

## 31,505 minorities

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against them. If this trend continues, no Hindu will remain after 20 years," said Gobinda Chondro Pramanik.

Culture of impunity is encouraging perpetrators to commit violence and grab lands of the minority, he added.

The alliance demanded 50 reserved seats in the parliament, a ministry on minority affairs and a full minister from the Hindu community.

Meanwhile, leaders of the alliance also protested Election Commission's decision to hold the two Dhaka city corporation polls on the day of Saraswati Puja (January 30).

Senior vice president Pradip Kumar Paul demanded rescheduling of the election.

Among others, BB Goswami, senior vice-president of the organisation; Bijoy Krishna Bhattacharya, its chief coordinator; and Sajen Krishna Bal, president of Students Grand Alliance, also spoke at the programme.



Attempt to salvage this cargo vessel is underway after it capsized in the Kirtankhola river on December 14. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## Road crashes kill 10, injure 30

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after a pick-up van collided with his autorickshaw at Musulli Bazar area around 11pm on Wednesday, said police, quoting locals.

On information, police recovered the body and handed it over to family members. They also seized the van but its driver managed to flee. A case was lodged.

In Bogura, two people were killed and 15 injured after a truck collided with a bus at Chandaikona Rawra area in Sherpur upazila around 1am on Wednesday.

The deceased are truck driver Sanowar Hossain (35) and his helper Minto Mia

(38), said police.

Sanowar died on the spot while Minto succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. The injured were admitted to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, they added.

According to a report by Shipping and Communication Reporters' Forum, accidents are common on Bangladesh's highways. On average, the country saw about 11.56 accidents per day in 2019. Reckless driving is one of the leading causes.

As many as 4,628 people were killed and 8,621 suffered injuries in 4,219 road accidents last year.

## Abu Taher passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abu Taher, father of special correspondent of daily Samakal Abu Kawas, died of cardiac failure on Wednesday.

Taher, a former naval officer, was 76-year-old and had been suffering from old-age complications.

His body was buried at his family's graveyard at Palishara village in Haziganj upazila of Chandpur yesterday.

Economic Reporters Forum expressed grief at Taher's demise.

## A victim

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He also said the no hospital property of the railway would be handed over to the health ministry.

Communicated, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan had told this newspaper in November, "It has come to my notice that there has been no significant development [of the hospital]. I have directed my officials to form a committee and submit an extensive report about it."

He said after getting the report, they would decide who will run the hospital.

Pronab Kumar Ghosh, additional secretary to the ministry of railways and a member of the committee, said they would start working after getting an official order.

## Youth burnt

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"We are investigating it," he said, adding that firefighters were yet to estimate the financial damage due to the incident.

Contacted, Utpal Barua, officer-in-charge of Patenga Police Station, said Javed used to work at the warehouse and could not come out of the building in time. Investigation is underway.

Owners of the warehouse could not be reached for comments despite several attempts.

## Protesters issue

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The alliance members are: Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakhan Parishad, Chhatra Federation (Gana Samhati Andolon), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (Marxist), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (BSD), Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Biplobi Chhatra Moitri, Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (Jatiya Mukti Council), Biplobi Chhatra-Jubo Andolan, Greater Chittagong Hill Tracts Pahari Chhatra Parishad, Nagarik Chhatra Oikya, Swantantra Jote and Chhatra Moncho.

On December 22, Nur and his supporters came under attack from a faction of Mukti Juddho Moncho, mostly comprised of BCL men, at his office at Ducus building.

Nur and at least 26 of his supporters were wounded in the attack.

## NO PROBE REPORT YET

Meanwhile, the probe body -- formed over the incident of attack on Nur and his followers on December 22 -- is yet to submit their report, even though eight days have passed since its formation.

The university authorities formed the six-member body two days after the attack, asking them to submit the report along with recommendations within six working days.

Contacted, Arts Faculty Dean and convener of the committee Prof Abu Md Delvar Hossain said they would request the vice-chancellor to extend the timeframe of submitting the report.

## Gas explosion

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of DMCH police outpost.

Contacted, Md Shahjahan, senior station officer of Adamjee EPZ fire service, said the explosion might have happened due to leakage in the pipeline or keeping the stove turned on overnight.

When a stove is kept on in this way, gas accumulates and stays trapped in the room, especially when doors and windows are shut. This inevitably leads to an explosion the moment a matchstick is lit the following morning, he added.

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## Land services just a click away

Virtual record room in all districts within 6 months, says land minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will open virtual record rooms in all districts within the next six months, Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury said yesterday.

The minister came up with the announcement while inaugurating the first Virtual Record Room in the country, set up in the Dhaka Collectorate at the office of the deputy commissioner.

With the theme -- "Land Service - a click away", the ministry will set up the virtual record rooms.

"We have opened this virtual record room at Dhaka Collectorate as an experiment. It is a New Year's gift for the people of Dhaka district from the land ministry," said the minister.

The government has stepped up reformation of the land management to make it fast, the minister said, adding, "We will initiate fast track service to settle land mutation application of the limited companies within seven days."

From now on, RS Khatiyan and Mouza Map can be viewed on websites: <https://land.gov.bd> or <https://rsk.land.gov.bd>.

Besides, certified copies of RS Khatiyan and Mouza Map could be availed within three working days, either directly or by post by paying Tk 45 through mobile or online payment system.

Land Secretary Md Muksudur Rahman Patwary, Additional Divisional Commissioner (Revenue) of Dhaka Md Nurunnabi, were present on the occasion, among others.

## Syed Ashraf's first

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wreaths at his grave in Banani, reports BSS.

Born in Mymensingh in 1952, Ashraf started his political career during his student years with Chhatra League and became general secretary of its greater Mymensingh district unit. He was a member of the Mukti Bahini during the Liberation War.

Following the killing of his father on November 3, 1975, inside Dhaka Central Jail along with the three national leaders, he left the country for the UK. There, he engaged in activism with the Bangladeshi community, and worked to organise Awami League in the UK.

On his return home in 1996, he was elected MP and served as the state minister for civil aviation and tourism ministry from 1996-2001. During his second term in parliament from 2001-2006, he was a member of the House committee on foreign affairs.

After the 2008 election win, he became minister for the Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives. Later in July 2015, he was given the charge of the public administration ministry, a post he held till his death.

During the turbulent times of the 1/11 changeover, Ashraf, together with another AL veteran Zillur Rahman, ran the party when Sheikh Hasina was in jail.

Later, he was elected party general secretary in 2009 and 2012. He was made a presidium member of the party in 2016.

Ashraf, one of the brightest stars in Bangladesh politics, was known for his honesty, humility and simplicity. He was a charismatic leader too, but more than anything else, he commanded respect from across the political spectrum, a rarity in Bangladesh politics.

Ashraf, who stood by his party -- Awami League -- in good times and bad, died on January 3, 2019 at Bumrungrad International Hospital in Thailand at the age of 68.

His death came just four days after he was elected MP from Kishoreganj-1, a constituency he represented since 1996.

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