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Three killed as auto-rickshaw, truck collide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three people, including two of a family, were killed as a truck and a CNG-run auto-rickshaw collided head-on in Chattogram's Patiya upazila early yesterday.

The victims were Rumi Akter, 30, her five-year-old nephew Fahim, of the upazila, and auto-rickshaw driver Anwar Hossain, 51, of Boalkhali upazila, said Jasim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Patiya Police Station.

The incident took place around 12:10am in Pachuria Military Pool area when the Patiya-bound auto-rickshaw collided head-on with the truck heading for Boalkhali, he said.

Driver and two passengers of the auto-rickshaw were critically injured, said the OC, adding that they were declared dead after being taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the auto-rickshaw, but the trucker managed to flee with the truck, said the OC, adding, "We are conducting drives to nab the trucker."

Filing of a case was underway, said the police official.



Palestinians mourn over the body of their relative killed in the Israeli bombardment in western Gaza City's Al-Sinaa neighbourhood yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Biden faces more calls to quit race

Donors to hold roughly \$90m in pledges if he remains on ticket

REUTERS, Washington

President Joe Biden faced more calls from fellow Democrats to abandon his re-election bid yesterday, following a news conference in which he delivered nuanced responses but occasionally stumbled over his words.

It was unclear whether Biden's performance would convince doubters in his party that he is their best bet to defeat Republican Donald Trump in the November 5 election and serve another four-year term in the White House.

At least 17 congressional Democrats so far have called for him to drop out and allow the party to pick another standard-bearer, including some who announced their positions after the Nato news conference on Thursday night.

The New York Times reported that unnamed donors have told a pro-Biden Super PAC that roughly \$90 million in pledges will remain on hold as long as he remains in the race.

But Biden made clear that he did not plan to step aside. "If I show up at the convention and everybody says they



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Ambanis hire over 100 pvt planes for wedding



REUTERS, Mumbai

The wedding of the billionaire Mukesh Ambani's youngest son Anant Ambani, 29, and his long-time girlfriend Radhika Merchant, 29, is expected to require the use of more than 100 private planes, including three Falcon-2000 jets, to transport wedding guests, among whom are celebrities in the worlds of entertainment, politics, and business.

Rajan Mehra, chief executive of Club One Air, said the Ambanis have hired three of his company's Falcon-2000 jets to ferry wedding guests and expects 100 plus private planes to be used for the events.

"The guests are coming from all over and each aircraft will make multiple trips across the country," he said.

The wedding is the culmination of lavish celebrations throughout the year and according to police, has been deemed a "public event" due to the presence of international and Indian household names.

The couple tied the knot yesterday.

NEPAL LANDSLIDE

63 missing as 2 buses swept away

AFP, Kathmandu

At least 63 people were missing in Nepal after a landslide triggered by heavy monsoon rains swept two buses off a highway and into a swollen river, authorities said yesterday.

Dozens of search and rescue personnel were combing the site for survivors of the accident in the central district of Chitwan, district official Khimananda Bhusal told AFP.

Bhusal said that the buses were carrying at least 66 people between them but three passengers had been able to escape before they crashed into the Trishuli river and were now being treated in hospital.

"We are not sure of the total number because the buses could have picked up others on the road," he said. "The river has swollen and no one else has been found yet."

The accident took place along the Narayanghat-Mugling highway, around 100 kilometres (60 miles) west of the capital Kathmandu early yesterday at 3:30 am local time.

One bus was heading from the capital Kathmandu to Gaur in Rautahat district in southern Nepal and the other was en route to Kathmandu from southern Birgunj.

A driver was killed in a separate accident on the same road after a boulder hit his bus. He died as he was being treated at a hospital.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal expressed sadness over the accident in a post on social media platform X.

Rohingya repatriation looking like pipe dream

Experts say fighting in Myanmar complicating efforts for their return

PORIMOL PALMA

The issue of Rohingya repatriation is getting more complicated for Bangladesh with the rebel armed group Arakan Army (AA) controlling most of the bordering Rakhine state.

