

Husband, wife die as car falls into ditch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A couple died as a car they were in fell into a roadside ditch on Rajshahi-Naogaon regional highway in Naogaon's Mohadevpur upazila yesterday.

The victims were Golam Sarwar Jahan, 28, and his wife Zinia Akter, 27, of Manda upazila of Naogaon. The couple, who completed their master's in economics from Islamic University in Kushtia, got married early this year.

Sarwar was driving and his wife was in passenger seat, said police and eyewitnesses.

They were going to visit Sarwar's uncle's house in Naogaon town.

One of the car's front wheels fell off and the vehicle fell into the roadside ditch in Khordonarayanpur area around 12:30pm, said his uncle Bazlur Rashid, a police officer working in Dinaajpur.

The couple were declared dead after being taken to Naogaon Sadar Hospital, said Sub-inspector Ziaur Rahman of Mohadevpur Police Station.

The bodies were later handed over to their family members.



A car being pulled up from a bog in Mohadevpur, Naogaon, yesterday. A young couple died as the vehicle veered off the road after one of its front wheels fell off. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Three dead after smuggler van overturns in Austria

AFP, Vienna

Three people died and several others were injured in Austria yesterday after a crammed van smuggling them tried to escape a police control and overturned, the state news agency said.

The accident occurred on a highway in Burgenland state near Austria's border with Hungary, the APA news agency reported.

The van was crammed with some 20 people, including children, when it overturned as the driver sought to escape a police control on the Austrian side of the frontier.

Two men and a woman died, APA said, with several others seriously injured. The driver has been arrested.

Police or other officials could not immediately be reached by AFP.

Austria's interior ministry announced in May that police had smashed a group believed to have smuggled tens of thousands of people, mostly Syrians, from Hungary to Austria.

Two of those illegally transported across the border were found suffocated in a van last year.

POSSIBLE SEIZURE OF RUSSIAN ASSETS Moscow warns of end to Russia-US relations

Shelling kills three people in Ukrainian cities of Kramatorsk, Zaporizhzhia

AGENCIES

Any possible seizure of Russian assets by the United States will completely destroy Moscow's bilateral relations with Washington, TASS quoted the head of the North American Department at the Russian foreign ministry as saying yesterday.

Russia's relations with the West have deteriorated sharply since Moscow sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine on February 24, calling it a "special military operation".

The West responded with unprecedented economic, financial and diplomatic sanctions, including freezing around half of Russia's gold and foreign exchange reserves that stood near \$640 billion before February 24.

Top Western officials, including European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, have suggested seizing the frozen reserves to help fund the future reconstruction of Ukraine.

"We warn the Americans of the detrimental consequences of such actions that will permanently damage bilateral relations, which is neither in their nor in our interests," Alexander Darchiev told

TASS in an interview.

It was not immediately clear which assets he was referring to.

The United States and its European allies have also frozen \$30 billion of assets held by wealthy individuals with

Top Western officials suggested seizing frozen reserves to help fund the future reconstruction of Ukraine.

ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin, including yachts, helicopters, real estate and art, according to the Biden administration.

The US Department of Justice was seeking broader authority from Congress to seize Russian oligarchs' assets as a means to pressure Moscow over its actions in Ukraine, a prosecutor said in July.

Darchiev also said that Russia warned the United States that diplomatic ties would be badly damaged and could even be broken if Russia is declared a state sponsor of terrorism, reports Reuters.

Speaking about the situation in Ukraine, Darchiev said that the US influence on Kyiv had increased to the degree that "Americans are increasingly becoming more and more a direct party in the conflict".

Darchiev confirmed that Viktor Bout, an imprisoned Russian referred to by American prosecutors as one of the world's most prolific arms dealers, as well as US basketball star Brittney Griner and former Marine Paul Whelan detained by Russia are being discussed in prisoner swap talks between Moscow and Washington, according to TASS.

In the battleground, Russian shelling late on Friday killed three people in two separate incidents in the Ukrainian cities of Kramatorsk and Zaporizhzhia, local authorities said.

In the east of the country, Russian shelling killed two civilians in the last major city under Ukrainian control in the Donetsk region, reports AFP.

"New attack on Kramatorsk... two civilians dead and 13 wounded," regional governor Pavlo Korylenko said on Facebook, calling for remaining residents to evacuate.

Five Ashrayan-3 homes demolished

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

At least five half done homes of the Ashrayan-3 project in Sunamganj's Dobarabazar were demolished by the upazila administration due to faulty construction on Friday night.

The project was undertaken by the government on the occasion of Mujib Borsho, with an aim to provide homes for the homeless across the country.

Farzana Prianka, upazila nirbahi officer, said, "During inspection on Friday evening, we found the contractors used fewer steel rods [in the five under-construction homes] than needed for grid beams."

"After informing the deputy commissioner about the anomalies, we demolished the half-complete houses. According to the rules, these houses are to be reconstructed within five days."

