage and wastage of Wassa water and practice of evading tax have declined remarkably due to such drives.

The same court in a drive in the port city's North Halishahar area recovered around 164 acres of land from the erstwhile Pakistan government in 1962 to implement its garbage treatment plant while the then district administration handed it over to Wassa in 1964, sources said.

But locals illegally occupied the land through building different structures, including around 25 fish cultivating farms, 25 poultry farms, houses and shops for the last 43 years, said CPA Magistrate Munir.

DV LOTTERY 2009

Applications to be accepted from 10:00pm today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US Embassy in Dhaka yesterday cautioned the applicants

not to become victims by paying money to frauds as the online Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery Season 2009 starts at 10:00pm (local time) today and will continue up to December 2.

"With your personal application, dishonest agents can receive your winning letter at a different address, and then extort money from you. Some people have paid over Tk 15 lakh," said US Embassy Consular Section Chief Elizabeth P Goulay at a press conference at American Club in the city.

Applicants may have the access to electronic DV entry form at www.dvlottery.state.gov during the registration period and no paper entries will be accepted, she said, advising them not to wait until the last week of the registration period to enter because heavy demand may result in website delays.

Elizabeth said every person is 100 percent responsible for his or her own entry.

"Even if someone fills out the form for you, you are still responsible for the mistakes on the application, which will disqualify you," she said, asking applicants not to use agents to fill out the form.

Elizabeth said the applicants should pay not more than one would pay to check his or her e-mail while paying for using a public computer during applying for DV.

She said the costs for DV will be about Tk 60,000, but only if anyone is scheduled for an interview at the US Embassy.

"Remember, it costs absolutely nothing to apply," she added.

The annual DV programme makes diversity immigrant visas available to persons meeting the simple, but strict eligibility requirements.

A computer-generated random lottery drawing chooses selectees for diversity visas.

The visas are distributed among six geographic regions with a greater number of visas going to regions with lower rates of immigration, and with no visas going to nationals of countries sending more than 50,000 immigrants to the United States over the period of the past five years.

Bangladesh will receive a maximum of 3500 visas under the DV 2009, Elizabeth said.

The Diversity Visa application instructions in Bangla are available on the Embassy's website at dhaka.usembassy.gov.

All instructions in print will also be found at the American Embassy at Baridhara, American Center at Banani and Saimon Overseas Ltd at House 4/A, Road 22, Gulshan in the city.

Deputy Director of American Center Harvey W Sernovitz and US Embassy Visa Assistant Jasmin Ara were present at the press conference.

Drug stores fined for irregularities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A mobile court realised fine Tk 47,000 from several drug stores for having no trade license, not preserving vaccines properly and keeping date expired medicines in Gazipur yesterday.

The court ran the drive at Sadman Medical, Hasan Medical, Beethi Pharmacy and Sayma Medical.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Chittagong division and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet, Barisal and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 34.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakundu and lowest 24.0 degree Celsius at Tangail.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:44pm today and rises at 5:51am 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	32.8	26.4	76	77
Chittagong	32.7	26.5	76	80
Rajshahi	32.8	26.0	90	89
Khulna	33.5	26.4	80	95
Barisal	33.5	26.6	77	83
Sylhet	33.5	25.0	75	72
Cox's Bazar	33.0	25.5	67	78

GRAFT CASE

Hazari's sister Khodeza held in Feni

UNB, Feni

A taskforce of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) arrested former Awami League lawmaker Joyal Hazari's sister Khodeza Begum from her Mastapara residence in the town yesterday in a corruption case.

Khodeza was produced before the district cognizance court-1 and then sent to jail.

Earlier in the day, ACC deputy director of Comilla M Saifur Rahman filed the case against Joyal Hazari and Khodeza with Sadar Police Station.

According to the case, Tk 1.13 crore owned by Joyal Hazari was found in the bank account of Khodeza.

In her statement to the ACC, Khodeza said her brother Hazari owns the money.

Hazari, a former AL lawmaker from Feni-2 constituency, fled to India during a BDR-police raid on August 17 in 2001.

Hazari has already been sentenced to 50 years' imprisonment in four cases.

ACC to receive list of 80 graft suspects in two days likely

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) may officially receive the new list of 80 high-profile corrupt suspects within a day or two, but it is likely to come to the Commission in pieces.

The list containing the names of senior politicians, businessmen and bureaucrats were made available on Sept 27.

"We've not yet officially received the list. I guess we'll get it within this week," ACC Secretary Mokhees ur Rahman told UNB yesterday evening.

He said, "I also think the list will come to the Commission in pieces for the convenience of work."

Banglalink offers online mock test for SSC examinees

Recently banglalink has partnered with Dhaka-bd.com to provide the students of the country with a unique opportunity to improve their examination skills.

This innovative method of providing testing solutions for students through online tests was developed through Dhaka-bd.com and their database of SSC questions.

Any banglalink customer can use his/her banglalink number and appear for an online mock test at www.mcgexam.com, SSC exams, says a press release.

The process through which the service is provided is quite simple. A banglalink subscriber or customer interested in it has to send an SMS from their number to 6271, to receive the pin code to sit for the online exams. Students can use their customer ID and PIN code.

Death anniversary of Baren Majumder today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 6th death anniversary of Baren Majumder, a noted musician and one of the pioneers in promoting classical music and founder of the first music college in the country.

Baren Majumder was born in Pabna in 1919. He learned classical music from Vishwadev Chatterjee, Chinmoy Lahiri, Ustad Faiaz Khan and Pandit Sreekrishna Ratanjankar.

After completion of his education in Lakhnou Moris College Baren returned to the country in 1947. He prepared music syllabus for secondary education board.

In 1963 he established the first music college 'College of Music' which later affiliated with Dhaka University.

Baren was honoured with Ekushey Padak, Swadhinata Padak, Janakantha Gunjan Shanmanana and many other awards.

Nasreen Jahed Rekha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 4th death anniversary of Nasreen Jahed Rekha, wife of former chief executive of Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC) MA Jahed.

On the occasion, fateha will be offered at her grave and millad mahfil will be held at her Dhamondri residence in the city after Asr prayers.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the millad mahfil.

Power ministry power being decentralised

FROM PAGE 1

A power ministry official cannot represent the ministry in more than two of these companies at other levels.

At the executive body level, only the managing director will have the authority to represent a company. The company boards will have representatives from the consumers, businessmen and other groups concerned for the first time.

Representatives' councils of the companies will include financial experts, also for the first time.

On the other hand, the companies, which now do not have specific financial or performance targets, will have to set their annual targets.

Sources said the highest level of the government has approved in principle this proposal and it is now under legal scrutiny. A legal adviser of the ministry is now scrutinising it.

In the past, secretaries or high officials of the ministry solidified their positions in these companies through approval of the prime minister or by incorporating certain clauses in the Memorandum of Association of the companies. According to legal experts, these

clauses can be removed through holding annual general meeting (AGM) of a company.

Sources pointed out that in the past secretaries or high officials of the ministry managed to have such powers simply to get extra personal benefits. For instance, a power secretary used five to six cars and Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs). He also made extra income by taking allowances for attending meetings of the companies. Besides, there were a host of other benefits.

"As the power secretary headed five or six boards, this made him a very powerful and influential man, which was not desirable. This created the opportunity of corruption at his level, and broke the chain of command in the companies," said another official.

The secretary's involvement with the boards also encouraged company staff to ignore their management and make the secretary happy. This turned out to be a disincentive for professionalism, he added.

Meanwhile, the government last week also approved promotion of more than 100 technical officials of Power Development Board (PDB), who had been serving on a make-