

9 killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

At least nine people, including a minor boy and a handi-capped girl, were killed in separate road accidents in Comilla, Rajshahi, Lalmonirhat, Jhenidah and Kishoreganj yesterday.

A correspondent from Comilla reports: At least three people were killed on Comilla-Muradnagar road in South Bakrabad area in Muradnagar upazila early yesterday morning.

Police said the accident occurred when a passenger bus of Janata Paribahan turned upside down and fell into a ditch, which is about 10 feet deep, as its driver lost his control over the steering.

Two of the dead were identified as Md Chanu Miah, 55, of Burboria village in Brahmanbaria district and Monju Rani Nandi, 40, of Ramchandrapur village in Muradnagar upazila while other's identity could not be known immediately.

The bodies were handed over to their relatives after autopsy at Comilla Medical College Hospital.

A case has been filed with the Muradnagar police station in this connection.

Meanwhile, a youth was crushed under the wheels of a truck on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Nayabazar area under Chouddagram upazila in the morning. The dead was

identified as Maznu Miah, 18, of Kalikrisna village under Chouddagram upazila.

Witnesses said the accident took place when the youth was trying to cross the road. He was taken to a thana health complex where he succumbed to his injuries.

Mob sets fire to bus as two killed in a road accident in Rajshahi

RU correspondent adds: Two motorcycle riders were killed and a bus driver was injured seriously in a road accident on Rajshahi-Tanor highway in Bagsara area under Poba upazila in Rajshahi yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Muhammad Salim, 28, son of Mafiz Uddin, ward councillor of Nawhata municipality and Jalal Uddin, 32, son of late Hossain Mondol, of village Talond under Tanor upazila.

The seriously injured bus driver was identified as Sharif Sheikh, 30, son of late Safor Sheikh, of Talaimari area in the city.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place at around 10:00am when a speedy Rajshahi-bound passenger bus knocked down a motorcycle in Bagsara area under Poba upazila, leaving two motorcycle riders dead on the spot.

Local people set fire to a passenger bus, put up barricade on Rajshahi-Tanor high-

way for two hours and beat up the bus driver indiscriminately.

The bus driver was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Later, a huge number of riot police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Humayun Kabir, Nawhata Municipality Mayor Abdul Hafur and high police officials visited the spot.

Our correspondent from Lalmonirhat adds: A seven-year-old boy was killed as a truck hit him on Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway in Palashi area under Aditmari upazila yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mahabub, 7, son of Hafizul Islam of Taluk Palashi under Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred when a Patgram-bound truck from Lalmonirhat hit the boy when he was crossing the road in Palashi area.

The boy came to visit his village home on Friday along with his grandmother from Dhaka where his parents work in garments factory, locals said. The angry people blocked Lalmonirhat highway for two hours from 12:30pm protesting the death of a minor boy in the road accident. Later, police brought the situation under control.

The body was sent to Lalmonirhat hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police seized the truck and arrested its driver.

Our correspondent from Jhenidah says: A handicapped girl was killed in a road accident at Dakatia village under Moheshpur upazila in Jhenidah.

The dead was identified as Afroza Khatun, 14, daughter of Shahidul Islam of Dakatia village under Moheshpur upazila.

Police and witnesses an engine-driven power tiller hit Afroza when she was trying to cross the road at her village Dakatia, leaving her dead on the spot.

A correspondent from Kishoreganj adds: One minor girl was killed in a road accident on Pakundia-Hossainpur road at Jangalia village yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Sonia, 11, daughter of Hazrat Ali of Darbarpur village under Kishoreganj Sadar upazila.

The accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound bus hit Sonia from behind in Jangalia area while she was going to her relative's house at Tarakandi, leaving her dead on the spot.

Police seized the bus and arrested its driver from the spot.

The body was sent to Kishoreganj Adhunik Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.



Hundreds of goods-laden trucks wait in a queue on Dhaka-Mawa highway yesterday since ferry movement was suspended during the last two nights because of inclement weather.