She added that legal action would be taken against the contractors in charge if they failed to follow the orders, and all other houses under the project will be inspected thoroughly.

Supreme Court lawyer Kanon Alam, also a resident of Azampur village in the upazila where the houses were demolished, said, "Even though the project site is very close to Sadar upazila, the contractors were able to carry out such anomalies. This proves the lack of monitoring by the project implementation office and the upazila administration."

Journo stabbed in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A group of criminals stabbed a journalist in Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila yesterday.

The victim, Abdul Basit, 36, a district correspondent for Daily Khabarpatra and Daily Notun Din, is now under treatment at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

The attack took place when he was returning home after working on a report on the tea plantation workers' strike.

Police said a group of four to five, with sharp weapons, arrived on two motorcycles when Basit reached Ubahata village. They attacked him and fled the area.

Locals rescued and rushed him to hospital. Mohammad Zakaria, superintendent of police in Moulvibazar, said a drive is on to arrest the culprits.

92 more dengue patients hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 92 more people were hospitalised with dengue in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

In Dhaka, the number of patients admitted to hospitals was 89, while the rest were outside the capital.

So far, 355 patients are being treated for dengue in hospitals across the country, as the infection rate has been on the rise.

The death toll from the mosquito-borne disease this year rose to 16, with one more death reported in Dhaka on Thursday.

The DGHS reported the first dengue case of the season on June 21. By July, it recorded 1,571 cases and nine deaths.

The number of cases this year stands at 3,643 and recoveries at 3,272.

Stern actions

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"Do Biman's respective ground handling staff follow the standard operating procedure while operating its aircraft like in other international airports? Are they efficient enough? The accidents gave birth to so many questions," said Kazi Wahidul Alam, editor of weekly Monitor, an aviation and travel-related publication.

Due to the negligence of Biman's ground staff, two aircraft of Turkish Airlines were damaged at the HSLA in recent years.

"If Biman fails to ensure the safety of its own aircraft, how safe are the aircraft of other airlines at the hands of Biman is a big question as it provides ground handling support to foreign airlines at the Dhaka airport," said a Turkish Airlines official wishing anonymity.

Biman provides hanger support to Qatar Airways and Malaysian Airlines, according to MM Ekramuzzaman, director of Biman's engineering and material management department.

Such accidents are very rare in other airports, said an official of Saudia, the flag carrier of Saudi Arabia.

Moving aircraft at the airport is not the same as moving a toy, said an official of Singapore Airlines.

"Dhaka Airport is not a small airport. How much reckless can one be that such bizarre accidents take place? You need sincerity, perseverance and patience to do this job," he added.

Such incidents show the level of impudence among a section of Biman staff, said MA Momen, a former managing director and chief executive officer of the national flag carrier.

The accidents might be the result of not taking stern actions against the responsible persons due to the strong influence of the Collective Bargaining Agency and union leaders.

"Were stern actions taken, there would not have been a repeat of the accidents," Momen added.

No one lost their jobs for the incidents; they got away with just suspensions.

AL's polls pledges in many cases unrealistic

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It said several pledges are not being reflected in important government policy documents, such as the 8th Five-Year Plan and Sustainable Development Goals, as concern remains over the AL's willingness to fulfil those pledges.

Also, there is now a communication gap between the public representatives and the people, which creates obstacles to implementation of the pledges, the study said.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the dialogue as chief guest, Planning Minister MA Mannan said voters in his constituency (Sunamganj-3) want a stable and favourable environment where they can have income-generating opportunities.

He said it is the responsibility of all political parties to ensure such an environment and the AL has been working towards ensuring this.

Mannan said the AL had shortcomings in the last 12 years, but it had more achievements during this period.

The CPD study is based on 90 focus-group discussions (FGDs) in 15 districts. As many as 918 individuals, including 458 females, participated in those.

The research said the process to include people in election manifesto formulation is still "informal" in the country.

In many cases, citizens cannot take part in the manifesto formulation. Also, there is no specific system either for involving political party members in the process, CPD said.

Political parties need to be democratic to devise election manifestos, it said.

Detailing the study outcome, CPD Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem said most respondents in FGDs mentioned that they could not place their requirements or demands before the candidates directly or in writing.

People were allowed to talk about

their problems on a limited scale although their suggestions were not reflected in the manifestos afterwards, he said.

"It can be said [political parties'] national election manifestos are largely formulated from the top level. Those are not devised from the grassroots."

The links between the manifesto formulation process and targeted people have not yet been developed in the country, Moazzem said.

The study found that political parties in Bangladesh have "traditionally" been publishing manifestos ahead of national elections.

A manifesto proclaims a party's ideological and political positions and gives an idea about its political commitments to the voters and the countrymen.

Pledges of election manifesto are very important for a democratic country since it can be considered as a "written agreement" between a political party and voters, according to the study.

During the FGDs, people said they take manifestos as verbal pledges made by public representatives as they are little aware about what is written in those.

