

Danger

FROM PAGE 1
and found that 45 percent of the accidents were caused by buses and trucks.

ARI sources said they had prepared the report based on police records, according to which 3,656 accidents occurred in 2008 while 2,802 in 2009 and 2,437 in 2010, showing a gradual slide in number.

According to foreign organisations working here, the total number of accidents is four to five times higher, ARI Director Prof Hasif Mohammad Ahsan said on a previous occasion.

He told The Daily Star yesterday that buses make the city roads chaotic and risky by shifting lanes and halting for passengers whenever and wherever they want to. Besides, lack of coordination among the Dhaka city corporations (North and South), Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and traffic police is also responsible for the mind-boggling number of accidents, added Prof Hasif.

"The ARI detected incorrect road signs in the capital and spoke of those on many occasions but the authorities concerned are yet to take any measure," he said, adding that proper enforcement of traffic laws could bring down road accident to a great extent.

Contacted over the phone, traffic chief Mohammad Mahubur Rahman yesterday said bus drivers were the most unruly. On Thursday, traffic police filed around 3,500 cases and over 1,500 of those were against bus drivers, he said.

Easy penalty is also a reason for drivers not getting any careful. According to section 304(B) of the Penal Code, death of a person due to reckless driving is an offence bailable and the highest punishment for this is three years' jail or fine or both.

Many citizens think this law should be revised.

FBCCI chief

FROM PAGE 20
government to take initiatives and talk to the diplomats so that they don't interfere in our internal politics," he told a function at Gulshan Club in the city last night.

Referring to the recent remarks by a group of diplomats from European countries at a joint press conference, Azad said they cannot give prescriptions to politicians by holding press conferences.

On Wednesday, the ambassadors of the European nations expressed their grave concern over the negative image of Bangladesh abroad caused by hartals, street violence, corruption, killing and disappearances. They called for dialogue between the parties to resolve the political problems and create a congenial environment to attract foreign companies to make investment in Bangladesh.

The FBCCI Standing Committee on Tourism and Hospitality Services arranged the function titled 'Prospects of Tourism & Steps for Us'. Commerce Minister GM Quader, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Faruk Khan and Civil Aviation Secretary M Ataharul Islam were also present.

The FBCCI president also urged political parties to shun the path of hartal, a "destructive means of protest", and said they would help win elections that party which would promise not to call hartal when they will be in the opposition in the future.

"We need to be united against hartal...we need to ensure that no one dies in the name of hartal," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, GM Quader reiterated that hartal does not hurt the economy "unless there is violence".

Referring to newspaper reports, he said the number of casualties in road accidents was higher than in hartals. "But it tarnishes the country's image abroad."

Yunus, microcredit

FROM PAGE 1
that undermines the success of Grameen Bank.

Dismissing the comments of Prof Yunus and Grameen Bank supporters that the government was trying to take control of the bank, Muhith said, "Sorry to use the term rubbish again, but this is all rubbish. It is a government institution. It is running in the way it ran in the past," said Muhith.

On Thursday, Awami League General Secretary and LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam said Prof Yunus had studied economics and he introduced a microcredit programme, but did not get the Nobel Prize in economics.

Launching a blistering attack on the Grameen Bank founder, Syed Ashraf said, "These days many of us know how one gets the Nobel Prize. There are some countries in the world where a person's popularity increases if he has chips, sandwiches and white wine there."

Talking to The Daily Star, M Hafiz Uddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, yesterday said such comments were regrettable, malicious and envious.

"Professor Yunus' fight is against poverty and for women's empowerment and he established peace through his work," he said, adding, "If he [Syed Ashraf] had any suspicion about the Nobel Prize, he could have asked the Nobel Committee."

Salehuddin Ahmed, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, said the remarks by the two ministers had no merit and should be overlooked.

"We should have celebrated his feats, but we are belittling him. This is nothing but our inferiority complex and people worldwide will just be surprised," he said.

This is a very narrow attitude, he noted.

Himself an economist, Salehuddin said microcredit had its negative and positive sides. Complete alleviation

A sacrifice

FROM PAGE 20
any way to bring back her father," Salma said. "I got no answer, but Tanvir straightaway says their father would never return."

"Usually Sinthia doesn't talk about her father by day," she said, adding, "But she gets upset after the evening and starts asking such questions."

Apart from the immediate worries over how to pay for the family expenses, future of her children is a big concern for the 32-year-old widow.

"I wish my children got higher education," she said, "But don't know how it would be possible."

