

Man killed in road crash in Araihazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Narayanganj

An elderly fish vendor died after a three-wheeler, locally called a Nosimon, veered off the road and fell into a roadside ditch in the Araihazar upazila of Narayanganj.

The accident took place early yesterday on the Uchitpura-Ramchandradi road in the Gohordi area, said Khondaker Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge of Araihazar Police Station.

The deceased was identified as Ali Akbar, 65.

Quoting locals, police said Akbar hired a Nosimon along with his two sons to buy fish from the Bhulta area in Rupganj upazila.

On the way, the driver lost control of the vehicle in the Gohordi area, causing it to fall into a roadside ditch.

Akbar was seriously injured after being crushed under the overturned vehicle. He was rushed to the Araihazar Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead.

Legal procedures are underway regarding the incident, the OC added.

Child drowns in river

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Netrokona

A five-year-old boy drowned in the Mangaleshwari river in Kalmakanda upazila of Netrokona yesterday.

The deceased is Mujahid, son of Sabir Hossain of Dahapara village in Durgapur upazila of the same district.

According to family members and police, Mujahid, along with his parents, went to visit his aunt's house in Bishwanathpur-Nayapara village during the Eid vacation.

Around 2:30pm, he went to the nearby Mangaleshwari river while playing in the area. At one point, he accidentally fell into the river.

As his family couldn't find him for a while, they began searching. With the help of locals, he was eventually rescued from the river and rushed to the Kalmakanda Upazila Health Complex.

Afroza Akter, the on-duty physician at the emergency department of the health complex, confirmed that the child was brought dead to the hospital.

Md Lutfor, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Kalmakanda Police Station, said following necessary legal procedures, the body was handed over to the family.



A street vendor sells face masks from a makeshift stall in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area, as demand rises amid renewed Covid-19 concerns. The Directorate General of Health Services already issued an 11-point advisory for the public and suspected patients following a spike in cases at home and in neighbouring countries. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Foreign mango varieties gain popularity in hill tracts

MD NAZRUL ISLAM, Ctg

Alongside local mango varieties, various foreign types of mangoes are now being cultivated in the three hill districts. The hilly orchards are currently adorned with colourful and flavourful mangoes. This year, the harvest has been abundant.

Last year, the three hill districts of the country produced over 200,000 tonnes of mangoes. This year, production is expected to be even higher, according to officials involved.

There was a time when people in the Chattogram region had to wait for mangoes from the northern parts of the country. But that is no longer the case. The mangoes produced in the three hill districts are now meeting a significant portion of the demand in the Chattogram region and are also being supplied to other districts across the country.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension, mangoes are being cultivated on 3,620 hectares of land in Rangamati district. In Bandarban, both local and foreign mango varieties are being grown on 10,239 hectares, and in Khagrachhari, mango cultivation covers 4,421 hectares.

Md Nasim Haider, Chief Agricultural Officer of the Department of Agricultural Extension in the three hill districts, said mango cultivation has increased in the hilly areas. Many hobbyist orchard owners are cultivating various foreign mango varieties out of passion and are getting good yields. However, these foreign mangoes have not yet reached full-scale commercial production, he said.

Orchard owners in the three hill districts report that mango cultivation is increasing day by day. Previously, only local varieties were grown, but now foreign varieties such as the Japanese "Miyazaki", Thai "Katimon",



"Red Palmer", "Banana mango", "Brunei King", "Kyojai", "Valencia Pride", and "Kensington Pride" are also being produced.

The orchard owners said these mangoes are attracting buyers due to their excellent taste and being free from formalin. They are also providing new income opportunities for local farmers.

Mohammad Rafique, a wholesale fruit trader from Bandarban, said both local and foreign mangoes are now reaching not only local markets but also Chattogram, Dhaka, and the tourist city of Cox's Bazar.

A visit to various hilly markets revealed that depending on size and variety, local mangoes such as "Rupali" (Amrapali) and "Rangwai" are being sold at prices ranging from Tk 60 to 100 per kg. Among the foreign varieties, "Red Palmer" is selling at Tk 300, "Banana" at Tk 200, "Kyojai" at Tk 180, and "Red Queen" at Tk 300 per kg.

In Sindukchhari, Khagrachhari, Lashi Mong Marma has cultivated various foreign mango varieties on 25 acres of hilly land. His

cultivation of the Japanese "Miyazaki" mango in the hill tracts has created quite a stir.

