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Road crashes claim 18 lives

81 injured in six districts

STAR REPORT

At least 18 people were killed and 81 others were injured in separate road accidents in six districts yesterday.

Of the 18 dead, seven were killed in Feni, four in Faridpur, three in Kishoreganj, two Sirajganj and one each in Gopalganj and Mymensingh.

Of the 81 injured, 32 were in Faridpur, 20 each in Feni and Sirajganj, four in Mymensingh, four Kishoreganj and one in Gopalganj.

The injured were admitted in different hospitals in these districts and Dhaka, reports our correspondents.

In Feni, the accident took place when the driver of a Cox's Bazar-bound bus lost his control over the steering on the Dhaka-Chattagram highway and hit a roadside tree near the Lemua Bridge area in Sadar upazila around 6:00am.

The passengers started their journey from the capital's Pallabi.

The accident left two passengers dead on the spot, two died on their way to a local hospital and three others died while undergoing treatment, said police.

Of the dead, two were identified -- Shadat Hossain, 30, from Feni; and Sujan Miah, 40, from Munshiganj.

In Faridpur, at least four people were killed and 32 injured in two separate road accidents at Bhanga and Sadarpur upazilas.

Three of the dead were identified as Rowsan Fakir, 35, Mira Kundu, 60, and Sattar Mollah, 40, police said.

The first accident took place at around 8:30am when a Tuhin Paribahan bus took off from Faridpur and was on its way to Nilphamari's Saidpur and collided head-on with a local bus in Bhanga upazila's Nowpara area.

PHOTOS ON PAGE 4 SEE PAGE 17 COL 3



A rickshaw with passengers falls on its side after hitting a pothole on Mitford Road in old Dhaka yesterday. The busy road has been in a poor condition for months, but the authorities seem to have done nothing to repair it.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

SACRIFICIAL CATTLE SALE Big losses for small traders

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The small scale cattle traders, who came to Dhaka with sacrificial animals expecting those to be sold at a better price ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, incurred huge loss this year.

The Daily Star spoke to 10 such traders of different cattle markets in Dhaka and eight of them faced loss. Although the rest of the two did not incur loss, they failed get their expected profit.

Sanwar Mandal, a cattle trader who took his sacrificial animals to Dhupkhola cattle market from Pabna's Ishwardi upazila, said he took a loan of Tk 4 lakh from a local NGO and invested a total of Tk 9 lakh.

He said, "I brought 15 cattle and returned home with three. I had to make a loss of Tk 3 lakh.

"I would never go to Dhaka again. Even if I prepare cattle for the next Eid I will sell those at local markets."

Jinarul Haque, another trader who tried his luck with 13 cattle at Kauartek cattle market, said he made a loss of Tk 1.65 lakh.

"I am completely destroyed. I cannot express in words how my family and I spent the Eid," he said.

Another cattle trader Milon Reza, who brought 13 sacrificial animals to Kamlapur

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6

3 factors behind rawhide mess

Lack of market monitoring, syndication of tanners and traders, cash crunch of merchants led to drastic fall in demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 35 percent of over 1 crore pieces of rawhide were thrown away after this Eid, mainly due to slack market monitoring by the government, a syndication of tanners and merchants, and a lack of capital to buy rawhide, said sources in the sector.

With the damage put at nearly Tk 100 crore, tanners and merchants suggested the government fixes a minimum price rate for unsalted rawhide to ensure better prices.

Before this Eid, the commerce ministry fixed the prices of salt-applied rawhide of cows and buffaloes at Tk 45-50 per square foot in the capital and Tk 35-40 elsewhere. The price of rawhide of castrated goats was fixed at Tk 18-20 per square foot, while it was Tk 13-15 for that of uncastrated goats.

The rate was fixed for rawhide merchants and tanners. There was, however, no fixed rate for small traders who collect rawhide at the field level.

After the Eid, seasonal traders across the country threw away thousands of pieces of rawhide, failing to sell those for a drastic fall in demand.

In such a situation, the government has decided to export rawhide.

On the slack monitoring by the government, Md Mofizul Islam, senior secretary to the commerce ministry, said there was no such monitoring in the rawhide market.

"So, we could not predict that such a situation will come," he said.

