

Girlfriends, bikes, phones blamed for India road deaths

AFP, New Delhi

A Indian state leader has said a deadly trio of riding flashy motorbikes, speaking on the telephone while driving and trying to impress women has caused a jump in fatal road accidents among young people.

"If there is a good motorcycle, a good mobile and a good girlfriend then accidents are bound to happen," Raman Singh, the chief minister of Chhattisgarh state told a traffic safety conference on Saturday.

More than 110,000 people were killed in Indian road accidents in 2011 -- more than 300 every day -- according to the National Crime Records Bureau, with bad roads, speeding vehicles and poor driving among the many contributing factors.

Singh told a seminar in the state capital Raipur that 55 to 60 percent of all road accident victims were youths.

"It's a common sight to see youngsters driving two-wheelers while talking on cellphones which often leads to accidents. Youths should avoid such habits," Singh said, in comments reported by the PTI new agency.

Singh lamented that while people spent large sums on motorcycles, they were often reluctant to buy proper helmets.

1,600kg

FROM PAGE 20

Rapid Action Battalion-10 raided the five-storey building and found the pearls in two rooms on the roof, said Tasnimur Rahman, deputy commissioner (DC) of Customs (Intelligence).

Raja could not show any legal documents in this regard, the DC said.

The pearls have been kept under Customs custody.

Admission

FROM PAGE 1

children of the officials of education ministry, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) and education boards, and introducing 1pc quota for the kids of non-resident Bangladeshis.

"Every year, it is alleged that governing body members and lawmakers ensure school admissions of their relatives' kids by abusing power. Now this new quota will institutionalise this practice," said a guardian whose daughter studies at Vigarunnisa Noon School and College.

Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education, told this correspondent, "If the government wants to introduce the quota, we will demand that the lawmakers recommend under-privileged children's admission to prominent institutions."

She was present at the meeting yesterday.

Prof Siddiqui Rahman of Institute of Education and Research in Dhaka University said the lawmakers' quota is not acceptable at all. "The duty of the lawmakers is to enact laws. Why should they demand quota? Also, quota system is bad for a democratic country."

Ziaul Kabir Dulu, president of Obhikhobok Oikya Forum, a platform of guardians, said there should be no quota system since it will increase admission trade. "The school admissions should be on the basis of merit."

Briefing journalists after the meeting yesterday, the education secretary said the policy would be finalised today after discussion with the education minister.

At the meeting, the ministry gave a fresh ultimatum to three non-government schools in the capital to return or adjust within 15 days the extra admission fees they charged from students.

Replying to a question, the education secretary said they will take action if the schools do not meet the deadline. Earlier, the ministry had issued the ultimatum thrice.

According to a July 4 probe report of DSHE, Ideal School and College realised an excess of Tk 3.39 crore from 3,049 class-1 students while Monipur High School and College Tk 5.23 crore from 3,054 students. Vigarunnisa took Tk 68.17 lakh in excess from 1,627 class-1 students.

Muhith backs

FROM PAGE 20

Therefore, some of them might be appointed to the boards," Muhith told reporters after a meeting with a Turkish delegation at the Economic Relations Division in the capital.

The minister, however, did not comment on how strong the presence of political appointments could be on the boards of the state-owned commercial banks (SOCBs).

The tenure of the SOCB boards expired in the first week of September this year. But the government could not appoint board directors due to intense lobbying from vested quarters, said a finance ministry official.

The government, said Muhith, has picked as directors other professionals as well, such as teachers and bankers. "It is a combine. Not all the directors have political affiliation."

He added that the board directors will be appointed by the next week.

Officials in the finance ministry's banking division said they are clueless about who might get appointed as the board directors, as the finance minister is yet to give the division a short list of selected candidates.

Meanwhile, powerful vested interests are lobbying for the posts at the banks, which have been plagued by

irregularities due to interference from some outgoing directors with political influence.

There are allegations that some of the directors take payoffs from business firms as well as individuals in return for helping them get loans from the state-owned banks, said a finance ministry official.

Some former SOCB directors have been lobbying government high-ups to get appointed once again. Besides, people with political affiliation are pursuing the same path, said sources at the finance ministry and the Prime Minister's Office.