Lashi Mong Marma said, "I'm cultivating many foreign mango varieties in my orchard. I've been maintaining mango orchards in the hills for about 10-12 years. I started growing foreign mangoes as a hobby, and I'm getting good yields. Many people come from far away to see these mangoes."

In Bandarban, Shahadat Hossain, a businessman from Chattogram, has established an orchard of foreign mangoes. "I started importing popular mango varieties from different countries and began setting up orchards around 8-10 years ago. Now the trees are bearing good fruit. These tasty mangoes are very enjoyable to eat and fetch good prices in the market."

Meanwhile, officials from the Department of Agricultural Extension in Bandarban reported that this year's mango harvest in the district has been abundant. About 60 percent of the yield is from the Rangwai variety, 30 percent from Amrapali, and 10 percent from other foreign varieties.

According to officials, training programmes for farmers are helping to expand mango cultivation in the region.

Erosion threatens new embankment in two villages

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

Around 3,000 residents of two villages under Pirojpur's Indurkani upazila have long endured immense suffering due to the absence of a protective embankment.

About seven years ago, an earthen embankment was constructed along the Kacha River in Togra village to replace the previous one, which had been washed away by the high tide caused by Cyclone Sidr in November 2007.

However, the new embankment also collapsed within a few months after being struck by tidal surges.

Finally, last year, a 1.5-kilometre embankment was constructed along Togra and Umedpur villages using geotextile and tube bags for added protection.

places due to insufficient placement of the protective bags, significantly weakening its structure.

"During the high tide at the end of May this year, water levels rose and struck the embankment," said Kabir Howlader of Togra village. "That's when the geotextile bags were displaced."

He added that the bags did not cover the full height of the embankment, leaving it inadequately protected.

Another resident, Abdul Mannan Howlader, said they were initially hopeful after the new embankment was built.

"But now we fear it might collapse again during the upcoming rainy season, when flooding is most frequent," he said. "If concrete blocks were placed on the embankment, it could be properly protected."

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This high-voltage power box, connected to underground electrical lines, has been left exposed after its cover was broken. Nearby residents have used wood to create a temporary cover; however, it still poses a risk to passersby and anyone who comes into contact with it. Locals have alleged that, despite informing the authorities, no action has been taken to cover the exposed box. The photo was taken from Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, near the west side of the metro rail station yesterday.

PABNA MUNICIPALITY Residents suffer due to sorry state of roads

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

More than 130 kilometres out of total 240 km road network in Pabna Municipality are in a dilapidated condition due to lack of repairs and maintenance for prolonged period.

As such, residents including students, office-goers, businessmen and vehicle drivers have been suffering immensely during their daily commute.

Visiting the roads in different areas of the municipality recently, this correspondent observed that bitumen surface has worn off and small and large potholes have developed everywhere, causing disruption to vehicular movement and severe congestion on the busiest roads. The situation exacerbates when roads become submerged after rainfall during monsoon.

"It is difficult to use Pabna Bus Terminal Road (Ataikula Road) and Pabna General Hospital Road at normal time as those are entirely damaged and unfit for vehicular movement," said Md Idris Ali, a local rickshaw puller.



"Just commuting from one corner to another within the municipality often becomes extremely difficult as the roads are utterly damaged and vehicles charge high fares to ply the roads," said Akhirun Islam, a resident of Eidgah area beside Ataikula road.

"One needs to spend a minimum of Tk 40-50 for travelling barely half kilometre distance in the town. When it rains, it becomes even more of an ordeal as vehicle drivers simply refuse to take passengers using the battered roads. Office-goers and students suffer the most," he added.

"At least 1-km stretch along this road has long been in a dilapidated condition, making it an arduous task to take patients to the hospital.

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Stepmother, grandmother killed 'by youth'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A 27-year-old man allegedly killed his stepmother and grandmother by slitting their throats with a machete in the Charabunia village under Madarunia union of Patuakhali Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Shahida Begum, 48, and Kulsum Bibi, 125.

The alleged killer, Al Amin, fled the scene immediately after the incident, which took place around 1:00pm yesterday, said police.

Family members claimed Al Amin has been suffering from mental illness for over 5-6 years.

According to locals and police, Al Amin had gone missing several days ago. He was found three days back and brought back home by his family.

Yesterday around noon, his elder brother went to a local female union parishad member to collect documents needed for admitting Al Amin to the Pabna Mental Hospital. Their father, Abdur Razzaq, was away for work at the time of the killing.

Seizing the opportunity, Al Amin allegedly hacked his stepmother in the yard and then entered the house and killed his grandmother.

Police rushed to the spot after being informed, but the accused had already fled the scene.

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