



SAUDI BUS CRASH At least 18 Bangladeshis confirmed dead

STAR REPORT

The number of Bangladeshis dead in Monday's bus crash in Saudi Arabia has risen to 18.

Kazi Emdad, counsellor (labor wing) at the Bangladesh Consulate in Jeddah, also told The Daily Star yesterday that 16 Bangladeshis injured in the accident were undergoing treatment in different hospitals in Makkah.

According to media reports, on Monday afternoon, the bus lost its brakes, hit a car, overturned on the side of the road, and burst into flames in the Abha district of Asir province.

There were 47 people on board the Makkah-bound bus and 34 of them were Bangladeshis, according to officials at Bangladesh Consulate in Jeddah.

The death toll is now 24.

"It is very difficult to determine the nationality due to the burnt and disfigured bodies. It will require DNA test and we cannot say the time frame to complete this right now," Muhammad Nazmul Hoque, consul general of Bangladesh Consulate in Jeddah, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Deceased Gias Uddin Meer, 49, of Cumilla made a call to his wife not long before the crash. He told his wife that he would be coming home for the Eid holidays this year.

Now his family is waiting for his body.

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Fly ash is in the air and coating the bare face, arms and clothes of a worker carrying a sack of the waste product of burning coal. Tonnes of fly ash arrive at Khulna River Terminal every day from India to be used mainly by cement manufacturers in Bangladesh. Even though the ash contains several harmful heavy metals, no safety measures are taken by the contractors who employ the workers.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

No point of sitting with EC Says BNP

STAR REPORT

Rejecting the Election Commission's invitation for informal talks, the BNP policymakers think any meeting with the commission is meaningless since it has no power to resolve the political crisis.

The party, however, thanked Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal for sending a letter inviting the BNP for a discussion.

"Our standing committee feels that any discussion or dialogue with the Election Commission will not be fruitful and will be meaningless until the main political crisis regarding the election-time government is resolved," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told journalists at a press conference at the party chairperson's

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DSA CASE AGAINST SULTANA Rab arrests prime accused ASK asks for judicial probe into death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rab arrested the key accused of the Digital Security Act case that was filed in Rajshahi after Rab detained Naogaon land office employee Sultana Jasmine.



Al Amin

Al Amin, 32, of Chandpur, was arrested in the capital's Shahjahanpur, said a press statement issued yesterday by Farzana Haque, staff officer (media) of Rab-3.

Sultana, 41, an office assistant at Chandipur union land office in Naogaon Sadar, was detained on her way to the office by a patrol team of Rab-5 on March 22. She died at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in Rab custody two days later.

On March 23, when Sultana was fighting for her life at RMCH, Enamul Haque, director of local government at the office of Rajshahi divisional commissioner, lodged the case with Rajpara Police Station in Rajshahi city.

In his case, Enamul accused Al Amin, Sultana and three other unnamed people of using his hacked Facebook account to con people by offering them jobs.

Since the case was filed, Rab members had been keeping Al Amin under surveillance, according to the Rab-3 statement.

On Tuesday afternoon, acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-3 raided Shahjahanpur

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2ND DHAKA-N'GANJ RAIL LINE

BR project runs into more trouble

Chinese contractor wants scrapping of deal for non-payment, delay in handover of part of site

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The second Dhaka-Narayanganj rail line project, which is already running behind schedule, has run into major trouble as a contractor has sought to cancel the contract.

Power Construction Corporation of China (PCCC), the contractor for civil works including laying the rail line, on March 15 sent a "contract termination notice" to the project authority citing that it was not getting payments and the project site was not handed over to it on time, shows a project document.

About 40 percent of the contractor's work still remains unfinished.

Yesterday, the Project Steering Committee held a meeting with Railways Secretary Humayun Kabir at the capital's Rail Bhaban. The committee asked the project authority to reach a solution with the contractor, said meeting sources.

In another development, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Suhan yesterday asked a delegation of PowerChina, the mother company of PCCC, to complete the Dhaka-Narayanganj rail line project before approaching the ministry for another BR project.

The delegation met the minister several weeks after Chinese state-run PowerChina sent a proposal to invest and build the Bhanga-Payra rail line on a Public Private Partnership model, two participants of the meeting said.

