

Three killed in truck accidents

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed in separate road accidents yesterday -- both involving goods-laden trucks -- in two districts, report our correspondents.

In Mymensingh, two garment workers were killed and three passengers of a CNG-run auto-rickshaw were injured in a road accident at Shambhuganj Bazar area on Mymensingh-Netrakona road in Sadar upazila yesterday noon.

The victims were identified as Nazma Akter (16) and Momen Mia alias Saiful Islam (23).

Quoting locals, Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali Police Station Md Mahmudul Islam said the accident took place when a sand-laden truck collided head-on with the Mymensingh bound CNG-run auto-rickshaw, killing Momen on the spot and injuring four around 2pm.

Locals rushed the injured to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) where on-duty doctors declared Nazma dead, said the OC. The condition of the other injured are critical, the official confirmed.

On information, police recovered the bodies and took them to MMCH morgue for autopsy.

Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee the scene. A case was lodged in this regard.

In another accident in Jhenaidah, a biker was killed and his pillion rider injured on Maheshpur-Bhairab road under Maheshpur upazila yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Mamun Mondol (35), a painter. Pillion Shawan (25) received injuries and is undergoing treatment at a local health complex.

Officer-in-Charge Morshed Hossain Khan of Maheshpur Police Station told our Jhenaidah correspondent that the duo were going to Bhairab Bazar when a cement-laden truck hit their bike from the opposite direction after they reached Bamongacha area.

Injured, they were rushed to the health complex where on-duty doctors declared Mamun dead.

His body has been sent to Jhenaidah Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Stalled dev works raise concerns

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The proprietor of Asif Traders said the drainage development works were not yet completed and the upcoming monsoon will spell trouble for both residents and contractors.

“Due to monsoon, the work will slow down. Also, on a regular day we need around 40-50 labourers but during the rainy season we need over 100 workers to get the job done. This will also make the cost go up,” he added.

Besides, they had kept piles of sand, bricks and rods on roadsides, he said, fearing those might get damaged or stolen.

Another contractor, Khairul Hasan, whose company Opal International was working on a Dhaka South City Corporation project to solve the waterlogging problem in the secretariat area at Topkhana (zone-1). As per agreement, his company was scheduled to finish the work within June.

“We have completed 80 percent of our work. We just needed a couple of days

more but we had to abandon our work due to the virus outbreak,” he told this correspondent.

“We have installed drainage pipes underneath the footpath, surrounding the secretariat. However, we did not get enough time to cover up the pipes and carpet it with cement,” he said, adding that they did fill the gaps so that people can walk over it.

Khairul also said most of his labourers have left the city. He said since most of the work has been done, he is hopeful that they will be able to finish the work quickly once the situation improves.

“We cannot ask for extra money from the city corporation as we already signed a contract to finish the work within the decided budget. But there’s a chance that construction materials may get pricier given the situation,” he added.

Meanwhile, city dwellers are also concerned. They said once the present crisis passes, they will have to worry about

waterlogging, unfinished roads, footpaths and mosquito attacks.

“In our area, drainage work has been going on for months. Now, the work is left half done... there are craters at many places... when monsoon starts and the situation does not improve, there will not only be waterlogging but also mosquito problem,” said a worried Sabuj Alam, a resident of Badda.

Sanjidul Hasan of Shahjampur said, “Usually the city corporation is to blame for a patch up job or leaving the work untended, but it’s different now... it’s not in their control.”

Saiful Alam, executive engineer of DSCC (zone-1), seemed to agree with residents.

“It’s a situation we had no control over. However, we are still on duty and doing the emergency work from our engineering department,” he said. “For example, if any particular road gets damaged and ambulance cannot go through, we repair it right away with our limited manpower.”

Create emergency fund

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Recruiting Agencies (Baira) to prepare separate lists of aspirant migrant workers. One list should be comprised of workers who paid money partially and are yet to get necessary documents while the other will be of those who are all set to travel abroad for jobs.

Baira should create an immediate fund to financially support families of workers who were set to travel as well as those who made full payment for their recruitment. Besides, Baira should arrange return of money to those workers whose visa process have not started yet, it said.

Once the coronavirus crisis ends, migrant workers -- whose recruitment

process was completed -- should be given the chance to go overseas on a priority basis and without adding any new fee, it added.

Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit also urged the authorities concerned to develop a database of returning migrant workers and ensure protection of female migrant workers abroad amid Covid-19 outbreak.

Due to economic impact of coronavirus, there is a chance that international human trafficking syndicates will become active as many Bangladeshi migrant workers who are now losing their jobs will try for overseas jobs again. As long-term

measure, the organisation called upon the government to take precautionary measures to tackle such human trafficking syndicates.

In the statement, it also raised concern that in some areas of the country returning expatriates faced harassment and were blamed for spreading coronavirus.

