

Road accidents kill 9 in one day

STAR REPORT

Nine people were killed and four others injured in road accidents in five districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Dinajpur, three people, including a man and his daughter, were killed while two were injured as bus and a battery-run rickshaw collided head-on in Chuniapara village in Sadar upazila.

Ashraful Islam, 40, from Jamalpur village in Natore; his daughter Ivy Islam, 10; and Sazdar Ali, 48, from Dinajpur Sadar upazila died on the spot, said Redwanur Rahim, officer-in-charge of Dinajpur Sadar Police Station.

Locals and firefighters took the injured -- Mostafa Kamal and Afsar Ali from Natore -- to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital.

In Joypurhat, a motorcyclist was killed and another injured as their bike hit a roadside tree in Helmunda village of Sadar upazila.

Rakib Hossain, son of Pallab Hossain from Motherganj village in the upazila, succumbed to his injuries on the way to Joypurhat Modern Hospital.

Injured Shahadat Hossain was taken to the hospital.

In Brahmanbaria, two motorcyclists were killed after being hit by an SUV on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Bertola area of Sarail upazila.

The identities of the deceased could not be known immediately. Highway Police said they seized both the vehicles, but the SUV driver managed to flee.

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Understanding cultural diversity can help prevent ethnic divisions

Speakers say at BISS seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said small ethnic groups are still lagging behind as the government is yet to take adequate measures to protect their rights and cultures.

They urged the government to introduce an ethnic minority-friendly public policy to facilitate their integration.

They made the call at a seminar on "Importance and Challenges of Protecting Heritage of Small Ethnic Groups in Promoting National Culture" organised by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) at its auditorium in Eskaton.

Presenting a keynote paper, eminent historian Prof Syed Anwar Husain said many languages of small ethnic groups

have already become extinct and the languages that still exist are struggling for survival.

"These languages must be included in primary education and the government should introduce a national language policy or take initiatives under the supervision of International Mother Language Institute for protecting linguistic diversity," he said.

Prof Anwar, also the Bangabandhu Chair of Bangladesh University of Professionals, said the participation of ethnic groups in state programmes should be increased and government should also recognise their various traditional festivals for fostering national solidarity.

He claimed that there is lack of communal harmony in the country as a

particular group "still opposes celebration of Mangal Shobhajatra".

State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid said cultural exchange and cooperation can strengthen communal harmony between Bengalis and small ethnic groups.

He said the current government has been working to realise the CHT Peace Accord and has planned to establish cultural centres in three hill tracts districts [Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban].

"Government allowance will also be provided to disadvantaged artistes of ethnic groups," he added.

Major General AKM Abdur Rahman, director general of BISS,

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Theft, fire at Rajabazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged incident of theft and fire took place yesterday in Purba Rajabazar area of the capital.

The incident happened at the house of Rony Augustin Gomes, 42, a private firm official, who has been living in the four-storied building with his wife and children.

Tk 12,000, gold ornaments, ATM cards and other valuables were stolen, Gomes said.

"I went to Savar with my family three days ago, and got call from neighbours today [yesterday] morning of the fire incident," Rony told this newspaper.

Reaching home, he found two window grilles cut off, furniture burnt and the house ransacked.

A GD was filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police.

6 deals likely to be signed during PM's Brunei trip

Says foreign minister

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Brunei are likely to sign six memorandums of understanding (MoUs) to boost trade and investment ties during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's three-day visit (April 21-23) to the Southeast Asian country.

Briefing reporters at the foreign ministry, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the six MoUs are on scientific and technological cooperation in agriculture, arts and culture, youth and sports, fisheries, livestock and energy sectors.

The visit is significant and will bring a positive result, he said. It will help expand bilateral cooperation in a number of areas including trade, investment, energy, human resource development, tourism, agriculture and technical cooperation.

Momen said the visit will also help improve Bangladesh's relations with Southeast Asian nations. Brunei is one of the member states of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

It will also help Bangladesh gain effective support from Brunei and other Southeast Asian nations on various regional and international issues including resolving Rohingya crisis, he said.

The PM will leave for Brunei Darussalam on Sunday at the invitation of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

The minister said the PM will lead a large delegation, including a business team, to explore trade and investment opportunities in Bangladesh. Brunei has already expressed its keen interest to invest in Bangladesh.

Momen said Brunei is an important partner of Bangladesh in the international arena as the country is member of both the OIC and Asean. The PM will discuss with the Brunei government about safe repatriation of Rohingya refugees, he added.

Secretary (Bilateral and Consular) to the Foreign Ministry Kamrul Ahsan and Secretary (Maritime Affairs Unit) Rear Admiral (retd) Md Khurshed Alam and other senior officials of the ministry were present.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested a man from Banskhali upazila in Chattogram in connection with the case filed over raping a female madrasa student in the port city on January 27.

The arrestee, Md Shahabuddin, 24, was an accomplice to the prime accused of the case -- who was killed in a "gunfight" with police on January 29, said Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

On information, a team of law enforcers conducted a drive at Jaldi village and arrested the man around 1am. He has been absconding for three months.

Earlier on January 29, police also arrested Shyamol Dey, 30, hours before the prime accused -- also named Shahabuddin -- was killed in a gunfight.

