

8 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least eight people were killed and six others injured in separate road accidents in Lalmonirhat, Comilla, Joypurhat and Benapole yesterday.

A correspondent from Lalmonirhat reports: Four people were killed and six others injured in separate road accidents in Lalmonirhat yesterday.

Witnesses and police said three people, including two by-cycle riders and a rickshawpuller, were killed on the spot and six pedestrians injured in Rangpur-Kurigram Highway in Barabari Dakbangla area under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila when a Rangpur-bound passenger bus from Kurigram hit them at 12.30pm.

The dead were identified as Rezaul Karim, 18, Mohammad Reza, 28, and Yunus Ali, 35. They were residents of Barabari and Kheda Bag villages under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

The agitated people put up barricade on the highway for two hours following the accident.

The local people seized the bus but its driver managed to escape.

Meanwhile, a village policeman was killed on the spot in Saptabari area under Aditmari upazila when a microbus hit him on Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway at 10.30am yesterday.

The dead was identified as

Hossain Ali, 35, son of Akbar Ali of village Kamlabari under Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat. Hossain was working as a village policeman under Kamlabari Union.

Hossain was going to Lalmonirhat town from Aditmari riding a by-cycle.

The bodies were sent to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

A correspondent from Comilla says: Two people were killed in a separate road accident in Comilla yesterday.

An elderly man was crushed under the wheels of a bus on Comilla-Burichang road in South Shyampur area under Burichang upazila in the morning.

The dead was identified as Abdul Khaleq, 70, of Mohismara village of the upazila.

Local people said, a Brahmanpara-bound passenger bus ran over Khaleq when he was crossing the road at about 7.00am, leaving him dead on the spot.

Police sent the body to Comilla Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Police also seized the bus.

A college student was killed on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Suyagazi area in Choudhagram upazila on Saturday night.

The dead was identified as Golam Hasnail Towhid alias Shohag, 25, a BBA student and son

of Ahalay Sunnat Wall Jamaat Comilla district President Gazi AM Wahid Maburi.

Quoting local people, police said the accident occurred at about 7.30pm as Towhid's motorcycle turned upside down on the road while he lost his control over the steering, leaving him dead on the spot.

Our correspondent from Dinajpur adds: A minor girl was killed in a road accident at Kalai upazila of Joypurhat yesterday.

The dead was identified as Purnima, 6, under Kalai upazila of Joypurhat was student of Kalai Primary School in Kalai upazila of Joypurhat.

Witnesses said the accident occurred when a motorcycle hit Purnima while she was crossing a road, leaving her injured critically. She was rushed to Joypurhat Modern Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries.

A correspondent from Benapole adds: A transport businessman was killed in a road accident near Benapollandport yesterday.

The dead was identified as Rukanuddin, 35, son of Akbar Ali of Gazipur in Benapole.

Witnesses said the accident occurred when a truck hit his van while Rukanuddin was going to Benapole Port, leaving him injured critically.

Rukanuddin succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital.

Two abductees rescued in Ctg, 2 arrested

CU CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) rescued two abductees and arrested two abductors from Rahimpur at Hathazari in the district on Saturday.

The abductees were identified as Mohammad Hanif, 22, son of Abdul Wahab of Munshiganj district and Mohammad Nasir, 20, son of Alek Ali of Dhaka district while the arrestees were Mohammad Ayub Uddin, 29, and Mohammad Zia Haider, 25.

Sources said the abductors picked up Hanif and Nasir identifying themselves as policemen from a scrap shop at Bangla Bazar under Bayezid Police Station on September 20.

They demanded Tk 5 lakh from Renu Begum, mother of Hanif, as ransom over cellular phone and threatened to kill her son if she fails to meet their demands.

Later, the deal was settled at Tk 1 lakh, to be paid in two installments. Renu Begum paid Tk 50,000 of the first installment at a house in Mekhalat Hathazari on October 22.