Moderating the session, CPD Executive Director Fahmida Khatun said election results in many developed countries significantly depend on pledges made in manifestos by political parties beforehand.

In Bangladesh, there has been progress regrading election manifestos as political parties now give more importance to it than they had the past. However, there is still a lack of progress in terms of implementation after elections, she said.

One reason is when the winner party takes office, it walks away from the pledges it made before the election, she added.

Also, people do not make much efforts to follow-up with the manifesto and try to hold the ruling party or the government accountable

to fulfill their pledges, Fahmida observed.

Local government expert Tofail Ahmed said a political party should make its election manifesto public for discussion at least one year ahead of the polls.

However, in Bangladesh there are examples of publishing manifestoes only days before an election, he added. Opinions of citizens and experts should be considered during formulation of an election manifesto, but such a process is not followed in Bangladesh, Tofail said.

As a result, manifestos turn out to be "just utterances", he added.

Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir said political parties' election manifestos should reflect people's expectations.

No one cares

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"According to the contract, the wages were supposed to be revised in January 2021 again. But the owners did not do it. The workers have been demanding their pay hike for the past year and a half," said Nipen.

During the period, tea garden owners held multiple meetings with the workers and proposed a raise from Tk 120 to Tk 134. The workers rejected it and demanded a daily wage of Tk 300.

"As prices of essentials are increasing, we will not be able to survive without a substantial wage hike. Our work abstention will continue until our demand is met," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Contacted, Golam Mohammad Shibli, general manager of Finlay Tea Company and chairman of Bangladeshi Tea Sangsad in Sylhet, said it was illogical to stop work, while the discussion on the matter was still ongoing.

"It is a full tea production season. If work stops, both owners and workers will suffer. I request all the workers to resume work and solve the issue through the ongoing discussion."

Shakib rewarded

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The Tigers in the marquee T20 event in Australia.

There was an air of anticipation regarding what decision would follow the meeting held at BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon's residence in Gulshan yesterday. After over three hours of discussion between the board president, BCB officials, and Shakib, it was the 35-year-old all-rounder who came out with the upper hand, despite initially landing in hot water for his controversial deal with a betting-related site.

The main purpose of the meeting was to demand answers from Shakib about why he had endorsed a betting-related site, that too without informing the BCB about it beforehand.

However, instead of sanctioning the cricketer for violating BCB's code of conduct, the BCB opted to reward him.

It seemed as if the board's hands were tied in front of Shakib, at least that is what could be ascertained from what BCB cricket operations committee chairman Jalal Yunus said after the meeting.

"The logic [behind making him the captain] is that Shakib is still our best cricketer. We own him. He is not someone from outside the board or the country. He assured us in front of the board president that he won't do any such thing in the future and we agreed. Maybe compromising regarding such offences isn't a good thing even though he is our best cricketer because he did break the code of conduct. But [this decision was taken] for the sake of the team," Jalal said.

The Shakib issue, coupled with multiple injuries to the squad, had forced the BCB to delay the announcement of the Asia Cup squad till the last minute.

When the board finally announced a 17-member squad yesterday, it was almost clear that the board had stuck with its initial decision of choosing Shakib as Mahmudullah Riyad's successor as T20I skipper by overlooking the cricketer's shenanigans only because of a lack of available options.

Moreover, not only did the board reward Shakib, but it also justified the decision by saying that Shakib had

unknowingly gotten embroiled in the controversial deal.

"The board president was present at the meeting. He said that Shakib endorsed Betwinner News thinking it was an online news portal. It wasn't the right decision. After we explained that issue to Shakib, he understood that he had made a mistake and said that he had come out of that contract," Jalal added.

Shakib did not face the media yesterday. He did not have to. Without saying any words, he had actually said a lot and probably exposed the helplessness of the BCB. In fact, the cricketer, sporting his usual nonchalant demeanour, exited the BCB president's residence and blew a kiss to the cameras panned at him, leaving everyone as just mere spectators to whom he is not accountable.

Are we letting

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possible to get the maximum benefits and move forward with it. It seems we are happy with the low-end benefits," Raihan added.

Developing a technical generation is a process and takes time, said Ubaidur Rob, country director of Population Council, a New York-based non-governmental organisation that conducts research to address critical health and development issues.

Rob went on to urge the government to invest heavily in technical education.

"The other point is that we have to focus on job-oriented education. We have the chance to reap the benefits of demographic dividends until 2045 but so far we are doing nothing," he added.

The government, albeit late, has formulated the National Employment Policy 2022 identifying a number of challenges, including measures that hinder the skilled-workforce generation.

The policy aims to create about 30 million new jobs by 2030 and take unemployment to the lowest level by 2041, according to a gazette notification of July 14.

The policy mentions that the number of unemployed and "disguised unemployed" people is 2.7 million and 12.5 million and that more than 60 million people are capable of work.