Expatriates also faced harassment when they went for medical treatment, said the organisation, urging all to have a positive outlook towards them.

The migrant rights group also urged all to observe a one-minute silence on April 12 morning in remembrance of those Bangladeshis died of the disease so far.

Star report prompts action

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Dorianagar to Inani Beach -- so that sagarlata and red crabs, which are often seen around the vines, can thrive without any human interruption, the DC said.

“We will form a conservation committee

led by local conservationists and journalists to oversee the conservation guidelines. A placard and signboard will be put up highlighting the importance of the two species to raise awareness,” he added. The DC also spoke of further plans to involve

locals in conservation activities along the beach.

Ahmad Gias, a local journalist who also focuses on conservation and protection of local ecology, will be leading the proposed conservation committee.

US recognition

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In a statement issued today, the Prime Minister says, “I take this opportunity to thank the people of the US and the press for their support to our legitimate aspirations during our war of liberation.”

Earlier on April 2, 1972, the US envoy to the UN, George Bush, on behalf of his government handed over a cheque of 31 million dollars to the UN Secretary General for Bangladesh as part of their donation committed earlier. The donation was meant for purchasing trucks to carry foodstuff within Bangladesh. Two days later, the US accorded recognition to Bangladesh.

SURRENDER ARMS

Addressing a mammoth public gathering in Mymensingh yesterday, Bangabandhu advised all unauthorised possessors of arms to surrender their weapons before it is too late. The Prime Minister said that those “who had taken up arms at his call surrendered their arms responding to his call. But there are others who retain arms with them. These people are creating a law and order situation and committing theft, dacoity and robbery.” Bangabandhu warned that these anti-social elements will be shot if found engaged in acts of dacoity and robbery. He appealed to the people to hand over to the police the anti-social

elements. He also appealed to the police to behave like peoples’ police.

DHAKA AGAIN BATTERED

Dhaka city and its suburbs are battered again by the cyclonic storm for the second time in 24 hours today evening, making recovery more painful for those unfortunate ones, who were affected by the first onslaught. It is reported that the death toll of yesterday’s storm rose to over 40 in Dhaka and Narayanganj, while the number of the injured would exceed 150. Bangabandhu today flies over the affected areas by an Air Force helicopter to see for himself the extent of damage caused by the cyclonic storm. He meets the government officials about the measures to be taken to help the people in distress.

BANGLADESH-YUGOSLAV TRADE PACT SIGNED

A general trade and economic cooperation agreement providing for exchange of goods worth 3.5 crore taka each way and a cooperation in economic development of Bangladesh was signed yesterday between the government of Bangladesh and Yugoslavia.

SOURCES: April 6, 1972 issues of Ittefaq, The Bangladesh Observer, Azad, Morning News, Dainik Bangla and Purbodosh.

Wearing masks

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handwashing and social distancing.

“So we can certainly see circumstances in which the use of masks, both homemade or cloth masks, at community level may help in an overall comprehensive response to this disease,” he said.

Ryan, citing data from Italy, said that there did not appear to be a link between people taking drugs against hypertension known as ace inhibitors and getting the disease or developing severe disease.

Exhausted staff in some overwhelmed health care systems could be a factor in mortality rates, Ryan said, adding: “We need to reduce the tsunamis of patients coming through the door to give doctors, nurses and other carers the opportunity to save more lives.”

Dr. Maria van Kerkhove, a WHO epidemiologist, cautioned against comparing mortality rates between

countries, noting that some may be missing mild infections as they focus on patients in severe condition.

“What we really need to be focusing on right now is what is the age profile of people who are in ICU (intensive care units),” she said.

“We are seeing more and more individuals who are of the younger age group - in their 30s, in their 40s, in their 50s - who are in ICU and who are dying,” she said, citing Italy and China.

Generally older people or those with underlying medical conditions will have more advanced disease and a higher risk of death, van Kerkhove said.

“But we have some time to go before we can really understand what mortality looks like across different countries so I would urge you to take those mortality rates with caution when comparing across countries,” she said.

Admissions

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primarily to reduce students’ anxiety over coursework and grades in this stressful time. There will be no finals. Given the extraordinary circumstances of this term, faculty members are asked to be lenient and understanding of the situation when assigning grades,” said the order.

Vice Chancellor Professor Vincent Chang was not available for comment as he was abroad. Brac University Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Mohammad Tamim confirmed the matter to The Daily Star.

A section of teachers, however, alleged Vice Chancellor Vincent Chang alone took the decision. Students who did not perform well in class tests usually gets a chance to make up their grades in the final exams, but there will be no such option now, one teacher pointed out.

Pro-VC Tamim said that Brac University is getting feedback from teachers. “I think there is scope for reviewing the decision,” he said.

