

Five killed in New York state tourist bus crash

AFP, New York

Five passengers aboard a tourist bus were killed Friday when their driver got distracted and crashed on a New York state highway, police said.

The wreck happened 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Buffalo as the tourists headed back to New York City after visiting Niagara Falls.

The passengers were of Indian, Chinese and Filipino origin, authorities said.

"It's believed the operator became distracted, lost control, over corrected and ended up... over there," said New York state police commander major Andre Ray at the scene Friday evening, giving the toll for the first time.

No one else was in a life-threatening condition, Ray said. Several passengers received medical treatment and were released.

Fifty-four people were on the bus when it crashed and no children were killed, US media reported, contradicting an earlier police briefing.

Six Chinese citizens were aboard the bus, China's state broadcaster CCTV said quoting the Chinese consulate in New York. Five were treated for minor injuries and discharged, while the sixth was undergoing surgery.



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan Ishaq Dar being welcomed by Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday afternoon. Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Imran Haider and Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Muhammad Iqbal Khan were also present at the time.

PHOTO: PTD

JCD panel delayed over internal feud

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this year, but disputes soon followed.

Insiders in JCD factions, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the feuds slowed polls preparations.

The situation worsened on August 8 after the JCD announced its extended and hall committees, sparking controversy over post allocation.

Dissident leaders alleged the committees included former Chhatra League activists, clandestine Shibir members, murder accused, and individuals expelled for drug abuse and mugging. They staged protests, barring the JU unit's top leaders from campus for nearly nine days.

Tensions peaked on August 17, when the JCD central general secretary arrived on the campus and the JU unit's leaders re-entered, triggering a face-off with dissidents. That same day, a probe committee was formed to investigate the disputed appointments, with its report due on September 15.

Although the conflict has since cooled, several senior leaders allege the rift was provoked by infiltrators to weaken the JCD ahead of the polls.

JU JCD Convener Jahir Uddin Muhammad Babor said, "We're united over Jucusu. We have multiple aspirants for several posts, many of whom submitted nominations for more than one position. We're taking time to select the most qualified candidates."

He said the JCD would announce a full panel for Jucusu and hall elections

in two to three days. "We'll contest with a full panel in four of the 11 male halls, while in the others, partial panels will be announced. No panels will be formed for female halls, but if anyone seeks support, we will provide it."

He added that non-committee-based candidates with strong standing on the campus were also being considered.

Sources said Sheikh Sadi, Tanjila Hossain Boishakhi, Mirza Saki, Syeda Ananna Faria, Abdul Gaffar Jisan, Rubel Hossain, Arshad Habib Bishal, and Mehadi Emon are likely to contest top posts from the JCD panel.

They added that a female candidate may run for vice-president or general secretary.

Meanwhile, Islami Chhatra Shibir and Bangladesh Gonotantik Chhatra Sangsad (BGCS) have already announced full panels.

On Friday, BGCS declared its "Shikkharthi Oikkyo Forum" panel, in which Convener Arifuzzaman Ujjal will run for VP, while Member-Secretary Abu Touhid Mohammad Siam will contest for GS. Ziauddin Ayan and Maliha Namlu will vie for AGS in the male and female categories.

Two BGCS leaders, Nazmul Islam Limon and Kawsar Alam Arman, who failed to secure posts, are preparing to contest independently for AGS.

Ahsan Labib, a murder accused and former leader of the banned Chhatra League, was nominated for

secretary of social services and human development. The panel has yet to name candidates for drama and sports secretary.

On Thursday, Islami Chhatra Shibir announced the "Shomonnito Shikkharthi Jote" panel. Arifullah Adib has been nominated for VP, and Mazharul Islam for GS. Ferdous Al Hasan will contest for male AGS, and Ayesha Siddika Meghla for female AGS. The panel does not include indigenous or minority students.

