

8 killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

At least eight people were killed and 30 others injured in separate road accidents in Bogra, Tangail, Jessore and Satkhira yesterday.

Staff correspondent from Bogra says: At least three people were killed and 10 others injured in separate road accidents in Bogra yesterday.

The dead were identified as Dhalu Miah, 35, son of Tabu Miah of Kuribari in Sariakandi upazila of Bogra, Milu, 38, son of Akbar Ali of Andarbari of the same upazila and Sherpur Bus stand Traders' Association Sports Secretary Md Ashish Islam Ranju, 35.

Witnesses said, Dhalu Miah and Milu died on the spot when a shallow engine run vehicle from Sariakandi to Rural Development Academy at Sherpur collided head-on with a truck near Fatki Bridge of Shahjahanpur upazila.

Businessman Ranju was killed when the wheels of a coach in Hamchayapur area on Bogra-Dhaka highway.

Besides, 10 people were injured when the driver of a Gaibandha-bound coach from Chittagong lost his control over the steering and the coach turned upside down on the road in Jhoggari area in Bogra suburbs.

Our correspondent from Tangail reports: At least two people were killed and 20 others injured in a road accident in Tangail Sadar upazila yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place around 2:00pm when a North Bengal-bound passenger bus from Dhaka collided head-on with a speeding truck from opposite direction at Ashekpur bypass in the town, leaving two truck passengers, including its driver, dead on the spot and injuring 20 other passengers of both the vehicles.

Police and fire fighters rescued the injured and rushed them to the Tangail General Hospital. Of the injured, condition of at least five people is critical, hospital sources said.

Jasim Uddin Sarker, officer-in-charge of Tangail Police Station, told The Daily Star that the identity of the dead could not be known immediately.

A correspondent from Jessore says: Two businessmen were killed in a road accident on Jessore-Jhenidah road in Satiyantola area yesterday.

He dead were identified as Nasir Ali, 30, son of Badshah Tarofdar, and Alamgir Hossain Uzzal, 28, son of Samsul Haque of Degholiya village under Chaugachha upazila.

Police said the accident occurred when a bus hit a Nasiman, locally made human hauler, from behind at Satiyantola. Nasir and Uzzal

were going to Jessore with green chili by the Nasiman.

Nasir and Uzzal along with injured driver Alamgir were rushed to Jessore General Hospital in critical condition where they succumbed to their injuries. Condition of driver Alamgir was stated to be critical.

Our correspondent from Satkhira says: An old man was crushed under the wheels of a prison van on the Satkhira Judge's Court premises in the town yesterday.

Public caught the driver of the prison van and handed over to police after given a mass beating.

The victim was identified as Akbar Ali Gazi, 65, son of late Mandar Ali Gazi of village Gumantoli in Shyamnagar upazila.

Police said Akbar, complainant of a case, was crushed under the wheels of a prison van while he was trying to cross the road, leaving him dead on the spot.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina calls on former Indian prime minister IK Gujral at his residence in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: PID



National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources, Electricity and Seaports forms a human chain at Paltan intersection in the city yesterday demanding exploration of oil and gas resources under state proprietorship.

'Explore oil, gas under state proprietorship'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources, Electricity and Seaports yesterday demanded the government explore oil and gas resources under state proprietorship.

The leaders of the committee placed the demand at a human chain formed at Paltan intersection in the city as part of its countrywide programme to press home their seven-point demand.

The committee formed the human chains at some 150 points across the country.

Convener of the committee engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, Member Secretary Anu Mohammad, members Ruhin Hossain Prince, Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon, Prof MM Akash, Prof Mesbah Kamal, Nur Mohammad took part in the programme.

Prof Anu called on the government to punish the corrupt officials in the energy sector and free the energy sector, including Petrobangla and Bapex, of corruption.

The demands of the committee include smooth gas supply, formulation of an act prohibiting export of mineral resources, scrapping of Model PSC-2008 and punishment to people and policemen responsible for attacking its procession on September 2, 2009.

After the human chain, the committee staged a street drama at Muktagang.

The committee members also formed human chains at Jatrabari, Shahbagh and Shyamoli in the city.

The leaders of Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh expressed their solidarity with the national committee leaders for the human chains.

Dhaka Wasa realises Tk 1.4cr in bill arrears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (DWASA) realised around Tk 1.39 crore in outstanding bills during a drive in different parts of the city from December 12 to January 4.