However, the abductors assaulted Renu and her granddaughters when she asked them to release her son. On the contrary, the abductors said they would release her son once they receive the full amount within October 25.

In the meantime, Renu lodged a complaint at Rab-7 Headquarters at Patenga in this connection.

Later, Rab members raided the house - Nur Mahal at Rahimpur and arrested the abductors and recovered Tk 40,000 from their possession on Saturday.

Seminar for women entrepreneurs in Chittagong today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A daylong seminar cum workshop for women entrepreneurs titled 'Pathfinders 2007: Women in SMEs' will be held at Hotel Agrabad in the port city today.

Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (BFWE), Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CWCCI) and IFC-SEDF jointly organise the programme beginning at 10.00am.

BFWE president and former adviser to the caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman will inaugurate the seminar as the chief guest.



Lt Gen Masud leaves for US

UNB, Dhaka

Principal Staff Officer of Armed Forces Division Lt Gen Masud Uddin Chowdhury left Dhaka for United States of America (USA) yesterday to attend the 10th Annual Asia-Pacific Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) conference.

The conference will be held at Honolulu in Hawaii from October 30 to November 2.

Lt Gen Masud was accompanied by his wife Begum Jasmin Masud, said an ISPR press release.

Birth anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 89th birth anniversary of late poet and journalist Talim Hossain, says a press release.

Talim was born in a cultural family at Chakrail in Rajshahi on this day in 1918. He played significant role in establishing Nazrul Academy. He also contributed in the field of literature and journalism in the sub-continent.

His daughters and sons requested all to pray for the departed soul.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of poet Gazi Sadeq, former managing director of Sonargaon Pan Pacific Hotel and general manager of Bangladesh Parjaton Corporation, will be held today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held after Asr prayers today at his Shyamoli residence in the city.

Admirers are requested to attend the doa mahfil and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

He passed away at Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital on October 26.



Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain speaks at the inaugural session of a two-day Senior Editors' Conference 2007 on 'Media Reporting: Armed Conflict and Violence' at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

Five arrested with 71 grams of heroin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) has arrested five people and seized 71 grams of heroin in three separate raids, said a press release yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a special team of DNC raided a place at Pargandaria in Jatrabari and arrested Abdul Kalam, 25, and Zulhash Uddin, 30, with four grams of heroin.

In the second raid, two people Md Jahangir, 24, and Nur Karim, 30, were arrested from Dayaganj Bridge and Uliniganj area and seized 63 grams of heroin.

The team also arrested a woman Rani, 20, with 4 grams of heroin from Pallabi area.

'Ensure inclusion of all in voter list'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday urged all to work together to ensure inclusion of all in the ongoing voter list.

Bangladesh Manabdhikar Samannaya Parishad (BMSPP) organised the meeting titled 'Encouragement of voter registration and election management' at WVA auditorium in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, former adviser to a caretaker government ASM Shahjahan said people invest in election because it offers an opportunity to get the refund.

And that is why we witnessed influence of black money and muscle power in the previous elections, he said.

"We have to ensure that the election is free from black money and muscle power to establish

good governance," he added.

In his keynote paper, BMSP President AHM Nouman said, "We have witnessed bitter experiences regarding formulating voter list and we have to work together so that no voter misses out."

He proposed to form an Election Caretaking Council (ECC) comprising political parties, civil society members and professional bodies, which will assist the Election Commission (EC) in carrying out its election-related activities.

He urged the EC to formulate laws regarding electoral expenditure management to find out the deserving candidates.

BMSP Director Advocate Muhammad Shamsuddin, Vice Presidents Osman Gani and Abul Kashem also spoke on the occasion.

SA media leaders talk of greater duty, freedom

FROM PAGE 16

Governments must learn to show restraint and follow international laws by allowing international institutions to play their parts, before resorting to repression, he said.

"The effectiveness of the UN is our best hope for peaceful resolution of national and international conflicts. If the arrogance of military might states can be kept in check, then the UN's collective power can be best used for avoiding dangerous conflicts you feel so concerned about," he told the audience.