Salma said she has to pay a monthly rent of Tk 6,500 for their two-room flat. She needs around Tk 20,000 to cover the family's monthly expenses including the house rent and school fees of the children.

Several organisations, including a private bank, have donated the family some Tk 3,00,000 and Hazrat's employer Kallol Group has promised to provide Tk 12,500 every month.

Salma said the group had given them the first month's Tk 12,500, but she was not sure how many days they would continue.

"We have no relatives in Dhaka... We will have to leave the city if we do not get help from any organisation or the government."

"What a happy family was ours! Now everything is over," Salma said, choking back tears. "He [Hazrat] did not think about me, not even about our children. He sacrificed his life for others and left the family in trouble."

"Won't he get recognition for his sacrifice?"

Salma, who passed HSC, urged the government to arrange a job for her.

She also expressed dissatisfaction over the police investigation into the killing. The widow filed a murder case with Mirpur Police Station on the day of the incident, accusing four

of poverty is not possible through microcredit, but it has immense contribution to poverty reduction.

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, another former adviser to a caretaker government, said politicians could disgrace anyone for political purposes.

"It is not possible to get Hitler and Mussolini now. In the twenty first century the biggest war is against poverty and for human rights," he told ATN Bangla.

Dhaka University Professor Imtiaz Ahmed said he was frustrated by Muhith and Ashraf's statements about Prof Yunus. "Their comments don't merit response. Actually, there is nothing to say."

These comments are mere political, and do not represent the feeling of the people of the country, said Prof Imtiaz.

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said the whole issue had been politicised deeply and such comments form political leaders were undesirable.

In a sense, those comments from political leaders are "an example of political bankruptcy," he told The Daily Star.

It seems all these have been done to divert public attention, he added.

FAKHRUL REACTS
BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the prime minister had lobbied to get the Nobel Peace Prize for herself. And as she had failed to obtain it, the ruling party leaders are vengeful toward Prof Yunus.

"Prof Yunus created a new chapter in development and poverty reduction. The Awami League leaders are trying to defame him, as they are jealous of him," said Alamgir at a meeting at the BNP's Nayapalton office in the capital.

"The prime minister herself had lobbied for the Nobel Prize and invested money, but she failed as it is not possible to get this prize this way," he added.

Tremor jolts

FROM PAGE 20
immediate report of damage or casualty.

According to the Met Office in Dhaka, epicentre of the earthquake was in Assam, 353km north-east of Dhaka.

Prof Humayun, director of the Earthquake Observatory Centre at Dhaka University, told The Daily Star that epicentre of the quake was 210km north-east of Dhaka and 30kms east of Assam-Guwahati on the Brahmaputra valley of Shillong Plateau.

He said the earthquake originated at a depth of 15 kilometres from the earth.

Our correspondent in Dinajpur reports that the moderate tremor jolted Dinajpur and its adjacent districts yesterday evening forcing many people to come out of their houses.

In Sirajganj, the earthquake lasted for around 8 seconds. Due to panic, many people came out of the buildings, according to our correspondent.

BSS reports that the mild tremor also jolted Rangpur for a couple of seconds around 6:43pm, local Met Office said. The city dwellers experienced the quake when almost all of them were inside their houses for cloudy weather.

On April 11, an earthquake was felt in Dhaka city and different parts of the country. The epicentre of the tremor was at Sumatra in Indonesia where it was measured at 8.7 on the Richter scale.

BNP leaders

FROM PAGE 1
18-party alliance.

City BNP Member Secretary Abdus Salam presided over the meeting at the party's city unit office at Naya Palton.

The meeting was organised as part of the 18-party alliance's preparation for making Monday's mass procession a success. The alliance will organise the programme to get back missing BNP leader M Ilias Ali and protest the cases filed against top opposition leaders.

Fakhrul said the government wanted to foil the ongoing movement by filing cases and repression "but it would not be possible".

"We will not go for movement if you hold elections under a non-party caretaker government," he mentioned.

The government on April 29 filed cases against top opposition leaders for blasts and arson during the opposition's hartal and on Thursday, police submitted charge sheet against 45 leaders including Fakhrul to the court.

Blasting the government for killings and disappearances, the BNP spokesperson said disappearance does not go with a democratic government.

"The international community including the European Union has raised voice against such acts saying that such disappearance and killing were diminishing the country's image," said Fakhrul.

Meanwhile, BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed yesterday urged the government to come forward to compromise with the opposition over the reinstatement of caretaker government system.

"Restore the caretaker government system and save the country from anarchy. BNP does not want to see any confrontation and the country will overcome this situation if only the government realises the demand," he said while addressing a human chain in front of National Press Club in the capital.

