

5 killed, 15 hurt in road crashes

METRO DESK

Five people were killed and fifteen others injured in separate road accidents in Sunamganj and Gazipur yesterday.

Staff correspondent from Sylhet reports, three people were killed instantly as a private car fell into a ditch beside Sunamganj-Sylhet highway at Iqbal Nagar in Sunamganj district town yesterday afternoon.

The deceased are private car driver Abdul Aziz, 35, of Teghoria, Sohag, 25, of Notunpara and Rahela Begum, 60, of Hajipara of the town.

A correspondent from Gazipur says, two people were killed and 15 others injured as a bus overturned in the sadar upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

Police said the accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound passenger bus ploughed through a road divider when it reached Zirani around 2:00am.

Bus supervisor Md Saidul Islam, 28, and helper Md Aynul, 26, were crushed under the bus when the vehicle turned turtle after hitting the divider, according to the Prothom Alo.

The injured passengers were rushed to a local clinic.

Mothers' depression linked with underweight babies

Says study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is a strong association between perinatal depression of mothers and underweight babies, according to a study conducted in Bangladesh by Brac in collaboration with Karolinska Institute, Sweden.

The finding was revealed at a national conference titled "Peri-natal Mental Health: Breaking the Vicious Cycle" organised by Brac at its auditorium in the capital yesterday, said a press release. Dr Sadia Afroze Chowdhury, public health specialist of the World Bank, chaired the conference also attended by Akhtari Mamtaz, additional secretary of Ministry of Health, as a special guest.

Mamtaz said the government was working on improving maternal and child health in the country.

With the help of NGOs, international organisations and other stakeholders, the maternal depression situation in Bangladesh should be improved for the interest of a better nation, added Mamtaz.

Dr Sadia said, "We have learned the reasons and the long lasting impact of maternal depression throughout the presentations, and now it's time to take policy initiatives to improve the overall situation".



Demanding implementation of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord, recognition of indigenous people in the constitution and an end to the oppression on them, Sommilito Nagorik Samaj organises a rally and sings protest songs on Dhaka University campus yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Water crisis grips CU residential areas

CU CORRESPONDENT

Around 7,000 residential students of Chittagong University and teachers and other staff residing in the campus area have been suffering from serious water crisis since Wednesday evening after the largest water pump of the campus became dysfunctional.

Md Mukul, student of economics department and resident of CU eastern campus residential area, said they had been suffering from the problem for the last five days.

"The hostel students have been suffering from water crisis since Wednesday and power disruption has increased their sufferings," said Proctor MD Sirajuddoulah.

He also said the proctorial body along with CU engineering department was trying to fix the problem within the shortest possible time.

CU Chief Engineer Md Alamgir Chowdhury said they were now supplying water three times in the hostels and the residential areas.

Flood disrupts life in Fatikchhari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Torrential rain for three consecutive days and onrush of water from Khagrachhari hills flooded 16 unions out of 20 in Chittagong's Fatikchhari upazila marooning over 10,000 families and obstructing traffic on Chittagong-Khagrachhari road.

Local administration sources said about 206 primary schools in the affected areas closed down due to flash floods.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Anjana Khan Majlish said the schools would open once the situation improves.

One Tipu Sultan from the upazila drowned after being washed away in a strong current while a boy, whose name could not be known immediately, died of snakebite.

Thousands of villagers were marooned in the waterlogged villages. Rosangiri, Sundarpur, Pindang, Daulatpur, Nanupur, Samitir Hat, Bhujpur and Shuabil areas of the upazila were submerged by onrush of water, locals said.

Flood water damaged many village roads and mud houses, creating immense sufferings to the villagers, they said.

Ten unions out of 14 of Fatikchhari Police Station and six unions of adjoining Bhujpur Police Station in the upazila are completely inundated with rainwater, said Manjur Kader, officer-in-charge of Fatikchhari Police Station.

Many schools became relief centres where local administration is distributing relief.

Indigenous people still oppressed

Claims rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous people are still being oppressed because they are not recognised in the constitution and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord is yet to be implemented, speakers said at a rally yesterday.

Moreover, the campaign of some government policymakers, which say that there is no indigenous people in Bangladesh, is encouraging miscreants to oppress them, they said.

Sommilito Nagorik Samaj, a platform of different indigenous, human rights and political organisations, organised the rally on Dhaka University campus to press home their four demands--constitutional recognition of indigenous people, implementation of CHT Peace Accord-1997, separate land commission for plain land indigenous people and ending their oppression.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of parliamentary caucus on indigenous people, said the government through its latest amendment of the constitution has created new debate over the identity of indigenous people instead of solving their problem.

