

6 die as bus rams truck, falls in ditch

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Six people were killed and 13 others injured when a bus fell into a roadside ditch after it collided head-on with a stone-laden truck at Jummerghar in Gaibandha's Gobindaganj yesterday morning. Four of the deceased were identified as Abdul Wahab Mandol, 26, of Dharmapal village in Nilphamari, Ashraf Islam, 27, of Dinajpur's Kansama upazila, Shapla Begum, 28, of Ballamjhar village in Gaibandha Sadar, and her six-year-old boy Abdul Alim.

The identities of the two others could not be known immediately. Abul Bashar, officer-in-charge of Gobindaganj Highway Police Station, said the accident occurred when the Saidpur-bound bus from Dhaka collided head-on with the truck coming from the opposite direction on Bogra-Rangpur highway around 5:00am. On impact, the bus fell into the roadside ditch, killing four bus

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



The badly damaged bus that fell in a ditch at Gobindaganj in Gaibandha after colliding head on with a truck yesterday. At least six people were killed and 13 others injured.

PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

27 hurt as AL men clash in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least 27 people including seven policemen were injured as two factions of ruling Awami League clashed over establishing supremacy in Jahazmara Bazar in Hatiya upazila on Saturday.

Three of the injured, including AL members Imam Hossain, 35, and Akbar Hossain, 28, received bullets during the clash that occurred around 10:00pm.

Police and locals said supporters of former lawmaker Prof Oli Ullah and another former MP Mohammad Ali clashed over establishing supremacy in the area.

The supporters of Prof Oli Ullah were led by former chairman of Jahazmara Union Parishad Md Sirajuddin, while incumbent Chairman Masum Billah led the supporters of Mohammad Ali, locals claimed.

Eighteen injured including Organising Secretary of upazila unit Chhatra League Sohel Uddin were admitted to Hatiya Upazila Health Complex. Two other seriously injured people were sent to Noakhali Medical

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Oldest war

FROM PAGE 12

agency on February 8 said to have found evidence against the four.

Yesterday, Baki was brought before the three-member tribunal led by Justice Anwarul Haque at 1:20pm on a stretcher with defence counsels reasoning that he can not move on his own.

Prosecutor Rezia Sultana Chaman prayed to send him to jail.

The tribunal questioned the prosecution's petition, which sought Baki's arrest stating that he was trying to influence the prosecution's witnesses and may go into hiding.

"How can such a man influence investigations? How can he obstruct the trial?" the tribunal said.

Defence counsel Abdus Sattar Palwan said Baki has been suffering from old age complications and he was ready to follow any condition set by the tribunal if granted bail.

The tribunal allowed his prayer. The Daily Star is yet to know what the conditions are.

INVESTIGATION AGAINST OSMAN FARRUK

War crimes investigators yesterday visited Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) in Mymensingh as part of a probe in a case filed against top BNP leader and former education minister Muhammad Osman Farruk over his alleged involvement in crimes during the Liberation War.

A team of investigators led by the agency's coordinator, Sanaul Huq, met Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Ali Akbar, some freedom fighters and several teachers, employees and officials who served at the university in 1971, reports our Mymensingh correspondent.

Farruk was an assistant professor of the then East Pakistan Agricultural University (now BAU) in 1971.

On May 4 last year, the agency said to have started a preliminary probe into the alleged crimes committed by Farruk and 10 other teachers.

Investigations formally began against Farruk on January 4. He was elected lawmaker from

Kishoreganj-4 in 2001 and later became the education minister of the BNP-led four-party government.

NORTH KOREA

Rocket engine test a 'great leap forward'

CNN, Seoul

North Korea is touting a "great leap forward" in its rocket programme after the successful testing of a new high-thrust engine, state media reported yesterday.

The test measured the thrust power in the combustion chamber, the structural safety and reliability of the engine, and the movement of the turbine pump, the Korean Central News Agency said. It reportedly took place at the Sohae Satellite Launching Ground, in North Pyongan Province.

CNN military analyst Lt Gen Mark Hertling said advances in North Korea's rocket system could help with the country's development of ICBMs -- intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"Some of these technologies which the North Koreans are including in their rocket expansion programme

actually have to do with a covert method of firing missiles without being detected in advance of actually exploding the devices. So that's part of the issue," Hertling said.

"The other piece is when you're talking about an intercontinental ballistic missile, the types of warheads and the amount of weight that are in the missile itself have to be launched off of a pad. And the better they can improve their technology to do that, the more accurate these systems are going to be -- not only from leaving the pad, but also going into the atmosphere and then hitting the target on the other side."

