

# ZIA ORPHANAGE TRUST GRAFT HC clears way for Khaleda's trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for a lower court to continue with trial proceedings of Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The HC summarily rejected a petition filed by Khaleda seeking its directive upon the lower court to expunge deposition of the investigation officer in the case.

The HC bench of Justice Md Moinul Islam Chowdhury and Justice JBM Hassan passed the order saying that there was no illegality in recording statement of the investigation officer in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Khaleda could cross-examine IO Harun-or-Rashid and she would not be prejudiced in the case, the bench observed.

AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, a lawyer for Khaleda, told reporters that his client would appeal to the Supreme Court against the HC order since she "did not get justice".

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star there was no legal

bar for the lower court to continue with the trial proceedings against Khaleda now in the Zia Orphanage Trust case following the HC order.

The BNP chief filed the petition with the HC on June 15 seeking its directives for expunging deposition of Harun-or-Rashid and recording his fresh statement in her presence at the court.

In her petition, Khaleda also said the Special Judge's Court-3 of Dhaka had recorded the statement of Harun, also a director of ACC, in her absence for six days.

As per relevant rule, the court has to take deposition of a witness in presence of the accused, but a Dhaka court did not follow that rule, she said.

The ACC had filed two graft cases including the Zia Orphanage Trust case in 2008 and 2011. According to the charge sheet in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case, Khaleda, her son Tarique Rahman and four others embezzled Tk 2.1 crore by forming the charity that exists only on paper.

The Special Judge's Court-3 of Dhaka on June 18 scheduled next hearing of the two cases against the BNP chief for July 23.



A naval ship searching for the missing pilot of the F-7 fighter that went down into the Bay of Bengal yesterday morning.

PHOTO: STAR

# College admission process stumbles

FROM PAGE 1

opened a new cell to address different anomalies in the lists.

Contacted, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "We would extend time for admission if necessary."

Buet's Institute of Information and Communication Technology was assigned the task of preparing the lists.

Shahan Ara Begum, principal of Ideal School and College in the capital's Motijheel, said they could not download the list till 2:00pm which caused a lot of difficulties for them.

"We could only admit students of our institution who received the SMS. But we could not admit those who are from other institutions as we did not get the list on time," she told The Daily Star.

She said they were able to download a list of science students around

4:00pm.

"The admission process might be delayed if this situation continued," feared the principal.

The college, which tops the best-performing colleges every year, can accommodate some 1,380 students in different faculties.

Farhad Hossain, principal of Monipur High School and College, echoed Shahan Ara.

"Many parents and students have gathered here [in the college compound] for admission. But we did not get the list yet. We all are worried," he said.

Waliur Rahman, a parent, said his son came to know about his selection to Monipur College through an SMS, but he could not get admitted as the college authorities were yet to get the complete list.

The picture at Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, however, was a

little different.

The college principal said they got the list but it did not have the names of some of their own students who passed the SSC from the institution.

"We will admit these students whether their names are on the list or not. They were our students and they have studied for 10 years in this institution. We are communicating with the board regarding this," said Sufia Khatun, principal of the institution.

The college has 2,000 seats for class XI students.

Similar is the situation outside Dhaka.

Shah Md Moksed Ali, principal of Carmichael College in Rangpur, said they could not download the merit list till 3:30pm yesterday and that is why they could not start the admission process.

"We are trying to download the list and if we can, we will start the

process tomorrow [Tuesday]," the principal told our Rangpur correspondent at 4:50pm.

Moksed said he had information that Rangpur Govt College and Govt Begum Rokeya College are also facing similar problems as they could download only the merit list of Science students.

Mukaddir, a guardian from Mymensingh, phoned The Daily Star office to complain about the problem his niece is facing.

He said his niece obtained GPA-5 from a rural school and applied for five colleges including two government institutions. "But she was not selected for any of the first three colleges. However, her friends who got GPA-4.5 found a place in one of the government colleges," he said.

Dr Rezaul Karim, principal of Government Shaheed Bulbul College in Pabna, said they have to

enrol 1,200 students but only 63 students could take admission yesterday as they were able to download the merit list around 1:30pm.