Veteran left politician Pankaj Bhattacharjee urged all the progressive forces and indigenous communities to continue strengthening their movement to protect the rights of indigenous people.

Workers Party of Bangladesh Politburo Member Fazle Hossain Badsha said CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission should be effective and a separate land commission for plain land should be formed to resist eviction of indigenous people from their ancestral land.

Angry clients ransack DPDC revenue office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Local subscribers yesterday besieged and ransacked the revenue office of Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd (DPDC) at Shimrail intersection in Siddhirganj upazila of Narayanganj, protesting harassment and inflated bills of electricity.

They attacked the office and ransacked several computers, chairs, tables, window glasses and other furniture around 12:00 noon.

The employees of the office, however, escaped from the protestors.

The subscribers alleged that the employees of the DPDC revenue office have been delivering extra bills to them for long.

Although they have complained about the matter several times, the authorities concerned did not take any initiative in this connection.

Meanwhile, Palli Bidyut consumers in Kanchpur Industrial Area have demonstrated regarding the same issue and threatened to go for tougher movement.

Confirming the incident, Siddhirganj police said the

VITAL INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY

US experts provide anti-terrorism training

UNB, Dhaka

A 10-day Vital Infrastructure Security training course, held by the US government through the state department's Anti-terrorism Assistance Program and the US embassy's Regional Security Office, concluded in Dhaka on July 12.

The training, offered by the state department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security and taught by US instructors, took place at Police Staff College, says a press release.

Officers from Special Branch, Armed Police Battalion, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Works Department, Special Security Force, Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate, and National Parliament participated in the training.

"The program's courses are just one of many avenues we can use to fight terrorism together and protect the interests of Bangladesh, the US and the entire region," said David J Koczot, regional security officer at the US Embassy in Dhaka.

He said, "A nation's vital infrastructure is the framework of networks and systems that provide a reliable flow of products and services essential to the defense and economic security of the nation.

"The US believes that through this training,

participants learned the strategies to protect their vital infrastructure, which will help ensure the smooth function of government at all levels and society in the event of a terrorist incident."

The participants learned how to recognise the components of a physical protection system, identify vital infrastructure, characterise vital infrastructure, identify and prioritise assets, develop design basis threat statements and identify security countermeasures.

They also learned to conduct a security inspection validation, manage critical incidents, perform threat/risk/vulnerability analyses, and develop recommendations for implementing improvements to existing physical protection systems based on gap analysis.

The training also included limited scope performance testing, cost benefit analysis, feasibility, and acceptability.

Through lectures, large and small group discussions, demonstrations and small group activities, participants learned how to use a systematic process for securing vital infrastructure against the threat of terrorism.

The embassy, in partnership with Bangladesh Police, plans to offer the training programme several more times throughout the year.



Local consumers ransacked Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd revenue office in Siddhirganj upazila of Narayanganj yesterday, protesting its engineers' high-handedness and inflated bills of electricity. PHOTO: STAR

ICT-2 rejects pleas against in camera testimonies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday rejected a defence petition seeking recall of its July 12 order allowing two female witnesses to give testimonies behind closed doors, in a case against Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah.

The three-member tribunal headed by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir also rejected another plea in the petition recalling the case's second prosecution witness for further cross-examination over the contents of three video clippings produced by the defence.

The case accuses Quader of committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

The tribunal, as per a prosecution petition, had fixed July 17 for the closed door testimonies to protect the "identities and privacy" of the witnesses and the defence had not opposed it.

Chief of the defence counsels of detained Jamaat leaders, Abdur Razzaq, said there was no reason to take the statement of one witness, over a murder, behind closed doors as the murder victim was not her relative. Prosecutor Mohammad Ali said the victim was her husband and she was a very religious person and afraid of testifying in public.

On the plea, Razzaq said the cross-examination of Syed Shahidul Haque Mama was completed on July 12 without the clippings being played. Ali said Shahidul had left for Sweden and the cross-examination concerning the clippings had been completed.

Meanwhile, the defence cross-examined the first prosecution witness, Hamidul Haque, in a case against Jamaat leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman. The tribunal adjourned the proceedings till July 19.



PHOTO: BSS

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addresses her party's central working committee meeting at her official residence Gono Bhaban in the capital yesterday.

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