## 2 killed, 50 hurt in picnic bus wreck in Gopalganj

**OUR CORRESPONDENT,** Benapole

Two people, including a teacher, were killed and 50 others were injured after a picnic bus from Jashore hit a roadside tree in Goplaganj's Kashiani on Thursday night.

The dead are Sudipta Biswas, 37. assistant teacher of Bangari Secondary School in Jashore's Bagharpara upazila, and Bidyut Biswas, 47, guardian of a student.

Twenty-seven students are now receiving treatment at Jashore General Hospital while three of them were taken to the hospital's Incentive Care Unit, said Akhtaruzzaman, superintendent of the hospital.

Besides, three others, who suffered serious injures, were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for better treatment, said the doctor.

Police and students said the school authorities arranged an annual educational excursion to visit the mausoleum of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Gopalganj's Tungipara.

Over 200 people, including students, teachers, school managing committee members and staffers, joined the tour.

The accident happened around 12:00am when they were returning home from Gopalganj by three buses, said Taijul Islam, officer-in-charge of Jashorte Kotwali Police Station.

The OC said one of three buses tried to overtake another bus at Kashiani in Gopalganj and hit a roadside tree after its driver lost control over the steering, leaving Bidyut dead on the spot and 51 people injured.

Sudipta died soon after he was taken to Jashore General Hospital, said Saiful Islam, a physician at the hospital.

Tamizul Islam Khan, deputy commissioner of Jashore, said the district administration is giving allout support to the injured.



An aerial view shows damaged and collapsed buildings, in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake in Hatay, Turkey, yesterday.

# Russian missiles pound Ukraine's energy system

Kyiv says new Russian ground offensive has begun in east

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia struck power facilities across Ukraine with missiles yesterday, the day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky concluded a tour of Western capitals, as Ukrainian officials said a longawaited Russian offensive was under way in the east.

Ukraine's air force said 61 of a total of 71 Russian missiles had been shot down. But Energy Minister German Galushchenko said Russia had hit power facilities in six regions with missiles and drones, causing blackouts across most of Ukraine.

Russia has repeatedly attacked civilian infrastructure far from the front lines over the last four months, leaving millions of urban Ukrainians without power, heat or

winter.

The barrages have often followed diplomatic or battlefield

This one came as Zelensky ended a tour of London, Paris and Brussels with standing ovations ringing in his ears, though no public promises of the fighter ets he was asking for.

Kyiv's mayor Vitali Klitschko said 10 Russian missiles had been shot down over the Ukrainian capital after air raid sirens blared across the country during the morning rush hour and officials urged weary civilians to heed them and shelter.

European Council President Charles Michel said the attacks were indiscriminate and constituted war crimes.

"The EU and its member states stand water for days at a time in the middle of by Ukraine and all Ukrainians. And will

further speed up the provision of military equipment, including air defence," he

Russia denies targeting civilians and says the facilities it attacks are relevant to Kviv's war effort.

Ukraine has been bracing itself for a new Russian offensive in the belief that, after months of reverses, President Vladimir Putin wants to tout a battlefield success before the anniversary of the invasion he launched on Feb 24.

Putin will give his delayed annual showcase address to parliament, akin to the US president's State of the Union speech, on Feb 21. That was the date last year when he recognised the breakaway Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk as independent, a prelude to invading.

### Rohingva man with Bangladeshi passport held in Ctg airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Rohingya man was arrested with a Bangladeshi passport at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram yesterday.

Asad Ullah, accused in a murder case, was arrested by members of the Detective Branch of Chattogram Metropolitan Police when he was trying to flee the country for Saudi Arabia, said police.

The case was filed against him with Ukhiya Police Station on January 9, said Nahid Adnan Taian, deputy commissioner (north) of CMP's DB.

"The Rohingya man was trying to flee the country by a Jeddah-bound flight using a Bangladeshi passport. Acting on a tip-off, police arrested him around 6:45pm at the airport," the police official said. Further details will be disclosed later, he added.