State media said the test was successful and marked an event of "historic significance" that could lead to the rebirth of the country's indigenous rocket industry.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered the start of the test and oversaw it from an observation post, the KCNA reported.

Kim emphasized the whole world would "soon witness what eventful significance the great victory won today carries," KCNA reported.

Kim's announcement came hours before US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met with President Xi Jinping of China -- North Korea's only major global ally -- in Beijing.

Although neither side brought up the subject publicly, Tillerson was expected to raise the prospect of financial penalties on Chinese companies and banks that do business with North Korea.

North Korea has conducted a series of missile launches this month, including four on March 6, KCNA reported.

A North Korean military unit tasked

with striking US bases in Japan was involved in those launches, the state news agency said.

But a fifth missile fired by North Korea failed. And that's not an unusual outcome.

Last fall, the US and South Korean militaries detected at least two failed missile launches by North Korea.

Still, the world is taking note that North Korea's weapon technology may be improving.

As North Korea's missile program gets more sophisticated, schoolchildren in Japan are preparing for attack.

On a recent sunny day in Oga, children playing duck-duck-goose on the playground stop in their tracks when an announcement blares over the loudspeaker:

"This is a drill," the voice says. "A missile has been launched."

Rock 'n' roll 'father' falls silent

FROM PAGE 12

Police Department sadly confirms the death of Charles Edward Anderson Berry Sr., better known as legendary musician Chuck Berry," it said on Facebook.

Berry became a sensation in the years after World War II as the baby boom generation came of age in an increasingly prosperous America. The middle-class son of a carpenter and a high school principal, Berry grew up under segregation but instinctively sensed how to bridge the racial divide.

Berry had played blues guitar but found that his white audience was more interested in country. He merged the styles with an electric energy and consummate stage showmanship, although he hesitated to say that he created rock 'n' roll.

"It used to be called boogie-woogie, it used to be called blues, used to be called rhythm and blues," he later said. "It's called rock now."

Whatever the music was named, Bruce Springsteen, one of many artists heavily influenced by Berry, said the man was indispensable.

"Chuck Berry was rock's greatest practitioner, guitarist and the greatest pure rock 'n' roll writer who ever

lived," Springsteen wrote on Twitter.

But it was perhaps John Lennon -- who died in 1980 -- who put it most succinctly. "If you tried to give rock and roll another name, you might call it 'Chuck Berry.'"

His 1958 hit "Johnny B. Goode" was so influential and recognisable that the US space programme chose it to represent rock music for potential extraterrestrial listeners on the Voyager spacecraft.

"Roll Over Beethoven" from 1956 was almost a manifesto of rock 'n' roll as the charismatic Berry urged the DJ to switch off the classical records and turn to the new genre of the youth.

Other hits included "Maybellene," one of the pioneering rock songs that gave a guitar edge to a popular fiddle tune, and "Sweet Little Sixteen," in which Berry hailed rock 'n' roll's sweep across the United States.

Berry was one of the first African Americans to find a widespread white audience, with his gentle demeanor and the usually innocuous subject matter of his songs initially insulating him in a country where many black people lived under Jim Crow institutionalised racism.

But that changed as his fame grew.

After a packed performance in 1959 in Meridian Mississippi, a white crowd set upon Berry and forced him to leave through a side entrance after accusing him of kissing a white girl among his fans.

"One of the girls threw her arms around me and hung a soul-searching kiss that I let hang a second too long," Berry later explained. He was arrested for disturbing the peace and left the city after paying a fine.

His career soon was interrupted when he was arrested in 1959 under an obscure law for taking a 14-year-old girl across state lines for "immoral purposes."

Berry defended himself against allegations that he had slept with the young waitress. But he was convicted by an all-white jury and served a year and a half in prison. In a bitter irony, he was incarcerated just as the United States was swept by white rockers influenced by him, including the British invasion led by The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.

Mick Jagger hailed Berry on Saturday as an inspiration, saying: "He lit up our teenage years, and blew life into our dreams of being musicians and performers."

"One of my biggest lights has gone one," Jagger's bandmate Keith Richards chimed in.

After his prison time, friends described the laid-back and fun-loving Berry as a changed man, and the conviction has long been viewed in the African American community as a warning sign for artists on the rise.

Berry mostly avoided the media limelight as he resurrected his career. In a rare 1987 interview with NBC television, Berry declined to describe himself as the father of rock 'n' roll, listing others including his contemporary Elvis Presley as well as Fats Domino and Little Richard.

