



The hardly recognisable microbus after it collided with a bus in Narsingdi yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## 17 deaths a day on roads this year

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were killed and 30 others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a microbus in Narsingdi's Darikhali on Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

The 12-seater microbus, which was going to Kishoreganj from Kamrangirchar with more than 15 passengers, was reduced to a mangled heap of metal. Eleven people died on the spot while two others died in hospitals.

On Saturday night, 13 people were killed in a head-on collision between a bus and a lorry carrying LP gas cylinders to Faridpur's Nagarkanda. Both the vehicles caught fire on impact, and almost all the dead were burned beyond recognition, said fire service officials who visited the spot.

Eight more people were killed on February 3 when a truck helper, filling in for the trucker, lost control over the wheel and ploughed through a crowd in Alutilla of Khagrachhari. The accident occurred on Chittagong-Khagrachhari road where thousands gathered to attend a funeral of a monk.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, urban transport expert Prof Shamsul Huq said road fatalities occur as Bangladeshi roads have all the elements required for accidents to happen.

He said haphazard plying of motorised and non-motorised vehicles, speeding, the tendency to overtake and a lack of monitoring of the authorities concerned are the reasons for recurring road crashes.

"Strict monitoring while issuing driving licences and fitness certificates of vehicles, proper planning in road construction and increased police vigilance on the highways are a must to reduce road accidents," said Shamsul, who teaches at Buet's civil engineering department.

Film star and Nirapad Sarak Chai Chairman Ilias Kanchan said a lack of monitoring was the main reason for road crashes in Bangladesh.

"Those who can drive fast and overtake other vehicles are considered to be quality drivers. There is no one to monitor this. The number of road crashes will not decrease until we change this attitude," he observed.

Painting a grim picture of road safety, Mozammel Haque Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Passengers' Welfare Association, said the government should make the issue a priority.

In 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing the Decade of Action for Road Safety

(2011-2020) with the goal to stabilise and reduce predicted levels of road traffic fatalities around the world. The issue has also been included in the adopted Sustainable Development Goals with a target to halve traffic deaths and injuries by 2020.

Being the signatory, Bangladesh is doing little to check road crashes and save lives.

According to the 2015 global report of the World Health Organisation, 90 percent of the road fatalities occur in the low and middle-income countries and road crashes, which are preventable, are the leading cause of death for people aged 15-29.

Deaths of so many economically active people place a huge burden on the victims' families and a country loses an estimated 1.6 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) due to road crashes that put a heavy burden on the national economies, said the report.

Identifying reckless driving and owners' greed for profit as major reasons for road crashes, Roads and Bridges Division Secretary MAN Siddique claimed that no steps would be enough unless the issues were addressed.

## AL men beat up doctor

Sparks doctors' protest; hospital in Sirajganj virtually closed for 4 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Some activists of ruling Awami League yesterday assaulted a doctor of Belkuchi Upazila Health Complex in Sirajganj for "refusing to admit a critically injured patient".

Demanding punishment of attackers, doctors and employees of the 50-bed Belkuchi Upazila Health stopped work for around four hours from 8:30am. However, emergency medical services were available.

Seriously injured Hasan Ali of Konabari village in Belkuchi upazila was taken to the health complex around 8:00am. But on-duty doctor Shakhawat Hossain asked Hasan to go to Sirajganj General Hospital as his condition was critical. Hasan had a motorcycle accident, said Kamrul Hasan, Belkuchi upazila health officer.

At one stage, some AL men went to the hospital and insisted that their patient be admitted. As Shakhawat refused, they assaulted Shakhawat, alleged Kamrul.

"The patient's condition was critical and his treatment was not possible at the upazila health complex. So, the on-duty doctor asked them [AL activists] to take their patient to district general hospital, but they became angry and beat up the emergency doctor mercilessly on the hospital ground," said Kamrul.

Hearing the news, Sirajganj civil surgeon, superintendent of police, local lawmaker and local AL leaders rushed to the spot and assured the doctors of taking action against the culprits.

Following the assurance, doctors resumed work around 12:30pm, said Monjur Rahman, civil surgeon of Sirajganj.

The director general of the Directorate General of Health Services was informed of the matter, the civil surgeon said.

Contacted, Eusuf Z Khan, president of Belkuchi upazila unit AL, said the attackers were activists of AL and its associated bodies.