Diploma Engineers of Bangladesh organised the human chain protesting disappearance of Ilias Ali and filing of cases against top opposition leaders. Party standing committee member Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and former lawmaker Shamsuzzaman Duda also spoke.

Moudud said the anti-government movement would continue if the government did not realise the demands. "The government will be compelled to hold the next general elections under a non-party, neutral caretaker government under pressure, mounted by vigorous movements."

He said the caretaker government had become a national demand. Even foreign guests like Hillary Clinton and Pranab Mukharjee supported it for making the next election participatory.

Dipu Moni

FROM PAGE 20
signed.

"India will keep all the promises, including Teesta water sharing deal and land boundary agreement, it made to Bangladesh," she told BBC Bangla Service yesterday, refuting a BBC report on Wednesday that signing of the Teesta deal was uncertain for now.

Dipu Moni, who was on a visit to Egypt, told the BBC that during her visit to India, Indian external affairs minister, water resources minister and the prime minister assured her about Teesta water sharing deal.

In response to a query on Paschim Banga Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's stance on the issue, Dipu Moni said, "That is India's internal issue...an issue of relationship between the central and provincial governments."

However, India is an independent and sovereign country and will keep the promises it made to Bangladesh, she said.

Buriganga in peril

FROM PAGE 1
As a result, the breadth of the Buriganga will shrink considerably from what it was before the 2009 verdict of the HC.

The HC in its order had asked administration of the districts concerned to demarcate the Buriganga, Shitalakkhya, Turag, Balu and Dhaleswari rivers with boundary pillars retaining both the eroded area and formed land (char) as integral parts of the rivers as per CS and RS records.

Foreshore is the land of a river lying between the low water mark and high water mark of normal tide during dry season and monsoon. It is defined by law as an integral part of the river.

Zanendra Nath Sarker, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Dhaka, told The Daily Star that including foreshores as part of the river would entail a large area of "private land", as the practical situation is different.

"We are setting up boundary pillars along the flowing water and have informed the court about it, though the court has not yet permitted us to do the job this way," he added.

Following a writ petition by Bangladesh

Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) in 1999, a High Court bench had ordered the government to evict those occupying the Buriganga and recover the public property in the river as per CS records.

Accordingly, BIWTA along with the Dhaka district administration had demolished nearly 3,000 illegal structures to recover the foreshores in Kamrangirchar, Lalbagh, Keraniganj, Fatullah, Shashanghat, Shyampur and Shyambazar in 2000 and 2001.

Contacted, a BIWTA official involved in that eviction drive said most of the river area reclaimed then has been occupied again by some "private owners."

It is impossible to evict the occupiers as it would create law and order problems, said Zanendra adding that a big part of the river, as per CS records, has been transferred to "private owners" in the RS records.

He, however, could not explain how an individual can be a legal owner of eroded and formed land (char), which is khas land.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bela, said a district administration cannot demarcate a river by

following only the RS records as the HC had ordered to follow both the CS and RS records. The court also directed them to follow the relevant laws giving highest priority for river, she added.

Official sources said the administration in many districts has leased out most of the river foreshores over several decades in violation of related laws and now they are unable to bring the rivers back to their original state.

A special committee headed by the state minister for land last year had decided that the authorities would identify the foreshores as per high-water mark during August and September.

Shaheed Ullah, BIWTA deputy director of Dhaka river port, said, "We have not yet conducted any fresh survey to identify the Buriganga foreshores. We are setting up the boundary pillars on the basis of a map prepared in 2005."

He claimed that there is no foreshore in Sinnirtek and Birulia as the river runs through plain land there.

But another BIWTA official said in such cases both the CS and RS maps have to be followed to demarcate the river.

AL leader, 2 journos

FROM PAGE 1
Al-Amin, officer-in-charge of Osmaninagar Police Station, told The Daily Star that the accident occurred around 5:30am when the stone-laden truck collided with the bus heading for Sylhet from Dhaka, reports our staff correspondent in Sylhet.

All the deceased were in the bus.

The other deceased were: Haji Abdul Baten, 45, of Keraniganj, his son Abir Hossain, 20, and nephew Apu, 22, Standard Chartered Bank officer Rashembwar Singh, 28, and Shawkat Ali, 33, of Habiganj, Afzal Hossain, 50, of Suhrawardy Hospital in Dhaka, and Saikat Ali Asgar.

Of the deceased, seven died on the spot while Shawkat succumbed to his injuries at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Al-Amin said.