Three other panels are also in the fray: one jointly backed by Jahangirnagar Sangskritik Jote and a faction of Chhatra Union (Adri-Ankur); another by Jahangirnagar Theatre and a faction of Chhatra Union (Imon-Tanjim); and an independent alliance led by Abdur Rashid Jitu and Shakil Ali.

The "Sampritrir Oikyo" panel, likely to be led by former JU Chhatra Union president Amartya Ray and former Sangskritik Jote president Sharan Ehsan, will include leaders from cultural organisations under the Teacher-Student Centre, along with indigenous and minority students.

Sharan said, "We'll announce our full panel by Monday or Tuesday. It will include 8-10 women along with members of indigenous and minority communities." Sources said Prapti Taposi, Irfanul Islam Iftu, and Nur-e-Tamim Srot might vie for top posts from this panel.

Another panel, possibly named "Shikkharthi Oikkyo Sangsad", is expected under theatre activist and former Students Against Discrimination coordinator Mahfuz Islam Megh, and Jahidul Islam Imon, president of another JU Chhatra Union faction.

Megh said, "It [the panel] will be inclusive, with cultural activists, indigenous and minority students. We plan to contest around 10-12 posts," he said, adding it will be announced within two days.

The "Swatantra Jote" panel, led by former Students Against Discrimination coordinator Abdur Rashid Jitu and Shakil Ali, is expected to contest around 20 posts. Jitu said he would run for VP and Shakil for GS, adding that Sultan Mulk Shubho and Anwar Hossain Rudro will run for other key positions in the panel, which will be announced by Monday.

Several independents and partial alliances, including Chhatra Front's Sohagi Samia with a possible partial panel, are also expected to contest.

A total of 276 nominations were submitted for the Jucusu polls and 467 for the hall elections. For Jucusu, 25 posts will be contested, with six reserved for women. The number of voters is 11,919 – 6,102 men and 5,817 women.

The Jucusu election, which was last held in 1992, is scheduled for September 11.

MoUs to be signed include establishing a joint working group on trade and commerce, as well as cooperation between the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangshtha and the Associated Press of Pakistan, the two countries' Foreign Service Academy, and the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies and the Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

This is the highest-level Pakistani visit since 2012. Pakistan's interior minister visited Dhaka in July following foreign secretary-level talks in April, held after a 15-year hiatus.

Dhaka-Islamabad ties soured after Pakistan condemned the 2013 execution of Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah for 1971 war crimes. Relations have improved since last year's political changeover.

Bilateral trade reached \$865 million in FY2024-25, with Bangladesh's exports rising 20 percent to \$78 million and Pakistan's exports up 28 percent. Since last August, the two countries have launched direct shipping, eased visa and trade regimes, and plan to start direct flights.

with limited campus support. This time, they are pushing for broader coalition with cultural groups.

Fuad Ratul of the Socialist Students' Front is tipped to be their vice-president candidate, alongside contenders Nasim Sarkar, Tarek Ashraf, Kaisar Ahmed, Alif Shahriar, and Shamim Tripura.

However, they too have pre-polls demands, including keeping polling centres at academic buildings, forming a cyberbullying prevention cell, and cancelling voting rights for accused attackers.

On August 14, they observed a hunger strike, but the administration did not respond.

Rucusu Treasurer Setaur Rahman said, "Student organisations are regularly presenting their demands. We're constantly reviewing them. We're also sitting with the student organisations for discussions. However, it isn't possible for the administration to meet all the demands."

Ties based on mutual interests stressed

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repatriation of stranded Pakistanis, and Bangladesh's share of undivided assets.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary said the Pakistani side expressed willingness to address these matters. He added that discussions also covered Pakistan's plan to establish a cultural centre in Dhaka, expanding university-level exchanges, cooperation in the defence sector, river management, the pharmaceutical industry, and ways to revive SAARC.

He said the talks also touched on Bangladesh's foreign policy shifts, from the Liberation War of 1971 to the mass uprising of 2024.

