

Road accidents

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another was injured when a microbus plunged into a roadside ditch at Paschim Jainabari near Hemayetpur Bus Stand Monday morning.

The deceased were identified as microbus driver Sajal Khan, 27, and Kabir Hossain, a passenger, police said.

Two unidentified people were killed and seven others were injured in a head-on collision between a microbus and a bus at Kanaipur in Faridpur Monday afternoon.

Police recovered the bodies and sent those to Faridpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong reports: Three people were killed in two separate road accidents in the port city Tuesday.

Motorbike rider Rafiqul Islam, 33, of Comilla and his pillion Nazmul Hasan, 27, of Tabalchhari in Rangamati, were killed on the spot when an intercity bus from opposite direction knocked their motorbike down in Kazir Dewry in the morning. The other pillion Mahmud Bappi was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

In another accident Kamal Mia, 32, of Rangpur was crushed under the wheels of the human hauler he was getting down from at New Market in Chittagong.

Three people were killed and five injured when a speeding truck rammed an SUV on Cox's Bazar Highway at Zoriana in Ramu Sunday morning.

The five injured passengers of the car were taken to a local hospital.

Two people were killed and 10 others injured when a bus heading towards Rajshahi from the capital skidded off the road into a ditch at Mohisdanga in Baraigram in Natore on Banpara-Hatikumrul Highway early Sunday.

Police said Saiful, 30, and Sarwar, 24, of Rajshahi, who were travelling on the roof of the bus, died on the spot. The injured were admitted to different local hospitals.

Bus conductor Sahabuddin, 30, was killed and 10 others were injured when a Noakhali-bound bus crashed into the central reservation at Fatehpur on Feni Bypass Sunday.

Our correspondent in Patuakhali reports: Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Patuakhali Monday.

The deceased are Abdul Jalil, 45, of Bighai, and Masuma, 15, of Lawkathi, of Patuakhali. Both were killed when speeding motorcycles hit them from behind.

A correspondent from Kishoreganj reports: The car driver Alauddin, 55, of former BNP lawmaker Hasne Ara Gias Daisy was killed and three others including the former

lawmaker were injured at Pulerghat Bazar on Kishoreganj-Bhairab Highway yesterday when a bus rammed the car.

Our correspondent in Sirajganj reports: Miron, 45, was run over by a truck on Sirajganj-Bogra Highway at Shilanda area in Sirajganj Tuesday.

Our staff correspondent in Khulna reports: Businessman Nibash Chandra Saha, 48, who was severely injured in a road accident, died after he was admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

The accident occurred when he was run over by a speeding motorcycle on PTI Road in Khulna.

A correspondent in Gazipur reports: At least 20 people, including a bus driver, children and a pregnant woman, were injured when a Sherpur-bound bus plunged into a ditch after it was hit by another bus coming from the opposite direction on Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway at Sreepur of Gazipur.

The injured were returning to Sherpur and Mymensingh from Dhaka after collecting clothes of Zakat and Fitra money.

Holiday mood

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"The attendance will also be low today as it is the last office day of the week." It would not be normal before next week as another public holiday is due for the Durga Puja on Monday, he added.

Among the ministers who attended office were Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmed and Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader.

However, several other ministers joined office in the afternoon.

There were little activities at the offices as the officials and employees were seen exchanging Eid greetings with their colleagues amid a festive mood. The same situation prevailed at private offices as well.

Earlier, the government and private offices, banks and other offices and business establishments went into holiday on Friday, while the three days of Eid vacation started on Sunday.

With the city dwellers went to the native places to celebrate the occasion with their near and dear ones, the city streets became almost empty with very low traffic movement. Another reason of little movement of commuters was the rain since the Eid day.

This year the official holiday for the Eid-ul-Fitr was three days following four-day vacation for three consecutive years.

Meanwhile, the normal office schedule (9:00am to 5:00pm) resumed yesterday after it was curtailed for the month of Ramadan.

Gas cylinder blast kills 2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Gas cylinder explosion of a balloon seller took lives of two persons and injured another at Balashpur Pal Para in the district on Tuesday.

