

## 'DENIAL OF PROTOCOL'

## Santu Larma stays away from event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Regional council chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, popularly known as Santu Larma, cancelled his scheduled programme in Rajshahi yesterday as the district and police administrations did not provide him protocol of a state minister.

Kolyan Chakma, personal assistant to Santu Larma, said nobody welcomed Larma as he reached Rajshahi Circuit House Monday, though the deputy commissioner (DC) or his representative and the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) commissioner or his representative should have been present as per rules.

He said Larma was to attend the fourth National Council of Jatiya Adibashi Parishad at Bhubon Mohon Park as the chief guest. None of the senior officials visited Larma till 9:00pm yesterday when this report was filed.



The city's Kalabagan playground swarms with people coming to pay their last tribute to Buddhist spiritual leader Sadhana Nanda Mohasthabir, commonly known as Bana Bhante, inset, who breathed his last in a city hospital on Monday.

PHOTO: STAR



## WAR CRIMES TRIAL

## Proceedings adjourned as PW falls sick

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) adjourned the trial proceedings against Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee till today, as a witness fell sick during his deposition yesterday. Madhusudan Gharami, the 23rd prosecution witness, will give the rest of his deposition before the tribunal with special arrangements today in a case filed against Sayedee in connection with the crimes against humanity during the Liberation War of 1971.

Prosecutor Rana Dasgupta told The Daily Star that the witness would be lying on sickbed in the courtroom and a doctor would be present during the proceedings today.

Madhusudan, 81, had been in the hospital for over a week due to old age and other complications and he left the hospital on Monday, he said.

The elderly man started his deposition after the tribunal took the charges over crimes against humanity against another Jamaat leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman into cognisance around 10:40am yesterday.

As Madhusudan fell sick within few minutes after answering some questions, the tribunal adjourned the proceedings.

During his unfinished deposition, Madhusudan told the court that he is aware about the Liberation War of the country and he used to work as carpenter at that time. He had his mother, two elder sisters, and a brother during the war, he said.

Sayedee, a top leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, is among six Jamaat leaders including its former chief Ghulam Azam and two BNP leaders who are facing war crime charges.

## Journo hurt in road crash dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

General Secretary of Boda Press Club Khorshed Alam, 48, injured in a road accident on Saturday night, died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) on Monday afternoon.

Khorshed met with the accident at Sipapara village in Boda town area when he fell onto the road from his motorcycle.

He was shifted to RMCH on Sunday morning from Boda Health Complex but he died at 4:00pm on Monday.

Lawmaker of Panchagarh-1 Nurul Islam Shujan, and district unit BNP president Mozahar Hossain condoled the death.

## Road accidents kill 16

STAR REPORT

Sixteen people were killed in road accidents in Dhaka, Gazipur, Naogaon, Sylhet, Jessore and Thakurgaon on Monday and yesterday.

In the capital, a bus rammed a rickshaw-van before Balaka Bhaban on Airport Road around 11:30pm on Monday.

Airport police said van puller Nurul Islam, 30, died instantly while his passenger Akkas Ali, 70, was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police seized the bus but its driver managed to flee the scene.

Fazr Ali, brother-in-law of the van driver, filed a case with Airport Police Station in this connection.

Mohammad Sajib, 11, died after being hit by a battery driven auto rickshaw at Mirpur DOHS around 10:30am yesterday.

In another incident, Nazrul Islam, 25, a store keeper of Amzil Apparel at Baipail, died on the spot when a Dhaka-bound bus from Naogaon hit his bicycle near the EPZ intersection around 7:30am yesterday.

Later, the bus also hit two other ready-made garment (RMG) workers.

Hearing the news, workers of Amzil and other apparel factories blocked Nabinagar-Kaliakoir road for two and a half hours, halting traffic movement on the road.

The workers also vandalised and set fire to the bus, Badrul Alam, OC Ashulia Police Station, told The Daily Star.

The workers withdrew the blockade around 10:30am after law enforcers assured them of taking action against the bus driver.

In Gazipur, two workers were killed and 20 others injured as a bus plunged into a roadside ditch in sadar upazila.

Police said a Kashimpur-bound bus

carrying the workers of Tahmina Garments located at Kashimpur fell into the ditch at Bhabanipur around 8:00am while giving way to a truck.

Monirul Islam, 20, a worker of the factory, and Jalal Miah, helper of the bus driver, died instantly.

In Chapainawabganj, five people, including two of a family, were killed and two others injured when a bus hit a rickshaw van at Hapania in Naogaon sadar upazila around 7:30pm on Monday.

The deceased are van puller Muslim Uddin alias Mukul, 20, and its passengers Kabita Begum, 35, her son Minhaz, 2, Sajjad Hossain, 35, and Rizia Bawya, 45.

Agitating locals blockaded the highway for about two hours and set fire to the bus after the incident.

They removed the barricade when police assured them of taking action against the bus driver and his helper.

Staff correspondent from Sylhet reports: Three workers were killed as a truck crashed into a roadside shop on Companiganj-Bhologanj road at Kalasadek in the district yesterday afternoon.

Of the deceased, Saju Miah, 35, is of Chunarugaht upazila in Habiganj. Our Benapole correspondent says: A three-wheeler ran over school girl Saleha Khatun Sheela, 6, daughter of Billal Hossain, killing her on the spot at Srirampur in Keshabpur upazila of Jessore district yesterday.

Following the accident, local people caught the driver of the vehicle and handed him over to police.