The government appointed some former leaders of Jubo League and Chhatra League as SOCB board directors after coming to power in 2009.

In September, a central bank report said the overall control system of the state-owned banks has broken down due to a weak internal monitoring.

It said a number of big corruption scams, including that involving Hall-Mark, have been detected in the banks in recent times.

A central bank official alleged that some board members were also involved in the Hall-Mark scam, adding that the Bangladesh Bank informed the finance ministry about it.

The last speaker

FROM PAGE 20

the focus of renewed interest among linguists across the world who are trying to ensure her language survives in some form after she has gone.

Sen's Kusunda tribe, now just 100 members strong, were once a nomadic people but she has found herself living out her twilight years in a concrete bungalow built by local authorities in Dang district, western Nepal.

"How can I forget the language I grew up learning? I used to speak it when I was a child. Even now, I wish I could talk to someone who understands my language," Sen said in Nepali.

Unesco lists 61 of Nepal's languages as endangered, meaning they are falling out of use, and six, including Kusunda, as "critically endangered".

"Kusunda is unique because it is not related to any other language in the world. It is also not influenced by other languages," Pokharel told AFP. "In linguistic terms we call it a language isolate," said Tribhuvan University linguistics professor Madhav Prasad Pokharel.

Until recently, there were two other native speakers of Kusunda, Puni Thakuri and her daughter Kamala Khatri, but Puni died two years ago and Kamala migrated to India for work, leaving Sen the sole surviving native speaker.

Tribhuvan University, in Kathmandu, started up a project 10 years ago to document and preserve Kusunda, inviting Thakuri and Khatri to the Nepalese capital. But as the money ran out, the research ground to a halt.

The project has been given new life by Bhojraj Gautam, a student of Pokharel who recently spent months recording Sen speaking, and gaining the knowledge to speak basic Kusunda himself in the pro-

Strong quake

FROM PAGE 20

river from a partly-built bridge in the region were among those believed to have died, according to a situation report from the Save the Children charity.

The collapse of a monastery in the nearby village of Kyauk Myaung killed two people and one died in Mandalay, it said.

A further six were killed in Sint Ku township, including two people who died when a gold mine collapsed.

An official from Myanmar's Relief and Resettlement Department confirmed a death toll of seven so far, with four still considered missing from the bridge construction site.

He told AFP information was still patchy and the number of dead could rise.

"People everywhere are very worried that another earthquake might strike," the aid organisation said. Residents of Mandalay fled shaking buildings in terror, although no major damage was reported there.

Save the Children, which has an office in Mandalay, said reports indicated that 25 were

cess.

As part of the project, funded by the Australian Research Council, Gautam has written down the entire language and the outcome, he says, will eventually be a Kusunda dictionary and a comprehensive grammar.

Kusunda, incorrectly first classified as a Tibeto-Burman language, has three vowels and 15 consonants, and reflects the history and culture of its people.

"They call themselves 'myahq', which means tiger. That's because they think themselves as the kings of forests," Pokharel said.

The origins of the Kusunda people have never been established but they are believed to have lived in the midwestern hills of what is now Nepal for hundreds of years.

They traditionally rely on hunting to survive and are adept at using arrows and bows for killing wild animals, with lizards and wild fowl being their meal of choice.

Pokharel said Kusundas have no equivalent of the word "green" because the forest-dwellers are surrounded by vegetation and don't recognise greenery as something that needs its own word.

The tribe has been dying out for decades, with women marrying outside the bloodline, and the language is perishing with it as many take to speaking Nepali.

When King Mahendra dismissed the elected government in 1960 and put in its place an autocratic, partyless system which would govern Nepal for the next 30 years, the use of languages other than Nepali was discouraged.

With the end of a decade-long Maoist insurgency in 2006 and a revived focus on the rights of minorities, indigenous people have started to preserve their language and culture.

Five students killed in Pakistan shooting

AFP, Karachi

At least five seminary students were killed and six others injured in a shooting at a roadside tea stall in Pakistan's largest city Karachi on Saturday, police said.

The incident took place near a seminary of Deobandi Sunni sect in Gulshan-e-Iqbal neighbourhood of the city, where the students had gathered for some refreshments. The school is for pupils aged 18-22.