Barisal Women's College faced similar problems, reports our Barisal Correspondent.

Contacted, Prof Abu Bakar Siddique, chairman of Inter-education Board Coordination Subcommittee, said they also heard of such problems.

"We cannot say why these technical problems have arisen. People from the Buet should respond to this," he told The Daily Star.

The Daily Star, however, could not reach the Buet authorities for comments despite repeated attempts.

The education minister told The Daily Star that no student would be affected due to the newly arisen problems.

Nahid urged the college authorities, who did not get the list, to contact their respective boards. "We have opened a separate section which will address these problems," he said.

Before preparing the admission policy, the education minister had given a written instruction to bring under the online admission system only those colleges that have over 300 seats, ministry sources said. As all colleges were not technically equipped to cope with this digitisation, the minister thought it better not to incorporate all the colleges into the system, they added.

Education Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan, however, allegedly disregarded the minister's written instruction and issued the admission guidelines in his absence, sources added.

The education secretary could not be reached for comments.

# MIDEAST PEACE France pushes for new group to revive talks

AFP, New York

France wants a new international group made up of the United States, European powers and Arab countries to be set up to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said yesterday.

"It could be a sort of Quartet-plus," Fabius told reporters, referring to the four-some led by former British prime minister Tony Blair that included the United States, Russia, the European Union.

Fabius said including Arab states "makes sense" because they have a role to play in the peace process and have put forward a plan in 2002 that the foreign minister described as "interesting."

The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative calls for an Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories in exchange for full normalization of ties between Israel and the Arab world.

# Jaywalkers at high risk

FROM PAGE 1

Death as a result of jaywalking is not uncommon in Dhaka city.

The Daily Star's road accident stories between 2010 and present found that jaywalkers accounted for 40 percent of all reported deaths due to road accidents in Dhaka city.

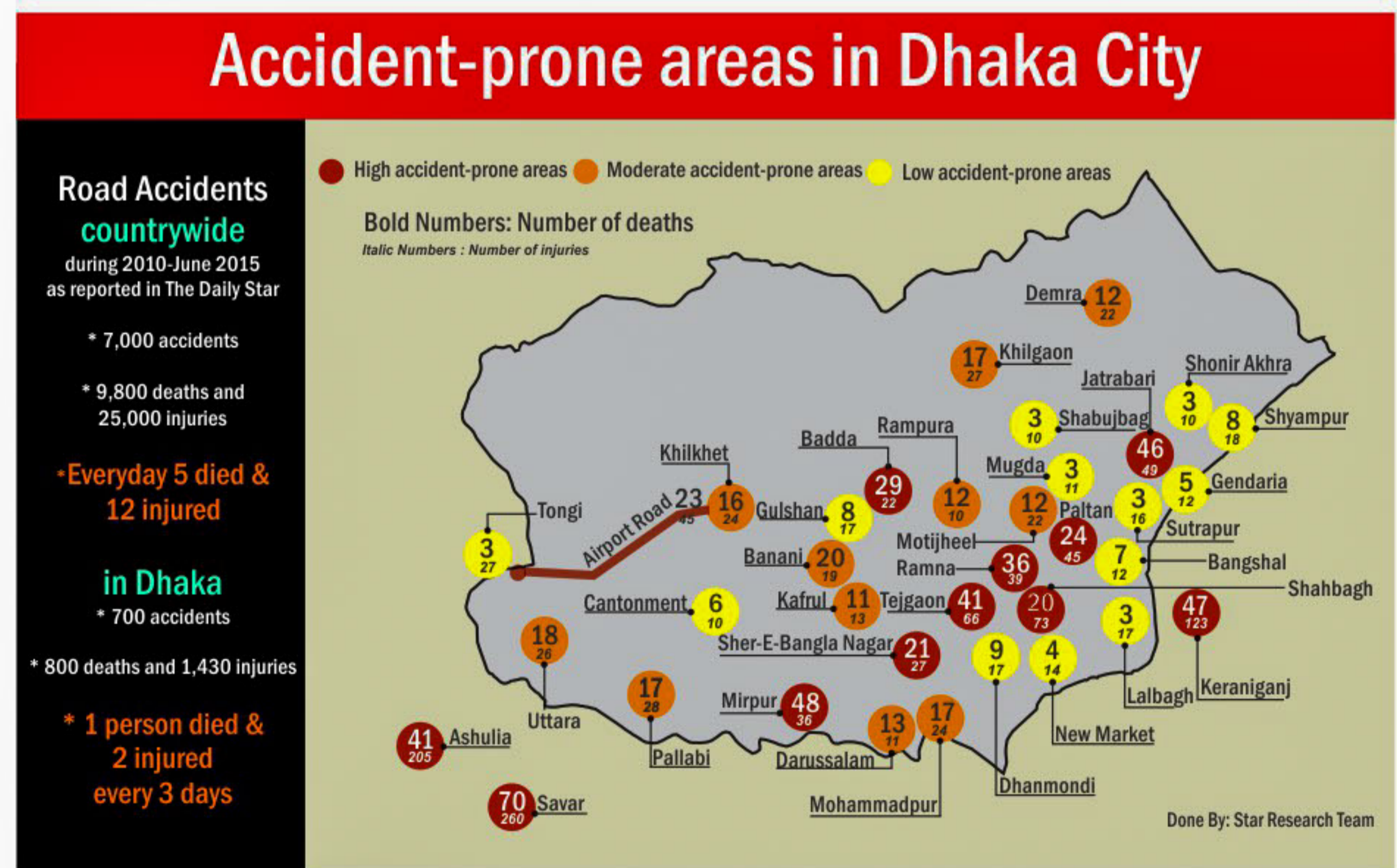
It was also found that after jaywalkers, commuters of buses and motorcycles were at risk. Thirty percent of deaths due to road accidents in Dhaka city were drivers/passengers of buses and motorcycles.

