

There was hardly traffic on streets in the capital during countrywide hartal enforced by 12 like-minded Islamist parties yesterday. The photo was taken from Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Karwan Bazar around 12:30pm.



PHOTO: STAR

Fire breaks out in Uttara building

50 rescued from it after 3hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire fighters rescued around 50 residents trapped in their 16 storey shopping-cum-apartment complex in the capital's Uttara Sector-3 after a generator in its basement caught fire yesterday.

Some of the residents who became ill were treated for smoke inhalation at the scene, said fire service officials.

The fire, originating around 7:00pm in Tropical Alauddin Tower Shopping Complex, went up the generator's wiring to the seventh floor while thick black plumes engulfed the entire building.

People on the first six floors, up to which the shopping complex is situated, came out unhurt. The residents of the apartments above were trapped, with some seen waving flashlights and clothes to attract the attention of fire fighters, said witnesses.

Fire fighters used megaphones to advise them to move to the roof and brought them down using an aerial ladder platform after dousing the fire around three hours later.

"It was absolute darkness and we could not breathe," said one resident, Rafiqul Islam, trapped on the seventh floor with his wife and two daughters, adding, "we felt our way to the top using the stairs before being rescued."

A total of 13 fire fighting units from the capital and Gazipur rushed to the spot and carried out the rescue operation.

Posts and Telecommunications Minister Shahara Khatun, Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandker and Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Benazir Ahmed visited the scene.

13 killed, 38 hurt in road crashes

METRO DESK

Thirteen people were killed and 38 others injured in separate road accidents in Madaripur, Dhaka, Gazipur, Barisal, Netrakona, Jessore and Kishoreganj on Saturday and yesterday.

Our Madaripur correspondent reports, four people were killed and 30 others injured as a bus collided head-on with a truck on Dhaka-Khulna highway at Sanyasirchar in Shibchar upazila of Madaripur on Saturday night.

The deceased were identified as Sathi Akter, 20, Rabiul Islam, 26, Abu Bakkar, 30, and Saiful Islam who died at Bhanga Upazila Health Complex.

Pachchor Highway Police said the accident occurred when the Madaripur-bound bus of Sharbik Paribahan rammed the cattle-laden truck near Hazi Shariatullah Bridge around 11:00pm, killing the four people and injuring the 30 others.

Following the accident, vehicular movement on the highway was suspended for about two hours.

Later, police brought the situation under control.

The injured were admitted to the health complex and Faridpur General Hospital.

UNB in Dhaka reports, a girl was killed in an accident at Battala in Mugda area of the capital on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Sabina Aktar, 17, daughter of Shahed Ali of Fajda village of Kishoreganj sadar upazila. She was a resident of Manda in Mugda area.

Sabujbagh police said Sabina, along with her younger brother Shrabon, 12, was going to their Manda residence from Bishwa road by a battery-run auto-rickshaw at about 9:00pm.

On the way, her scarf wearing around the neck tangled in the wheels of the auto-rickshaw's engine and she became unconscious.

Sabina was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where she was declared dead at about 10:15pm.

In Savar, two people were killed and another was injured as an ambulance hit a rickshaw on Dhaka-Aricha highway at Jorepool near Hemayetpur yesterday.

The dead were identified as Selim, 30, the rickshaw-puller and Tutul, 24, his passenger. Co-passenger Shahidul Islam, 30, was injured and receiving treatment at the DMCH.

The injured was rushed to the DMCH where Tutul was declared dead on arrival.

UNB from Gazipur reports, two people were killed and four others injured as a bus

hit a human hauler from the opposite direction at Tongi yesterday evening.

The deceased were identified as Robin Rozario, 50, and Sultan Ahmed, 32, of Kaliganj upazila in the district.

Police and locals said the Narsingdi-bound bus rammed the human hauler (leguna) on Ahsan Ullah Master Flyover at about 6:00pm, killing Rozario and Sultan on the spot and injuring the four.

The injured persons were admitted to Tongi Government Hospital.

In Barisal, a youth was killed after a bus ran him over in Sharsibazar area of Babuganj upazila yesterday evening.

The deceased was identified as Rubel, 24, son of Siddiqur Rahman of the area.

Rubel sustained serious injuries and died on the way to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

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

Our Netrakona correspondent reports, a man was killed and another injured as a tempoo hit them on Mohonganj-Khaliajuri road at Chachrakhali in Khaliajuri upazila at about 10:00am yesterday morning, Khaliajuri police sources said.

The deceased was identified as Liton Mia, 35, of village Chachrakhali in Khaliajuri upazila.

Police and local sources said the tempoo knocked them from behind in the area, killing Liton instantly and injuring Rubel.

Rubel was taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

A case was filed with the police station.

BSS from Jessore reports, a man was killed as a bus hit him in Dharmotola area in the town yesterday evening.

The deceased was identified as Mazharul Islam alias Selim, 25, a worker of Seviour Medical Company in the area.

Kotwali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Golam Rahman said the Jessore-bound passenger bus hit Mazharul while he was crossing the road at about 6:00pm.

He was rushed to Jessore 250-bed Hospital in a critical condition where he succumbed to his injuries.