The case was filed on January 28, a day after prime accused Shahabuddin and Shyamol forcibly picked up the girl, who

was going to attend classes, in a private car from in front of Jamal Khan PDB officer quarters around 10:30am, police said.

The duo was able to carry out the crime in broad daylight as the car had tinted windows and they played loud music.

They also pretended to have recorded the whole incident on one of their mobile phones and threatened the girl of releasing the video clip if she told anyone.

A day after the rape, the prime accused called the girl and asked her to come to a designated place threatening to release the clip if she had acted otherwise.

That night, police arrested Shyamol and on his information went to arrest Shahabuddin in city's Fishery Ghat area.

The "gunfight" ensued around 3:30am, when the prime accused and his accomplice opened fire on police, forcing them to retaliate.

The prime accused Shahabuddin was killed in the incident, but the accomplice had managed to flee.

Woman found dead in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police recovered the hanging body of a housewife from her in-law's house at Boalkhali upazila in Chattogram early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mary Das, 25, wife of Rajesh Chowdhury, at Naba Kumar Mahajan Bari in Kanungopara under Boalkhali upazila, said Sairul Islam, officer-in-charge of Boalkhali Police Station.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered Mary's hanging body after breaking open the bedroom door around 12:30am, said the OC.

The body bore no marks on injury, the OC also said, adding it has been sent to CMCH for autopsy.

Russell gets prosthetic leg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Russell Sarkar, who lost a leg after a bus ran him over in April last year, received a prosthetic leg yesterday.

A Swiss-made artificial leg was attached to Russell's knee at Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) around 11:30am. CRP is bearing the whole cost, said Mohammad Shafiq, head of CRP's prosthetic and orthotics department.

"After conducting a number of assessment tests, we attached a leg to Russell," said Shafiq, adding that it usually takes four weeks to get used to an artificial leg.

Russell will have to practice a lot to adjust his movement with the leg, Shafiq also said.

Russell was seen practicing walking at CRP's prosthetic and orthotics department yesterday morning, directed by a group of physicians.

Talking to The Daily Star there, Russell said after he lost his leg, he was utterly depressed. But now, he is seeing a ray of hope to return to normal life.



Russell expressed his gratitude to CRP for donating an artificial leg and all the support.

Russell, 26, was knocked down by a Green Line bus near Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover in the capital's Dholaiapar on April 28 last year. The incident happened after an

altercation broke out between Russell and the bus driver over rear-ending his car. As Russell chased down the bus, the bus driver ran him over.

On April 11, Green Line Paribahan handed Tk 5 lakh to Russell following an HC order and is expected to pay another Tk 45 lakh in 30 days.

DEATH OF RAJIB Court seeks probe report by May 22

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday for the 11th time asked Shahbagh police to submit a probe report by May 22 in connection with a case filed over the death of Titumir College student Rajib Hossain in April 2018.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sarafuzzaman Ansary passed the order after Sub-inspector Edrish Ali failed to submit the report yesterday. Earlier on April 1, the SI told The Daily Star that he would complete the probe within a short time and submit the report to the court.

Rajib lost his right hand after it got stuck between two speeding buses of BRTC and Sajan Paribahan, which were trying to overtake each other in Bangla Motor on April 3 last year. After two weeks in coma, Rajib died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on April 17.

A case was filed accusing drivers and helpers of two buses. Police arrested Khorshed, driver of Sajan Paribahan, and Wahed Ali, driver of BRTC. They are behind bars.

On May 8, 2018 the HC ordered the bus companies to pay Tk 1 crore to Rajib's family as compensation. BRTC and Sajan Paribahan challenged the order and on May 22 last year, the apex court stayed the HC order and asked it to form a committee to assess the liabilities.

The committee, led by Prof Mizanur Rahman, director of Accident Research Institute at Buet, said reckless driving was the primary cause of the accident.



The vandalised venue of the Baishakhi programme in Sylhet.

Uninvited, BCL activists vandalise Baishakhi event

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists of Madan Mohan College unit in Sylhet yesterday vandalised a Baishakhi programme of the college as they were not invited.

Students of the Tarapur campus organised the event at Ali Bahar Tea Estate with permission of the college authorities around noon.

When the programme started, a group of BCL activists arrived there and asked the organisers why they did not invite leaders of the pro-Awami League student organisation, said witnesses. They argued over the matter for a while, and at one stage vandalised the stage, equipment and bungalow of the tea estate.

Mahmud Baskh Rajon, owner of the tea estate, said, "The college authorities took permission from us to arrange the programme but

a group of attackers vandalised the programme and the bungalow. We will ask the college to compensate us."

Kartik Paul, proprietor of Parbon, said, "I provided logistics for the programme, but the attackers vandalised my musical instruments, sound system and other equipment -- worth around several lakh taka."

Contacted, Mahmudul Hasan Sunny, president of the college's BCL unit, said, "The event was arranged outside the campus and we don't know who vandalised it. BCL is in no way involved in this."

Sahadat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Airport Police Station, said, "A group of BCL activists attacked the programme over some issues and vandalised some materials. Police brought the situation under control. No complaint was filed yet."