"We don't support such criminal activities," said the AL president, adding that the criminals must be punished.

Sazzad Hossain, officer-in-charge of Belkuchi Police Station, said they would take action against the accused, if any case was filed in this connection.

## College goer arrested for stabbing girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Police yesterday arrested a college student in connection with stabbing a visually impaired schoolgirl inside a rehabilitation centre in Harihbanga area on Saturday.

The arrestee, Jahangir Hossain, 19, son of Shamsul Haque alias Hossain, of Sindura village in Hatibandha upazila, is an intermediate level student of Lalmonirhat Govt College and also visually impaired.

Victim Mina Akhter, 14, daughter of Afaz Uddin and Anwara Begum of Saptibari village in Aditmari upazila, is a student of class-V at Harihbanga Dargapar Govt Primary School.

Her mother filed a case with Lalmonirhat Sadar police on Saturday night.

Police said both the victim and the attacker were residential students of Visually Impaired Rehabilitation Centre run by NGO RDRS Bangladesh, which has 23 other such students.

Family sources alleged Jahangir on several occasions made illicit proposals to Mina. Refused by her, Jahangir stabbed her inside the centre on Saturday morning, police said.

Mina has been admitted in Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

"We are poor. We cannot afford the treatment of our daughter," Anwara said, adding, the NGO had assured them of bearing the treatment expenditures.

Ahsan Ullah, hostel superintendent of the centre, said the RDRS Bangladesh would bear Mina's treatment costs.

Officer-in-Charge Rafiqul Islam of Lalmonirhat Sadar police said Jahangir confessed to attacking Mina and was produced before a court yesterday afternoon.

## 17 named

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hand over the awards to them at a function at Osmani Memorial Auditorium on February 20, a day ahead of the International Mother Language Day.

The government introduced the Ekushey Padak in 1976 in memory of the martyrs of the Language Movement.

# Yunus advocates participatory economy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus termed financial service as the oxygen of economic life of the people. Bottom half of people, particularly women in the bottom half, do not have access to this oxygen. That is why their economic life remains extremely weak. This oxygen remains exclusively for the privileged.

Prof Yunus was speaking as a keynote speaker at the three-day National Women's Parliament (NWP), organised by Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, India, with the theme "Empowering Women -- Strengthening Democracy", which began on Friday in the state capital of Amaravati, says a press release of the Yunus Centre yesterday.

About 12,000 young women from all over India participated in the conference.

Prof Yunus said, "Ensuring participatory democracy is a fundamental goal. But we all should remember that participatory democracy is not feasible



without participatory economy.

"Economy that we have in the world today is certainly not a participatory economy. Bottom half of the population hardly has any share in it. One percent of population of the world owns 99 percent of the global wealth. That does not

sound very participatory." The Nobel Laureate and spiritual leader Dalai Lama, Union Ministers M Venkaiah Naidu and P Ashok Gajapati Raju, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi, Gandhian Ela Bhatt, Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, actress Manisha Koirala and many other dignitaries attended the inaugural event of the conference.

The vision of NWP is to enable and encourage social, political and economic empowerment of women in all strata of the society. One of the objectives of NWP is to generate new ideas, concepts, theories and ideologies for women empowerment.

## 11 arrested

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The 11 have been identified as Yousuf Kazi, Akash Rahman Mintu, Afsar Ali, Faruk Hossain, Malek Mia, Abdul Malek Mia, Masud Parvez, Shahin Kazi, Liton Sheikh, Masum Gazi and Aslam Sheikh.

It is hard to collect vests and walkie-talkies similar to ones used by law enforcers, said Nurunnabi, adding, "We are now investigation how it reached their hands."

Addressing a briefing at the Dhaka Metropolitan Police media centre, DB Joint Commissioner Abdul Baten said these groups also target rickshaw and bus passengers at night and early morning.

During the day, they target bank clients by maintaining sources inside the financial institutions, he said.

The arrestees will be interrogated and two separate cases were filed with Sabujbagh Police Station, he added.

Iqbal said the ringleaders recruited members luring financially insolvent

young people in remote districts with promises of lucrative jobs. DB police say at least six such gangs were arrested in the last one year.

## Condemned

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On January 16 this year, Narayanganj District and Sessions Judge's Court found 35 people, including 25 former Rab men, guilty of abduction and murder of seven people and destroying evidence.