The US's war on Iraq and Afghanistan can be used as a valuable study for learning, albeit in the costliest of ways, how in modern days military might of a superpower might become helpless by trying to impose its will, only to succeed in spreading the violence globally instead, he observed.

Emphasising on efforts for discouraging armed conflicts as means for resolving political disputes by the states or non-state players, Barrister Mainul said the Geneva Convention or other international laws are not adequate for protecting the journalists covering armed conflicts.

"The relationship between the media and its readers and viewers is based on trust. Misinformation and manipulation of information are violations of that trust," said Swapna Das Gupta, a prolific columnist based in Delhi.

Speaking on glamorizing violence and the media's role in it, in the morning session he said glamorizing violence might be good for business, but it is a bad business

practice that should be stopped.

Dhaka Bureau Chief of Associated Press Farid Hossain said telling the truth is the virtue of journalists, but unfortunately they are dying around the globe for doing so.

This trend of torture and killing of journalists is on the rise as govt. perpetrators are failing to bring the perpetrators to justice, he said, urging the editors to stand by the reporters to save them.

Asian Affairs Editor Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley of Dhaka termed journalists "unacknowledged legislators", and observed that the authorities should change their mindset and should be motivated properly to ensure free movement of journalists.

"Worldwide advocacy campaigns are needed for free press that helps save the humanity," Dr Shelley, also the chairman of the Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh said.

Speaking at the afternoon session, Press Trust of India's Senior Editor Amitabh Roy Chowdhury said terrorist insurgents are a threat to the protection of journalists in many parts of the region.

Referring to experiences in covering insurgency-related events, he said those groups often put pressure for printing their information in an effort to gain mileage with the people, while the state authorities ask the media to show enough causes for running the stories -- putting the media between a rock and a hard place.

Amitabh Roy recommended a number of ways including carrying identity cards, being in groups and

in low profile, keeping the editors informed, and taking help from local journalists while covering armed conflicts.

Annapurna Post News Editor Dharmendra Jha of Nepal said hundreds of journalists were tortured and many were killed in their struggle for democracy in Nepal, while the role of the judiciary in protecting the media has sometimes been laudable.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said journalists deal with the issues of freedom of expression, diversity of views, cultures, religions and the right to differ -- where lies the soul of creativity.

"They deal with accountability and transparency and a whole range of intellectual activities," he said adding that the media's duties have also increased now in manifold, making it imperative that the media carries out its duties more effectively and responsibly.

There are international safeguards for journalists, but those do not help effectively in situations of armed violence, said Mahfuz Anam, who chaired the afternoon session. Lankabaranage Anura Solomons of Sri Lanka, Ugyen Penjor of Bhutan, Murtaza Razi of Pakistan, and Abdul Aziz Danesh of Afghanistan also spoke at the sessions. Mahfuz Alam, former adviser to a caretaker government of Bangladesh, chaired the morning session.

The second and concluding day of the event is today, where Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury is scheduled to be present as the chief guest.

Govt counting loss as production cost triples

FROM PAGE 1

noted a high official.

The payment of the seventh instalment of the loan became due in September and the government is now processing all formalities for the payment, although the spiralling coal production cost is imposing huge liabilities on the government.

CMC had suspended coal production for six months from October 2006 due to non-payment of the sixth instalment of the supplier's credit. Although the mine was supposed to be completed in 1998, the project remains unfinished in parts and the mine is producing less than half of "revised" target production. Originally the mine, being built at a cost of around Tk 800 crore, was supposed to produce 60 million tonnes of coal in 30 years. But following a technical disaster, the mine was redesigned in 1998 putting the production target at just 30 million tonnes. But again, from late 2005, poisonous gas emission forced the mining authorities to seal off phase-1110 along with mining equipment, thus halving the daily production target again.

This has tripled the coal production cost.

Sources said while the original coal production cost was estimated at less than \$35 per tonne now it is close to \$100 per tonne.

