

ILLEGAL LEVEL CROSSING

4 killed as train rams into truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

At least four people were killed and two others were injured after a commuter train hit a truck at an unmanned and unprotected illegal level crossing in Shambhuganj of Mymensingh city yesterday.

Three of the deceased are truck driver Sajib Miya, 28, from Mymensingh's Treeshal upazila, train passenger Rafiqul Islam, 25, from Netrakona's Barhatta upazila, and Titu, 12, from Netrakona's Durgapur, said railway police.

It was not immediately clear whether Titu was a passenger on the train or on the truck, police said, adding that the fourth victim was yet to be identified.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent them to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Md Jahangir Alam, officer-in-charge of Mymensingh Railway Police Station, said the accident took place around 1:30pm when a Dhaka-bound Balaka commuter train collided with the sand-laden truck, killing four people on the spot.

Meanwhile, train communication on the Mymensingh-Netrakona and Mymensingh-Kishoreganj routes resumed at 3:40pm, nearly two hours after the accident, said Nazmul Haque Khan, superintendent of Mymensingh Railway Station.

He said the level crossing where the accident took place is an illegal one, meaning it didn't have gates or a gateman.



Rescuers recover bodies from the damaged locomotive of a Dhaka-bound commuter train after it rammed into a sand-laden truck on an unprotected level crossing in Mymensingh city's Shambhuganj yesterday afternoon. The accident left four people dead.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Israel kills Iranian general in Syria

Tehran vows to make Tel Aviv pay

AFP, Tehran



A senior general with Iran's Revolutionary Guards was killed yesterday by an Israeli strike in Syria, the military force said, with Tehran vowing to make Israel "pay for this crime".

Iranian state media also reported the death of Razi Mousavi, describing him as "one of the most experienced advisors" of Quds Force, the foreign arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

There was no immediate comment from Israel, which has repeatedly said it will not allow arch-enemy Iran to expand its presence in Syria.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi expressed condolences for Mousavi's death, saying Israel "will certainly pay for this crime".

The general "was killed during an attack by the Zionist regime a few hours ago in Zeinabiyah district in the suburbs of Damascus," official news agency IRNA reported, using a different name for Sayyida Zeinab south of the Syrian capital.

Mousavi was "active in the field of providing logistical support to the axis of resistance in Syria," IRNA said, referring to groups backed by Tehran and arrayed against Israel.

The IRGC in a statement said Mousavi was killed in a "missile attack" and also vowed to avenge his death.

The statement noted that Mousavi was a companion of General Qassem Soleimani, Iran's revered Quds commander who was killed in Baghdad in a US drone strike in 2020.

Israel has intensified attacks there particularly against Hezbollah since the start of its war against Hamas -- also backed by Iran -- triggered by the Palestinian militant group's October 7 attacks.

A tale of the minnows

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal got zero percent of the votes cast in 2008 and its lone candidate Dilip Barua, who is also the party chief, contested and lost the deposited security money.

In 2018, it secured only 0.0005 percent of the total votes cast when two of its candidates lost their security deposits. The party did not run in 2014.

Asked why the party is contesting the election after repeated poor showings, Barua said that they have an ideology and they want to uphold it and move it forward.

"Voting has become commercialised and that is why people do not cast vote for us. We are helpless in the voting politics," he said.

Like JP (Manju) and Samyabadi, two other AL allies have an extremely low voter base.

Of the two, the Workers Party got 0.37 percent, 2.1 percent and 1.01 percent of the votes cast in the constituencies it fielded candidates in the last three national polls respectively, although few of its candidates got elected as they contested with the symbol of Awami League (boat).

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), the other ally, bagged 0.72 percent, 1.19 percent and 0.74 percent votes in the elections.

Despite such poor performance, all four parties are running with AL blessings in the January 7 polls amid a boycott by 17 of the 44 registered political parties, including the main political opposition BNP.

A total of 27 political parties, including the ruling AL and the incumbent main opposition in the parliament Jatiyo Party now led by GM Quader, are running in the election.

Bangladesh National Awami Party participates in elections as this is the biggest occasion for a small political party to get publicity and to reach out

PARTY	VOTE % IN 2008	VOTE% IN 2018
Awami League	48.04	74.22
Jatiyo Party	7.04	5.38
Jatiya Party (Manju)	0.01	0.22
Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal	0	0.0005
Krishak Shramik Janata League	0.15	0.001
Bangladesh National Awami Party	0.03	0.01
Workers Party of Bangladesh	0.37	1.01
Bikolpodhara Bangladesh	0.21	0.68
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu)	0.72	0.74
Zaker Party	0.19	0.13
Bangladesh Tarikat Federation	0.03	0.3
National People's Party	0.01	0.05
Gono Front	0.01	0.01
Bangladesh Jatiya Party (Mukit)	0.01	0.01
Islamic Front Bangladesh	0	0.04
Bangladesh Kalyan Party	0.03	0.05
Islami Oikya Jote	0.15	0.01
Bangladesh Islami Front	0.05	0.07
Bangladesh Muslim League	0	0.02
Bangladesh Sangskritik Muktijote	--	0.001
Bangladesh Khelafat Andolon	0.02	0.01
Bangladesh Nationalist Front	N/A	0.02
Gonoforum	0.1	0.61
NEW PARTIES: Bangladesh Congress, Trinamool BNP, Bangladesh Nationalist Movement and Bangladesh Supreme Party		

to the people, said its Chairperson Ivy Ahmed. The party is part of the 14-party alliance.

