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Six die as bus, microbus collide head-on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

At least six people, including two of a family, were killed and 12 others injured in a head-on collision between a microbus and a bus in Eidgaon upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The accident took place on Cox's Bazar-Chatto gram highway in Khodaibari AG Lutfur Kabir Adarsha Dakhil Madrasa area around 11:30am, said Mozammel Haque, in-charge of Dulahazara highway police.

Two died on the spot and four others passed away while undergoing treatment at hospitals.

The deceased were passengers of the microbus that was heading towards Chattogram's Banskhali upazila from Cox's Bazar.

The deceased were Md Dula Mia, Abu Ahmad, Halsa Begum, Mahmuda Begum and her daughter Saira Khatun. They are residents of different villages in Banskhali upazila.

The identity of the other deceased could not be known till filing of this report last night.

Sources said several people in the microbus were patients and their attendants.

They were returning to Banskhali after having eye surgeries in Cox's Bazar.

Two died on the spot and four others passed away while undergoing treatment at hospitals.



Sayma, around seven-years-old, had tied a sheet of styrofoam to her head to shield herself from the glaring sun as she continued her work of collecting scraps in the capital's Gabtoli. Along with the likes of rickshaw pullers and traffic cops, child labourers too are the worst victims of the ongoing heatwave. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Raise age ceiling for govt jobs to 35yrs

Education ministry proposes public admin STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Education has proposed increasing the age ceiling for entering government service from 30 to 35 years.

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury recently forwarded a letter to the Ministry of Public Administration outlining the proposal.

Public Relations Officer MA Khair confirmed the information to The Daily Star last night.

The letter stated that the age ceiling for various government, non government, semi-government, nationalised, and autonomous institutions is 30 years.

However, students and job seekers have been demanding to raise the age

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Nine AL activists among 33 charged with Tipu murder

Trial to begin May 21, over two years after the incident

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against 33 people, including nine members of the ruling Awami League and its associate bodies, in a case filed over the killings of party leader Jahidul Islam Tipu and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity in March 2022.

Twenty-six people, who were present at the court yesterday, pleaded not guilty after Judge Muhammad Ali Hussain of Dhaka Special Judge Court-3 read out the charges to them.

Attackers opened fire on Tipu, who was in a car, in Motijheel AGB Colony area. A stray bullet hit Prity, 22, who happened to be in a rickshaw next to the vehicle. The two were declared dead after being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The death of Prity triggered a huge public outcry.

Dhaka city (South) AL Organising Secretary Golam Ashraf Talukder, its member Maruf Ahmed Mansoor, former general secretary of Motijheel thana Chhatra League Khairul Islam, and Motijheel thana Jatiya Party leader Juber Alam Khan Robin are among the 33 accused.

Two other accused are Suman Sikder Musa, a businessman named as the main coordinator of the murder in the charge sheet, and Shamim Hossain, who was contacted by Musa to carry out the murder.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Tipu

Farmer killed in 'shootout between Rab, robbers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A farmer was killed allegedly in crossfire during a gunfight between Rapid Action Battalion members and a gang of suspected robbers in Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila last night.

The deceased, Bayet Ullah, 35, hailed from Boro Chowdhury Para in Bharuakhali union.

Masud Chowdhury, an employee of NGO Prottasi, was kidnapped by the "Farhad Mostaq gang" of Bharuakhali, said Lt Col HM Sazzad Hossain, commanding officer of Rab-15 in Cox's Bazar.

He said Rab members went to Murapara area in Baruakhali union to rescue him last night.

Seeing the law enforcers arrive, the gang opened fire, triggering a gunfight. During the gunfight, Bayet was caught in the line of fire and died on the spot, the official said.

Some villagers were also injured, he said, adding, "Bayet along with other villagers joined the Rab team to drive away the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

US, Egypt 'hopeful' of Gaza truce

Envoys meet in Cairo for a new round of talks; Israeli air strikes kill 30 in Rafah

AGENCIES

US top diplomat Antony Blinken yesterday said he was "hopeful" Hamas would accept the latest proposal for a long-sought Gaza truce and hostage release deal as negotiators from the Palestinian group were due in Egypt.

