

Five killed, three injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Five persons were killed in separate road accidents in Chattogram, Dinajpur, Pabna, Barishal and Dhaka districts in the last two days.

Sixty-year-old Kamal Uddin was critically injured after being hit by an unidentified vehicle on Chattogram-Dhaka highway in Mirsarai upazila of Chattogram yesterday morning, reports our correspondent.

He was rushed to Mirsarai Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead around 9am, said Amit Dey, emergency medical officer at the health complex.

In another incident, college teacher Anwar Hossain, 32, was killed on the spot as a truck hit his bike on Dinajpur-Bogura road in Ghoraghat upazila yesterday, our correspondent reports quoting locals.

The deceased was a teacher of Raniganj Degree College in the upazila, said police.

Meanwhile in Pabna, school teacher Md Ariful Islam, 38, was killed after a bus ran him over in front of his residence in Diarpara village under Bhangura upazila yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The deceased was an assistant teacher of Sarutia Government Primary School, locals said.

The accident took place on Tebunia-Baghabari highway, said Masud Rana, officer-in-charge of Bhangura Police Station. Ariful was rushed to Pabna Medical College Hospital, where he died around 1:30am, the OC added.

In Barishal, a woman

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An unfit auto-rickshaw being dismantled on BRTA premises in Chattogram.

PHOTO: STAR

BRTA to scrap 5,400 unfit auto-rickshaws

AMIR HASAN SHAHRIAR, Ctg

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Chattogram has taken an initiative to scrap 5,400 CNG-run auto-rickshaws that are at least 15 years old, and plying the port city roads.

BRTA already dismantled 107 three-wheelers by Thursday. The drive began on Monday and the authorities plan to dismantle at least 100 vehicles per day.

But the turnout was low as only 26 percent vehicles, scheduled to be scrapped, showed up at BRTA office during the first four days till Thursday.

On the first day, 33 vehicles were scrapped while 19 and 22 were dismantled on the next two days.

Though the turnout increased on Thursday, the authorities could scrap 33 vehicles out of 55, as they were unable to verify the chassis and engine numbers due to their worn-out conditions, informed Sohel Rana, BRTA

executive magistrate. He said the drive will continue till May.

BRTA Deputy Director Mohammad Shahidullah said new dates would be assigned if the stipulated number of vehicles could not be scrapped within schedule.

He said they were expecting to scrap 2,000 vehicles within first 20 days. As precaution, the authorities are keeping cylinders of scrapped vehicles, he said.

Though they have declared to issue registration numbers for new vehicles in no time, auto-rickshaw owners, whose vehicles had already been scrapped, are yet to apply for it, he added.

Jalal Sheikh, an auto-rickshaw driver, told The Daily Star that the company he works for had two vehicles but the owner was planning to buy one after those were scrapped. "New vehicles are faster and run on less gas. Why would the owner buy two vehicles?" said Jalal at BRTA.

Mentionable, around 150 owners did not apply for registration after BRTA conducted a similar drive last year.

Besides, 101 vehicles, scheduled to be dismantled in 2018, did not respond to the drive and are still on the road, informed BRTA officials. Last year, BRTA took an initiative to dismantle 2,885 three-wheelers.

The authorities later ordered owners of those 101 vehicles to show proper reason, said BRTA Inspector Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury. "Only 25 owners responded. We're trying to give them a chance by assigning new dates, but they are yet to respond."

Ziaul Haque Mir, BRTA executive magistrate, said they were conducting regular drives to seize illegal vehicles.

The economic life of an auto-rickshaw is 15 years. Around 13,000 registered auto-rickshaws are plying the port city roads.

Abduction gang arrested in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested six members of an abduction gang yesterday, after conducting drives in different areas of the port city.

The arrestees are: Mohammed Didarul Islam, Fatema Yasmin Nishi, Bithito Mahmud Mostafa Shifa, Md Anwar Hossain Anu, Md Rakib Al Imran and Md Kamrul Hasan.

Addressing a press conference held at Deputy Commissioner's (South) office in Cheragi Pahar, DC Mehedi Hasan said the arrestees are members of a criminal gang which mainly abducted businessmen.

Their modus operandi was to abduct the men by posing as plain-clothed policemen and taking them to a rented house. They would force the victims to take implicating pictures with drugs. Finally, they would use those pictures to blackmail the businessmen into paying them money, said DC Mehedi.

He added, Didar is the ring leader and they have been active for the last five years. They were arrested by Kotwali police following a complaint.

OC Mohammed Mohsin of Kotwali police station said they began the investigation following a case filed by one Imran, a businessman from Nupur Market area.

Imran was picked up by the gang on March 2, and the criminals took Tk 50,000 from him in their typical manner, said the OC.

SNAPS & snippets

Man found dead in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police recovered the body of a man from Harualchhari area in Fatikchhari upazila of Chattogram yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Abul Bashar, 55, a security guard of Rangapani Tea Garden, said Sub-inspector Shahadat Hossain of Bhujpur Police Station.

Staff members of the tea garden spotted the body and informed police. On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body around 9am, said the SI.

The body was sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital Morgue for an autopsy and a case was filed in this connection, he added.

Three held with phensedyl, yaba

CU CORRESPONDENT

Rab and police in separate drives yesterday arrested three persons with phensedyl and yaba pills.