The dead were identified as balloon seller Abdul Aziz, 45, son of Sukur Ali of Pal Para and his nephew Ridoy, 13, son of Mahar Ali of Trishal upazila.

The injured was Sufia, 46, wife of Abul Hossain.

Police and local witnesses said, the explosion occurred around 11:30am when Aziz was inflating balloons that killed Ridoy on the spot.

The critically injured Aziz and Sufia were soon rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Aziz succumbed to his injuries while Sufia was undergoing treatment in the hospital.

A general diary was lodged with Kotwali Police station in this connection.

Jewellery

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night around 3:00am and heard about the incident when his staff came to open the shop Tuesday morning.

Gulshan Zone Deputy Commissioner (DC) AKM Hafiz Akhter said there was a small hole on the glass partition through which no one can possibly enter. Terming the incident mysterious he said if anyone entered the shop through the glass hole, there would have been bloody injuries, but there was no drop of blood on the spot.

Though the owner of the jewellery shop claimed that he had gold ornaments worth over Tk 4.2 crore he had no vault, said the DC, adding that the register was also reported stolen which itself is intriguing. Gulshan police said they had held two market security guards, Mazid and Kashem, and the owner of Biriani House for interrogation.

Meanwhile, burglars broke into two flats of a building at West Rajabazar during the Eid vacation. Victim of one of the flats Siddique Rahman said burglars stole three tolas of gold and Tk 12,000 breaking open their steel almirah and wardrobe.

He said "I found locks of my bedroom and sitting room broken when my family and I returned from village around 5:00am yesterday. The burglars entered the flat breaking the windowpanes and grills. They left the tools they used for breaking in, he added.

The burglars also broke into the next flat on the same floor but could not steal anything.

Many more incidents of burglaries are feared to be reported as the city dwellers have started to return to their Dhaka residences.

Forest dept

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stern action against those involved in the plunder of the trees.

About 30,000 Jhau trees on the beach had been plundered by a section of influential people between 5 and 10 September while the forest department played the role of a silent spectator.

With the felling of the trees, the 10 kilometre-long beach stretching from Shahpari Dwip to Baharchhara has become denuded, leaving the area vulnerable to natural disasters like cyclone and tidal surge.

A three-member probe body headed by Chittagong Divisional Commissioner MN Siddiqui was formed to investigate the incident following the premier's directives, said sources.

Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner Gias Uddin Ahmed, Chittagong Divisional Forest Officer MA Khaleque, Superintendent of Police Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain and local Awami League lawmaker Abdur Rahman Badi have visited the spot and submitted their reports to the authorities concerned.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner MN Siddiqui said, "The people responsible for plundering the trees will be brought to book no matter how influential they might be," he said.

He asked the divisional forest officers to prepare a list of the people responsible and file a case against them seeking compensation.

Deputy Commissioner Gias Uddin Ahmed said some ruling party leaders, a section of forest officials, Union Parishad members and influential people were involved in the plunder of the Jhau trees.

He said the trees were felled in a bid to grab the lands and sell those at high price.

Police have arrested 14 people so far in connection with the incident.

Ex-Minister

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organiser of the liberation war, died of cardiac arrest on Monday.

The veteran AL leader complained of chest pain during Eid prayers at Jamiatul Falah Mosque. He was immediately rushed to nearby National Hospital where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Speaker Abdul Hamid, ministers and leaders of various political parties expressed profound shock at his death.

Mannan was the chief election commissioner at the AL national council on July 24 this year.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at Jamiatul Falah Mosque after Asr prayers. Later, the veteran freedom fighter was given a guard of honour and buried at his family graveyard at Bagmoniram at about 5:00pm.

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Amin, former ministers Abdul Matin Khasru and engineer Mosharruf Hossain, AL lawmakers Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury, ABM Fazle Karim and Abul Kashem, BNP Joint Secretary General Abdullah Al Noman, former commerce minister and BNP city unit Convener Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, BNP leaders Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and Jafur Islam Chowdhury and Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries President MA Latif, among others, attended the janaza.

Earlier, his body was kept at the AL city unit office at Darul Fazal Market where hundreds of people including party leaders and activists paid homage to the deceased leader.