"The unidentified gunmen on motorcycles specifically targeted the students of a nearby religious seminary and escaped after the shooting," Shahid Hayat, a senior police official told AFP.

"The initial investigations reveal that the killings were part of the ongoing wave of target killing in the city," he said referring to Karachi's sectarian, political and ethnic violence which have killed at least 1,100 people this year.

Sri Lanka troops accused of jail 'massacre'

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's main opposition party yesterday demanded an independent inquiry into a prison riot that left 27 convicts dead, alleging many were shot by security forces in a cold-blooded "massacre".

The United National Party (UNP) called for a parliamentary investigation into the riot that erupted on Friday evening at the maximum-security Welikada prison in the capital Colombo.

"This is nothing but a massacre," UNP spokesman Mangala Samaraweera told AFP. "Most of the convicts appeared to have been killed in cold blood. We want a parliamentary select committee to go into this."

Jamaat-Shibir

FROM PAGE 20

Meanwhile, Jamaat and Shibir have called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in Joypurhat today following the death of Shibir activist Badiuzzaman. He was hit by a bullet during a clash with police in the capital on November 5.

Badiuzzaman, 22, was from Joypurhat. He died at Islami Bank Central Hospital in the capital on Saturday morning.

Besides, 27 Jamaat men, including Panchagarh district nayeb-e-ameer and sadar upazila Chairman Abdul Khalek, have been sent to jail in a case filed for beating Chhatra League and Jubo League activists.

In Noakhali, 26 Jamaat leaders and activists were placed on one day's remand yesterday. Chief Judicial Magistrate SM Zakir Hasan passed the order following a remand prayer from police, reports our Noakhali correspondent.

Habiganj unit of Bangladesh Chhatra league brought out a procession in the district town yesterday, protesting against a threat to kill its district President Mostafa Kamal Azad. BCL alleged Shibir's Sylhet district President Khalilur Rahman made the death threat by phone on Friday.

Our RU correspondent said BCL activists allegedly beat and ousted eight students from the Madar Baksh Hall of Rajshahi University on Saturday night, suspecting their links with Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Cop drowns

FROM PAGE 20

of divers led by Saiduzzaman, station officer at Fire Service and Civil Defence headquarters in Dhaka, recovered the body around 9:00pm from the river, near Majhpara.

The victim's family sources said Noor along with his eight family members went for a boat trip on the Brahmaputra river near his village around 11:00am. Suddenly, 12-year-old Ena Akter, his sister-in-law, fell into the river. Two other women jumped from the boat to save Ena, but to no avail.

Finally, Noor jumped off the boat and managed to rescue the three, but failed to save himself from drowning, said Arifur Rahman, in-charge of Narundi investigation centre under Sadar Police Station.

Noor went to the village five days back to spend his one-month leave.

Schoolboy kidnapped



Parag

FROM PAGE 1

Finally, the family's driver Nazrul Islam tried to stop the criminals taking away Parag and received a bullet in the arm.

A panicked Piyal Mondol made a run for it screaming.

One of the abductors knocked Parag out with a blow to the back of the head with a firearm butt. They put a helmet on Parag's head before leaving the scene with him on their bikes.

Nobody could identify the criminals.

The incident happened in front of about 20 bystanders who could do little to stop the armed criminals. They rushed the three injured to Mitford Hospital in Old Dhaka.



Lipi Rani

Lipi was later referred to National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital. There she underwent a surgery which doctors claimed to have been successful.

Pinaki also had to have further treatment at the National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation.

All three have been declared out of danger by doctors.

Bimol Chandra Mondol, Parag's father and a successful businessman, told The Daily Star that he had no personal feuds to speak of and that he neither received any threats or demand for toll.

Bimol, who owns JC Battery



Pinaki

Engineering Works in Tantibazar and a lot of highly valued pieces of land around his home, said he was waiting anxiously for the kidnappers to call and may be ask for a ransom.

An emotional Bimol said he only wants his son back.

No ransom demand had been made as of filing of this report at 1:30am today.

Officer-in-Charge Shakhawat Hossain of South Keraniganj Police Station said police and intelligence agencies were trying to find Parag and were exploring all possibilities.