The mine is also set to stop coal production for six weeks from mid-November. The mine authorities would take this time to prepare for coal extraction from a new phase (phase-1103).

The miners have nearly exhausted extracting coal from

phase-1109 from which the mine is now producing 2,000 to 2,500 tonnes of coal per day and it serves as the main source for the 250 megawatt coal fired power plant at the mine site.

"The biggest challenge for the loss-incurring coalmine is to keep producing coal at any cost to keep the power plant running. The power plant itself took nearly \$300 million to set up and keeping it closed for lack of coal supply is not an option," said a Petrobangla official.

"But, this will not be a problem for the power plant. Presently we have more than 60,000 tonnes of coal in our inventory. In the next three weeks, we expect the mining authorities to extract and add another 40,000 tonnes. The power plant may consume 30,000 tonnes during this time and that leave us with around 70,000 tonnes of coal in the inventory--this is enough for the power plant's operation for the next six weeks," he added.

He pointed out that the mining authority in association with CMC was preparing to unseal phase-1110 again in early 2008. "We have no option but to try to unseal it and recover our mining equipment. Once we do it, we can take our production level to 3,300 tonnes a day and thus halve the production cost," he pointed out, adding, as part of the preparation, the CMC has expanded its expert team.

He noted that if the incident of poisonous gas emission had not happened, the mine would have produced coal as per target. "In 2005-06, the mine came close to its targeted production of five lakh

tonnes. But the mine could not come close to the targeted 7.7 lakh tonne production in 2006-07. The target production for 2007-08 is one million tonnes. But we are left with just one set of mining equipment," he pointed out.

"We cannot afford to fail with the mine. Because, we spent Tk 1,445 crore for this mine and another Tk 2,000 crore for the power plant. If we fail, both these investments will be doomed," he added.

Earlier this year, the government paid CMC the sixth instalment of the Chinese supplier's credit worth \$15 million, despite opposition from the mining company's legal adviser.

The legal adviser said CMC repeatedly failed to fulfil contractual obligations.

Because of the severely faulty 1995 deal with China, Bangladesh has to pay China more than another \$85 million till 2012 in 10 more instalments.

The contract, which was spearheaded by Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain as the energy minister of the previous BNP rule, is full of so many glitches that it did not even say how mining equipment would be supplied. According to Hosaf chief Moazzem Hossain, his company promoted the credit scheme. Hosaf has been representing the builder of the mine, power plant and the consultants of both the projects; making it impossible for the government to ensure their quality implementation.

Spain to open embassy in Dhaka soon

UNB, Madrid

Spain will soon open an embassy in Dhaka to promote economic and business relations with Bangladesh.

Queen Sophia of Spain said this while UNB Chief Editor Enayetullah Khan met her in a courtesy call on the sidelines of the World Congress of News Agencies (WCNA) in Estepona, Spain, last week.

Queen Sophia indicated that she herself might come to Bangladesh to attend the inauguration of the Spanish embassy.

Spain is one of the EU countries, which is yet to open an embassy in Dhaka.

Enayetullah Khan represented Bangladesh at the global congress of news agencies held in Spain on October 24-27.

The moot, inaugurated by King Juan Carlos of Spain, was attended by heads of news agencies and top media personalities from across the world.

Obituary



Md Ibrahim Talukder, father of Commodore MAK Azad, director general of Bangladesh Coast Guard, passed away due to old age complications at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) on October 26 at the age of 97, says a press release.

He left behind his six sons, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at Banani graveyard in the city on Saturday.

Khaleda Khanam

UNB, Sathkira

Khaleda Khanam, mother of Qamruzzaman, news editor of the daily Janakantha, passed away due to old age complications at her Polash Pool home in Sathkira yesterday at the age of 68.

Khaleda was grand daughter of Maulana Akram Khan.

She left behind five sons, four daughters and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

She will be buried at the family graveyard after namaz-e-janaza after Zohr prayers today.