Among the injured, 15 were undergoing treatment at the hospital. They include Naznin Hossain, wife of the deceased Awami League leader, their daughter Sejin, Golam Kabir Chowdhury, editor of weekly Prio Bangla, Palestinian national Md Rajin, also a third-year student at the MAG Osmani Medical College, Md Lutfur Rahman, a government employee at Sylhet Sadar Upazila land office, Zakir Hossain, Mohammad Ali, Sajib, Ashraf, Bulbul, Md Ejajur Rahman, and Emran.

The truck driver and his helper escaped arrest, the OC added.

After the news of Shamim's death spread, Sylhet City Mayor Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran, Awami League district general secretary and lawmaker Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury, local Awami League leaders, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Khan Mohammad Billal and Superintendent of Police Md Shakhawat Hossain visited the spot.

The DC told newsmen that he had already instructed highway police to form a committee to probe the accident.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also expressed profound shock at the loss of lives in the accident.

The namaz-e-janaza of Shamim was held at the Sylhet Government Alia Madrasa Maidan after Ashr prayers yesterday. Shamim's son Intekhar Hossain, Suranjit Sengupta, a minister without portfolio, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, prime minister's representative Mahbul Alam Hanif, lawmaker Shafiqur and Sylhet city mayor addressed a public gathering before the janaza.

After the janaza, the valiant freedom fighter was given a state honour. He was laid to rest at the graveyard adjacent to the shrine of Hajrat Shahjalal (RA).

Shamim left behind his wife Naznin, also a woman and cultural activist, two sons, a daughter and a host of relatives and admirers.

Sylhet district and city Awami League have taken up

a five-day programme to mourn his death.

Sylhet BNP Vice-chairman Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury, Sylhet city BNP President MA Haque, Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry's President Faruque Ahmed Misbah expressed deep shock at the death of Shamim and others in the accident.

JOURNALIST BIBHAS
Bibhas Chandra Saha, 46, chief crime reporter of The Independent, was killed in the capital's Dhanmondi when a bus ran him over.

Witnesses said the bus rear-ended Bibhas' motorbike near Popular Medical College Hospital on Dhanmondi Road-2 just 200 yards away from his office.

Tea stall owner Abdul Zabbar witnessed the accident. He said, "First the bus hit him from the behind and he fell on the street. But the bus did not stop, rather it tried to escape and the left rear wheel went over his head..."

Bibhas' head was crushed along with the helmet he was wearing. He died on the spot.

Witnesses claimed that Bibhas was following traffic rules but the bus was not. Locals chased down the bus and vandalised it. The driver managed to flee but his helper was arrested.

Police rushed to the spot as people were vandalising the bus. They had to fire three shots in the air to control the situation, locals said.

Hearing the news of Bibhas' death, his colleagues from The Independent and fellow journalists of other newspapers and media houses rushed to the spot and later to Dhaka Medical College morgue, where the body was kept for an autopsy.

Bibhas started his journalism career at The Independent as staff correspondent in February, 1996. He joined New Age in 2003 as senior staff correspondent and worked there until 2009. He returned to The Independent as senior staff correspondent in 2010.

In his 15-year career as a journalist, he mainly worked as a crime reporter.

Bibhas left behind his wife Taposhi Saha and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

PHOTOJOURNALIST
Photojournalist Shahiduzzaman Titu, 38, of local daily Matabad of Barisal died when a bus rear-ended his rickshaw near Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the capital yesterday afternoon and then ran him over.

Dainik Destiny Sub-Editor Jannatul Ferdous Chowdhury Sohel, a friend of Shahiduzzaman, who was also on the rickshaw, and rickshaw puller Altaf sustained minor injuries.

Shah Alam, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station, quoting Sohel said a bus heading for Sadarghat hit the rickshaw from behind near the hotel, formerly Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, around 1:30pm.

Sohel told The Daily Star that he and Shahiduzzaman

fell on the road after they were hit. Wheels of the bus then crushed Shahiduzzaman's head.

Sohel said Shahiduzzaman came to Dhaka on Wednesday for a job interview at a new newspaper and for medical treatment of his wife.

Shahiduzzaman started his journalist carrier at regional daily Sattya Sangbad in 2005 and later joined daily Matobad. He left behind his wife and a five-year-old son.

Police seized the bus right away and arrested driver Naimul Islam. 40. They sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

The Ramna OC said they would talk to Sohel and the rickshaw puller to know why the rickshaw was on a street restricted for non-motorised vehicles.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of the two journalists. She directed authorities concerned to arrest the guilty drivers and take necessary steps so that such accidents do not happen in the capital.

