

Train rams truck on open level crossing

13 killed, 50 injured; probe body given 3 days for report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

At least 13 people were killed and 50 others injured when a train rams a truck on the unprotected level crossing at Kashiabari in Sadar upazila of Joypurhat yesterday noon.

Witnesses said the Khulna-bound train Rocket Mail hit the truck loaded with sand as the truck got stuck suddenly while crossing the railway track.

The train dragged the truck around 100 metres from the level crossing. The

people sitting on the train engine fell on the railway track and died being crushed under the wheels of the train.

The deceased identified until yesterday evening were Liton, 35, son of Masiruddin of Badalgasi upazila in Naogaon, Liton, 22, son of Moeenuddin of Akkelpur upazila, Arif Mia, 9, son of Sirajul Islam of Peergachha upazila in Rangpur, and Sayeed Babu, 12, of Aladipara in Peergachha upazila.

Of the injured, 37 were admitted to Joypurhat Adhunik Hospital and Bogra

Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

Joypurhat Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shafiqul Alam, however, claimed that nine people were killed in the accident. The DC also formed a three-member probe committee and asked to submit its report within three days from yesterday.

"I saw corpses and parts of human bodies on 100-metre rail line," said Shanto, who went to the scene minutes after the accident.

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The damaged locomotive of the train that rams a truck killing 13 people at Kashiabari in Joypurhat yesterday. PHOTO: HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU

Local development to sink in MP meddling

Roundtable urges govt to ratify local govt ordinances for democracy's sake

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demanding immediate ratification of the local government ordinances promulgated by the caretaker government, experts and newly elected upazila officials yesterday said if members of the parliament (MP) are allowed to meddle in the affairs of upazila parishads, that will be a violation of the constitution.

Strong local governments are a prerequisite for good governance and balanced economic development, they said adding that an effective local government commission (LGC) is also a must for a strong local government system.

* Ratification of local govt ordinances a must

* MPs must not interfere in local government

* Local admin should be under Upazila Parishad

* No MP office on Upazila Parishad premises

* Redefining bureaucrats' role in local govt

They fear local administrations might be rendered ineffective and law makers might end up lording over upazila parishads, running the risk of letting corruption creep into the system, if MPs are allowed to have their previous controlling authority over the elected local governments.

Suggesting formulation of a policy specifying the duties of the chairmen, vice-chairmen, and women vice-chairmen of upazila parishads without further delay, they said the role of bureaucrats in relation to local governments should also be redefined in order to make

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UPAZILA PARISHAD Local MPs to be made advisers

Elected local govt representatives slam the move

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to make the local lawmakers adviser to the Upazila Parishad, a move vehemently opposed by newly elected representatives of the parishad.

It also decided not to approve Local Government Commission Ordinance, 2008, even though experts believe the local government will face a set back if the commission is dissolved.

"The government will not place the ordinance as a bill before the House. Rather, we will amend the Upazila Act, 1998, keeping the provision for the post of a vice-chairman and a female vice-chairman." LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam said yesterday

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DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES MPs shout, bang desk at JS for role

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament witnessed a brief commotion yesterday as lawmakers shouted and thumped desks, demanding restoration of their authority to oversee development activities in their constituencies.

Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzak struggled to speak amid the rising clamour of voices during the question-answer session.

As things threatened to go out of control, the speaker intervened and brought the House back to order.

The situation heated up when the minister was replying to a question if the government will cancel the caretaker government's circular scrapping the lawmakers' authority to supervise implementation of the projects under Test Relief and Food for Work programmes.

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More fortunes found stashed in UK, HK

Govt receives details of graft by some ex-ministers, MPs

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

United Kingdom and Hong Kong have informed Bangladesh that some of its former ministers, lawmakers and businessmen and their relatives have houses and money in banks in the two countries, highly placed officials said.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith and Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor to Salehuddin Ahmed yesterday confirmed

that they got the information but refused to give details.

UK has provided specific information about the wealth of seven persons -- four former ministers, two lawmakers and a businessman. It has asked Bangladesh government to specify what kind of cooperation it wants regarding the seven persons, the sources said.

At the same time, London has sought information from Dhaka regarding two

expatriate Bangladeshi businessmen in UK.

The four former ministers of BNP-Jamaat alliance include Khandeker Mosharraf Hossain.

The Daily Star recently published a report on Khandeker Mosharraf's bank deposits and wealth in UK.

A former minister bought a four lakh-pound house in London in his daughter's

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MPs cannot use mobile in House

Speaker's ruling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid yesterday asked lawmakers not to use mobile phone inside parliament.

He also asked them to have their mobile phones switched off before entering the House.

The speaker stopped Awami League lawmaker Nasimul Alam Chowdhury during question-answer session, saying that he was

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BCL dissolves JU unit after gunfight

31 BCL men held

A CORRESPONDENT, Jahangirnagar University

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has dissolved its Jahangirnagar University (JU) unit while police arrested 31 BCL activists Monday night and yesterday following the gunfight between its two factions on the campus that left 50 injured.

Ten of the detainees were sent to jail hajat after the police showed them arrested in the case filed by Sohel Parvez, a leader of Parvez and Jony group of BCL. The other detainees were set free after interrogation.

Police conducted raid on Bangabandhu Hall and Kamaluddin Hall of the university from 8:30pm to 11:30pm on Monday and arrested 22 BCL men. Later, they released three

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Govt to recast CHT Land Commission

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said the government will recast the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Land Commission to settle the longstanding land disputes between indigenous people and Bangalee settlers in the region as per the CHT peace accord.

"The government will appoint chairman to the commission as its chairman has resigned. A retired judge of the Supreme Court may be given the

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MRP scheme not placed in Ecneec meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The much-awaited machine-readable passport (MRP) and visa project was not placed in the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec).

"Due to some printing mistakes and problems in preparing the report, the project was not placed in the Ecneec meeting today," Planning Minister AK Khandakar told the reporters

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The number of beggars has increased on the streets of the capital. The photo was taken near Chairmanbari on Airport Road yesterday. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

PM asks for plan to end power crisis

Adviser Toufiq says UNB, Dhaka

The prime minister has directed drawing up short, medium and long-term plans to resolve country's nagging power crisis, PM's Adviser Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury said yesterday.

He said experts' opinion will be accommodated in planning the comprehensive measures.

Elahi, a former bureaucrat associated with this power-energy sector, hinted that the

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Lower courts to get 207 judges soon

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Some 207 new assistant judges are going to be appointed to the lower courts across the country for quick disposal of pending cases.

Sources said the government has taken an initiative to appoint new judges through the Judicial Service Commission to fill up the vacant posts of judges in the lower tier of the judiciary.

A high official recently told The Daily Star that the commission has already selected 1,044 candidates out of total

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Two held for killing ntv video editor

Hijacked bike seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four days after the killing of private television channel ntv's video editor Atiqul Islam, detective police recovered the snatched motorbike of the victim and arrested two persons yesterday.

Quoting the arrested persons, detective branch (DB) of police said the muggers shot Atiq as he tried to resist the gang while they were snatching his motorbike in the city's Moghbazar area on February 14.

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Fishermen captured this 25-foot long shark from the sea at Kalapara in Patuakhali. The photo was taken at Kuakata yesterday where the fish was brought to be made jerky. PHOTO: STAR