Egypt, Qatar and the United States have been trying to mediate an agreement between Israel and Hamas for months, and a recent flurry of diplomacy appeared to suggest a new push towards halting the fighting.

Talks "are taking place in Cairo today", said Al-Qahera News, which is linked to Egyptian intelligence services. It was not clear whether the Hamas delegation had already arrived, but Qatari mediators were also in Cairo according to a source with knowledge of the talks.

A senior Hamas official said the besieged Gaza Strip to the brink of famine, UN and humanitarian aid groups say, reduced much of the territory to rubble and raised fears of a wider regional conflict.

Blinken told a World Economic

Forum meeting in Saudi Arabia he was "hopeful" Hamas would accept a truce. "Hamas has before it a proposal that is extraordinarily, extraordinarily generous on the part of Israel," Blinken said, urging the group to "decide quickly". "I'm hopeful that they will make the right decision."

Speaking at the same meeting, Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said "the proposal has taken into account the positions of both sides."

- » Hamas has no 'major issues' with the truce plan
- » 40-day ceasefire offered to Hamas: Cameron
- » Death toll in enclave rises to 34,488

While there was no "final decision" yet, Shoukry said: "We are hopeful... I hope that all will rise to the occasion."

The current proposal includes a sustained 40-day ceasefire and the release of potentially thousands of Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the release of Israeli hostages, British Foreign Secretary David Cameron said yesterday.

The offensive has brought the besieged Gaza Strip to the brink of famine, UN and humanitarian aid groups say, reduced much of the territory to rubble and raised fears of a wider regional conflict.

Scientists find fast CO2 storing material



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists are celebrating the "exciting" discovery of a material that can store carbon dioxide faster than trees.

Sulphur hexafluoride is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide and can last thousands of years in the atmosphere.

The research, published in the journal Nature Synthesis, saw a team led by scientists at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh create hollow, cage-like molecules with high storage capacities for greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and sulphur hexafluoride.

Dr Marc Little, who jointly led the research, said: "This is an exciting discovery because we need new porous materials to help solve society's biggest challenges."

"For example, direct air capture of carbon dioxide is increasingly important because even when we stop emitting carbon dioxide, there's still going to be a huge need to capture previous emissions that are already in the environment."

Bar pharma from raising medicine prices at will

HC asks authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to take effective measures to prevent the pharmaceutical companies from hiking the prices of all types of medicines arbitrarily.

The officials concerned, including the director general of the Directorate General of Drug Administration, have been asked to implement the order.

In response to a writ petition, the court also directed the government to prevent the pharmaceutical companies from importing raw materials, and manufacturing and selling foreign drugs without the approval of the health ministry.

The court issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why their inaction on fixing prices of all drugs under section 30 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act-2023 should not be declared illegal.

The bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice Md Atabullah issued

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



A goods-laden three-wheeler toppling over while plying a worn-out road in Keraniganj's Ikuriya yesterday. This road has long been in poor condition, with no initiative in sight to repair it, leading to frequent accidents like this.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Man secures bail after arrest over 'hurting religious sentiment'

He posted excerpt of Lalon song on FB

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

The man who was arrested for a Facebook post that featured lyrics from a Lalon song and consequently "hurt religious sentiments" secured bail from a Shariatpur court yesterday.

Shariatpur Senior Judicial Magistrate Sakib Hossain granted bail to Sanjoy Rakhit, 40, after a petition was filed with the court in this regard, court inspector Alamgir Hossain told The Daily Star.

Speaking to The Daily Star around 8:15pm last night, Nesar Alam, jail superintendent of Shariatpur, said they were yet to receive the bail order.

"Once we get the order, we'll talk to the higher authorities concerned since it is a sensational matter and then release him."

Meanwhile, Sanjoy's arrest sparked outcry among netizens. In separate statements issued yesterday, Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council and Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad condemned the arrest and demanded his immediate release.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1