

4 killed in Kishoreganj road accident

A child among the dead; at least 11 injured as bus collides head-on with truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

At least four people, including a girl child, were killed and 11 others injured in a bus-truck collision on Kishoreganj-Bhairab road in Katiadi upazila of Kishoreganj yesterday evening.

One of the deceased was Barek Mia, a resident of Austaborga village in Kishoreganj. The identity of three other dead victims could not confirmed till filing of this report at 12:30am today.

Quoting witnesses, Sub-Inspector DM Johirul Islam of Katiadi Highway

Police Station said the accident took place in Gangkulpara area around 6:30pm when a Bhairab-bound bus collided head-on with a truck, leaving about 15 bus passengers injured.

Locals rushed the victims to Katiadi Upazila Health Complex where two of them died.

The other injured, including two police constables, were sent to Jahurul Islam Medical College Hospital in Bajitpur upazila. Two of them died there, said the SI.

A case was filed with Katiadi Police Station in this regard.

A lost continent found

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The study was published this month in the journal Gondwana Research.

Researching the evolution of mountain ranges can show the evolution of continents.

“Most mountain chains that we investigated originated from a single continent that separated from North Africa more than 200 million years ago,” said van Hinsbergen. “The only remaining part of this continent is a strip that runs from Turin via the Adriatic Sea to the heel of the boot that forms Italy.”

This area is called Adria by geologists, so the researchers for this study refer to the previously undiscovered continent as Greater Adria.

In the Mediterranean region, geologists have a different understanding of plate tectonics. Plate tectonics are the theory behind how oceans and continents form, and for other parts of the Earth, that theory suggests that the plates don’t deform when they move alongside each other in areas with large fault lines.

But Turkey, and the Mediterranean, is entirely different.

“It is quite simply a geological mess: Everything is curved, broken and stacked,” said van Hinsbergen. “Compared to this, the Himalayas, for example, represent a rather simple system. There you can follow several large fault lines across a distance of more than 2,000 kilometres.”

In the case of Greater Adria, most of it was underwater, covered by shallow seas, coral reefs and sediments. The sediments formed rocks and those were scraped off like barnacles when Greater Adria was forced under the mantle of Southern Europe. Those scrapped rocks became mountain ranges in these areas: the Alps, the Apennines, the Balkans, Greece and Turkey.

The researchers found that Greater Adria started to become its own continent about 240 million years ago during the Triassic period.

This isn’t the first time a lost continent has been found.

In January 2017, researchers announced the discovery of a lost continent left over from the supercontinent Gondwana, which began breaking apart 200 million years ago. The leftover piece, which was covered in lava, is now under Mauritius, an island in the Indian Ocean.

Discarded notes

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dumping areas. Unfortunately, they dumped it in the beel. It’s their fault.”

He added that they have around 1,800-2,000 sacks of discarded bank notes, which the bank authorities dispose in one of two ways -- either burning them or giving them to the municipality to take care of it.

The bank urged the municipality to dump a large number of rejected notes on Friday. Two days later, the bank requested for a trash container big enough for their branch to dispose of the notes, after which the municipality voluntarily began taking the sacks of discarded notes for dumping.

Mamunur Rashid, in-charge of the municipality’s conservancy department, said, “We have certain places to dump garbage. The bank requested that we dump the notes there. But our truck driver, who lives close to the waterbody, unfortunately dumped 15-18 sacks of rejected bank notes, and other things, into the beel.

“It was a mistake. We will dispose of the rest of the rejected notes in our designated dumping site.”

Meanwhile, an administration officer of the municipality, wishing

anonymity, claimed the municipality itself made the wrong decision to dumping the rejected notes in the water.

The municipal authorities were supposed to take permission from the UNO to dump their waste in the area.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Fuara Khatun, Shajahanpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer, said, “The Bogura municipal authority has no specific dumping site as far as I know. They did not take my permission to dump the rejected notes in Shajahanpur upazila. Therefore, it’s not legal,” she said.

Contacted, Md Ashrafuzzaman, director of the department of environment (DoE) in Rajshahi division, said, “No one should dump such notes into a waterbody. It will be harmful for all aquatic lives in the body.”

