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3 couples die in freak road crash

Three more killed in the pileup in Gopalganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Lives of three couples and three others came to a tragic end in a three-vehicle pileup in Gopalganj's Kashiani upazila yesterday.

A chain of events lead to the tragic accident. Locals and sources said a couple was threshing paddy on the side of the Dhaka-Khulna highway in Dakshin Fukra area around 11:00am. Some hay eventually got on the highway which a couple on a motorbike tried to swerve right to avoid. A car was trying to overtake the bike at that very moment and it had to move right to avoid hitting the bike. But it put the vehicle squarely in front of a bus of Rajib Paribahan, which was heading for Dhaka from Pirojpur.

The head-on collision flung the car on to the motorbike and the thrashing machine the couple was using.

Bashudev Saha, 52, an anesthesiologist of Birdem in Dhaka, along with his wife Sibani Saha, 44, and son Sapnil Saha, 20, who were in the car and going to Gopalganj to visit Bashudev's ailing mother, died on the spot. So did car driver Ajijur Islam, 44.

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The mangled remains of a barely recognisable car by the side of Dhaka-Khulna highway in Dakshin Fukra area of Gopalganj's Kashiani upazila after it hit a bus and then was tossed on to a motorbike and a thrashing machine. The accident left nine people dead and 25 others injured.

PHOTO: SUZIT DAS

Buddha Purnima today

UNB, Dhaka

Buddha Purnima, the biggest religious festival of the Buddhist community, will be celebrated across the country today amid festivities after two years of Covid-induced restrictions.

Buddha Purnima marks the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha. On this day in 563 BC, Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gautama in Kapilabostu at the foothill of the Himalayas.

He attained supreme enlightenment at the age of 35 and finally departed into "nirvana" at the age of 80 in 483 BC.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages greeting the Buddhist community on the occasion.

President Hamid said, "Buddhist civilization and its culture have been deeply intertwined with

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JUBO JOTE LEADER MURDER 22 AL men sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Twenty-two leaders and activists of the ruling Awami League and its associated bodies have been accused in a case of killing Jatiya Jubo Jote leader Mahabub Khan Salam.

Mahabub's father Enamul Haque filed the case with Daulatpur Police Station in Kushtia on Friday night, a day after the murder.

Police said they arrested three of the accused in Daulatpur town on Friday night. There are also 8-9 unnamed accused in the case.

Among the 22 are Daulatpur upazila AL Joint General Secretary Selim Choudhury, his brothers Asaduzzaman Loton Choudhury, executive committee member of the same committee, Token Choudhury, president of Daulatpur upazila Jubo League, Poloton Choudhury, Tushon Choudhury and Swapan Choudhury.

The six are also brothers of the former AL lawmaker from Kushtia-1, Rezaul Haq Choudhury.

Mahabub, 37, general secretary of Daulatpur upazila Jatiya Jubo Jote, the youth wing of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, died of hacking injuries at the Kushtia General Hospital early Thursday, around two and half hours after he was attacked near his home in Daulatpur town.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Selim Choudhury said the case was a "conspiracy" against his family and it was a politically motivated one. He said the family will fight the legal battle.

Jabid Hasan, OC of Daulatpur Police Station, said they started the investigation, but were yet to detect the motive behind the murder.

Police are interrogating the arrestees named Sohan, Najibul and Mehedi.

According to the case statement, Mahabub was returning home from Alla Dargah Bazar in Daulatpur town on a motorised rickshaw van around 11:00pm on Wednesday. He was accompanied by two Jubo Jote activists.

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War could be over by year end

Claims Ukraine intel chief as resistance slows Russian advances in the east; Moscow pulls plug on power to Finland

AGENCIES

The war in Ukraine could reach a "breaking point" by August and end in defeat for Russia before the end of the year, Kyiv's head of military intelligence said yesterday, as fierce fighting raged in Ukraine's east, slowing down a hoped-for Russian advance.

The G7 group of the world's top industrialised nations meanwhile reiterated it would "never recognise" the borders Russia has attempted to redraw through aggression and pledged more sanctions to tighten the screw on Moscow.