He said no case had been filed and nobody was detained in this connection.

Big time for garment

FROM PAGE 1

The buyers include Walmart, VFC, Tradecard, Target, PVH, Li & Fung Group, Kiabi, H&M, Esprit, Carter's, C&A Mondial, Amer Sports and Avery Dennison.

These Hong Kong-based buyers believe that Bangladesh has a huge potential to grow with its garment industries but it has limitations in terms of infrastructure, management and productivity skill, and safety issues in factories.

The delegation arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a four-day visit. They will talk to entrepreneurs and government officials about Bangladesh's prospects to become a RMG giant and the challenges ahead.

"They [buyers] are here to see our capacity," BGMEA President Shafiqul Islam told journalists after the meeting

with the buyers.

Global buyers are coming to Bangladesh to look for alternatives to Chinese clothing manufacturers, he said.

"It is a crucial time for us. If we can give them [buyers] the assurance that the government is working to develop the infrastructure, we can surely become an alternative to China for them," he said.

BGMEA said it has the capacity to handle more work orders. But energy and infrastructure constraints are its biggest challenge.

Shafiqul Islam exporters are unhappy about the government's slow implementation of much-needed infrastructure projects.

He referred to the project to expand the Dhaka-Chittagong highway, slow progress in implementation of Pangaon river port and inland container depot.

"We don't know when the project to expand the Dhaka-Chittagong highway will be completed. We have to act fast on these issues," said the BGMEA president.

The exporters also talked to the buyers about wages of workers.

"We have urged them to look into the wage issue, and sought their help for developing two housing projects for garment workers," said Shafiqul.

The exporters said shortage of skilled manpower still remains a big problem for the industry.

"The apparel industry as a whole faces shortage of 20 percent skilled manpower," said BGMEA Vice President Faruque Hassan.

Siddiqui Rahman, another vice president, also spoke on the occasion.

AL govt most communal

FROM PAGE 1

the following day, a mob destroyed over a dozen temples and their houses in Ramu, Patiya and Ukhia. The violence was triggered apparently by a Facebook photo defaming the Holy Quran.

Several hundreds of Buddha statues were also looted from different temples and monasteries during the mayhem that led to huge criticism at home and abroad.

On the concluding day of her visit in the ravaged areas of Ukhia, Khaleda yesterday categorically blamed a local AL leader for carrying out attacks on Buddhist's houses and temples in the area.

Without naming Hamidul Haq Chowdhury, general secretary of AL's Ukhia unit, Khaleda said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently visited abroad taking the local AL leader with her.

"Arrest and try him [Hamidul] who accompanied

you [PM] during your travel abroad, [and then] everything behind the massacre will be revealed," Khaleda claimed.

Terming AL government the most communal, the BNP chief said the ruling party men tortured Hindu people, attacked their temples, grabbed their homes and looted wealth.

"They stole valuables from Hindu temples; and they even insulted Muslims by wearing cap on dog's head," she alleged.

Khaleda said situation of the country was so worse at present that people of every religion were unsafe under the rule of the present government.

Apart from speaking on the attacks on Buddhist's temples, the BNP chief spoke on the next general elections.

In her over 20-minute-long speech, Khaleda called upon the people of Ukhia not to make further mistake in choosing who to vote.

"You will have to suffer again if you choose the wrong candidate. So, cast your vote for the BNP-led alliance to ensure development in your locality," she said.

The former premier said: "I can promise that BNP-led alliance will move the country forward if we are voted to power in the next elections. We will create huge job opportunities for unemployed youths, reduce prices of agricultural equipments and if necessary, we will give subsidy."

Khaleda also reiterated her demand to restore the caretaker government system to hold the next elections.

After the meeting at Ukhia, the BNP chief visited Dulahazra Safari park at Chakoria and spent some time there before going to Chittagong Circuit House.

She exchanged views with Buddhist leaders of Patiya upazila at the Circuit House last night before she left the port city for Dhaka.

BBC chief quits

FROM PAGE 1

Chris Patten yesterday called for a radical overhaul of the world's largest broadcaster.