## Man hanged for killing Dr Naznin, housemaid

UNB, Dhaka

A man has been executed at Kashimpur Central Jail for killing Dr Naznin Akhtar and her housemaid 17

The execution of Amirul Islam, 42, took place on Thursday night, said senior superintendent of Kashimpur Central Jail-2.

Amirul, son of Mohammad Mandal, was of Naogaon's Patnitala upazila.

His body was handed over to his relatives after completing necessary procedures.

Amirul was tried and sentenced to death in 2008, three years after the double murder in 2005 at Dr Nazneen's house in Dhanmandi residential area.

A murder case was filed against him with Dhanmondi Police Station.

## Businessman held in Tk 326cr embezzlement case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctq

Members of Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested Rising Steel Limited Director Jasim Uddin Chowdhury in a case filed over embezzling Tk 326 crore from AB Bank.

Jasim, brother of Aslam Chowdhury, national executive committee member of the BNP, was arrested in Feni's Mohammad Ali Bazar area early vesterday, read a press release of Rab.

According to the release, Rising Steel Limited is one of the top 20 loan defaulters. A list of loan defaulters was revealed in

the parliament on January 24. Rab has been investigating the defaulters ever since.

Nurul Absar, senior assistant director (media) of Rab-7, said during their primary interrogation they found information about a case filed over embezzling Tk 325.77 crore from AB Bank.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case against Jasim with Halishahar Police Station on July 17, 2016.

## A good initiative falls short of goal

FROM PAGE 1

Farming would require far fewer workers and much less investment if the government could popularise the Dhanbari upazila and one block of use of modern equipment, he said.

21, 2021, Agriculture Minister in Dhanbari. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said paddy seedlings on each acre of land could be planted with a transplanter in an hour and that would reduce the cost of hiring workers by around Tk

In the places where synchronised farming is being done for demonstration purposes, the farmers were given free seeds and seedling trays. The transplanters for planting seedlings were also used for free. The harvesting will be for free as well.

Mahmudul Hasan, additional

deputy director of the DAE in Tangail, from one bigha of land, but the the same size in Delduar upazila this

Dhanbari Masudur Rahman said farmers on said Anwar. their own have yet to cultivate this

Farmers owning land in the same location do not seem to be willing to cultivate together, he said, adding that using the equipment on smaller pieces of land is not cost effective.

Anwar Hossain of Bhatkura village, who participated in the synchronised farming with DAE assistance, said the harvest was better than usual.

"We get 18 to 20 maunds of rice

said synchronised cultivation was output rises to 25 to 28 maunds in done on two 50-acre blocks in the integrated farming method," he

"I wanted to cultivate paddy in Launching the project on February year. This is the third such experiment this method along with several farmers. But the authorities did not provide us with a seeding machine,"

> Many other farmers in Tangail said they were ready to form groups and adopt mechanised farming, but the equipment was not available.

Asked about this, DAE DG Badal said there was a shortage of seeding machines. "But farmers can prepare seedbeds manually if they want."

The government is trying to create entrepreneurs who would own seeding machines, transplanters and harvesters and rent those out.

Several mistakes were also found in three textbooks for the ninth and tenth grades. NCTB in mid-January issued corrections to mistakes in books for class 9 and 10 books.

Late last month, the education ministry formed two probe committees to identify mistakes in textbooks and ascertain whether the errors were

Serajul Islam Choudhury said the withdrawal of textbooks "was a political decision in the face of demands made by some religious groups".

"We don't find such debates over English medium or madrasa books. But we see it in the case of the Bangla medium, which is our mainstream... in the past, the authorities also showed the tendency to compromise by dropping contents following demands of Hefajat," he added.

On the debate over Darwin's theory of evolution, he said there is no disagreement that it is scientifically proven.

Brac University Professor Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed said the decision of withdrawing two textbooks came amid controversy and criticism from religion-based groups. "It seems to me such a decision is one kind of surrender of government," he told this newspaper.