Our Kishoreganj correspondent reports, a motorcyclist was killed and two others were injured as the motorbike from Hussainpur upazila skidded off the road at Mollapara in sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Al-Amin, 19, son of Abdul Aziz, was a resident of Haybatnagar in the town.

Injured Murad, 17, and Aslam, 18, were taken to Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital.

NGO federation executive board elected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 22-member National Executive Board for Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) was elected in which Dr Muhammad Ibrahim, head of Center for Mass Education in Science, was made chair.

The board was elected for the next two years at the biennial election of the organisation following its annual general meeting at Women Voluntary Association's auditorium in the capital on Saturday, says a press release.

AHM Nouman, executive director of Development Organisations of the Rural Poor (DORP), and SN Kairy, deputy executive director of Brac are vice-chairs, while Md Fayzer Rahman, executive vice-president of ASA, has been elected treasurer.

The board's general members are Zakir Hossain, BURO Bangladesh; Dr Salima Rahman, RDRS-Bangladesh; MA Quader, SETU, Kushtia; Fakir Md Mazharul Islam, ORA, Kishoreganj; Mojibur Rahman, SDS, Shariatpur; Jesmin Prem, SKUS, Dhaka; and Dr Sajjad Hussain Khandaker, SAVE, Lalmonirhat.

The divisional members are Sk Arif Ahmed, ECO Society, Dhaka; Aftabur Rahman Jafree, Ghasful, Chittagong; Belal Ahmad, SSKS, Sylhet; MM Anower Ullah, BRAVE, Barisal; Harun Ur Rashid, Khulna; Jasim Uddin, Rajshahi; and Nurul Islam Dulu, Rangpur.

Besides, the FNB has kept some reserved seats for the physically challenged persons in its board. They are Faisal Rahman Jasim, Jhalakathi; Engineer Musbah Alim, Catalyst, Dhaka; Nilufa Nasrin Rima, SUK, Dhaka; and Daisy Ahmed, PKSS, Natore.

Fund constraint stalls road development projects in Ctg

Work on two major roads going at snail's pace

PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY, Ctg

Fund constraint has stalled several road development projects being implemented by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in Chittagong.

This fiscal year the RHD demanded about Tk 55 crore for its project but the department was only approved of Tk 25 crore.

Officials in the department complained that in addition to the shortage of funds, so much time has passed for construction of its projects that their costs need to be revised.

Work on two major roads at the entry points of the port city from northern and southern upazilas of the district have almost come to a halt.

Construction of Bahaddarhat to third Karnaphuli Approach Road and Oxygen-Hathazari four-lane road has been proceeding at a snail's pace mostly due to shortage of funds.

With the communications ministry sanctioning around Tk 7 crore for the Bahaddarhat to third Karnaphuli Approach Road this fiscal year, the project has so far only received about Tk 11 crore out of the total Tk 153 crore allocated to it.

Shortage of funds has slowed down the construction work of the road, which was to be completed by this December, as only 10 percent of the work has been done so far, sources said.

RHD expressed frustration over the fund crunch and said if the project is not completed on time then vehicles plying on Bahaddarhat flyover, which is under construction and is expected to be ready by December, will face enormous traffic jams.

Meanwhile, work of Oxygen-Hathazari four-lane road project is in a similar state.

In this fiscal year RHD received approval of Tk 10 crore for the project against their demand of Tk 25 crore. Though the project started in 2009, till date it has only received Tk 21 crore out of

Tk 129 crore, said sources.

Oxygen-Hathazari road, which connects the city with northern upazilas, was initially supposed to be upgraded to six lanes but later it was reduced to four. The government decided to only construct four lanes in areas owned by RHD.

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, during his recent visit to Chittagong, said it is not possible to set up four lanes according to the project.

Roads department is only working on the portion that is owned by them, he added.

Though the minister did not mention the reason behind this decision, sources of RHD department said the decision was taken due to fund shortage.

A higher official of the department told The Daily Star that only 15 percent of the project has been completed so far though the road was to be finished by 2013.

Rana Priya Barua, executive engineer of RHD, Chittagong, told The Daily Star that they would be able to set up four lanes except at three to four points of the road.

RHD sources said they would get funds in four instalments for four projects. Two of these projects are the two roads at the city's entry points and the other two projects are Kalindi Rani road of Rangunia upazila and work on Kaptai road.

Tk 5 crore and Tk 3 crore have been sanctioned separately for Kalindi Rani road and for construction of several small bridges and culverts at Kaptai road.

MAN Siddique, secretary of communications ministry, told The Daily Star that they sanctioned funds according to guidelines of finance ministry.

Communications ministry depends on finance ministry regarding distribution of funds for its various projects, he said.

He also said when they find that a particular project cannot be implemented due to shortage of funds, they submit additional budget in the next following Annual Development Plan (ADP) for the project.



Expansion work of Oxygen-Hathazari road, to be upgraded to four lanes, is still ongoing after about two years since construction started. The photo was taken from Fatehabad area in Chittagong recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Finance Minister AMA Muhiith, sitting centre, attends a programme, organised by Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited in the capital's Shaheed Suhrawardy National Indoor Stadium on Saturday as part of its Tk 1.02 billion annual scholarship programme, to award scholarships to 4,015 financially insolvent but meritorious students who passed SSC and equivalent exams this year.

PHOTO: COURTESY

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