"When the election is costly and heavily dominated by muscle power, it is tough for an ideology-based party to survive. The party gets organised and benefits during the election as many activities take place," she said.

In the last three elections, the ruling AL's vote has increased exponentially -- it bagged 48 percent, 72 percent and 74 percent of the votes cast -- while JP's vote decreased steadily at 7.04 percent, 7 percent and 5.38 percent respectively.

Nearly half the JP candidates in 2014 and over a quarter in the 2008 elections lost their security deposit for failing to secure the mandatory minimum votes.

Zakir Hossain, chairman of Gono Front, said they contest in polls to speak up for the people of the country.

"If you don't have any platform, your statement is worthless. We take part in the election to keep our

PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE

Three Jubo League activists shot in Tangail

11 more injured in 5 districts; two polls campaign offices vandalised in Lalmonirhat, Faridpur

STAR REPORT

At least 14 people were injured and two campaign offices damaged in polls-related violence in six districts since Sunday night.

Of them, three Jubo League activists suffered bullet wounds during a clash between the supporters of the Awami League candidate and an independent in Tangail Sadar upazila on Sunday night.

The injured -- Baghil union unit Jubo League General Secretary Rokon Miah, and activists Emdadul and Siam -- were admitted to Tangail General Hospital, said Lokman Hossain, officer-in-charge of Tangail Sadar Police Station.

They were hit by shotgun pellets, said hospital sources.

AL nominee for Tangail-5 Mamunur Rashid Mamun and independent aspirant Sanowar Hossain blamed each other for the incident.

Mamun told reporters that their motorcycle procession came under attack by Sanowar's men in Jugani village around 11:00pm.

Contacted, Sanowar refuted the allegation and demanded a proper investigation into the incident.

Police detained two people in this connection, said OC Lokman.

A campaign office of an independent candidate for Lalmonirhat-1 was vandalised in Hatibandha, while a campaign office of the AL nominee for Faridpur-4 was attacked in Bhanga.

In the Lalmonirhat-1 constituency, eight followers of an independent candidate were hurt in an attack allegedly by men of the AL candidate on Sunday night.

The injured were admitted to Hatibandha Upazila Health Complex, said Anwarul Haque, the resident medical officer.

A group of people swooped on a procession brought out by supporters of independent candidate Ataur Rahman Prodhana at Doani Sadhurbazar in Hatibandha around 8:00pm, said locals.

Contacted, Ataur said that supporters of AL contender Motahar Hossain carried out the attack and also vandalised a campaign office.

However, Motahar dismissed the allegation.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, said OC Saiful Islam of Hatibandha Police Station.

Meanwhile, Jahirul Islam Munshi, upazila vice-chairman of Cumilla's Chandina, was injured in an attack allegedly by followers of the AL candidate yesterday evening at Gazaria of the upazila.

Jahirul is a supporter of Cumilla-7 independent candidate Muntakim Ashraf Tito.

AL candidate Pran Gopal Datta could not be reached for comment.

If anyone files a complaint in this

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EC decides to withdraw Habiganj DC

Three cops to be withdrawn as well in Chandpur, Madaripur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday asked the public administration ministry to withdraw Habiganj Deputy Commissioner Debi Chanda, who has also been working as the district returning officer for the January 7 polls.

A letter was issued by EC Deputy Secretary Mizanur Rahman in this regard.

Without mentioning any specific reason, the letter, sent to the public administration secretary, said that the decision was taken for the sake of a free and fair election.

"After withdrawing the DC, the authority has been requested to appoint a suitable officer in the post," reads the letter.

Meanwhile, the EC also decided to withdraw two more officers in charge and a police inspector in three districts as they were found to be neglectful in discharging their duties.

The two OCs are from the Matlab Police Station in Chandpur and the Dasar Police Station in Madaripur. The lone police inspector is from Kaliganj Police Station in Gazipur.

Earlier, on Sunday, the EC withdrew three OCs in Madaripur's Kalkini, Mymensingh's Fulpur and Tarakanda, and an upazila nirbahi officer of Mymensingh's Fulpur. On Saturday, two more OCs were similarly withdrawn.

2 Bangladeshis executed in KSA

UNB, Dhaka

Two Bangladeshi expatriates living in Saudi Arabia were executed after being convicted in a final court verdict over the killing of an Indian man.

The murder, for which no date was given, was the result of a financial disagreement, reports Gulf News.