Commercial, industrial exploitation of forests displaces dwellers

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said commercial and industrial exploitation of forests are the main reasons behind mass displacement of forest-dwellers in the country.

They also pointed out rubber and pulpwood plantation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts as major reasons for deforestation in the area. Flawed policies have destroyed a large part of the Modhupur forest, they added.

The seminar on 'Tea Workers, Forest and Forest Peoples' was organised by Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) at the WVA auditorium in the city as part of the national assembly of tea plantation workers and forest-dwellers.

Lawmaker Promod Mankin, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on CHT, said traditionally most of the indigenous people in Bangladesh live in and around the forest regions.

The indigenous people only collect firewood and wild vegetables from the forest. But their access to the forest is being restricted by introducing eco park, he alleged.

They are being detached from the forestland, the main source of their livelihood. On the other hand those who fell trees commercially are being patronised, Mankin added.

At Madhupur, indigenous people remain in constant

threat of eviction. They do not have land records as they follow the traditional community ownership, he mentioned.

Out of the total landmass Bangladesh has about six per cent of forestland. The forests are classified as hilly forests, plain land Shawl forests, Mangrove forests, coastal forests and home gardens.

Zuamlian Amlai, chairperson of the Movement for the Protection of Forest and Land Rights in CHT, Bandarban chapter said a huge area of natural forests in CHT have been cleared for pulpwood

and rubber plantations. Pulpwood plants are felled when they are mature so these artificially planted trees fail to create any forestland.

Meanwhile, a large number of the indigenous people have been evicted from their homeland for rubber plantation, which had attracted outsiders, mainly Bangalees to the region who are often the reason behind many violent activities, including rape of indigenous women, Amlai added.

He blamed the Forest Department for destroying the forest instead of protecting it.

Unscrupulous foresters are behind illegal felling of trees, he alleged.

Forest-dwellers Ching Sala Chak, Shambhu Tanchangya, Kajendra Tripura and Nidarshan Khisha gave accounts of their suffering at the seminar.

Dr Noazesh Ahmed, photographer and agricultural scientist, Prof Amena Mohsin of Dhaka University, Farida Akter, executive director of Policy Research for Development Alternatives (UBINIG), and Philip Gain, general secretary of SEHD, also spoke.

Prof Nurul Islam meets president

UNB, Dhaka

National Prof Dr Nurul Islam made a courtesy call on President M Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday, when Islam's various programmes and contributions came up for discussion.

During the meeting, Dr Islam apprised the president of the activities of development projects of Bangabandhu Memorial Hospital (BMH) and University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (UST), established by him.

He also informed President Zillur about the activities of Adhunik, an anti-smoking organization established by him.

The president gave him a patient hearing and assured him of "all-out cooperation" in the programmes.

President Zillur praised his role in establishing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (the then IPGMR) and formulating the national drug policy.

Secretary of the President's office M Shafiqul Alam, President's Military Secretary Maj Gen M Ehtesham Ul Haq and Press Secretary Abdul Awal Hawlader were present.

BSB-CAMBRIAN PRAJANMA BITARKA UIU champion, DU runner-up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the slogan 'Juktir Aloye Gorbo Bangladesh' the grand finale and award giving ceremony of BSB-Cambrian Prajanma Bitarka were held at the ATN Bangla Studio in Bashundhara City yesterday.

United International University (UIU) became the champion by defeating Dhaka University in the final round. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) became the second runner-up in the tournament.

The topic of debate in the final round was 'Unrest in educational institutes would be eased if student politics is disallowed'.

"While student politics is important to collectively voice the opinion of students, we have no need for politics that is guided by chaos and mayhem," said ATN Bangla Chairman Dr Mahfuzur Rahman while handing over awards to the winners.

ATN Bangla Chief Adviser Saiful Bari, BSB Global Network and Cambrian College Chairman Lion MK Bashir PMGE, head of programmes of ATN Bangla Nowajish Ali Khan and Debate for Democracy Chairman Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron also spoke at the event.