Next came rickshaw pullers and passengers with 10 percent, followed by three-wheelers at 8 percent.

Sadly, some pedestrians were still at risk and death of pedestrians was at 7 percent.

## LIMITATIONS

This trend was seen exclusively in The Daily Star reports. Between 2010 and 2015, about 7,000 accidents were reported and one-tenth of these incidents took place in Dhaka city and its outskirts. This study was based upon that information only.



# Cartels employ ingenious ways

FROM PAGE 1

People in Bangladesh only knew about powder cocaine. In all the previous seizures of the addictive drug in the country, it was in powdered form.

Customs intelligence officials said they learnt about liquid cocaine a few months ago when the Canadian customs seized 310-kg of cocaine aboard a ship from Bolivia.

Meanwhile, officials of a UK intelligence agency and US forensic department experts will arrive in Dhaka next week to help local officials extract cocaine from the seized oil and probe the smuggling.

In March last year, German customs seized 12 ounces of liquid cocaine filled in 14 condoms. Officers at Leipzig airport found the Vatican-bound cocaine coming from South America.

In 2012, a Panamanian woman landed at Barcelona airport with 1.38 kg of cocaine in her implanted breasts. It was detected when the border police noticed fresh scars and blood-stained gauze around her chest. There were also pale patches beneath her skin.

The woman said she had a breast implant surgery recently. But police sent her to a local hospital where surgeons removed her implants and found cocaine.

from a lorry carrying concentrated orange juice at the Port of Plymouth in Spain last year.

In the same year, 35 pounds of cocaine was seized at Port Newark, New Jersey. The drug was stashed in a shipping container, packed with 1,050 cartons of wine from Panama.

According to Huffington Post, a Texas pilot in September last year booked himself a direct trip to a hospital when a balloon of smuggled cocaine burst in his stomach. He allegedly ingested 62 small rubber bags of the drug before boarding a flight from Colombia to Houston.

The gang last year plotted to smuggle 108-kg cocaine into the UK by using a "James Bond"-style underwater vehicle, reported The Telegraph.

Three years ago, a Nigerian drug smuggler was arrested in Switzerland with 123 condoms filled with cocaine weighing 1.7 kilograms in his stomach.