Patten, also a prominent political figure, said accepting Entwistle's resignation had made for one of the saddest nights of his public life.

He said the crisis had revealed a need for a "thorough, structural, radical overhaul" of the organisation, although he said he would not be quitting.

Entwistle's departure leaves the state-funded broadcaster in chaos as it struggles to restore trust in its journalism and battles the scandal surrounding Jimmy Savile, the late BBC television star now alleged to have been a prolific child sex offender.

The organisation issued a full apology on Friday, but early on Saturday Entwistle had to admit under questioning from his own journalists that he had not known in advance about the Newsnight report, weeks after being accused of being too hands-off over a previous scandal involving the same programme.

He resigned saying the unacceptable standards of the Newsnight film had damaged the public's confidence in the 90-year-old BBC.

"As the director general of the BBC, I am ultimately responsible for all content as the editor-in-chief, and I have

therefore decided that the honourable thing for me to do is to step down," he said.

The 50-year-old was only appointed to the top job in September, making his leadership the shortest in the BBC's history.

Entwistle succeeded Mark Thompson, set to take over as chief executive of the New York Times Co, in September and almost immediately faced one of the biggest crises in the history of the BBC, funded by a licence fee paid by TV viewers.

This was the revelation by rival broadcaster ITV last month that the late Jimmy Savile, one of the most recognisable personalities on British television in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, had sexually abused young girls, some on BBC premises.

Commentators described the crisis as one of the deepest in the BBC's 90-year history.

Entwistle was condemned for the BBC's slow response to the Savile furore and then lambasted after it emerged that Newsnight had axed a planned expose into Savile shortly after his death and that the broadcaster had gone ahead with tributes instead.

His appearance before a parliamentary committee provoked mockery, with one lawmaker saying he had shown a "lamentable lack of knowl-

edge" of what was going on at his own organisation.

The knives were out for Entwistle on Friday after the BBC apologised for the mistaken allegation that an ex-politician, later identified on the Internet as a close ally of former prime minister Margaret Thatcher, had abused children.

The last straw came when he was forced to admit on the BBC morning news that he had not known - or asked - who the alleged abuser was until the name appeared in social media.

Politicians said Entwistle's decision was right because it appeared that under him the BBC, long affectionately known as "Auntie" and widely respected in many parts of the world, was systematically incapable of addressing its failings.

"It is vital that credibility and public trust in this important national institution is restored," Culture Secretary Maria Miller said in a statement. "It is now crucial that the BBC puts the systems in place to ensure it can make first class news and current affairs programmes."

The crisis at the BBC is the latest drama to hit the British media industry after two years of soul-searching sparked by a phone-hacking scandal at Rupert Murdoch's newspaper empire.

Ex-DGFI chief

FROM PAGE 20

attacks that killed 24 AL leaders and workers and maimed around 300 others on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue. Sheikh Hasina, the then opposition leader, narrowly escaped death but suffered ear injuries.

Replying to a query, Rumi said he had no documents to prove that he had sought Khaleda's permission to investigate the attack.

Earlier on November 5, he testified as the 65th prosecution witness at the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1.

Fakhrul Islam, counsel for Mufti Abdul Hannan, the detained leader of the militant group Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji) and prime accused in the blasts cases, cross-examined the former DGFI chief yesterday.

Judge Shahed Nuruddin of the tribunal set November 18 and 19 for further cross-examination.

Meanwhile, Fakhrul Islam has filed a petition seeking action against Rumi for "giving false and fabricated statements". In the petition, he said Rumi had no jurisdiction to go to the then prime minister to request permission for probe.

Twenty-six of the accused including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojaheed, now behind bars, were produced before the court yesterday.

Seven others including Ariful Islam Arif, a former DCC ward councillor, now on bail, were also present.

Tarique Rahman, senior vice-chairman of BNP, and 18 others have been shown absconding.

Belarus PM

FROM PAGE 1

honour at the airport. A tiny tot presented a bouquet to Myasnikovich.

Hasina introduced her cabinet colleagues, cabinet secretary, principal secretary, press secretary, and the chiefs of three services and other high civil and military officials to the Belarus premier.

This is the first official visit of a Belarus premier since the establishment of diplomatic