"We're all I think just a cog in the wheel. We all got the ball rolling," he said. In a surprise, Berry last year celebrated his 90th birthday by announcing that he had recorded his first album in 38 years.

Entitled simply "Chuck," the album is slated to be released sometime this year.

In a statement as he announced the album, Berry dedicated it to his wife of 68 years, Themetta Berry.

"My darlin', I'm growing old! I've worked on this record for a long time. Now I can hang up my shoes!"

OUT OF THE BLUE



Without warning, a tree just falls on the Lake Road near the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan and takes down a motorcycle and a three-wheeler around 10:00am yesterday. The biker, Mujahidur Rahman, 35, a medical equipment businessman, died. The driver of the auto-rickshaw was also injured. PHOTO: VIDEO GRAB

Hanif picked up on Feb 27

FROM PAGE 1

say more," he said.

Hanif, who is from Barguna's Amragasia village, had been living with his family in the capital's Rayerbazar area for around eight months.

He was involved in transport business in the capital, and owned three Turag Paribahan buses and a car.

Halim yesterday said they learnt from media reports that a person named Hanif died in Rab custody. Later, they went to the Bimanbandar Police Station and confirmed that the deceased was indeed his brother Hanif.

Talking to this correspondent on Saturday, Mufti Mahmud Khan, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, said they detained Hanif Friday afternoon near Rab's Ashkona barrack where a suicide bomber blew himself up on Friday.

At about 4:30pm, some Rab members saw Hanif trying to run away from a restaurant in the area. They detained him and took him to a Rab camp where he complained of chest pain, said the Rab official.

"He was taken to Kurmitola General Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 5:45pm,"

he added.

Yesterday, Hanif's wife Kulsum Begum told reporters at her Rayerbazar house that Hanif and his friend Sohel, a furniture trader, went to Barisal on February 24 to attend a religious programme of Charmonai Pir.

On February 27, they boarded a launch to return to Narayanganj, and got down at a terminal near Kanchpur Bridge, she said.

"Our driver Jewel took our private car to Kanchpur Bridge to pick Hanif."

After Jewel reached there, he saw a group of seven to eight people whisk Hanif and Sohel away by a HiAce microbus, Kulsum said quoting the driver.

Several other members of the group posing as detectives then forcibly boarded the private car. They pointed firearms at Jewel and asked him to keep driving. As the car reached Purbachal area, they forced Jewel to get down and then drove off, she said.

Kulsum further said that later at night, a group of men came to their house by a HiAce microbus. They identified themselves as law enforcers and took away Hanif's motorbike.

Halim said that more than two weeks after Hanif was picked up, several men in plain clothes and one in Rab uniform brought his brother to the house by a white HiAce microbus on March 15. The man in Rab uniform was wearing a badge that read "Iqbal".

They forced Hanif to sign two cheques for Tk 6.70 lakh, and then took him away, he alleged.

Some of Hanif's neighbours told this correspondent that they saw some people, who identified themselves as law enforcers, bring Hanif to his house on March 15, and then take him away.

Contacted, Mufti Mahmud said, "We have heard about it. But one needs to keep in mind that people were abducted by gangs of criminals posing as DB police and Rab on various occasions. We have arrested members of such gangs at different times."

In reply to a query, he said they were investigating the claim that one of the group members was wearing a Rab uniform with a badge inscribed with the name "Iqbal".

Mohammad Shahidullah, officer-in-charge of Amtoli Police Station in Barguna, said he visited Hanif's village home yesterday after police high-

ups enquired him about Hanif.

He said Hanif started living in the capital several years back and used to visit his village home occasionally.

The police station didn't get any complaints against Hanif in the past, added the officer.

IDENTITY OF SUICIDE ATTACKER, BIKER

Law enforcers were yet to identify Friday's suicide attacker at Ashkona and the biker shot dead by Rab men on Saturday after he defied a signal to stop at a checkpoint in the capital's Khilgaon.

Rab official Mufti Mahmud said they were still trying to know the identity of both the persons.

The woman, who had earlier claimed that the suicide attacker was her son, yesterday said her son returned home, he added.

Police said the job of probing the suicide attack case was transferred to Rab from them. The case was filed with Bimanbandar Police Station against seven to eight unidentified people.

Shahadat Hossain, a sub-inspector at Khilgaon Police Station, said Rab filed a case against two unnamed persons over Saturday's shooting of the biker.