He was commander of Bangladesh Liberation Force (east zone) in the liberation war and elected parliament member in 1973 and 1996. Mannan also served as the president and general secretary of AL city unit for several years.

Dhaka deluged

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Sheorapara, Paikpara, Bijoy Sarani, Shanti Nagar and low lying areas of the capital went under water during yesterday's downpour.

There was shortage of public transport in the city as well and CNG-run three-wheelers and rickshaws took advantage of it and charged very high fare.

"I have been waiting for a three-wheeler to go to Gendaria for the last one hour," said Azad, a resident of Pallabi, in Mirpur.

"I had to pay Tk 20 to cross a short distance of waterlogged area in Kazipara which usually costs Tk 5," said Liton, a resident of Kazipara.

Rain came down in sheets just before the Eid Jamaat began causing sufferings to those in the congregation.

"I offered my Eid prayers under heavy rains... my new clothes got wet and I had to wear old clothes," said Polash, a resident of Mirpur-12.

Barakat

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He also said he does not want to be received by garlands like his predecessors.

And he meant what he had said. On September 16, he went to the bank headquarters in Motijheel using his own car, though he is entitled to have an exclusive Pajero sports utility vehicle (SUV).

As he went up to the 12th floor to attend his office, he chose to queue up with others to board the lift. It is a common practice in the bank's head office to keep a lift standby for hours for the chairman.

There was also no fanfare to receive him.

He attended his first board meeting the same day. He did not use the "throne-like" chair. Instead, he sat on the same chairs used by other board members.

"Our first impression is that we have a good chairman," says a high official of the bank. "He is different from others."

Barakat also proposed that the chairman's official SUV should be used by the bank for other purpose and should not be taken away by the finance ministry.

It is a common practice by the ministries to take away 'unused' vehicles purchased by subordinate organisations.

The nine-month-old Awami League government has recently appointed new chairmen and directors to all state-owned banks and financial institutions.

He is survived by his wife, six sons and two daughters.

President Zillur Rahman in his condolence message said the country has lost a veteran politician.

In a message, Premier Sheikh Hasina said the nation has lost one of its worthiest sons.

They prayed for salvation of his departed soul and conveyed sympathy to his bereaved family members.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam, Speaker, ministers and state ministers in separate messages condoled his death.

Ministers for education, labour and employment, expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, post and telecommunications, shipping and communications and the parliamentary standing committee on labour and employment ministry issued condolence messages recalling Mannan's contribution to the country's democratic movements.

Durga Puja

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Kangshanarayan of Taherpur in Rajshahi in the month of Aswin in the Bengali year 887 and then by Bhabananda Mazumdar of Nadiya in 1606.

According to the Hindu mythology, goddess Durga appeared in the midst of the commoners following the prayer of King Kansa.

Marking the occasion, the first Durga worship was held at Taherpur king's palace.

Ram, elder son of King Dasharat, had earlier offered the puja at a different time to seek blessings from the deity to save people from the "repression and misrule" of Lanka Raj Ravana.

With her boon, Ram destroyed the kingdom of Ravana and "annihilated the tyrant monarch."

Puja is taking place in 21,927 mandaps across the country, including 178 in the capital. A total of 21,917 puja mandaps were set up in the country last year.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has already taken special security measures for the city dwellers on the eve of Durga Puja, like Eid-ul-Fitr.

Official sources said additional police and Ansar will be deployed at puja mandaps in the capital from today and will continue until Bijaya Dashami.

A contingent of 30 law-enforcers, including nine Ansar personnel, will be posted at each vulnerable puja mandap, 16, including five Ansars, at each less-vulnerable mandap while 11, including five Ansars, will be on guard at each normal mandap.

Additional 1,556 police and 1,048 Ansar personnel will be deployed at the puja mandaps with adequate security equipment, sources added.

Eid-ul-Fitr

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offered at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, other mosques, eidgahs and open spaces.

President Zillur Rahman offered his Eid prayers at the National Eidgah.

A tight security net comprised of Special Security Force, intelligence agencies, police and plainclothes personnel was thrown around the Eidgah where government leaders and other important personalities also joined the congregation.