GAIBANDHAROAD CRASH
Five people, including four of a family, were killed when a truck rammmed a rickshaw-van at Dhanghara on Gaibandha-Palashbari highway yesterday morning.

The deceased are: Shyamol Chandra Sarkar, 35, of Khamar Pargachha village, his wife Nomita Rani, 28, younger brother Chandon Kumar, 23, maternal aunt Kanchan Bala, 60, and rickshaw-van puller Ashraf Ali, 50.

Mostafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Gaibandha Police Station, said a speeding truck rear-ended the rickshaw-van killing all four family members on the spot, reports our Gaibandha correspondent.

Ashraf succumbed to his injuries on the way to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital, Mostafizur said, adding that they were trying to locate the truck and its driver.

Ctg courts

FROM PAGE 20
CDBA leaders said they requested Chief Justice (CJ) Md Muzammel Hossain, during his first visit as the CJ to Chittagong on April 2 this year, to take steps for appointing more judges.

In his speech the CJ said, "Having many limitations and lack of resources, we should manage the problems," adding, "We will reduce the shortage of judges at the courts as soon as possible."

CDBA President Md Delwar Hossain Chowdhury said they will write to the law ministry requesting appointments of more judges to the courts in Chittagong soon.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed told The Daily Star, "We will take measures to fill up the vacant posts as soon as possible."

Bid term

FROM PAGE 20

has ruled out such bias against any bidder. "Right now, together with the Bibiyana-3 project, we are dealing with an investment requirement of \$ 1.5 billion to \$2 billion. If the PDB does not seek 100 percent financing, it will have to pay \$300 million upfront for these projects. But the PDB does not have the financial strength to pay so much money at one go," he told The Daily Star.

"Secondly, in a power project, the EPC component costs us 80 percent expenditure. The remaining goes to developing the site and setting up other facilities. Since this is an EPC contract, the PDB is carrying out the job of site development and setting up other facilities. If you consider the power projects as a whole, the bidders are just arranging the finance for the 80 percent job," he argued.

"I don't believe that Chinese bidders would be unable to find funds under this criterion," the chairman said.

The other amendment to the bid terms is the withdrawal of a condition that demands the bidder provide notarised and authenticated certificates of its equipment.

The PDB did so on the ground that some bidders had complained about the lengthy bureaucratic procedure in authenticating certificates.

In the earlier bid for Bibiyana plant, the PDB had demanded notarised and authenticated certificates so that low quality bids with fake claims could be filtered out. But surprisingly, the PDB itself violated this term last month and accepted Japanese company Marubeni's bid that failed to provide authenticated certificates.

Many criticised this withdrawal saying that this would now formally allow bidders to get away with unauthentic or even fake certificates. Industry insiders said this was done to ensure Marubeni's participation.

The PDB had also dropped a condition demanding that bidders must have the experience of building 3,000 MW power plants in the last 15 years. This condition was reinstated on Wednesday as the power ministry insisted on keeping it to ensure participation of experienced companies.

Lightning

FROM PAGE 20
around 10:00am when lightning struck them while they were working on a paddy field in Dastampur village.

The deceased were identified as Mosharul Islam, 25, son of Sirajul Islam and Anarul Islam, 23, son of Chiharul Mohammad, Dastampur village.

The injured -- Khalil, 35, Sobhan, 45, Kalu, 28, Nasima, 13 and Salil, 40, -- were admitted to Pirganj upazila health complex, Abdur Rauf Mondal, upazila nirbahi officer of Pirganj, told The Daily Star.

In Haripur, lightning killed three persons and injured eleven others on the same day.

The deceased are Rabbani, 18, son of Dabirul Islam of Moradhar village, Shahina Akhter, 13, daughter of Abul Kalam of Magura village, and Suraia, 12, daughter of Ghuttu Mohammad of Amgaon village.

Officer-in-charge of Haripur Police Station told The Daily Star that Rabbani and Shahina were struck by lightning when they went amid rain to bring cattle back home while Suraia was struck at their own courtyard.

During the 90-minute downpour, lightning injured Badrul Islam, 18, of Moradhar village, Kachnu Roy, 50, Mohon Roy, 35, Rajen, 27, Ataur, 50, and Sabuj, 2, of Nandagaon village, Sheikh Ful, 12, Merina, 6, Sajener, 8, and Monsura, 8, of Amgaon village and Md Sabuj, 40, of Chapshar village.

Besides, many thatched houses in the two upazilas were destroyed due to strong wind, sources said.