The IUB authorities have asked all course instructors to assign grades based on the available semester assessments -- the midterm, quizzes, presentations, assignments -- and inform students via email or social media.

Students who would like to improve the assigned results are requested to contact their respective course faculty members for additional assignments; the nature of the assignment is at the discretion of the faculty member, said IUB registrar Brig Gen (Retd) Md Anwarul Islam.

He said the University Grants Commission (UGC) do not have any set rules on assessment.

Fakhrul Islam, UGC private university division director, said the universities have taken these decisions based on the current

situation and the closure of educational institutions.

All educational institutions were ordered shut from March 17 to 31; this has since been extended to April 9.

Top DSHE officials said that there is a strong possibility that the government will extend the closure till April 14 -- and perhaps even till the 25th. And in case of the latter, schools and colleges will remain off till May 31 for the Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr vacation.

NO ADMISSIONS TESTS

The IUB authorities have cancelled admission test-2 of the summer semester, scheduled for April 18, said registrar Anwarul Islam.

He said that students will be enrolled based on their GPA in SSC, HSC or O-level and A-level results and an online or phone interview if necessary.

Abu Sadat, UIU deputy director of PR, said the university has also cancelled their admissions test for the summer semester. “We will enroll students based on the results of their SSC and HSC exams.”

Zamal Uddin Bhuiyan, deputy registrar (admissions) at ULAB, confirmed the same for the upcoming semester.

Authorities of North South University, Brac University, East West University, and the University of Asia Pacific have also deferred admission tests.

Public universities enroll students in three semesters -- spring (January to April), summer (May to August) and fall (September to December). Every year, about 25 percent of students enroll in the summer semester.

There are 105 private universities in the country; of these, 97 are licensed to carry out academic activities.

Get things delivered

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as quickly as possible.”

He said it is safe to receive parcels if it is properly handled, which means the delivery people and those who are involved with the process are not infected with coronavirus.

“However, if community transmission begins, then it is better to avoid [receiving parcels], because 80 percent of [infected] people might only have mild or moderate symptoms or no symptoms at all,” he suggested.

He said that currently there is no evidence that Covid-19 can be transmitted through food or food packaging, though

the virus is known to live on surfaces for up to several days.

“The potential problem is transmitting the coronavirus from delivery person to customer, or vice versa,” he said.

He suggested that people can ask the online deliverymen to drop off the parcel at the door or on the ground floor of the respective building, from where the buyer will collect the parcel.

Kaoser also suggested that, for better safety, one can wash hands with soap for at least 20 seconds and avoid touching their own or anyone else’s face after bringing the parcel home.

Woman raped

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arrested the duo.

The victim then filed a case with the police station in this connection, said the OC, adding that she has been admitted to the One-Stop Crisis Centre of Cox’s Bazar General Hospital for medical test.

Meanwhile, a 60-year-old man was arrested in Tangail’s Basail upazila yesterday on charge of trying to rape a minor schoolgirl, reports our correspondent.

The arrestee is Sohrab Miah, father of three children at Tenguriapara village in Habla union.

The girl’s father, driver of a three-wheeler, filed a case with Basail Police Station on

Friday night under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

According to the case statement, Sohrab took the girl, a class II student of a local school, to an abandoned house luring her of giving money while she was playing at an orchard adjacent her house on Thursday.

The girl screamed when Sohrab tried to rape her. Hearing screams, locals rushed to the spot and rescued the girl. However, Sohrab managed to flee the scene.

Sub-inspector Mahmudul Hasan of Basail Police Station said yesterday noon, the arrestee was produced before a Tangail court that later sent him to jail.

Torchbearers

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However, the path to making the list was not smooth. For Esrat, the glory comes after a long journey through not only challenges from her field of work, but also family pressures.

“When I came back home and started doing social work, I faced a lot of hurdles from my communities, and even my own family,” Esrat said.

“They did not want to accept that I would dedicate my life to being a social reformer.”

The validation only arrived after accolades did.

For her endeavours, Esrat has earned the Youth Icon 2018, YSSE Social Impact Award, GITA Global Award and the Jolkona Catalyst Fellowship Award.

However, she considers this the peak of her achievements. “After my inclusion in the Forbes list, they [her family] are stunned,” she said in a celebratory mood.

Esrat dedicates this achievement to the 5,000-plus volunteers who work for AMAL Foundation.

She doesn’t want to stop here. “My goal is to make Bangladesh a healthy and happy place for everyone. I would go on with my work, irrespective of whether I get awarded or not.”

Esrat believes social activism should be centred more on empowerment than charity or token donations, something many from her industry still believe. For her work, she prioritises creating more inclusive and enabling environments for women, children, and refugees.

“Empowerment is much more important than charity. We believe in sustainable social reforms when we are helping a marginalised community,” she said.