Explaining further, Masud Rana, a chemist of the Bogura DoE office said, “Bank notes contain painting ink and a highly toxic pollutant called Dioxin which can seriously damage the health of fish and other living things in the waterbody.”

While the blame game goes on, people are still recovering from the awe of what they had witnessed.

Netanyahu, Gantz in unity talks

They may rotate as Israel PM

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his rival Benny Gantz launched negotiations on Monday over a proposed Israeli unity government and a key politician said the focus was on who would lead it first under a rotation deal.

After failing to secure a clear victory in the second election in six months, Netanyahu, Israel’s longest-serving premier, seems to reckon he can stay in power only by sharing it.

Going solo, neither he nor ex-general Gantz have enough support from respective allies for a majority in the 120-member parliament.

Gantz, head of the centrist Blue and White Party, has been publicly resistant to the idea of allying with Netanyahu’s right-wing Likud, citing looming corruption charges against the incumbent.

President Reuven Rivlin, tasked with picking a candidate best-placed to try to form the next governing coalition, has spoken in favour of unity and, on Monday, summoned Netanyahu and Gantz for closed-door talks.

Gantz met earlier with Avigdor Lieberman, a political free agent and likely kingmaker thanks to his eight seats in parliament.

“Happily, the two big parties have internalised the pressing necessity of

setting up a unity government with a rotating premiership,” Lieberman said on Facebook.

Concluding their meeting at Rivlin’s Jerusalem office, Netanyahu and Gantz issued a joint statement saying they had discussed “moving forward with unity”. It did not elaborate.

“The entire argument right now is over the question of who will serve first as prime minister, and who second,” said Lieberman.

4 children

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village of the upazila’s in the evening with around 31 passengers on board.

At around 8:00pm, the boat was hit by storm and capsized within few minutes, said Liton Shamanta, a local fisherman and an eye-witness.

So far, four bodies have been recovered by the locals, said KM Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Derai Police Station.

Some 20 other people managed to reach the shore with the help of locals but seven still remain missing, said OC Nazrul.

Police and locals were continuing the rescue operation, said Nazrul. Bishwajit Deb, upazila nirbahi officer of Derai, said, “The fire service and civil defence have been informed and they are on their way to the spot.”

Govt slaps travel ban

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Dhaka South Jubo League Khalid Mahmud Bhuiyan was arrested in connection with running another gambling den at a club in Fakirerpool.

Awami League insiders said Samrat went into hiding when Jubo League leaders’ involvement in the illegal business came to light.

“He [Samrat] allegedly dug himself in at his office in Kakrail until Sunday to avoid arrest and was desperately looking for ways to leave the country. After Sunday, he is nowhere to be found -- neither at his home or at his office,” the insiders said.

Sources within the ruling party said a number of other Jubo League and AL leaders also went into hiding following the government’s drive against “casinos”.

Samrat could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts. His mobile phone was found switched off.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal recently said Samrat would be arrested if police found proof against him.

The drive against “casinos” began days after the Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina expressed her resentment over the activities of Jubo League leaders.

LEADERS UNDER SURVEILLANCE: QUADER

Asked about the restriction on political leaders’ traveling abroad, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said: “I do not know how many leaders have been brought under the restriction. But, many leaders are now under surveillance.”

Talking to reporters at his office at the Secretariat, Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said: “We’ve started with drives in our own house. Many leaders are now under surveillance. No wrongdoer will be spared.

“Now all are AL leaders...why did we take them in our party? They are using the label of our party and that’s why we’ve started drives....” the AL general secretary said.

He also reiterated that none would be spared if found involved in irregularity or corruption.

KHALID PRODUCED BEFORE COURT

Jubo League Dhaka South organising secretary Khalid Mahmud Bhuiyan was produced before a Dhaka court yesterday in connection with a case filed for possessing firearms.

Md Fazlul Haque, an inspector of the Detective Branch of police and also the investigation officer of the case, produced Khalid before the court

on expiry of his four-day remand in the arms case.