The delegation, however, was asked

to submit the detailed proposal on the 214km line, which may cost more than Tk 50,000 crore, they said.

The BR in January 2015 took up the second Dhaka-Narayanganj rail line project at a cost of Tk 378.65 crore. The project, which was supposed to be completed within June 2017, is now running behind schedule by more than five years.



But the BR could not even hire two contractors for the works within the stipulated deadline. Although the latest deadline expired in December last year, the project has seen 82 percent progress so far.

When the BR in September 2022 sought extension of the deadline for fourth time up to December 2023, Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division refused to extend the time without a revision of the Development Project Proposal (DPP).

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UNOs can't serve as upazila chief executive officer HC scraps provisions that gave them sweeping powers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday scrapped the provisions in a law that gave sweeping powers to upazila nirbahi officers to act as the chief executive officer and secretary of upazila parishads.

Delivering a verdict on two writ petitions, the HC at the same time ruled that the terminology "Upazila Proshason" cannot be used under the Upazila Parishad Ain. Terminology "Upazila Parishad" will be used from now on instead of Upazila Proshason.

The UNOs cannot exercise absolute powers in running the administration and other functions of the upazilas and they must be accountable to the upazila parishads led by their chairmen, who are the elected representatives of the people, said writ petitioners' lawyers.

Section 33 (1) of the Upazila Parishad Ain-1998 says that UNOs will be the chief executive officers of upazila parishads and they will give all secretarial assistant to the parishads.

According to Section 33(2) of the act, the CEOs will implement the decisions of the parishads, comply with the financial disciplines and do other functions as per the rules.

Yesterday, the HC declared sections 33(1) and (2) of the act illegal and unconstitutional, observing that those are contradictory to articles 59 and 60 of the constitution.

Article 59 (1) of the constitution

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Scientists identify secret ingredient in Vinci paintings



CNN ONLINE

"Old Masters" such as Leonardo da Vinci, Sandro Botticelli and Rembrandt may have used proteins, especially egg yolk, in their oil paintings, according to a new study.

Trace quantities of protein residue have long been detected in classic oil paintings, though they were often ascribed to contamination. A new study published Tuesday in the journal Nature Communications found the inclusion was likely intentional — and sheds light on the technical knowledge of the Old Masters, the most skilled European painters of the 16th, 17th, or early 18th century, and the way they prepared their paints.

"There are very few written sources about this and no scientific work has been done before to investigate the subject in such depth," said study author Ophélie Ranquet of the Institute of Mechanical Process Engineering and Mechanics at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology in Germany, in a phone interview.

"Our results show that even with a very small amount of egg yolk, you can achieve an amazing change of properties in the oil paint, demonstrating how it might have been beneficial for the artists."



Artisans sorting out hand-made prayer caps at a small factory in Kamrangirchar. Demand for such products multiplies during Ramadan and ahead of Eid. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Jugantor reporter sued under DSA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A journalist of the Bangla daily Jugantor was sued under the Digital Security Act yesterday.

Former deputy financial secretary of Jubo League Helal Akbar Chowdhury alias Babar filed the case against Mahbub Alam, special correspondent of the Jugantor, with the Cyber Tribunal in Chattogram, said the tribunal's Public Prosecutor Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury.

According to the case statement, the correspondent reported on March 14 that a syndicate controls everything — tender, illegal occupation and lease — in Central Railway Building (CRB), the zonal office of Bangladesh Railway, in Chattogram and the plaintiff is a part of the syndicate.

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim
2nd Death Anniversary
Marhum S.S. Nizamuddin Ahmed

Second Anniversary of death of Eminent banker and social worker **Marhum Shahzada Syed Nizamuddin Ahmed** will be observed on 30th March 2023, Thursday. To mark the day Milad Doa Mahfil and Mezban will be arranged at Gausia Rahmania Nizamia Darbar Sharif (Maizbhandar Sharif) today, 30th March, Thursday, after Magrib prayers.

Marhum Nizamuddin was a past District Governor of Lions Dist. 315 A 1 Bangladesh.

All his friends, relatives and well wishers are requested to attend the function and pray to Allah Subhanahu Ta'la for the salvation of the departed soul.

Rashida Begum and her Affectionate daughters and sons in law