Russia, which sent in troops to Ukraine on February 24, has increasingly turned its attention to eastern Ukraine since the end of March, after failing to take the capital Kyiv.

Western analysts believe President Vladimir Putin has his sights on annexing southern and eastern Ukraine in the months ahead but his troops have appeared to be encountering stiff resistance.

The governor of the eastern Lugansk region, Serhiy Gaidai, said Ukrainian forces had prevented Russian attempts to cross a river and encircle the

city of Severodonetsk.

"There's heavy fighting on the border with Donetsk region," Gaidai said, reporting big Russian losses of equipment and personnel.

"From interceptions (phone calls), we understand that a whole (Russian) battalion has refused to attack, because they see what's happening."

Aerial images showed dozens of destroyed armoured vehicles on the river bank and wrecked pontoon bridges.

UK military intelligence also said Russian forces had sustained heavy losses as they attempted the river crossing.

Kharkiv regional governor Oleh Synegubov meanwhile said in a video on Telegram that Ukrainian forces were counter-attacking in the direction of the northeastern city of Izium.

The Ukrainian General Staff said troops had managed to push Russian troops out of the Kharkiv, a priority target for Moscow.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday said his troops would fight to recapture all occupied territory, and those under siege.



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COVID-19 BOOSTER Special campaign to start this month

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

The health directorate is going to conduct a special campaign this month to inoculate around five crore people, aged 18 and above, who have received their second dose of Covid-19 vaccines at least four months ago.

Officials said they have enough vaccines in stock for the campaign.

It will be similar to the previous special campaign, which was held at the union level in rural areas and ward level in municipalities in February and March, they said.

"The date [for the special booster doze campaign] is yet to be fixed. We have been waiting for the health minister's return from abroad to finalise it," Dr Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star yesterday.

The minister is expected to return home tonight from an official visit to the World Bank headquarters in New York, according to a ministry official.

As of Thursday, around 11.68 crore adults - 68.51 percent of the total population - have received the second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. However, not all will be eligible for the booster, health officials said.

As per the DGHS's Covid-19 vaccine administration protocol, any second dose vaccine recipient can get a booster jab with an interval of at least four months - as recommended by the World Health Organization.

In that case, the number of eligible booster recipients will be around 4.6 crore, according to the DGHS data.

Around 1.35 crore people who already have

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The Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection in Chattogram conducted raids at different stores yesterday and fined several stores for hoarding edible oil and selling those at a higher price. In the photo taken during one such raid at the Karnaphuli Market in the city's Choumohoni area, people are seen elated after having been able to buy cooking oil at MRP.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

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World's longest suspension bridge opens

CNN ONLINE

Walking from one mountain to another, suspended high above ground with only a vast valley yawning below, isn't for the fainthearted.

But thrill seekers - and lovers of infrastructure - will be flocking to the Dolni Morava vacation resort in the northeast of the Czech Republic to scale the new world's longest suspension footbridge.

Under construction for the past two years, the 721-meter-long span (2,365 feet), appropriately named Sky Bridge 721, officially opened on Friday. The walkway promises spectacular views of the cloud-shrouded Jeseniky mountains, and an overall electrifying, albeit slightly terrifying, experience.

Austrian blogger

REPORT ON TEEN GANGS Jouno stabbed in 'revenge'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A journalist and his companion were stabbed allegedly by a teen gang in Narayanganj on Friday night.

Rashid Chowdhury, 28, executive editor of Dainik Agrabani Pratidin, was attacked for publishing a news on teen gangs, said Syed Sifat Al Rahman, general secretary of Narayanganj City Press Club.

Jashim Uddin, 38, a yarn trader, who was with Rashid at the time, was also stabbed, said Sifat, adding that they were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with critical injuries.

Quoting the injured, Sifat said the two of them were going to Chasara when a group of teenagers stopped them and stabbed them indiscriminately.

Locals rescued them hearing their screams, but the attackers managed to flee the scene, he said.

Torikul Islam, inspector of Fatullah Model Police Station, said legal action will be taken in this regard.

Earlier on May 11, video footage of teenage boys brandishing firearms and attacking other teens went viral on social media. A news article was published about the incident in Dainik Agrabani Pratidin.