Shamsuddoha Talukder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Shamsuddoha Talukder Manik, ex-president of Mymensingh unit of Bangladesh Jatiya Bidyut Samik Union, passed away due to kidney disease at the Dhaka Kidney Hospital in Dhaka yesterday at the age of 54.

He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

Governance Coalition organises a roundtable on 'Local government commission: Responsibility and proposal on scope'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

Conference

The second day of the conference for the senior editors on 'Media reporting: Armed conflict and violence' will be held. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:00am.

Seminar

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) organises a seminar on 'Privatisation of state owned enterprises and public-private partnership in public undertakings'. Venue: DCCI auditorium. Time: 11:00am.

DCAB talk

Diplomatic Correspondents' Association Bangladesh (DCAB) will talk with German Ambassador Frank Mayke focusing on Bangladesh-Germany relation. Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity. Time: 11:00am.

Film screening

Dhaka University Film Society organises its 54th World Film Manifestation Programme. Venue: Goethe Institute. Time: 3:00pm.

Rotary Dhaka North

The regular weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka North will be held. Venue: Rafflesia Restaurant, Gulshan. Time: 8:00pm.

Folk song

Mass-line Media Centre (MMC) and ORBS International will jointly organise a mobile folk song programme to mark the World Sight Day 2007. Venue: National Press Club, Karwanbazar, New Market, TSC, Mirpur-10 and Shabag intersection. Time: 11:00am to 2:00pm.

BRITISH RULE 'Rewrite history of Bangalee soldiers'

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a lecture yesterday underscored the need for rewriting the history of heroic contributions of Bangalee soldiers during and after the British rule in the sub-continent.

They said soldiers of Bengal Regiment had proved their heroism at war fields, but the historians of Delhi and other places did not mention their contribution with due recognition.

Shaheed Colonel Jamil Ahmed Memorial Lecture 2007 was held at the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt Col (Retd) Muhammad Latif Haq gave a brief history of the recruitment of Bangalees in the then British Army and their performance in the World War I.

He pointed out that though the Bangalees were treated as a non-martial race during British Raj, many Bangalee soldiers won medals and awards for their valour, bravery and distinguished service in the field.

Prof Emazuddin Ahmed, who presided over the programme, said the history of the heroism of Bangalees was not written objectively.

"I urged the government, army and historians to work for the preservation of the real history of the Bangalee warriors," said the former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University.

He also laid emphasis on further research to preserve the true history of Bangalee soldiers.

The notable soldiers from the 49th Bengal Regiment were Subedar Major Sallendranath Bose (Secretary of Mohonbagan Sporting Club, Kolkata), Subedar Major Kumar Adhikaran Majumder (pleader of Kolkata High Court), Jamadar Khwaza Habibullah (Nawab of Dhaka), Jamadar R P Saha (famous philanthropist), Battalion Quarter Master Haidar Kazi Nazrul Islam (national poet), Sepoy Mahboob Ali, a litterateur who won the Ekushe Padak.

Navy chief returns home

Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam has returned home on Saturday night after attending the 18th International Sea Power Symposium on Oct 16-19 in USA at the invitation of United States Navy (USN), says an ISPR press release.

Naval chiefs, naval representatives, naval analysts and naval observers from 100 countries took part in the Symposium. This year the theme of the Symposium was 'Forging cooperative solutions for international maritime security' and its purpose was to provide a common forum in which naval leaders can discuss issues of mutual interest and concern.

During his stay in USA, Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam attended various deliberation and lectures presented by maritime and naval warfare specialists.

He called on Chief of Naval Operations US Navy Admiral Gary Roughead (Chief of US Navy) and Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Robert F Willard.

He also exchanged greetings and discussed issues concerning mutual interests with other naval chiefs of participating countries during the visit.

Admiral Nizam also extended official invitation to the Chief of Naval Operations of United States to visit Bangladesh during bilateral discussion.



Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, the newly appointed Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the WTO and UN Office in Geneva, makes a courtesy call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday. (Story on Page 2)</