The court handed down death penalties to 26 people, including 16 former Rab men, and jailed nine others for seven to 17 years.

On April 27, 2014, seven people, including then Narayanganj City Corporation panel mayor Nazru Islam and senior lawyer Chandan Sarker, were abducted from Dhaka-Narayanganj link road. Later, their bodies were found floating in the Shitalakkhya river.

## Raids across US nab hundreds

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The order was a move to make good on America's undocumented population, estimated at 11 million people.

Marin said the operations were planned prior to Trump's swearing-in and were comparable to past actions.

He rebuffed reports about ICE checkpoints and random sweeps, calling them "dangerous and irresponsible."

The raids, which hit residential areas and workplaces, sparked protests and provoked the ire of elected Democratic representatives, notably in California and particularly in Los Angeles, where the Pew Research Center estimates around a million undocumented migrants reside.

"President Trump's policy change betrays our values," Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein said in a statement.

"Tearing families apart isn't what this country stands for."

Democratic Congressman Joaquin Castro of Texas confirmed the launch of a "targeted operation" aimed at arresting the undocumented.

Castro said the roundups were part of "Operation Cross Check" -- a series of large-scale raids that began in 2011 under Barack Obama.

The agency conducted the last sweep in March 2015, corraling 2,059 undocumented immigrants deemed threats to "public safety."

In New York, which hosts the country's largest population of undocumented immigrants -- 1.15 million, according to Pew -- a few hundred people demonstrated near the immigration services office.

Obama deported more immigrants than any of his predecessors, prioritising the expulsion of repeat criminal offenders or those convicted of serious crimes, including rape, child pornography and gang membership.

Undocumented migrants with repeated drunk driving convictions

were also targeted.

With his decree, Trump -- who vowed as a candidate to deport some three million undocumented immigrants with criminal records -- broadens the scope of the Obama administration's policy, dropping the distinction between convicted criminals and those who have simply been charged.

Activists have rallied around the case of Guadalupe Garcia de Rayos -- a 35-year-old mother arrested during a routine visit to Phoenix, Arizona who has become symbolic of Trump's hard-line measures.

The mother of two US-born children was caught in 2008 using a fake social security number and slapped with a deportation order. Authorities had not previously expelled her for practical reasons, however, as she posed little threat.

But by Thursday, she was in Nogales, the Mexican border town where she crossed into the US more than two decades ago.

## No red meat

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Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star couldn't reach the lessee, Lutfor Rahman.

Contacted, Lutfor's Manager Sanwar Hossain refuted the allegation.

He said they collect tax at a rate of 3.5 percent of cattle price from buyers other than the traders. "We don't collect tax more than the fixed rate from the licensed traders."

Asked, DNCC Chief Executive Officer Mesbahul Islam said they would solve the problem through discussions with both sides.

The DNCC monitors the market regularly, and it would take action if

the traders can come up with proof of excessive tax collection, he added.

Talking to this correspondent, a number of consumers and restaurant owners voiced concern about the strike.

"It's very bad news for me. I prefer meat to fish," said Sahabuddin Mia, a hardware trader, who frequents restaurants around his workplace at Farmgate.

Selima Aktar, an official at a private firm, said she keeps beef and mutton on the family's menu at least two days a week.

"I have been doing this for years to ensure protein intake for my family

members. If the strike continues, I will face problems," she said.

Anwar Hossain Belu, senior vice president of Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association, said beef prices remained stable for the last one month. "The sudden strike will create a crisis in the market and lead to a hike in prices."

This is the peak season for weddings and picnics, and the strike would hurt both consumers and businesses, he said.

According to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, retail prices of beef were Tk 430-450 a kg in the last one week and those of mutton were Tk 580-650 a kg.

## N Korea test

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stand, and fully know, that the United States of America is behind Japan, our great ally, 100 percent," Trump told reporters in Palm Beach, Florida, speaking alongside Abe. He made no further comments.

Abe called the launch "absolutely intolerable" and said North Korea must comply with UN Security Council resolutions.

China is North Korea's main ally but has been frustrated by Pyongyang's repeated provocations, although it bristles at pressure from Washington and Seoul to curb the North and its young leader, Kim Jong Un.

China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump and his aides are likely to weigh a series of possible responses, including new US sanctions to tighten financial controls, an increase in naval and air assets in and around the Korean peninsula and accelerated installation of new missile defence systems in South Korea, the administration official said.

