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ROAD CRASH IN GAZIPUR

Death of worker sparks vandalism

20 buses attacked; several passengers hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Death of a garment worker in a road accident at Shalna in Gazipur yesterday sparked a violent protest from fellow workers, disrupting vehicular movement on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway for over two hours.

Meanwhile, traffic halted on the Dhaka-Mawa highway as well for around an hour after a state-run BRTC bus crushed an elderly man to death at Lauhaganj in Munshiganj yesterday morning.

The Gazipur victim was identified as Morsheda Begum, 55, worker of a garment factory owned by Prity Group. She was knocked down by a truck around 9:00am while crossing the road, witnesses said.

As the news spread, several hundred garment workers took to the streets and ran riot, damaging around 20 vehicles, mostly buses.

Several passengers were hit by pieces of broken glass as the agitating workers smashed windshields of vehicles.

Panicked, passengers in their dozens ran for life, locals said, adding that several hundred vehicles got stranded on both sides of the road causing sufferings to many.

Police said they brought the situation under control around 11:30am, assuring the agitators of building a speed bump in front of the factory.

Talking to The Daily Star over the phone, Sub-inspector Abul Kalam Azad of Joydevpur Police Station, however, said only two vehicles -- one bus and a truck -- were damaged.

The driver of the Mymensingh-bound truck fled the scene.

Meanwhile, Morsheda's body was taken to her village home in Jamalpur for burial yesterday.

In Munshiganj, 70-year-old Aziz Bangi of Lauhaganj was crushed under the BRTC bus around 11:00am when he was crossing the road, police said.

Incensed, locals damaged at least five vehicles and blocked the road for around an hour.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4



The crowd at the weekly hawkers' market in Segunbagicha of the capital was heavy yesterday as people thronged to buy affordable winter clothes during the ongoing cold spell.

PHOTO: STAR

Cargo vessel gets stuck in Chittagong port channel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A foreign container vessel got stuck in the river bed at the entrance of Chittagong port yesterday as it was distracted by foggy weather.

The Panama-flagged Hanjin Semarang ran aground at the river mouth on the port channel in between Buoy No. 1 and Buoy No. 3 around 1:30pm, said on duty staff at the Chittagong Port Radio Control.

Officials said due to fogs the cargo ship mistakenly entered the channel's southern portion, comparatively less deep than the regular northern part, and got bogged down.

Contacted, Chittagong Port Authority (CPA)

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

Upazila parishads remain incomplete

Elections to 1,600 women seats in the parishads not held in 3 years

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The formation of upazila parishads remains unfinished as elections to some 1,600 posts reserved for women were not held in around last three years.

Over the period, the government itself had retained the authority to fix the timetable for the polls to the reserved posts, but refrained from taking measures to this end.

Recently, it has returned the authority to the Election Commission by amending the upazila parishad act. But the polls to the reserved posts are still uncertain as the commission is not thinking about it, the EC sources said.

"First we have to hold by-polls to the posts of chairmen and vice-chairmen, which have been lying vacant for long. So, we are not thinking about the elections to reserved seats right now," a senior EC official told The Daily Star last week.

The current EC, tenure of which will end in February, might not opt for holding the polls to the reserved posts in upazila

parishads, the official added.

Contacted by The Daily Star on Friday, Election Commissioner Sohul Hussein said the EC got the authority to fix timetable for the polls at the fag-end of its term.

"We will discuss the issue and examine what we can do about it at the last moments of our tenure."

The upazila parishad elections were held on January 22 last year and a chairman and two vice-chairmen, including a woman, were elected at each upazila. Union parishad chairmen and municipality mayors under upazilas became ex-officio members of the upazila parishads.

As per the existing law, the number of reserved seats for women in upazila parishads is one-third of all union parishads and municipalities.

There are now 504 union parishads and 327 municipalities. So the number of reserved posts for women in 481 upazila parishads would be around 1,600.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

DoE shuts down illegal dyeing unit on Turag

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday shut down a dyeing factory in Ashulia for running without authorisation and also fined it for discharging untreated chemical waste into the river Turag.

Director (enforcement) Mohammad Munir Chowdhury shut down Pearls and Paus, a sister concern of the Radiance Group, and recovered Tk 29 lakh in fine from them.

He directed the authority of the factory, located at Khejur Bagan in Ashulia near Savar, to set up an effluent treatment plant (ETP) and to stop all production until then.

If the authority fails to obey the directives, DoE

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

PAKISTAN CRISIS

Tensions rise between govt and generals

Army chief dismisses coup plot; many speculate Zardari could be forced out

AGENCIES

As tensions grew over a controversial memo alleging an army plot to seize power, Pakistan's powerful military pledged yesterday to continue supporting democracy, reiterating it was not planning a takeover.

At the same time, President Asif Ali Zardari's spokesman said he had resumed duties after returning from medical treatment in Dubai and has no intention of leaving over the scandal, which has undermined the already deeply unpopular president.

The army is fed up with Zardari and wants him out of office, although through legal means and without a repeat of the coups that are a hallmark of the country's



Zardari



Kayani



Gilani

64 years of independence, military sources told Reuters on Thursday.

Another military source said tensions must be defused.

Zardari's government has become increasingly unpopular since he took office in 2008. It has failed to tackle myriad problems, from crippling power cuts to suicide bombings and a struggling economy.

Many Pakistanis wonder whether he can survive the crisis, and speculation has

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5



Trucks unload fruits blocking large portion of the road between Sadarghat and Batamtoli in the capital yesterday. Such inconsiderateness on the part of traders is not unusual and many streets are blocked like this.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

TRANSPORT STRIKE

Commuters in Rangpur region suffer for 11 hrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

The 48-hour strike called by transport workers in Rangpur division was withdrawn yesterday, after 11 hours since its beginning at 6:00am.

The strike on 26 routes in all the eight districts of the division caused immense sufferings to hundreds of commuters.

Candidates, who were travelling to Rangpur to take admission tests of Carmichael College, Rangpur Government College and Begum Rokeya College, were the worst victims, said Dipakendra Nath Das, principal of Carmichael College.

Many candidates failed to reach the divisional headquarters because of the strike, he added.

Hundreds of buses, trucks and other motorised vehicles remained stranded at Pirganj, Kounia, Taraganj since the morning as transport workers barricaded different entry points to the divisional headquarters, said sources at Rangpur Highway Police.

However, with the withdrawal of the strike, vehicles started to operate on all the routes, Altam Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said.

Rangpur Bibhag Sarak Paribahan O Shramik Federation members called the strike on Thursday

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

The Daily Star



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ONLINE POLL

Do you think the latest hike in power tariff at retail level in 10 Months is justified?

Yes (24.4%)
No (73.9%)
No Comments (1.7%)

TOTAL VOTES: 303

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the president's dialogue with political parties on formation of a new, acceptable Election Commission will bring a positive result?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT
www.thedailystar.net
YOU MAY ALSO VOTE AT
facebook.com/dailystarnews

PRAYER TIMING		December 24
Azan	5-25	6-00
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-24	5-27
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		