The IO also sought permission for taking Khalid on a three-day remand granted earlier in the connection with the case filed under the Narcotics Control Act.

The IO in yesterday’s forwarding report said Khalid gave important information which was being verified, adding that he needed to be held until the investigation was completed, the IO added.

Metropolitan Magistrate Debdas Chandra Adhikary ordered Khalid to be sent to jail in an arms case and allowed DB to take him on a three-day remand in the drug case.

Earlier on September 19, two separate Dhaka courts granted Khalid seven days in connection with two cases.

A total of four cases were filed against Khalid, who was arrested on September 18 from his Gulshan residence.

Three of the cases were filed with Gulshan police station, while another with Motijheel police station under the Arms Act, the Narcotics Control Act and Money Laundering Act.

Besides, Rab filed a case against Khalid with Motijheel police station under the Narcotics Control Act.

Off-season watermelon brings smile

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upazila agricultural office and with its assistance, started watermelon farming,” he told The Daily Star recently.

The 35-year-old had to spend Tk 20,000 for fertiliser, preparing land, and for setting up the shed inside an enclosure. He believes that he would earn Tk 50,000 more by selling rest of the fruits in stock.

“I am selling the fruits at Tk 40 per kilogram. Every day I sell 25-30 kilograms of watermelons. One watermelon weighs around four to six kilograms,” he told this paper.

Watermelons were never a common fruit in Khulna, but now they are available in the local markets round the year. The varieties include sweet dragon, pakiza, sonia, asian-2, red dragon etc.

Earlier this month, this correspondent visited 10 villages,

including Andulia, Soto Bond, Kulbaria, Baratia, and Gonali, and found farmers growing off-season watermelons in enclosures.

“Watermelon is a high-value crop. It mainly grows in the Rabi season and sometimes in the late Rabi and Kharif-1 seasons as well. The sowing generally starts in May and continues until September. The fruit grows mature within 65-70 days,” said Dumuria Upazila Agriculture Officer Md Mosaddek Hossain.

“We had a target to grow the fruit on five hectares in the upazila, but we have already covered seven hectares. Thirty metric tonnes of watermelons grew in each hectare. The total production will be 210 metric tonnes by end of this month.”

The farmers were getting trainings on off-season watermelon farming under the National Agricultural Technology Programme (NATP) phase

-2, said the UAO, adding, “I believe that we will be able to create a new dimension in agricultural patterns of coastal areas through off-season watermelon farming.”

“Common varieties of watermelons grow between February and April while the off-season ones grow between May and September. They are more profitable than other crops,” said Mirtunjoy Mondal, a farmer of Soto Bond village.

Yunus Fakir, a farmer of Andulia village, said, “Earlier we used to cultivate watermelons only in Rabi season, but now we are cultivating off-season watermelons in Kharif-1 and Kharif-2 seasons too.”

An additional advantage of off-season watermelons is that they can be grown on the edge of a gher (enclosure). It can be harvested alongside fish and vegetables, said the agricultural officer and farmers.

19 dead, 300 hurt in Pakistan quake

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reports of a higher toll.

“Things are under control,” he said, adding that the nearby Mangla Dam, one of Pakistan’s two main water reservoirs, was unaffected by the quake.

The prime minister of Pakistani Kashmir, Raja Farooq Haider Khan, told reporters that infrastructure had been “destroyed”.

Roads, mobile phone towers, and electricity poles in the area were badly damaged, Naem Chughtai, a Mirpur resident living near the city’s main hospital, told AFP.

Witnesses Sajjad Jarral and Qazi Tahir, who spoke to AFP by telephone from Mirpur, said the quake had caused a building to collapse.

‘SO ANXIOUS’ Mirpur, a city known for its palatial houses, has strong ties to Britain with

the majority of its 450,000 residents carrying both British and Pakistani passports.

A spokeswoman at the British High Commission told AFP they were monitoring the reports, while the US embassy offered its sympathies to those affected via Twitter.

Tremors were felt as far as New Delhi, with the Press Trust of India reporting that panicked people rushed out of their homes and offices in several places, including in Rajasthan, Punjab, and Haryana.