The magistrate of DWASA, Kazi Wasiuddin, also realised Tk 6.97 lakh in fines from the bill defaulters during the drive.

Blankets for orphans

METRO DESK

Banglalink has recently donated blankets in various orphanages in and around the city to help orphans withstand cold wave which is currently sweeping across the country, says a press release.

Irum Iqbal, manager, PR and communication of Banglalink, donated the blankets at Bauniabadh Islamia Orphanage under Mirpur in the city.

Free blankets were also distributed in other orphanages and among the needy community of Rajshahi, Bogra, Mymensingh, Khulna and Chittagong.

To help underprivileged children brace themselves against the cold spell, the mobile phone operator took the initiative to distribute some 5,000 blankets in a number of orphanages.

Two hybrid varieties to boost cotton output

BSS, Dhaka

The government has taken an initiative to boost fibre cotton production in the country by introducing hybrid cotton varieties to meet commercial demand of cotton and ensure financial benefit of the farmers.

Under the initiative, the production of cottonseed would be almost doubled, said sources at the Cotton Development Board (CDB) in the city yesterday.

Now the country's annual cotton production is around 50000 bales while the initiative would help increase the output to up to one lakh bales in phases.

The Ministry of Agriculture has already permitted private sector seed importers and dealers for marketing hybrid cottonseed like HSC-4 and DM-1.

Presently, the farmers are being more attracted to cotton production as the cotton cultivation area has been increased by 200 hectares across the country during the 2008-09 season.

The production would rise further, said the CDB officials.

Officials of the seed companies and CDB said two hybrid seed varieties HSC-4 and DM-1, both being imported from China, would provide around 3-3.5 tonnes of cotton in each hectare compared with two tonnes from traditional variety CB-9, a local variety invented by the CDB.

Besides, the local variety is ultimately of long duration as it requires minimum seven

months after seed sowing on June-July period, but the hybrid varieties require less than five months.

Mostaq Ahmed, a farmer of village Dhankhola under Gangni upazila in Meherpur district, told BSS over telephone, "I have cultivated hybrid variety on four bighas of land and made a profit of Tk 17000 in each bigha. But the profit in case of local variety is only Tk 8000," he said, adding, "The cost of production per bigha is Tk 10000."

On increasing the cotton production, Deputy Director of CDB M Farid Uddin said local production can meet only 3-5 percent of the national demand, the country has to import around 25 lakh bales of raw cotton annually to meet the demand of around 350 spinning mills, which consume about 30 lakh bales of raw cotton every year.

The CDB official, however, stressed government initiative to develop the high-yielding variety locally as low-yielding variety and long duration are major constraints to increasing local cotton production.

Bangladesh has as much as 2 lakh hectares of suitable land for cotton production but overemphasis on other crops has drastically reduced the overall cotton output.

About the high price of hybrid cottonseed, Adviser to Supreme Seed Company Ibrahim Khalil told BSS that there is no scope to slash the seed price, as the production cost for per kilogram hybrid seed is Tk 3000 while the selling price is Tk 2000.



Banglalink distributes free blankets among children at Bauniabadh Islamia Orphanage at Mirpur in the city recently.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Deputy secy, wife beaten up by armed criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of armed criminals beat up a senior deputy secretary, his wife and two daughters severely with rods after storming his residence at Azimpur Govt Staff Quarters in the city yesterday.

The victims were identified as Senior Deputy Secretary Rafiul Alam, 48, of Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARSO), his wife Meena Alam, 42, and their daughters Rifat Alam, 20, and Taslima Alam, 17.

They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the couple was undergoing treatment while the siblings left the hospital after receiving treatment.

Albagh police or the victims, however, could not ascertain the real cause behind the incident.

Rafiul told The Daily Star that he and his wife woke up at the sound of breaking the door of his room on the ground floor of a five-storey building around 3:45am. But some six criminals attacked them and started hitting them with rods and other sharp weapons.

Their two daughters also came under the attack as they came to their rescue after hearing the screaming from the other room, he added.

The government official sustained injuries to his nose and face and his wife to her head while their daughters also received injuries to their bodies.

As they tried to call their neighbours, the attackers threatened them with firearms not to shout, Rafiul added.

The miscreants took away the gold necklace of his wife only, he said, adding that they first cut the grill at the balcony and then entered his bedroom.

Hasibul Hasan, neighbour of the victims, said the attackers reached the house after scaling the boundary wall of the Azimpur graveyard and escaped the scene the same way.

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