

Killer driver

FROM PAGE 1
company," the IO said.

Asked if he had contacted the company, he said, "No." Asked why not, he said, "Could not get to it."

"We definitely will contact the bus owners soon," he quickly added.

When The Daily Star contacted Winner Paribahan Managing Director Khandaker Rafiqul Hossain Kazol in the afternoon, he was quite reluctant to talk to the correspondent. He is also the president of the Association of Bus Companies, the largest of such associations in the capital.

He however said police did not contact him, but he took the initiative to send copies of the driver's license and company ID card to the police station. He also said his company made no effort to contact either the victim's family, or the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) authorities.

When the IO was asked if he got the documents sent by the MD of the bus company, he said he did not know anything about that.

The officer-in-charge of the station, Mohammad Ali, however said rather hastily that they have "all necessary information", adding, "But for the sake of investigation, we will not disclose those."

"We are trying seriously to arrest the killers," he assured.

The MD of the bus company said he only knows the driver as Shanto from Natore, and does not know where he lives in the capital, nor his cellphone number. He added he knows nothing at all about the driver's helper, because they are appointed by drivers.

"We appointed the driver in 2007. He submitted his driving license, but we are not sure whether it was fake," he said.

Since the fatal accident, both the driver and his helper have been missing, and they did not contact him, said the

Campaign

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planned manner.

Emerging from the programme, Mohiuddin told the reporters that the rift and disputes among the senior leaders of Chittagong AL has been healed after the meeting with the party chief Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka on Thursday.

He hoped that all the leaders, activists would work unitedly in support of him.

Mohiuddin also joined separate view-exchange meetings arranged by Nagorik Committee at Nandir Hat and in the city's Bakalia and Hazari Goli areas.

BNP-backed candidate M Manjur Alam started his formal campaign after saying Asar prayers at the shrine.

Later, he held view exchange meetings and continued mass contacts seeking votes in Lalkhan Bazar and Patharghata areas.

During the campaign, Manjur observed that Chittagong could be reached to the standard of developed cities by working impartially and maintaining sincerity and honesty.

Manjur also vowed to take sincere and effective initiative to wipe out all sorts of corruption, nepotism and autocracy from the CCC.

Musa's reception

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All Bangladeshis in Kathmandu will attend the programme to be held at hotel Everest in Kathmandu at 6:30pm Bangladesh time.

Nepal's Mountaineering Association sources said they are going to award medals to some prominent climbers.

The key figures include Peter Hebler from Austria, the first person to climb Everest without oxygen, Apa Sherpa, 20 times climber, Major HPS Alhawaliya, a war hero as well as Everest winner and Arjun Bajpayee, the youngest Indian to climb Everest.

Others attending the function are Chris Bonington, a renowned mountaineer and writer, L Jirasko, president of International Alpinism Festival and Richard Blum, president of American Himalayan Foundation.

On the occasion, Apa Sherpa, 20 times Everest summiteer, will be honoured as a Goodwill Ambassador of Saarc.

In addition, Tenzing Hillary Award will be presented to a person who contributed much to the development of Khumbu region near Mt Everest.

MD.

Asked how come he does not know his employees' cell numbers, the MD said, "Perhaps they do not use cellphones. And even if they did, I think they would keep those switched off now."

Asked whether his company will compensate the victim's family, Kajol said he did not think about it yet.

"We are running our business at a loss, and there is no chance of getting compensation from the insurance company, as our insurance is a third party insurance," he said adding, third party insurance covers only bus passengers.

"The matter will be settled legally," he said claiming the driver and the victim both were responsible for the accident.

"The driver reversed the bus absent-mindedly, while the student was talking on a cellphone on the street inattentively," he said.

Khandaker Khanjahan Samrat, 19, a fresher of the mechanical engineering department at Buet, was run over by a Winner Paribahan bus at Azimpur intersection.

A straight-A student, Samrat, had come to Dhaka City ten days before the fatal accident, and started attending Buet classes just five days ago. He was also allotted a seat at one of the institute dorms on Monday.

Accomplices

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him when he torched Aleya on Wednesday pouring petrol, but during interrogation, three names came up.

Meanwhile, Aleya's father Abdur Rashid yesterday noon learnt from his relatives about the attack on his daughter. He was on the way back to Dhaka from his village home at Jajira in Shariatpur.

Rashid, a rickshaw mechanic, left Dhaka 17 days ago, as he had decided to marry his daughter off in the face of Aleya being stalked by her rejected suitor Khokon of the capital.

Home Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque yesterday visited Aleya at the Intensive Care Unit of the Burn Unit in Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Aleya sought justice from the minister.

The minister assured her that the criminals must be given exemplary punishment.