Special prayers were offered seeking peace, progress and prosperity of the nation, and the Muslim ummah. Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Maulana Mohammad Salahuddin led the congregation.

The president hosted an Eid reception at the Bangabhaban, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Ganabhaban to exchange greetings with foreign diplomats, elite and a cross section of people.

On the occasion of Eid, special diet was served at hospitals, jails, government-run children and shelter homes, homes for the socially handicapped and vagrant welfare centres.

The national flag was hoisted atop government and non-government offices.

Main streets in the capital were decorated with flags inscribed with 'Eid Mubarak' in Bengali and Arabic.

Raining on the Eid day morning caused some inconvenience at places but it did not affect the celebrations.

Meanwhile, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote placed floral wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi on the occasion of Eid.

Train derailed at Ishwardi

Link with Dhaka disrupted for 9hrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A goods train from Shantahar derailed at Ishwardi station yesterday morning snapping movement of trains on the metre gauge line linking Dhaka for about nine hours.

Railway sources said the freight train derailed as it apparently violated signal.

Six out of 30 bogies and engine of the Chittagong-bound train fell off the track around 6:00am. Two rescue trains rushed to the spot and cleared the track at about 3:00pm, restoring train movement.

Meanwhile, train movement on broad gauge line was not affected since there is an alternative track at the station, the sources said.

A committee headed by Md Shariful Islam, divisional transportation officer of railway, was formed to probe the accident. It is to submit its report within three days.

Contacted, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of northern zone Md Mahabubul Alam said 'loco master' (driver) of the freight train from Shantahar seems to have 'violated signal' at Ishwardi station, and the train with empty wagons derailed. Two rescue trains cleared the line by 2:40pm, and the rescue operation continued.

Additional Regional Manager of the Railway Anwarul Kabir along with other high officials visited the spot.

Tremors jolt

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on the Richter scale originated on Monday in the Bhutan-China border region at 3:53pm local time. The epicentre of the quake was 462 kilometres off Dhaka.

Deputy Forecasting Officer Abdul Mannan yesterday said, "The Tuesday tremor was a moderate one which had a magnitude of 5.4 on the Richter scale."

The tremor on Tuesday originated in Myanmar region at 2:38am. The epicentre of the quake was 552 kilometres from the capital.

The Monday tremor also jolted Gauhati, the capital of India's north-eastern Assam state.

Prof Mehedi Ahmed Ansary of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, also secretary general of Bangladesh Earthquake Society, said frequent mild tremors might be precursors to a major shock.

"It is very much likely that an earthquake of seven plus magnitude may follow and shake Bangladesh, as it has long been overdue with a 70-year pause," said Ansary, also the coordinator of National Centre for Earthquake Engineering.

The Dubai earthquake of 7.1 magnitude with its epicentre in Coochbihar in 1930 devastated northern region of Bangladesh, he said. A series of major earthquakes occurred in the Indian sub-continent during 1869 to 1930.

A six-magnitude earthquake originated in the India-Myanmar border area in the early hours of September 4 and jolted greater Sylhet region and other parts of the country.

In the dead of night on September 12, another tremor of 7.6 magnitude shook the Andaman islands in the Indian Ocean and a tsunami alert was declared in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand.

Fortunately, nothing happened to Bangladesh.

Govt won't

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adequate stocks. She termed it a conspiracy against the government and vowed to take stern actions against people responsible.

She also said Trading Corporation of Bangladesh among other organisations would be remodelled so that they are more effective in keeping the prices of essentials stable as her government has pledged to reduce prices of essentials.

About the longstanding power crisis, Hasina said her government has taken various measures to improve the situation and urged people to be patient in this regard.

She reiterated that the killers of Bangabandhu and the four-national leaders, army personnel in the BDR mutiny and the war criminals would be tried.

The prime minister reached New York Tuesday morning. Her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the United Nations AK Abdul Momen and Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Akramul Qader received her.

During her nine-day visit to the USA, she will address the plenary of the UN General Assembly on September 26 that would focus on the adverse impact of climate change, world economic recession and transition to democracy in Bangladesh.

The prime minister is expected to return home on October 1.