“The earthquake was felt but there are no reports of any damage,” Amir Ali, from the disaster management department in Indian-administered Kashmir, told AFP.

With Indian-held Kashmir’s mobile and internet services mostly cut off after the region’s autonomy

was stripped by New Delhi in early August, people used social media to express fears about not being able to get in touch with their families in the valley.

“Dear @AmitShah (Home Affairs Minister) please restore mobile services in Kashmir I do not know any update since Aug 5 about my family . We are now feeling so anxious about our family in aftermath of Earthquake,” Faizan Peer tweeted.

Pakistan straddles part of the boundary where the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates meet, making the country susceptible to earthquakes.

In October 2015, a 7.5-magnitude quake in Pakistan and Afghanistan killed almost 400 people, flattening buildings in rugged terrain that impeded relief efforts.

Ringleader could access all EC servers

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give any name for the “sake of investigation”.

They said they were trying to arrest the other members of the nexus.

Sagar and Satya are members of a syndicate headed by Joynal, an office assistant of Double Mooring Thana Election Office under the EC office in Chattogram. Although Joynal is behind bars, the other two are on the run.

Investigators said Shah Nur came under law enforcers’ radar after police and the Anti-Corruption Commission launched investigations into the NID forgery. The scam surfaced a government enquiry that found at least 73 suspicious applications were uploaded to the EC database for issuing the identity cards.

Police have so far arrested seven members of two syndicates engaged in the crime. The arrestees included five EC staffers, of whom four are data entry operators.

They were being interrogated.

Police sources said Mostafa, a data entry operator who was arrested on Friday and now on a five-day remand, worked with Shah Nur in the past.

Inspector Rajesh Barua told The Daily Star that they learnt about Shah Nur’s involvement in the crime based on information gleaned from Mostafa.

“We will interrogate Shah Nur to learn how he operated the syndicate from Dhaka,” he said.

Also, Kotwali Thana Election Office’s data entry operator Shahin, held on Sunday in connection with the scam, is Shah Nur’s brother-in-law, the sources said.

Two other data entry operators Jahid and Pavel, who work at Bandar Thana Election office and Double Mooring Thana Election office respectively, were arrested the same day for their alleged involvement in the forgery.

Wishing not to be named, a CT official said, “Shah Nur’s younger brother and brother-in-law work as staffers of Election Commission offices in Chattogram. They would send personal identification numbers [PINs] to Shah Nur and he would upload data to the NID server,” the official said.

Shah Nur would then print out the NID cards and send them to his syndicate members in Chattogram via courier, the official said.

ACC investigators said Shah Nur’s brother works at the Double Mooring Thana EC office while his nephew is a computer operator in Banshkhali.

A cousin of the ringleader is a staffer at the Cox’s Bazar Sadar EC office while his sister is a data entry operator at Panchlaish Thana EC office, said the investigators.

Two other cousins of Shah Nur are data entry operators at Boalkhali upazila EC office.

The syndicate employs 10 to 15 others for outsourcing, the ACC investigators said.

Earlier this month, police and passport officials said some Rohingya refugees were making Bangladeshi passports using forged NID cards with the help of some locals and Rohingya brokers.

The Rohingya people were using fake names and addresses while applying for the identification documents.

Later, the EC conducted an internal probe, which found 15 of its staffers involved in the forgery. Most of them have been sacked for their involvement in different irregularities, said Brig Gen Saidul Islam, director general of the National Identity Registration Wing of the commission.

EC officials still can’t say exactly how many Rohingyas, who are Myanmar nationals, have secured the

cards through the illegal means.

Meanwhile, a Chattogram court yesterday placed each of the three arrested data entry operators -- Jahid, Shahin and Pavel -- on two-day remand.

The court passed the order after they were produced before it with five-day remand pleas.

IO says

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signed, was sent to Ajanta yesterday.

After checking, he said he only signed the bond when an IO from the criminal investigation department took his deposition on September 14.

“The IO will face departmental proceedings for the mistakes,” PBI chief Banaj Kumar Majumder told The Daily Star on Monday.