One of her relatives Razia Begum said they don't have the financial ability to continue such expensive treatment of burn injuries.

Dr Samanta Lal Sen, project director of Burn and Plastic Surgery unit, told The Daily Star that Aleya's health condition is still critical.

Yakub Ali, sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station and the investigation officer of the case, said Khokon initially told the police that Rana and Babu were with him.

Following Aleya's claim that Belal was with Khokon during the attack, the police asked him about Belal's involvement. Khokon admitted to Belal's involvement during interrogation.

Khokon is trying to confuse the police, Yakub said.

Mob beat robber to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

An alleged robber was killed and five others were injured in a mob beating at Raipur village under Tala upazila of the district on Thursday night.

The deceased was identified as Abul Kalam, 40, son of Ashraf Ali of Paikgachha upazila under Khulna district.

The injured are Azizul Gazi, 30, Mintu Gazi, 35, Tuku Sardar, Faruk Hossain, 25 and Ram Pada Mondal, 36 from different villages under Paikgachha upazila.

Locals and police said a gang of 10 to 12 armed robbers with sharp weapons swooped on a shrimp enclosure owned by Mostafa Gazi at Raipur village. After beating the duty staff they started looting the shrimps at around 2:00am Thursday night.

Hearing the screams of the staff local villagers rushed to the spot and encircled the gang members, sources said.

The mob caught six of them while they were fleeing the scene and gave them a good beating leaving Abul Kalam dead and five others injured on the spot.

Police recovered the body and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police also rescued the injured robbers and arrested them.

Officer-in-Charge Liakat Ali of Tala police station said six other members of the gang managed to flee the spot.

A case was lodged with Tala police station in this regard.

Everest hero

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father Ansar Ali will go to Nepal by a seven-seater aircraft to bring the hero.

Musa's elder sister Moni, one of the sponsors, and her husband Rashidul told The Daily Star yesterday that a Korean company named Youngone, which has five aircraft for their business purpose, is one of the sponsors for Musa's conquest.

After Musa's historic achievement for Bangladesh, the South Korean company has voluntarily come forward with a proposal to Musa's family providing one of their aircraft to bring Musa back home from Kathmandu, Nepal.

The family happily accepted the idea and now planning to fly to Kathmandu in the morning of June 1 from Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka.

Rashidul, a pilot of Youngone's flight department, said that they are expecting to arrive Dhaka with Musa in the afternoon, almost at the same time of arrival of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

It is an Italian aircraft Piaggio Avanti-II, P-180 in which Musa will arrive, he said.

The family members said Youngone sponsored for Musa some equipment, which were required to conquer Everest, and these are very expensive.

There is no programme of formal reception for Musa in the airport, they will receive him through the VIP lounge, the family members added.

"The sponsor wanted to arrange for his heroic return as he is a pride of the nation," said Rashidul.

BNP

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is yet to take any shape.

The party's Dhaka city unit has been without a committee since BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain disbanded the then committee led by Khoka in June 2008. Party Chairperson Khaleda Zia was in prison at that time.

BNP high-ups initiated formation of a new committee several times after the last parliamentary elections. But it didn't materialise due to disputes between two BNP factions -- one led by Khoka and the other by standing committee member Mirza Abbas.

Khaleda Zia recently assigned Khoka to run party activities in the city. Khoka also presided over the grand rally at Paltan Maidan following her directives.

Party insiders said the success of the grand rally sealed Khoka's position in the next city committee.

Meanwhile, some party leaders are mounting pressure on party high-ups to announce a convening committee instead of a full-fledged committee.

They argue that a full-fledged committee should be formed through a council.

BNP standing committee member Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman said the new committee will be announced soon. The BNP chairperson will pick dedicated party leaders to run its activities in the city.

This is necessary to cater the country's energy needs,

Culprits hardly

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these drivers there will not be many vehicles left on the streets.

He said there should be a legal provision to implicate irresponsible bus owners who employ these drivers.

Joint Commissioner (traffic) Shafiqul Rahman said around 80 percent bus drivers in the city use fake driving licences to get jobs.

Eminent lawyer and lawmaker Tarana Halim said there is no comprehensive law regarding road accidents.

"I raised the issue in the parliament but the law minister said at the moment it is impossible to promulgate a separate and complete law regarding road accidents without having specific advice from communications and home ministries," she said.

She said police should keep seized vehicles in custody until delivery of the verdict but the law does not have any directive in this regard.

If there were procedures for owners to follow before employing a driver, they could be tried for employing fake drives, she said, adding that with sections 279 and 304 and 304(b) of the Penal Code the drives concerned only can be implicated, not owners.