Samajtantrik Chhatra Front takes out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday to mark its 'Public University Convention'.

CONVENTION OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES 'Stop commercialisation of education'

DU CORRESPONDENT

With the demands of stopping commercialisation of education and increasing allocation in education and research, a convention of public universities was held at Teacher-Student Centre of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.

The central committee of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) arranged the convention as part of its movement to realise six-point demands that include stopping commercialisation of education, ensuring autonomy of public universities and increasing budgets for public universities.

Justice Golam Rabbani formally inaugurated the daylong function in the morning. Leaders and activists of the SCF brought out a colourful procession on the campus at noon to mark the programme.

Speakers in the second phase of the convention, in the afternoon, urged the government to allocate more funds for public universities.

SCF President Fakhruddin Kabir Atique read out a declaration on the occasion to realise its six-point demands that include -- no commercial would be run on the campuses and no research would be conducted for the interests of

commercial institutions, cancellation of umbrella act, ensuring congenial atmosphere and security to students, curbing session jam,

maintaining academic calendar and ensuring high salary scale for teachers and considering legal demands of employees.

GLOBAL RECESSION Call to allocate budget to save RMG units, its workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Alliance for Protection of Garments Workers and Industries demanded budgetary allocation to save the garment industries and its workers from the hit of global recession.

The alliance presented a seven-point demand including budgetary allocation at a press briefing at Shaheed Asad auditorium in the city yesterday.

Other demands of the alliance are conducting an audit by the government to assess the effect of global recession and provide assistance thereby, allocation in budget for essential commod-

ities of workers and fixing minimum wage for garments workers at Tk 4,500, says a press release.

Budgetary allocation for establishing health service centre and housing for workers, punishment to the owners who do not abide by industrial laws and resumption of closed industries were also demanded.

Labor leader Abul Hossain read out a written statement at the press conference while Hossain Molla, Golam Qader, Rafiqul Islam Sujon and Golam Rabbani Jamil were present.

They urged all to make a success the national convention of Garments Sramik Sangram Parishad on May 15.

Zakir made judicial service body member

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman appointed M Zakir Hossain, dean of Faculty of Law of Chittagong University (CU), as member of Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC) to replace Dr Asma Siddiqua.

Dr Asma Siddiqua, dean of the Faculty of Law of Rajshahi University (RU), has been "relieved", said an official announcement yesterday.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry issued a notification to this effect, it said.

Kazi Rafiqul elected CAMPE chairperson

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kazi Rafiqul Alam has been elected chairperson of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) for the term 2009-10, says a press release.

He was elected at the 12th annual general meeting of CAMPE held at LGED auditorium on Monday.

Other office-bearers are: vice chairpersons -- Shams Ara Hasan and Manjur Ahmed and treasurer -- Azizul Haque.

Fazle Hasan Abed has been elected life term adviser of the body for his contribution in education sector in the country.

WE MOURN

We are profoundly shocked at the death of **Dr. M. A. Wazed Miah**, an internationally acclaimed nuclear scientist and former Chairman of the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission. The Board of Governors of The People's University of Bangladesh and myself as Vice Chancellor of the university convey our heartfelt condolence to his bereaved family. The wound and loss that we bear at the death of **Dr. Miah** is perhaps not less than that of his wife, our beloved Prime Minister and the family. For a man of his talent and enlightenment great pride is felt by the nation - its intellectual community, academia, policy makers and citizens in general.

We sympathize with the bereaved family and pray to Almighty to grant them the fortitude to bear the loss. May the departed soul of **Dr. M.A. Wazed Miah's** rest in peace and may God reward him for his contributions to humanity and his righteousness.

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Fazle Hasan Abed speaks at the 12th annual general meeting of Campaign for Popular Education at LGED auditorium in the city on Monday. Kazi Rafiqul Alam and Rasheda K Choudhury are also seen in the picture.