

Road accidents on the rise in Ctg

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The number of road accidents is on the rise in Chittagong due to reckless driving and unfit vehicles.

Besides, traffic woes, bad infrastructures, lack of proper monitoring by the authorities concerned and stern action against the reckless driving are also reasons behind the accidents.

The unfit vehicles without fitness tests contribute much to the rise of road accidents.

A total of 42,655 vehicles, including bus, truck, auto-rickshaw and human hauler, dodged fitness tests until May 2008 while the number of registered vehicles is 1,17,814, said the BRTA Motor Vehicle Inspector Mohammad Shamsul Kabir.

He said the unfit vehicles cause road accidents frequently apart from depriving the government of handsome revenue every year.

"We would keep up-to-date the number of vehicles escaping the fitness certificate by June this year since the government gave an opportunity to renew them without any fine until June this year."

BRTA Assistant Director Masud Alam said tendency of violating the rules, faulty roads and unfit vehicles are responsible for the rise in the road accident.

He said they can't punish the violators instantly due to lack of mobile court. He said a seminar will be organised next month for the drivers to create awareness among them about the traffic rules and the road accidents.

Deputy Commissioner (Traffic) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police Mainul Islam said only rules cannot reduce the accident and creating awareness among the drivers is necessary to reduce road accident.

"We are continuing our drives against the violators and fake licence holders regularly," he added.

At least 99 people were killed and 173 injured in 101 road accidents within the BRTA Chittagong Circle stretching from Mirsarai upazila to Lohagara upazila from July 2008 to March this year, sources at Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Chittagong said.

Of the injured, condition of 95 were stated to be critical, said the sources, adding that the number might be higher as many of the accidents and casualties remain unreported to the BRTA.

In a major accident on March 26, nine picnickers were killed and 30 others injured when their

speeding bus skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch at Chunati on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway under Lohagara upazila.

Teachers and guardians of Koichar Siddika Dakhil Madrasha and Fapor High School of Bogra Sadar upazila numbering 55 to 60 went to Cox's Bazar from Bogra on a pleasure trip and fell victim to the accident when they were returning.

Highway Traffic Inspector Suja UI Haque told The Daily Star that the driver of the speeding bus lost his control over the steering and skidded off the road.

In another accident on

February 12, nine students of Chittagong Government College were killed and 27 others injured when their bus also fell into a roadside 500-foot ditch in the Monar Tek area under the Bandarban headquarters.

Students of the Economic Department boarding on five buses went to Bandarban to enjoy a picnic and one of their buses met the accident at Monar Tek area when returning after the trip.

Sources said the bus started rolling back suddenly while climbing a hilly road and fell into the ditch as the driver saved himself jumping from the bus.



A Chittagong-bound picnic bus from Cox's Bazar falls into a roadside ditch at Chunati under Lohagara upazila on March 26, leaving nine people dead.



An Amropali tree is in full bloom at the orchard of Dharmika Chakma at Headman Para in Khagrachhari.

Amropali ushers in hope for CHT farmers

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Full bloom of Amropali trees have increased prospect of a bumper production of mango in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) this year.

Sources at Khagrachhari District Horticulture Office said the hybrid variety of Amropali cultivation that began in the hills nine years ago has opened up a great scope for the farmers at 25 hilly upazilas in the CHT with promises of hefty financial gains.

The production of Amropali, a new variety of hybrid mango, is likely to change the fate of farmers this year because of huge budding on the mango trees, the officials and farmers said.

The hills with its suitable soil, favourable climate and fertile land have all the potentials to become another leading mango-producing region like Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj, they said.

Amropali is now being cultivated in at least 3,000 small and 146 large gardens in the hill districts of Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban, sources said.

Horticulturist Mizanur Rahman of Khagrachhari Horticulture Centre said there are over 1,000 small and large Amropali gardens in the district. Most of those are located at Dighinala, Matiranga, Ramgar, Khagrachhari Sadar, Panchhari, Manikchhari, Mohalchhari and Laxmichhari.

"Budding has started early this year. The weather, temperature and soil are

suitable for Amropali cultivation in the hills," he told this correspondent.

Horticulturists expect a yield of around 3.50 lakh maunds of mango from the gardens of three hill districts if the weather lasts another two months.

Khagrachhari is likely to produce over 1.5 lakh maunds while Bandarban 90,000 and Rangamati one lakh of Amropali mango, they said.

The horticulture centres distributed about 70,000 Amropali plants in Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban in last three years while the farmers and others collected over one lakh Amropali trees on their own, sources said.

"Amropali variety gives financial benefit more than other mangoes as its price remains at least Tk 20.00 to Tk 30.00 per kilogram higher than others," farmer Shahaz Uddin of Zaliapara at Ramgar upazila said.

Darmika Tripura, from headmanpara under sadar upazila in Khagrachhari, said Amropali variety has ushered in a hope for the farmers as well as the people of CHT as it is popular in the region.

Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Office TM Monjurul Islam said they are trying to expand its cultivation since the weather and soil conditions are suitable for it.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) AKM Khairul Islam told The Daily Star that the farmers here now feel more encouragement in the cultivation of Amropali variety of mango seeing the huge prospect of financial benefit.

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Study of science emphasised

Chittagong University (CU) Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Abu Yusuf Alam emphasised the need for more study on science to ensure national progress.

He was addressing as the chief guest a reception and get-together ceremony at a local community centre on Friday.

Former Students' Association of Chittagong University Physics Department organised the programme.

Prof Yusuf said most of the students at present are seen tendency of avoiding study of science but it is impossible to achieve ultimate progress without proper knowledge in science.

He also emphasised on

need for honest and morally sound leadership from the young generation in his party to meet the present demand.

Mohiuddin, also Awami League (AL) city unit president, was addressing a workers' meeting organised by city unit at Lalkhan Bazar on Thursday. AL Lalkhan Bazar Ward President Siddique Ahmad presided over the meeting.

Mayor said the young generation and female voters cast their votes in favour of AL in the December 29 national election supporting its vision of changing days.

Honest leadership in AL underscored

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury underscored the

need for honest and morally sound leadership from the young generation in his party to meet the present demand.

Mohiuddin, also Awami League (AL) city unit president, was addressing a workers' meeting organised by city unit at Lalkhan Bazar on Thursday. AL Lalkhan Bazar Ward President Siddique Ahmad presided over the meeting.

Mayor said the young generation and female voters cast their votes in favour of AL in the December 29 national election supporting its vision of changing days.

There is no alternative to young and honest leadership to materialise such vision, he said.

City Vice President AKM Belayet Hossain, Organising Secretary Badiul Alam, Publication Secretary Shafiqul Islam Faruk, ward unit leaders

Sheikh Delwar Hossain, Amzad Hossain, Mohiuddin Bachchu and student leader Delwar Hossain spoke among others.

Speakers urged the leaders and activists of the party to be aware of the enemy of the party.

An evil force always tries to create anarchy in the country when Awami League comes to power, they warned.

Call to ensure hassle-free journey'

Speakers emphasised on coordination among the law enforcement agency, owners and workers of public vehicles and passengers in order to ensure a hassle-free journey in the port city.

Chittagong City Passenger Welfare Association organised the open discussion with association President SMN Jahurul Hoque in the chair.

Representatives of different organisations took part in the discussion held on the DC Hill premises on Saturday.

Speakers said around 30 lakh passengers in the city are facing untold sufferings everyday while travelling on different public vehicles due to mismanagement in the traffic sector.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Panel Mayor Rekha Alam Chowdhury, General Secretary of Road and Transport Association Ashraf Khan and Chittagong Bar Association President Advocate Rafiqul Kader.

BITA workshop held

Speakers stressed the need for forming an alliance of the organisations working with the concept of theatre for development (TFD) across the country.

They were addressing a national workshop titled 'Theatre for Development, Sharing of Views' organised by Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA), a non-government organisation on Sunday.

President of International Theatre Institute (ITI) Ramendu Majumder inaugurated the workshop with BITA Secretary and drama personality Pijush Bandopadhyay in the chair.

Ramendu said development of cultural is not possible without involving the mass people in the cultural activities.



Theatre personality Ramendu Majumder speaks at a seminar on 'Theatre for Development: Sharing Views', at a local hotel in the city on Sunday.



Concern Services for Disabled (CSD) takes out a procession at Fateyabad in Hathazari upazila on Sunday to mark the National Chittagong University (CU) Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Abu Yusuf took part in the event.

STAR PHOTO

Chairman of Dhaka University (DU) Dramatics and Music Department Dr Israfil Shahin was present as the special guest.

Termed TFD as an effective process for social change, Dr Israfil emphasised on coordination between the theoretical knowledge on theatre for development studied in the universities and practical activities of the NGOs.

BITA Director Shishir Datta made the address of welcome at the workshop.

'Work for a non-communal society'

Industries Minister Dilip Barua

urged all to work unitedly with non-communal spirit in the country for a peaceful and developed society.

He was addressing as the chief guest a discussion on the 3rd day of Basanti Puja on the JM Sen hall premises on Thursday.

Chittagong Central Puja Ujjapan Parishad organised the discussion with Advocate Subhash Chandra Lala in the chair.

The minister said all should play an important role for protecting the country in the way people of all strata irrespective of different communities sacrificed their lives for independence in 1971.

He said the Bengalee culture, which has been practised for over one thousand years,

posses a heritage of non-communality.

He thanked the Parishad for giving all section of people a scope of meeting together by arranging different cultural programmes and discussions participated by cultural personalities and litterateurs amidst the festive mood of puja.

Ranjit Kumar Chowdhury, advocate Purnendu Bikash Chowdhury, Tinkori Prasad Ghosh and Prof Bijoy Laksmi Debi spoke at the discussion.

Later a cultural function was held where artistes of Fame Dance Group, Odyssey and Tagore Dance Movement and Adity Sangeet Niketon performed songs and dances.