'The government did not make the decision following proper procedures. As they have formed two probe committees, they could have reached a decision following their reports," he opined.

Asked whether they have taken the step under pressure from religious groups, Prof Moshiuzzaman evaded a direct answer by saying, "We made the decision keeping in mind different types of criticisms."

In 2017, writings of famous authors  $\,$ were scrapped because they were either non-Muslims or the contents were disliked by Islamists, said a former NCTB member, who was involved in the process. He added the exclusions were done on instructions from "higher authorities" On condition of anonymity, an

NCTB official said no textbooks were fully withdrawn since at least 2010.

Also yesterday, Education Minister Dipu Moni said, "We will prepare one new book each for sixth and seventh grade. The topics that are being talked about will not be studied in classrooms."

Regarding criticisms from various quarters, Dipu Moni, while speaking at a programme in Chandpur, said, "There is nothing anti-Islamic in these books. Still, we listen to people. we also give importance to it and respect it."

## NCTB withdraws Bangladesh approached vulnerable people, so when the subsidy

India carried out the reforms with such sincerity that after two years, it informed the lender that it did not need further instalments of the sanctioned

The reforms were much-needed but the Indian authorities were dragging act involved," Basu added. their feet then.

"For Bangladesh, that is possible," said Basu, who served as the chief economic adviser to the government of India from 2009 to 2012

Indian advisors told the IMF that they need reforms and urged them to make it happen through the conditions in the loan programme, said Basu, who is now an economics professor at Cornell University

"In the case of Bangladesh, the same thing might be happening.'

Chief among IMF's conditions are raising the tax-GDP ratio and paring back on subsidy expenditure. "Tax-GDP ratio can be increased

in the region. But 14-15 percent is He, however, acknowledged the

inertia among the tax administration that prevents the tax-GDP ratio from going up. "It is not easy though. This is a target

that must be there. You have to give attention and you have to try better." Subsidies must be pared back intelligently, he said.

"In many countries, as political pressure intensifies, subsidy starts to increase. There comes a time that subsidy needs to be withdrawn a bit

and that must be done intelligently." The ordinary people are the most is cut, buffers need to be provided for

"At the same time, fiscal deficit must be watched. Subsidy cannot be a free good -- you have to make people understand this. There is a balancing

Meanwhile, in his speech, Basu said every crisis provides an opportunity.

Bangladesh Pathashala, a social organisation, arranged the discussion at RC Majumder Auditorium. Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, chaired the event.

One of the major problems in developing countries like Bangladesh is the implementation of policies, said Mustafa K Mujeri, executive director at Institute for Inclusive Finance and Development.

does not want "Bureaucracy massive changes. They prefer marginal changes," he said.

Shamsul Alam, state minister for planning, said during his initial days as a member of the planning commission, he faced questions from bureaucracy about the necessity of planning.

Citing some decisions by former finance minister AMA Muhith regarding giving the planning ministry the responsibility to make projections for economic growth and poverty reduction, he said political far sightedness is important.

More autonomy for the Bangladesh Bank is necessary so that the central bank can determine the interest rate and solve foreign exchange issues.

"It should be given more scope," Alam added.

# Death toll nears 24,000

from the debris in the southeastern city of Antakya. Twenty minutes later, they rescued seven-year-old Muhammed Huseyin, NTV news channel reported.

Three-year-old Zeynep Ela Parlak was also rescued in Antakya yesterday, while in Adiyaman province, rescuers saved a 60-year-old Eyup Ak and in Gaziantep, two people were pulled out alive including a child whose age was not known.

But hopes were fading that many more would be found alive.

Some 24.4 million people in Syria and Turkey have been affected, according to Turkish officials and the United Nations, in an area spanning roughly 450 km from Adana in the west to Diyarbakir in the east. In Syria, people were killed as far south as Hama, 250 km from the epicentre.