But the official said that given that the missile was believed not to have been an ICBM and that Pyongyang had not carried out a new nuclear explosion, any response will seek to avoid ratcheting up tensions.

Trump has pledged a more assertive approach to North Korea but given no clear sign of how his policy would differ from Obama's so-called strategic patience. In January, Trump tweeted "It won't happen!" after Kim said the North was close to testing an ICBM, but his aides never explained how he would do so.

The missile was launched from an area called Panghyon in North Korea's western region just before 8:00am (2300 GMT Saturday) and flew about 500 km, the South's Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

"Our assessment is that it is part of a show of force in response to the new US administration's hardline position against the North," the office said in a statement.

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## Toddler

FROM PAGE 1

care of the child after he lost all family members travelling in the microbus.

Then the child lost the battle for life and let out his last breath at a private hospital in Mohammadpur four hours after his mother's death.

"As he [Rabbi] survived such a horrific accident, we hoped he might make it. We started arranging money for his treatment, but he died," said Mohammad Rubel, a friend of Rabbi's father Nur Alam.

Hailing from the city's Kamrangirchar, Rabbi along with his mother, 10-year-old uncle Antor Alam, and grandparents -- Manik Mia, 55, and Mofia Khatun, 48, -- were going to Kishoreganj to attend a village fair to be kicked off on February 15.

Except the two children and the driver, there were 15 passengers in the microbus, said Ziaur Rahman, a cousin of Nur.

The accident took lives of Rabbi and his other family members on board. Four passengers from Kamrangirchar are now undergoing treatment at DMCH.

Rabbi would turn two this April. He was dearest to his grandmother, said Lima Begum, a relative in Kamrangirchar.

"I thought I would look after him after he lost his mother and grandmother. But everything is finished now."

Ziaur said his brother Nur works at a fish wholesale market in Sowerighat in the old part of the capital while his father was a rickshaw-puller.

The microbus set off from Kamrangirchar at 6:00am. Rabbi's mother was on a rear seat with her toddler on the lap.

"The rescuers even told us that they found Rabbi on his mother's lap even after the accident," Ziaur said.

Both Rubel and Ziaur alleged the authorities of DMCH took long to tell them that Rabbi should be kept in Intensive Care Unit.

"The victims reached Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 11:00am. Initially the authorities did not tell us anything. As Rabbi's condition deteriorated around 3:00pm, they told us that he should be shifted to ICU."

"As we asked them to move him to ICU, they replied they didn't have any ICU for children and asked us to take him to a private hospital," Rubel said.

As the relatives took him to a private hospital in Mohammadpur, Rabbi's condition deteriorated further. He died as he was admitted there.

Asked why Rabbi was not shifted to ICU, Khawaja Abdul Gafur, deputy

director of DMCH, said the child needed to be in a paediatric intensive care unit, but the hospital does not have such facility.

## Wildcat

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wildlife breeding centre on two different occasions, had been killed and eaten by the wildcat.

The wildcat was shot and killed on February 6 when it was preying on the baby crocodiles at a pen of the centre.

At least 43 crocodiles going missing came to light on January 30. Later, 19 other carcasses of baby crocodiles were found inside a pen on February 5.

The government established the breeding centre under Chandpai range of the Sundarbans in 2002 aiming to breed and rear endangered saltwater crocodiles.

The centre started its journey with five saltwater crocodiles found in various canals of the world's largest mangrove forest. The saline water crocodiles generally lay eggs in May-June in the coastal areas. And the crocodile eggs are hatched artificially to increase their population.

## War heroine

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Bogar Bazar and the two brothers started beating him at one point and attacked Rokeya and Moymona when they rushed in, she added.

None at the bazar had come to their aid and they had refused to sit in an arbitration, Rokeya alleged.

The duo was pressing them to withdraw a complaint Sekander filed with Phulpur Police Station on Saturday and threatening them of dire consequences otherwise, she added.

However, in the non-First Information Report, Sekander stated that the duo assaulted them following an altercation over spilling tea.

He told The Daily Star that his wife and daughters had not informed him of Khalil stalking the girls and of the proposal.

Officer-in-Charge Ali Ahmed Mollah said they had started looking into the incident and was waiting for the medical report and that none had been arrested.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Rashed Hossain Chowdhury said the administration would look into the matter.