Meanwhile, chief of PBI Banaj Kumar Majumdar on Monday issued an order directing all the IOs to mention the present state of witnesses who had earlier given depositions to previous IOs.

The IOs have to write down the exact date of recording the deposition, relevant address, and national identity and cellphone numbers, if available.

The IOs also have to attach the witness bonds in the case diary mentioning the time and date of when the depositions were recorded.

Besides, the IOs were also instructed to collect details including the NID numbers of those to be investigated and attach colour photos of important evidence with the case diary.

Referring to the Nabinagar Police Station murder case, the order said, “The carelessness of the IO has not only tarnished the image of the PBI, but also brought the credibility of the investigation of the case into question.”

‘PLOT’ AGAINST GOVT

Ghana arrests three suspects

AFP, Accra

Ghana’s security forces have arrested at least three suspects over an alleged plot to destabilise the government, the information minister said.

“The joint operation was to neutralise an elaborate plot targeted at the presidency, and with the ultimate aim of destabilising the country,” Kojo Oppong Nkrumah said in a statement Monday.

He said those arrested last Friday included a medical doctor whose premises -- Citadel Hospital, in the capital, Accra -- were being used to manufacture weapons for the alleged plot.

The security agencies had been monitoring the activities of the suspects including their contacts with some soldiers over the past 15 months, he said.

“We also have in custody military persons and an officer in connection with these plots. We are not taking anything for granted in this case,” Nkrumah told AFP by telephone from Washington yesterday.

He assured the public that “state security agencies remain vigilant, and will work to safeguard national security and public safety”.

Four to die

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strangled her to death in the morning of July 16, 2008.

The court came up with the order after examining testimonies of 15 witnesses of the case, said AKM Nurul Huda Rubel, public prosecutor of the tribunal.

Romana’s uncle Kadam Ali filed a case with the Singair Police Station following the incident.

Committee

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The allegations emerged on September 12 when audio clips of two conversations between Rakib and two unknown people were leaked.

During one conversation, Rakib told a man that he would be able to make one Mahmudul Hasan the president of Pabna Science and Technology University in exchange for Tk 40 lakh, adding that he himself had to spend the same amount to secure his position.

In another conversation, he told another person that Polash had also “bought” his position by spending Tk 40 lakh.

Both of them gave the money to Golam Rabbani, recently sacked general secretary of the BCL central committee, the conversations also revealed.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the authenticity of the conversations.

The new committee of IU was announced on July 13.

Rakib denied the allegation when contacted, and said, “Some derailed activists are creating trouble over the issue with the help of outsiders.”

Polash could not be reached over phone despite several attempts.

Meanwhile yesterday, a group of students chased Rakib and his followers when they tried to gather on the campus.

Casinos

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Cox’s Bazar, Khulna and Satkhira as exclusive tourist zones, said Mohibul.

Asked about the government’s ongoing drives against illegal casino business, Mohibul said, “I fully support the government’s move.

“What I am trying to say is casinos will be available for foreigners and they will be allowed to avail the facility only after submitting their passports.”

The casino business in Dhaka is illegal and the government has taken the right measures against those, he added.

Asked whether the ministry was planning for casinos with night clubs like the ones in Bangkok, Mohibul said different Muslim countries were providing various entertainment facilities for foreign tourists.

“I think there should be no obstacle in providing such facility for the foreign tourists in exclusive tourist zones,” he said.

M Mahbub Ali, state minister for civil aviation and tourism, was also present at the briefing.

Mahbub said the government had taken mega plans for massive developments in tourism sector to attract tourists.

Survey of the delegation of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology on Sundarbans is at the final stage, he said, adding that they would soon take measures so that foreign tourists can enjoy eco-tourism there.

Apart from the mega plan, the ministry also has moved to prepare a master plan for tourism sector and that too is at the final stage, he said.

Bangladesh has attractive tourist spots but the authorities could not utilise those due to the lack of planning, said secretary Mohibul.

As the master plan is at the last stage, the authorities would now be able to execute those, he added.

The number of foreign tourists has increased by two lakh this year, the secretary said, adding that a guideline for private tour operators would be finalised by November this year.