Cocaine is produced in Colombia, Bolivia and Peru, but trafficked across the globe. The US, Canada, North American and European countries are the main market for cocaine.

Countries like the USA, the UK and Canada have been spending huge money for their war on drugs, but can't stop the illegal trade as the kingpins adopt inno-

vative and secret smuggling tactics, and lure people into drug trafficking.

## EXPERTS DUE NEXT WEEK

Javed Patwary, additional inspector general of police, said foreign experts would arrive in Dhaka next week.

Experts of the UK intelligence agency and US forensic department would help local police and customs officials investigate the smuggling incident and extract cocaine from the sunflower oil.

"We don't have the expertise and equipment to extract cocaine from oil. Primarily, it has been detected that a barrel of sunflower oil contained cocaine, but we don't know the actual amount of the drug. The foreign experts would help us in this regard," said Patwary, also head of the Special Branch (SB) of police.

A Bolivian company sent a container with 107 barrels of sunflower oil from Montevideo port in Uruguay. It arrived in Bangladesh via Singapore and was unloaded at Chittagong port on May 8.

A month later, the SB and customs intelligence officials identified the container at the port.

Police arrested Sohel, an employee of Khan Jahan Ali Ltd, who along with two other locals was trying to release the container upon instructions from Bangladesh-born UK citizen Bakul Mia.

# Govt reviews tax proposals

FROM PAGE 1

changes in the House while making his closing remarks before the bill got through in voice vote unopposed.

Originally, the bill was passed with 0.8 percent tax at source for exporters. But Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina requested the finance minister to reduce it to 0.6 percent. She argued that if the exporters did well next year, the tax rate could be increased. The finance minister accepted the PM's line of reasoning.

Also upon Hasina's advice, the duty and VAT on raw materials for producing cancer medicines have been withdrawn. Moreover, there will be no VAT on Unani, Ayurvedic and herbal medicines at production stage.

The finance minister also lifted the 5 percent import duty on book income and the 2 percent advance income tax that he had earlier proposed on import of food commodities such as rice, sugar, wheat and edible oil.

On the other hand, the supplementary duty on import of motorcycle in completely built form has been increased to 60 percent from the existing 45 percent in efforts to encourage local assemblers.

While some of the changes seem logical and will certainly give the middle class people some tax relief, a few were brought under pressure from

lobby groups, a fact Muhith himself candidly confessed.

"There has been some intense lobbying and I have backtracked, falling victim to such lobbying," Muhith said, for instance, about lifting the proposed 15 percent VAT on compact disk import.

After the bill passage, corporate tax for listed banks will be 40 percent, down from the proposed 42.5 percent. However, it will be applicable to new banks, non-banking financial institutions and insurance companies that got licence in 2013 and are not listed with the stock exchange.

For those living in Dhaka and Chittagong city areas, the minimum tax will be Tk 5,000, for those in other cities Tk 4,000 and for those outside city corporation areas Tk 3,000. The finance minister's original proposal was a Tk 4,000 minimum tax for all irrespective of where they live.

The condition of submitting TIN (tax identification number) by parents of students of English medium schools in city corporations and municipalities will remain, although parents of English medium school students in other areas have been exempted from it.

The government relaxed the condition of importing less paint for next three years to help the assembling companies set up painting plants.

Muhith recommended creating a separate HS (harmonised system) code for high capacity air conditioner import and imposing 25 percent import duty, 4 percent regulatory duty and other duties on import of air conditioners with capacity of 90,000BTU to 2 lakh BTU. But there will be no supplementary duty.

The proposed 10 percent VAT on tuition fee at private universities, private medical colleges and private engineering colleges has been reduced to 7.5 percent.

Supplementary duty on dish antenna cable import has been increased to 30 percent from 20 percent.

The minister said he placed the changes, considering the debate on some proposals in parliament and the reactions from the prime minister as well as from all over the country.

# BAF fighter

FROM PAGE 1

floating on the water and the pieces were recovered around 2:00pm about 6 nautical miles from the base.

The fuselage and the engine of the aircraft could not be located.

The BAF has formed a three-member committee to probe the accident.

The aircraft was bought from China three to four years ago, the ISPR official said.