Mofizul, however, hoped that rawhide merchants would get fair prices as tanners agreed to buy hide from Saturday.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

Second UK cop exposed to Novichok

AFP, London

A second UK police officer was exposed to a Soviet-era nerve agent used in last year's attack on a former Russian spy in the English city Salisbury, British detectives said yesterday.

Former double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia fell into comas after coming into contact with a banned chemical called Novichok in March 2018.

They both survived but a local resident named Dawn Sturgess died after picking up a perfume bottle UK police believe was used to transport it from Russia.

The UK government is seeking the extradition of two suspected members of Russia's military intelligence service that London believes carried out the attack on Kremlin orders.

Moscow denies its involvement.

Detectives from Britain's

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

Japan temple puts faith in robot priest



AFP, Kyoto

A 400-year-old temple in Japan is attempting to hot-wire interest in Buddhism with a robotic priest it believes will change the face of the religion -- despite critics comparing the android to "Frankenstein's monster."

The android Kannon, based on the Buddhist deity of mercy, preaches sermons at Kodaiji temple in Kyoto, and its human colleagues predict that with artificial intelligence it could one day acquire unlimited wisdom.

"This robot will never die, it will just keep updating itself and evolving," priest Tensho Goto told AFP.

"That's the beauty of a robot. It can store knowledge forever and limitlessly.

"With AI we hope it will grow in wisdom to help people overcome even the most difficult

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

ATTACKS ON MILITARY Myanmar rebels kill at least 15

AGENCIES

At least 15 people have been killed yesterday in ongoing fighting between Myanmar's military and rebels who mounted a series of attacks, including an unprecedented strike on an army academy, apparently in retaliation for massive drug seizures.

Ethnic armed rebel groups have for decades fought against the military -- and often between themselves -- for land and resources in Myanmar's east.

Experts say the area is now the world's largest meth-producing region, funding the complex web of conflicts.

Yesterday's brazen assault targeted Pyn Oo Lwin, a tourist town near Mandalay, which is also home to barracks teeming with soldiers receiving training.

An AFP reporter at a police post, the site of one of the attacks, counted the bodies of seven soldiers and four policemen.

Military spokesman Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun told AFP three more people, two soldiers and one civilian, had been killed and that fighting was "still ongoing".

This brings the death toll to at least 14. Reuters put the death toll at 15.

One of the five attacks targeted the town's Defence Service Technology Academy, where military engineers are trained, the first-ever time the training centre has been hit.

The military said rebels had fired 107mm rockets at the academy from a nearby hillside. Images from local media showing burned out cars and damaged buildings showered in debris.

The Taaung National Liberation Army (TNLA) claimed the attacks, saying

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 16

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:25 12:30 4:45 6:38 8:00
JAMAAT 5:00 1:15 5:00 6:41 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



NATURE QUEST

THE BEE HUNTER

A blue-tailed bee-eater sits on a bamboo pole in Chapainawabganj Sadar's Babu Dyeing area. The richly coloured, slender bird mainly eats insects, especially bees, which it catches during flight. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN



HK PRO-DEMOCRACY PROTESTS Beijing will not sit by and watch

Warns Chinese envoy in London; Trump urges Xi to resolve crisis

AFP, London

China will not "sit by and watch" and is ready to "quell the unrest swiftly" if the crisis in Hong Kong becomes "uncontrollable", China's ambassador in London said yesterday.

"If the situation deteriorates further into unrest uncontrollable by the SAR (Special Administrative Region) government, then the central government will not sit by and watch," Liu Xiaoming said in a televised press conference.

"We have enough solutions and enough power to quell the unrest swiftly," he said.

Images taken by AFP earlier yesterday showed thousands of Chinese military personnel waving red flags and parading at a sports stadium in the city of Shenzhen, just across the border from Hong Kong.

Dozens of armoured personnel carriers and supply trucks were also parked nearby.

"We hope this will end in an orderly way. In the meantime we are fully prepared for the worst," Liu said.

He also protested against "foreign interference" in the Hong Kong protests and urged British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government to handle the issue with "great caution".

"I think some politicians in this country... still regard Hong Kong as part of the British empire," he said.

Chinese state-run media reported this week that the elements of the People's Armed Police (PAP), which is under the command of the Central Military Commission,

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3