A team of Rab-7 arrested Md Shafikul Islam Shahin from Hotel Paramount and Restaurant in Chattogram city and recovered 13,430 yaba pills from him, said Assistant Director of Rab-7 media wing Mashkur Rahman.

In another incident, detectives arrested two others with 86 bottles of phensedyl from Mansurabad area in the port city, said police.

The arrestees are Md Sobhan Alim and Abdus Salam, said SI Mominul Hasan of DB. Filing of two cases is underway.

Special public lecture at NSU



CITY DESK

North South University (NSU) organised a special public lecture titled "Emerging Public Health Challenges and Opportunities in Developing Countries," at its auditorium on the campus yesterday to encourage teachers, students and researchers to spread education and research in the country.

The lecture began with a presentation by Prof Dr G U Ahsan, pro vice-chancellor (designate) of NSU, said a press release.

Distinguished Prof Rita R Colwell of University of Maryland & Johns Hopkins University, Nobel laureate Sir Richard J Roberts, Prof Anwar Huq of University of Maryland, Prof Shelley Feldman of Cornell University, Prof Haider A Khan of University of Denver, Prof Taher Saif of University of Illinois, and Dr Mohammad Ataul Karim of University of Massachusetts Dartmouth also spoke. The programme was chaired by Prof Atiqul Islam, vice-chancellor of NSU, the release added.



Thirty-nine female students of grades six to eight got scholarship from Rights and Sight for Children, the implementing partner of Distressed Children & Infants International. The programme was arranged yesterday in Bauphal upazila under Patuakhali district with support from Ashrafal & Nasren Islam Memorial Fund.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Youths should play key role against militancy

Speakers tell conference

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Speakers at a conference yesterday said that youths should play a pioneering role in accelerating social movement against militancy.

Society will change if this generation can educate themselves and come forward to build a militancy-free society, they said.

They were addressing the Youth Leadership Conference organised by Torun Alo (Light of Youth), a project of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), supported by Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), at BIAM auditorium in Cox's Bazar.

Speaking at the programme, the daily Prothom Alo's Associate Editor Anisul Hoque called upon the youth to enlighten themselves by reading books and upholding the culture of Bangladesh.

He said, reading books and upholding the culture can ignite patriotism among youths -- that will help the country move forward.

Abdul Mannan, deputy commissioner (DC) of Counter

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Three-wheelers continue to ply Dhaka-Barishal highway on a regular basis although the government banned such slow-moving vehicles on 22 national highways in August 2015. But these vehicles keep operating on the roads, causing frequent accidents. The photo was taken in Torki Nilkhola area of Gournadi upazila in Barishal yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Only 5-6pc of women entrepreneurs default loans

Says Association of Bankers chairman at AGWEB event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has made extraordinary progress in almost all indicators of women empowerment among Asian countries, and this progress will be further accelerated in future, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

They also said women's participation in all sectors, especially in small and medium enterprises (SME) is satisfactory; however, social security needs to be ensured fully.

Marking International Women's Day, Association of Grassroots Women Entrepreneurs Bangladesh (AGWEB) organised the discussion at CIRDAP auditorium.

Some four lakh women entrepreneurs have received funds worth \$3.3 billion in 2010-17, said Dr Atiur Rahman, former governor of Bangladesh Bank.

"Women are moving ahead in all sectors. Some 122 UNOs are women out of 470 in the country. Women contribute in 17 steps of agriculture out of 21," he said.

Lawmaker Aroma Dutta said, "There are 12,000 women working as union parishad members. This is definitely a positive step."

Speakers also said the ratio of loan defaulters is quite low among female entrepreneurs in comparison to men.

Only five to six percent of them are loan defaulters, and female entrepreneurs appoint around 85 percent women as employees in their industries, said Syed Mahubur Rahman, chairman of Association of Bankers.

Bangladesh has ranked 47 in global gender gap last year while India lagged far behind (below 100), he mentioned. They also informed that BB has planned to disburse 10 percent out of 25 percent of the bank's allotted SME loan among women.

At the discussion, Mosharrar Hossain Bhuiyan, chairman of National Board of Revenue, said, "Jakia Sultana was made the first woman secretary in 1996. Today, there are at least eight women secretaries. We hope that this number will increase soon."

Despite all sorts of progress, lack of security is still a threat against sustainable development of women, said Shah A Sarwar, chairperson of IFIC Bank.

"To overcome this, ensuring a speedy justice system is important," Mosharrar Hossain Bhuiyan opined.

Conducted by Mousumi Islam, president of AGWEB, and Shomi Kaiser, director of FBCCI, women entrepreneurs from different organisations spoke at the programme.

Bangladesh an 'innocent victim'

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said, "We're trying to do our part. I will request global community to lend a hand."

Speaking as chief guest, he also stressed the need for sensitising global leaders regarding climate financing.

BCAS Executive Director Atiq Rahman said extreme climate events, such as cyclones and droughts, are not only affecting the least developed countries but also developed countries.

"Adaptation is very essential as extreme events are happening more frequently. Greenhouse gas emission must be reduced to address global warming. If we don't successfully do that, the need for adaptation and financing will be more acute," said Atiq.

ICCCD Director Saleemul Huq, UNFCCC Adaptation Programme Manager Paul V Desanker and Adaptation Fund Board Chair Victor R Viñas Nicolas, among others, spoke on the first day of the two-day conference.

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