Masked men

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produce around 150 to 200 accused at the courts for hearing on a daily basis.

“Presently, we are getting some complaints about woman and child repression and petty crimes like theft in residential houses and shops,” Mahbub Alam, joint commissioner of detective branch (DB) of DMP, told The Daily Star on Thursday.

Between March 27 and April 2, DMP arrested 76 people for carrying or selling narcotics in Dhaka, and 55 cases were filed against them.

Mahmuda Afroz Lucky, additional deputy commissioner of Darussalam zone, said mugging and dope gang activities have declined in the city as people are not coming out of their homes, but there were some incidents of domestic violence and theft in residential houses and shops.

On March 31, a home ministry coordination cell in a directive instructed Bangladesh Police to take necessary steps to stop theft, robbery and mugging during the countrywide shutdown.

Starmer

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of his life and vowed to “engage constructively” with Johnson’s Conservative government.

Johnson immediately offered his congratulations and the pair spoke, with Starmer accepting an invitation to a government briefing on COVID-19 next week.

“Keir offered to work constructively with the government on how best to respond to the coronavirus outbreak,” his spokesman said.

Starmer himself vowed to reunite Labour, after deep rifts between supporters of socialist Corbyn’s hard-left ideals and centrists, and wrangling over its Brexit strategy.

He immediately addressed the issue of anti-Semitism that Corbyn was accused of failing to tackle, which tarnished the party’s reputation and caused Jewish members to leave in droves.

“Anti-Semitism has been a stain on our party. I have seen the grief that it’s brought to so many Jewish communities,” Starmer said.

“On behalf of the Labour Party, I am sorry.

“And I will tear out this poison by its roots and judge success by the return of Jewish members and those who felt that they could no longer support us.”

Starmer, who won a resounding 56.2 percent of the vote of Labour members, acknowledged the party had “a mountain to climb”, after four straight general election defeats -- two under Corbyn.

7 die showing

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assume the victim was not infected with coronavirus but died of a cardiac arrest. We have still requested locals to avoid a public gathering during the burial.”

In Netrokona, a 60-year-old man died in Khaliajury upazila yesterday after suffering from fever, cold and respiratory problems. He died yesterday morning, said Khaliajury UNO AHM Ariful Islam.

Samples of the victims have been sent to different hospitals for tests.

In Laxmipur, a two-year-old boy of Kamalnagar upazila’s Torabganj village died yesterday, while another four-year-old boy of the upazila’s Charmartin village died on Friday night. Both suffered from corona-like symptoms.

Local administrations have locked down four houses following the deaths, said Md Mobarak Hossain, Kamalnagar UNO, adding that the victims’ samples were sent to the Institute of Public Health in Chattogram for tests.

In Shariatpur, a 25-year-old woman died at Shariatpur Sadar Hospital around 10:30am yesterday, around an hour after she was admitted to the hospital. The victim’s family had taken her body back home. Health officials went to the house and collected samples, said Shariatpur Sadar UNO Md Mahabur Rahman Sheikh.

In Jashore, five out of 35 Bangladeshis, who returned yesterday from India through the Benapole border under special arrangement, were sent into institutional quarantine

The five sent to the quarantine ward of Jashore General Hospital had high temperatures, said Dr Zahidul Islam, a health official at Benapole Immigration Office.

The rest were sent into 14-day home quarantine, he said.

In Chattogram, three doctors and 15 staffers of a private hospital were sent into home quarantine on Friday evening after they came into contact with the first Covid-19 patient in the port city, said Chattogram Civil Surgeon Sheikh Fazle Rabbi.


The patient was a 67-year-old man.

In Rangpur, the home of a family in Sadar upazila’s Janki-Dhaperhat village was locked down yesterday after a man there tested positive for Covid-19, said Hirambo Kumar Roy, the district’s civil surgeon.

In Cox’s Bazar, the local administration on Friday night locked down seven houses, eight shops and one pathology centre in Teknaf upazila’s Old Pallanpara area as a person in the area showed Covid-19 symptoms.

In Rajshahi, a private hospital nurse was admitted to the coronavirus unit of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday with Covid-19 symptoms.

(Our Moulvibazar, Natore, Narayanganj, Mymensingh, Jashore, Noakhali, Chattogram, Dinaipur, Cox’s Bazar and Rajshahi correspondents contributed to the story.)



INVITATION TO BID
ITB No. UNFPA/BGD/ITB/2020/001

SUPPLY OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Bangladesh seeks bids from qualified supplier for supplying of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The qualified and experienced bidders are encouraged to download the ITB documents through the following link from UNGM:

https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/106410

Please note that, the Bid must reach at UNFPA's secured email inbox **procurement.bangladesh@unfpa.org** no later than **7 April 2020, 14:00 hours** Bangladesh standard time."