The Bangladeshi nationals were found guilty of taking the victim -- an Indian citizen -- to an empty plot of land, strangling him with a piece of cloth, and killing him with pesticide. They then sought to cover up the murder by burying the body, the report said.

However, the police were able to apprehend them. Following an investigation, the duo was submitted to the appropriate court, which convicted them.

The ruling was later upheld in the appeals and supreme courts, and it was made final by a royal order.

Both Bangladeshi individuals were executed in the Jazan area of Saudi Arabia's southwest.

Farmer found dead

UNB, Natore

Police recovered the body of a farmer at Belta village in Singra upazila of Natore yesterday.

Locals found Anwar's body in a paddy field, said Abul Kalam Azad, officer-in-charge (OC) of Singra Police Station.

Later, police recovered the body and sent it to Sadar Hospital morgue.

Family members said Anwar had gone out to his field at Chalanbeel, one and a half kilometres from his house, to check on his crops in the morning.

Police are investigating the death, the OC said.

Farewell

party's registration active."

Asked about the ideology of the party, he could not say anything specific but said that they work for the betterment of the country.

Bangladesh Congress, Trinamool BNP, Bangladesh Nationalist Movement and Bangladesh Supreme Party are contesting in this year's election for the first time as they got registration between 2019 to 2023.

These small and name-only parties are mostly opportunists, said Badiul Alam Majumder, secretary of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik.

They took part in the election to get some benefits from the ruling quarter and it happens during all the regimes, he said, adding that political parties also bring them on board to play a psychological game with the opponents.

A total of 27 political parties, including the ruling AL and the incumbent main opposition in the parliament Jatiyo Party now led by GM Quader, are running in the election.

"These small parties take full advantage of that when the election comes," he added.

Every political party has the right to contest in the election, said Shantanu Majumder, a professor in the department of political science at the University of Dhaka.

"But the mushrooming of political parties indicates that ideological differences among the parties are huge. Some right-wing politicians believe that the more posts they vie for, the higher their chances of getting a share of the power pie. The left-leaning political parties dug too much into theory and got split."

FROM PAGE 1

With just Tk 42 Rahman set off on his entrepreneurial journey at the age of 10 and over the next few decades, he went on to establish a business empire -- comprising 40 companies ranging from commodities such as flour, sugar, edible oil, feed and rice milling to economic zones and hi-tech park -- with an annual turnover of Tk 35,000 crore.

"He was a self-made man," said Biswajit Saha, director of corporate and regulatory affairs at the City Group and a longtime associate of Rahman.

At the tender age of around 10, he, alongside his elder sibling, set up a grocery shop in front of their home in the capital's Gendaria with capital provided by their father. The shop yielded a daily profit of Tk 30 from a daily turnover of Tk 150.

"In facing the circumstances of my life, there was no option to retreat, and there existed no alternative path to advance. With a family of 11 siblings, encompassing their financial needs alongside those of my own, the imperative to excel became an unwavering necessity," Rahman said in an interview.

But a bigger dream lay dormant within him upon witnessing an oil mill operated by a Pakistani national. "If they can establish a mill coming from Pakistan, why can't I do the same in my country?"

Then on February 6, 1972, at a cost of Tk 52,000 he opened his oil mill, which was the culmination of three years of planning and efforts. And with this began City Group's foray into commodity business on a full-fledged basis.

Today, City Group is major player in the edible oil, flour, sugar, rice and lentils alongside sprawling conglomerates like S Alam Group, Meghna Group of Industries, Pran, ACL Square and so on.

"By ensuring quality, we managed to sell products at a profit," Rahman said.

From oil mill, Rahman ventured

into wholewheat, flour and semolina under the brand name of Teer.

In 1991, as part of the backward integration, City Group established Hasan Printing and Packaging and Hasan Containers.

City Navigations started its journey in 2000 to support carriage of raw material from mother vessels to production units. Now, 37 lightertage vessels, each having capacity of 3,000-3,500 metric tonne, are now in operation.

In 2001, City PET industries started its operation in 2001 and at the same time a new pure drinking water brand named JIBON was introduced. In 2004, Teer Feed was launched to supply poultry, cattle and fish feeds.

Then in 2006, City Sugar Industries, the country's largest sugar refinery unit, was established.

In 2018, City Group received a licence from Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority to set up 'City Economic Zone' on 78 acres of land in Rupshi, Narayanganj. In 2021, the group set up fully automated Rupshi Flour Mills.

In 2010, City Group purchased 50 percent stakes of Somoy TV, which holds the distinction of being the most subscribed Bangladeshi YouTube channel and the first YouTube channel to get the Diamond Play Button. Rahman served as the chairman of Somoy TV.

The industrialist was also committed to social responsibility. In Gendaria, he oversaw the construction of the state-of-the-art Asghar Ali Hospital to cater to the healthcare needs of the residents of Old Dhaka.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi and Mahbubul Alam, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, expressed their condolences over the death of the eminent industrialist.

He was laid to rest at the capital's Jurain graveyard in the evening yesterday.