Sub-inspector Didarul Alam of Ramna Police Station is the investigation officer of Willes Little Flower School student Hamim Sheikh murder case. Hamim was killed by a bus in front of his school on February 3.

Didarul said about four months into the incident Modhumati Paribahan authorities obtained a court order to get their bus released.

He said the court order reached the police station Wednesday night.

He said despite the fact that Modhumati Paribahan employed a fake driver for the bus he could not implicate the authorities in the case due to lack of legal provision.

He said the bus also did not have a rear-view mirror.

Police said the authorities of Modhumati Paribahan said they do not care if some of their buses remain seized in connection with traffic accidents.

Driver Shamsur Rahman, 28, at Ramna Police Station following the accident told reporters that he had obtained a fake licence and his employer is so powerful that the owner would arrange his and the seized bus's release soon.

The High Court on May 11 directed Bangladesh Beverage

Industries Ltd to give Tk 2.1 crore as compensation to wife and two sons of late Mozammel Hossain Mantu, former newswriter of daily Sangbad.

A vehicle of the company injured him and he later died.

Advocate Mohammad Khalilur Rahman of the Supreme Court said the verdict was delivered under Tort Act, which is the first application in the country.

Slow-moving

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large vehicles like buses and trucks run smoothly on the highway.

"We learnt that the number of road accidents on the highway is less than other highways of the country," said Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain yesterday.

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) has already approved the project of the 20-kilometer by-lane on the Dhaka-Bogra highway in Sirajganj, he said.

Accidents are very frequent on the highway as hundreds of motorised and non-motorised vehicles use the road. There are many handloom industries in the area and thus a huge number of people travel to and from the area every day. People suffer a lot due to traffic congestion and often fall victim to road accidents, reads the project proposal.

The ministry is now awaiting disbursement of the funds from the finance ministry for the by-lane, the minister said.

"Once we get it, we will float a tender," said Abul Hossain.

He added that the ministry has taken another project of by-lane in Gopalganj district.

The communications minister said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had directed the ministry to construct by-lanes along each of the major highways of the country.

The ministry is selecting the busiest and the most accident-prone highways for constructing by-lanes, he noted.

In Gopalganj, a 34-kilometer by-lane will be constructed at an estimated cost of Tk 33 crore. The proposal is now under consideration of the planning commission.

According to the BRTA Accident Monitoring Cell records, a total of 3,381 road accidents occurred across the country in 2009, causing 2,958 deaths and 2,223 serious injuries. In 2008, the number of accidents was 4,427 with 3,765 deaths and 2,720 injuries.

Public-pvt

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metres below the ground). The coal deposit in the mine's southern part rests as deep as 450 metres.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, Chowdhury said, "We have to take a decision by December, we have to. Otherwise, the government will not be able to achieve any tangible progress about it within its tenure."

The underground mine's existing operational contract with Chinese consortium CMC-XMC will expire next year.

As part of the new initiatives, the government is now finalising the much awaited coal policy, which was first drafted during the past BNP-led alliance government's tenure, and then by the caretaker government. The Awami League government has also been taking a long time to finalise the policy.

"We have laws related to mining. But they need to be updated," the premier's adviser said, adding that the energy ministry is now shortening the draft policy as many of its parts were irrelevant. After the ministry finalises the draft, it will be sent to parliament for discussion.

The coal policy will make room for both open pit and underground mining methods as well as other methods like coal gasification and utilising coal bed methane.

The government will also form a new organisation to deal with all kinds of mining under the banner of "Khani Bangla". The past drafts of coal policy had advocated formation of an organisation named "Coal Bangla" in the same line with Petrobangla.

Last month, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a discussion with government officials for the first time talked about converting Barapukuria underground mine into an open pit mine after completely rehabilitating all the local people being affected by the on-going underground mining activities.

This is necessary to cater the country's energy needs,

Jamaat men assault UNO in Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A group of Jamaat activists assaulted Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abdus Samad for imposing section 144 over the meeting scheduled to be held at Fultala Madrasa field under Shahjahanpur upazila of the district yesterday.

Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid was present at the meeting as the chief guest, which was arranged for the death anniversary of a Jamaat leader and former lawmaker Abdur Rahman.

The Jamaat-Shibir activists attacked the UNO at around 12:45pm as he appeared there during the meeting and imposed section 144 over the meeting.

Sources said, in the banner of the death anniversary of his father Fultala Eidgah Imam Abdul Mozahid organised the party programme.

Denying the assault Abdus Samad said after declaring section 144 he left the spot immediately.

Officer-in-Charge Anisur Rahman of Shahjahanpur Police Station confirmed the incident of assault over the phone.