Intensified fighting between the Myanmar junta and AA has also created a serious security threat along the 271-km Bangladesh-Myanmar border, said international relations analysts.

This also puts Bangladesh in an awkward position in terms of diplomatic relations with Myanmar if the AA takes full control of Rakhine.

"Myanmar has virtually no central control over the border with Bangladesh as the Arakan Army controls the majority of it. Thus, our physical border security is already shaky," said M Sakhawat Hussain, a senior fellow at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance at North South University.

As of now, Bangladesh maintains a diplomatic relationship with Myanmar's military, which took control of the country through a coup in February 2021.

"The question arising now is with whom should Bangladesh communicate when it comes to border security? Is it the Myanmar

military or Arakan Army?" said Sakhawat, a retired brigadier general.

Analysts say Bangladesh's relations with Myanmar have remained fraught because of repeated influx of the Rohingya since the 1980s. It deteriorated following the influx of about 7.5 lakh Rohingya in 2017.

"The question arising now is with whom should Bangladesh communicate when it comes to border security? Is it the Myanmar military or Arakan Army?"

M SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN
A senior fellow at NSU's South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance

Meanwhile, after the military coup in 2021, the Peoples Defence Force, the armed wing of the National Unity Government (NUG) and other ethnic rebel groups across Myanmar, have taken control of the majority of the country.

Since November last year, the AA captured 10 key towns -- nine in Rakhine and one in adjacent Chin state -- according to a report of the International Crisis Group.

On May 18, AA captured Buthidaung town and seized much of Maungdaw in the Rohingya-majority region. In so doing, the AA now has control over most of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border.

Tens of thousands of people, mostly Rohingya in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships, were displaced following the looting and burning of Rohingya homes in Buthidaung and surrounding villages.

According to the UN, about 4,000 Rohingya took shelter near the Naf river close to the Bangladesh border about a month ago. It also called on Bangladesh and other states to provide shelter to those seeking it.

The fighting also forced nearly 800 members of Myanmar's Border Guard Police, military and their family members to take shelter in Bangladesh in recent months. They were later repatriated.

In early June, bullets were fired from Myanmar at boats on the Naf river, which caused some 10,000 Bangladeshis to be stranded on the St Martin's Island.

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Israeli forces pull back from parts of Gaza City

Leave behind dozens of bodies, wrecked homes

AGENCIES

Israeli forces pulled back from parts of Gaza City overnight, after a fierce, week-long offensive that met with Hamas resistance, leaving dozens of dead and wrecked homes and roads in the Palestinian enclave's biggest urban area, rescuers said yesterday.

The offensive, 10 months into Israel's campaign to eliminate Hamas, took place as US-backed mediators sought to finalise a peace deal that would free remaining hostages.

The Gaza Civil Emergency Service said teams had collected around 60 bodies of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces over the past week from the area of Tel Al Hawa and the edges of the Sabra neighbourhood in Gaza City.

Both residents and rescue teams cautioned that while tanks withdrew from some areas, Israeli snipers and tanks continued to control high ground at some locations, and warned residents against trying to return to their homes in those areas.

"There are bodies scattered in the streets, dismembered bodies, there are bodies of entire families, there are also bodies inside a home of an entire family that was completely burned," Gaza Strip Civil Defense spokesperson Mahmoud Basal said in comments carried by media in Hamas-run Gaza.

- » Israeli snipers, tanks continue to control high grounds
- » Hamas accuses Israel of stalling peace talks
- » Gaza death toll tops 38,400



A large tree fell on the Satmasjid Road in the capital's Dhanmondi yesterday after a spell of torrential rain in the morning, disrupting traffic. The photo was taken at 3:00pm.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Nepal PM Dahal loses confidence vote



REUTERS, Kathmandu

Nepal is set for a new coalition government led by politician K P Sharma Oli after the more radical Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal lost a parliamentary vote of confidence yesterday, ending a tumultuous 20-month tenure.

Nepal has been politically unstable since it abolished a 239-year-old monarchy in 2008. Oli's new government will be the 14th since then.

Its politics are closely monitored by its two big neighbours China and India, who have invested heavily in the Himalayan country as they jostle for influence.

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