Crisis-hit world

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prepared text. Ban will call for a revival of negotiations to achieve a comprehensive settlement in the Mideast and a two-state solution where Israel and Palestine live side-by-side in peace. And he will pledge to see the Afghans "through their long night" and stand as well with the people of Pakistan.

Security around the sprawling UN complex and adjacent neighbourhood is exceedingly tight because of the VIP participants, especially Obama who spoke at Monday's climate summit and will be back in the assembly chamber Wednesday morning to address ministers and diplomats from the 191 other UN member states.

Diplomats said the new US president is almost certain to receive a standing ovation because of the new American commitment to working with countries rich and poor, large and small, to solve global problems and Obama's outreach to the Muslim world.

On Tuesday in addition to focusing on reducing US carbon emissions, a Mideast summit with the Palestinian and Israeli leaders and a meeting with China's president Obama invited 25 African leaders and African Union Commissioner Jean Ping to lunch to discuss job creation, particularly for young people, increasing trade and investment and improving agricultural productivity.

Obama stressed that the lunch was not a one-off event but the start of a dialogue between his administration and African leaders, said Michelle Gavin, special assistant to the president and senior director for African affairs. She said she was certain that Obama whose late father was Kenyan would make a return visit to Africa "at some point," noting that he has received many invitations.

The US president will chair a high-level meeting of the UN Security Council Thursday on disarmament and efforts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons and the leaders of the four other nuclear powers on the council will also speak. Medvedev, Hu, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

The council is expected to adopt a resolution calling for stepped up disarmament efforts and a more intense global campaign to reduce nuclear dangers and threats of proliferation. It doesn't name any countries but the draft resolution does refer to previous council resolutions.

2 killed

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At one stage Mostafizur's men sprayed bullets on their rival group, according to the witnesses.

Police and eyewitnesses said the attackers belong to lawmaker Mollah Jalaluddin faction while the victims to Chairman Sharfuddin Ahmed Bachchu faction. The attack on Sharfuddin's men was made without any provocation, added police.

Police have so far arrested 18 people in this connection though no FIR was lodged with the police station.

Taliban bomb

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Taliban uprising after the United States branded Islamist extremists an existential threat to Pakistan.

Pakistan has announced a string of high-profile arrests in Swat and this month mounted another offensive in the lawless Khyber district, a main supply line for US and Nato forces in Afghanistan on the edge of Peshawar.

The school bombing came as police said they were investigating a possible assassination attempt on a provincial cabinet minister when they killed a teenage suicide bomber in Totail village of northwestern Buner district.

"We raided a primary school on intelligence information where four militants were staying," local police official Noor Jamal told AFP.

Three militants ran away as "we opened fire on them while the fourth one died as explosives that he had strapped with his body detonated."

"We have recovered legs of the bomber from the site," Jamal said.

It was difficult to determine who was the target of militants but provincial education minister Sardar Hussain Babak claimed he was the target as he frequently travels on the road where the school is located.

"The attackers were planning to hit me and my uncle," Babak told AFP.

Pakistan says it has cleared Swat, and neighbouring districts Buner and Lower Dir of insurgents and has encouraged almost two million displaced civilians to return home. The UN says around 1.65 million have done so.

The army said Monday that troops arrested a badly wounded Taliban commander and alleged mastermind of

that imposed sanctions on Iran and North Korea for their nuclear pursuits.

Foreign ministers from the five permanent council nations and Germany, who have been trying to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions, will meet with the European Union's top negotiator on Wednesday to discuss prospects and expectations for lower-level talks with Iranian officials on October 1.

Demonstrators have announced protests against two heads of government: Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi who will be making his first UN appearance after 40 years as ruler of the oil-rich North African nation, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

There has been much speculation on whether Obama will cross paths with Gadhafi and Ahmadinejad.

They are all invited to a lunch Wednesday hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and then there is a group photo session. Gadhafi is almost certain to meet the US leader if he attends Thursday's Security Council meeting on nuclear non-proliferation to represent Libya, which is a non-permanent council member.

There are many other meetings scheduled on the sidelines of the General Assembly.

Countries concerned with Myanmar, Pakistan and Afghanistan will hold closed-door talks. There will be