Up to 5.3 million people in Syria may have been made homeless by the devastating earthquake, a United Nations official said.

Rescuers, including teams from dozens of countries, toiled night and day in the ruins of thousands of wrecked buildings to find buried survivors. In freezing temperatures, they regularly called for silence as they listened for any sound of life from mangled concrete mounds. Temperatures in the Turkish city of

of the quake, plunged to minus three degrees Celsius (26 degrees Fahrenheit) early yesterday. Despite the cold, thousands of families have been living in cars and

Gaziantep, located near the epicentre

makeshift tents -- too scared or banned from returning to their homes. Monday's quake was the largest Turkey has seen since 1939, when

33,000 people died in the eastern Erzincan province. It now ranks as the seventh most

deadly natural disaster this century, ahead of Japan's 2011 tremor and tsunami and approaching the 31,000 killed by a quake in neighbouring Iran in 2003.

# Thank you all

Winston Churchill said, that "Democracy is the worst form of government – except for all the others that have been tried." We also hold fast the truth that a free and independent media serves democracy best and countries without a free media can never achieve the full potential of their people.

But for the free media to serve

democracy, it must maintain the

highest ethical standards and

never compromise on the norms of professional journalism. That is where the unique strength of The Daily Star lies. In this journey of more than three decades, our readers, advertisers and patrons have unfalteringly stood by us. They have been our greatest source of courage and moral strength. They stood by us as we stood by them, with our peopleoriented news coverage and editorial

love and support. We stand forever indebted to them. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our advertisers and to the advertising agencies who manage the business. Without their unstinting support no newspaper can survive with independence. We sincerely thank them for their support.

positions. We really could not have

traversed this distance without their

I also thank my Board of Directors for their commitment to a free and independent media.

From today, our five-part, 216-pages, 32nd anniversary the next week, up until the 19th February, we will serve our readers with specially selected topics and creatively designed segments of our special anniversary supplement series which will give our readers both a clear understanding of the present, and a vision of our way forward.

"Towards a Smart Bangladesh" is our first segment. Inspired by the vision of our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we bring out all the challenges that Bangladesh faces and the impediments that it must overcome to build a "smart" country.

Segment 2 is titled "The changing middle-class story". This segment addresses both the constraints faced and the innovations that this class has brought about as it struggled through the pandemic and the economic downturns.

Segment 3 and 4 deals with Showbiz and Lifestyle, two areas where we have had tremendous creativity and success. The two segments will bring out the heroes and heroines of these worlds and stun you with accounts of what has happened and how extremely innovative our artists have been.

Segment 5 is dedicated to our "inspirers". This special issue celebrates all those who have been the architects of Bangladesh's success in the past decades. We highlight our heroes especially in the business sector and when it comes to achieving women's empowerment. We retell the stories of those who

supplement series starts. Over have brought us recognition in the global marketplace and universal respect among those who are involved in development work, transforming our underdeveloped status with special emphasis on women's empowerment.

We thank all the writers who have helped to make our supplements extremely rich in content.

Through our special supplements we celebrate Bangladesh and express our sincerest gratitude in helping us to win your hearts and minds over the last 32 years.

time to read all the segments.

We urge you all to set aside some

Thank you. Mahfuz Anam **Editor & Publisher** 

Bangladeshi team FROM PAGE 1 medical professionals, and 12 personnel from the fire service

reached Turkey. Meanwhile, Bangladesh also sent humanitarian aid and medicines to Syria for the earthquake victims.

A cargo plane of Bangladesh Air Force, loaded with tents, blankets, sweaters, dry foods and medicines, left for Syria last night around 10:30pm, said Selim Hossain, deputy chief information officer of disaster management and relief ministry. Group captain Jamil Uddin Ahmed

of Bangladesh Air Force is leading the

team, according to an Inter Services

Public Relations (ISPR) press release.

### the result of any negligence of NCTB $Dhaka \, University \, Professor \, Emeritus$