In Thakurgaon, Nur Alam, 12, son of late Mokbul Hossain of Salondar village in the sadar upazila, was crushed under the wheels of a tractor in front of Islam Plaza in the town on Monday night.

## Roads blocked, buses on fire in Baipail, Chapainawabganj



President Zillur Rahman gives away Begum Rokeya Padak (medal) to a recipient at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PTD

## Transport workers block city road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transport workers last night blocked the road at Mohakhali in the city following an assault on a fellow worker by passengers.

The hour-long barricades at Amtoli halted vehicular movement triggering tailback on the road and caused sufferings to the commuters.

Witnesses said two passengers halted a Bogra-bound bus of Ekota Paribahan at about 11:00pm and asked the driver to let them get in. As the driver refused to allow them, they exchanged heated argument and, at one stage, dragged the drive out of the bus and beat him up.

Following the incident, at least 100 transport workers from Mohakhali inter-district bus terminal put up the barricades on the road.

## Experts stress detail study on Tipaimukh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh should initiate a study to assess the overall impact of the construction of Tipaimukh dam to reap more benefits from negotiation with India, water experts said yesterday.

"We should do our own study on the impacts of Tipaimukh dam on Bangladesh so that we can negotiate with India based on our own findings", said Dr MA Kashem, chairman of National Disaster Management Advisory Committee.

Kashem, also former director general of Water Resources Planning Organisation (WARPO), made the recommendation at a discussion titled Tipaimukh Project: Bangladesh Perspective.

Bangladesh Economic Association organised the discussion where former and present engineers of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) were present.

Economist Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad also spoke for a detailed study. "We are doing a lot of hue and cry on the issue. But we have

to come out from emotions and examine the matter objectively for the long term benefit of Bangladesh".

The expert opinions came amid fears about the possible negative impacts on northeastern Bangladesh due to the dam to be built on the Barak River in Indian state of Manipur.

India says it builds the dam to generate hydro-electricity.

Dr Kashem said there is a lot of public apprehension and "guess-conclusions". But no critic mentions the Northeast Regional Water Management Model Study (FAP-6), although it is the only authentic document, he said.

"Before saying that it conflicts with national interest, let us scientifically analyse and examine whether Tipaimukh project is really a disaster or there is any opportunity for us".

Khandker Azharul Haque, former managing director of Dhaka Wasa; Golam Rabbani Former director general of BWDB; and BEA President Abul Barkat also spoke.

## Minister urges use of 'Teletalk'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Post and Telecommunication Minister Raji Uddin Ahmed yesterday urged people to use mobile phone of 'Teletalk Bangladesh Ltd', a public limited company, leaving other mobile phone operators in the country.

"We all should come forward to play role in improving better phone services of the state-owned Teletalk. The government has already taken initiative to upgrade networks of Teletalk," the minister said while replying to lawmakers' queries in the House.

Earlier his reply in the House, several ruling party MPs during question hour criticised the Teletalk authorities for its poor service regarding less area coverage and disturbed network of the mobile phone operator.

## Control cars to cut city gridlock

### Suggest speakers at a seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is imperative to control the massively growing number of private cars on the city roads to reduce traffic congestion, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

Getting facilities like reducing taxes, natural gas conversion and easy banks loans, a huge number of private cars have already hit the road, becoming one of the main reasons of traffic jam in Dhaka, said Prof Anu Mohammad, member secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power, and Ports.

He said it is not possible to change this scenario without any major political change.

Janaganer Dhaka Andolon, a social organisation, organised the seminar titled "We want a liveable Dhaka city" at the Jatiya Press Club.

Criticising the Dhaka city split, columnist Syed Abul Maksud said everyone should go forward with the demand not to split the city in order to save the city.

## BID TO TOPPLE GOVT

## JS body talks

Feb 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry will discuss the recent foiled "attempt to overthrow the present democratic government" by a band of religious fanatics, comprising mid-ranking army officers and their retired colleagues.

The committee will hold the discussion at its next meeting scheduled for February 7, Idris Ali, chief of the parliamentary body, told The Daily Star on Monday at the parliament building premises.

"We have already asked the army authorities to brief the committee members at the next meeting about the latest situation in the force. Then we will hold the discussion", he said.

Idris, also a ruling Awami League MP and former defence secretary, said the meeting had been scheduled for February 2. But it was rescheduled for February 7, he added.

## Road crashes won't stop until reckless driving does

Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader said in parliament yesterday that the number of road accidents will not decrease if unfit vehicles, "reckless driving, and unskilled drivers" are not stopped.

"How we can be able to control road accidents when drivers in our country consider themselves the 'king of roads' while they ride vehicles", an apparently disappointed Quader said.

"Merely upgrading of highways to eight or twelve or sixteen lanes will not help to reduce road accidents until we stop plying of unfit vehicles and stop issuing of fake driving licenses".

The minister made the observations as Awami League MP Fazilatunnesa Bappi drew his attention on widening of the Dhaka-Sylhet highway to four lanes to avoid road accidents on the busy highway.

"According to my last two months' experience [as minister], I must say that upgrading of the highways into any number of lanes will not be able to check road accidents in the country", said Quader, who has been given the charge of the communications ministry as a replacement of Syed Abul Hossain.

"Because, in our country drivers think them as king of roads and drive recklessly causing road accidents often".

The minister told the House that his ministry has taken immediate steps to construct dividers and widen the 22 dangerous curves on the Dhaka-Aricha highway within the next three months to free those of risks.