AL men

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"I instructed the Alamdanga railway authorities to enquire into the matter and take necessary steps," said Kiron over the phone yesterday.

On Thursday, a group of about 50 AL men around 3:00pm asked the businessmen to move out within an hour.

The group led by Chhatra League, Alamdanga upazila unit president Tafsir Ahmed Lal and general secretary of the unit Sariful Islam started vandalising the structures by hammer, crowbar and other tools.

No police or railway staffs came to the spot during the mayhem between 4:00pm to 7:00pm.

When contacted, Kiron said he had heard about the incident.

Officer-in-Charge of Alamdanga Police Station Ilias Fakir told this correspondent over the phone yesterday that local protesters were behind the action.

He also said nobody came to file a complaint with the police station as the shop owners were running businesses illegally with the help of some railway officials.

Despite repeated attempts this correspondent could not reach the BCL leaders.

ACC officials

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ACC headquarters. They can negotiate their way out of those charges by sending money through SA Paribahan and Continental Courier Service.

ACC took the matter seriously a couple of weeks ago when the gang asked a Chittagong University teacher to contact a mobile phone number to negotiate the disposal of a corruption charge filed against him.

Quite incidentally, the teacher turned out to be a friend of Ghulam Rahman, the ACC chairman.

Following the attempt, the ACC assigned Major Shahrar the task and issued a handout asking people to remain aware of the extortionists exploiting the commission.

The government is also working on developing a mining city in Barapukuria, which will not only help voluntary relocation of affected people but also function as a centre for mining education, and create job opportunities and other facilities.

In this connection, Hasina told her cabinet colleagues last month that she would do whatever is best in the interest of the nation and would not be discouraged by any group's resistance.

She was referring to the national committee on protection of oil and gas, which has been opposing open pit mining arguing this would cause environmental damage and people would lose arable land.

The existing underground mine is already damaging arable land as huge areas above the mine area have subsided since 2006. According to the mining authorities, during the mine's 30-year life, an area of 4.5 square kilometre will subside by at least one to two metres and become useless.

Barapukuria deposit has 389 million tonnes of coal. But the present underground mining design will allow extraction of only 30 million tonnes over a period of 30 years. By converting it into an open pit mine, most part of this deposit can be tapped. The mine has, on an average, a very thick 36-metre high quality coal seam.

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Attack on Pak

FROM PAGE 1
bursts of heavy gunfire rocked the neighbourhoods and rescue services raced through the streets to tend to the victims.

"The prayer leader was delivering a sermon inside the hall when I suddenly heard distant gunshots," Bilal Ahmed, a worshipper told AFP after fleeing with his life from the mosque in Model Town.

"Then the firing became louder and closer and people started running here, there and everywhere to save themselves. Gunmen had entered the prayer hall and they were moving towards upper floors."

"The attackers were youths with beards who were not covering their faces. The floor was full of blood and broken glass," Ahmed said.

As the gun battles ended in both locations, officials spoke of scenes of carnage -- particularly in Garhi Shahu where dozens of bodies were found.

"Around 80 people have been killed," Sajjad Bhutta, the top city administrative official in Lahore, told reporters.

Doctor Rizwan Nasir, head of the rescue services in Lahore, said 108 people were wounded as police continued to search for any remaining attackers.

Taliban and Al-Qaeda-linked militants have orchestrated a three-year bombing campaign in Pakistan to avenge military operations and the government's alliance with the United States over the war in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Friday's attacks were the worst in Pakistan since a suicide bomber killed 101 people on January 1 at a volleyball game in Bannu, which abuts the tribal belt along the Afghan border that Washington calls an Al-Qaeda headquarters.

Nine attacks have killed around 265 people in Lahore since March 2009, a historical city, playground for the elite and home to many top brass in Pakistan's powerful military and intelligence establishment.

The precise number of attackers at Garhi Shahu was not immediately clear, but police said there were at least three in Model Town.

"They came into the mosque from the back and started firing. They were armed with hand grenades and suicide vests and other weapons," Rana Ayaz, a senior local police official, told AFP.

Officials said one of the attackers blew himself up and two were arrested -- one of them a teenager. The other was seriously wounded.

Founded by Ghulam Ahmad, who was born in 1838, the Ahmadi sect has a number of unique views including that Ahmad himself was a prophet and that Jesus died aged 120 in Srinagar, capital of Indian-ruled Kashmir.

The 2009 US State Department report on human rights says that 11 Ahmadi were killed due to their faith during the year.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said it had warned of threats against the Ahmadi community centre in Lahore and demanded "foolproof security and protection" from the government.

It expressed concern over "the increasing sectarian

dimension" of militancy in Pakistan, which it called "a big security threat to the entire society".

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