The rest of the NCP delegation were Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam, Senior Joint Convener Ariful Islam Adeeab, Joint Convener Arpita Shyama Deb, Joint Secretary Tarek Reza, and member Sagar Barua.

At a press briefing after the meeting, Jamaat's Nayeab-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher told reporters the 1971 issues were "matters for the two governments to discuss."

He, however, stressed that the unresolved issues in bilateral relations should be settled swiftly.

"Discussions were also held on how to advance relations with the brotherly Muslim state in the future and how to make the regional alliance SAARC more active and stronger."

Taher added that Bangladesh's foreign policy had been somewhat one-sided over the past 15 years. The current government, along with others, now believes the region requires maintaining good relations with all neighbouring countries.

"The upcoming national election in Bangladesh also came up," he said.

Pakistan's foreign ministry posted on X that Dar lauded the "courage and steadfastness" of Jamaat leaders in the face of difficulties.

Meanwhile, BNP leaders held a 55-minute meeting with Dar. BNP media cell member Sayrul Kabir Khan said the discussion focused on bilateral relations, though the party did not issue an official statement.

The Pakistan foreign ministry said regional cooperation featured

prominently, with Bangladesh's foundational role in establishing SAARC "fondly acknowledged." Dar also expressed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties "on the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefit."

Dar is scheduled to meet BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia today at her Gulshan residence Feroza.

The BNP delegation, led by Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, included Standing Committee members Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan, Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Selima Rahman, Vice Chairman Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, and Organising Secretary Shama Obaed.

BILATERAL MEETING TODAY
Dar will hold delegation-level talks with Bangladesh Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain at the state guest house Padma today. One agreement and five MoUs are expected to be signed.

He is also expected to meet Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus today.

The agreement to be signed is for visa-free entry for holders of diplomatic and official passports. The

changeover.

Although its influence has grown with Jamaat-backed individuals in the administration, Shibir will not contest under its own banner and is preparing to run as part of an "Anti-Fascist Inclusive Panel" to attract students from diverse backgrounds.

Its President Mostakur Rahman Zahid is expected to contest for vice-president, while General Secretary Mujahid Faisal and Najmus Shakib are likely candidates for general secretary and assistant general secretary.

However, leaders have been instructed to include general students in the panel, even if it means ceding top posts.

Mujahid Faisal said, "We had been kept away from the general students for a long time. However, after August 5, we have been able to mix with them. The misconceptions that general students had about Shibir have been broken. That's why we are hopeful about winning the election."

Meanwhile, left-leaning organisations continue to struggle

3-day int'l seminar on Rohingya begins in Cox's Bazar

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A three-day international seminar on the Rohingya crisis will be held in Cox's Bazar starting today, aimed at highlighting the cause of Rohingya rights and repatriation.

The Office of the High Representative for the Rohingya Issue and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are organising the event, titled "Stakeholders' Dialogue: Takeaway to the High Level Conference on the Rohingya Situation".

The seminar will serve as a preparatory event for the High Level Conference on the Rohingya Crisis scheduled in New York on September 30, 2025, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, according to a statement from the foreign ministry.

Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus will attend the event as the chief guest on August 25.

Experts from home and abroad, diplomats, representatives of the Rohingyas, international organisations and academicians will participate in the dialogue to discuss their views and table propositions to address the Rohingya issues.

The dialogue is also expected to take stock of different aspects of the crisis, including funding gaps for the Rohingyas in the camps, recent developments in Rakhine, dignified repatriation of Rohingyas, and a way forward for a sustainable solution to the crisis.

It will include five thematic sessions on humanitarian assistance, confidence building for repatriation, accountability for atrocities, and ways to achieve a sustainable, time-bound and actionable long-term solution to the crisis.

Participants are scheduled to visit the Rohingya camps on August 26.

Divisions widen over

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"It is unclear which specific proposals or recommendations are considered immediately implementable. We oppose this ambiguity," the party said.

The NCP firmly stated that the July Charter must be implemented in full, without delay, by the government and all relevant authorities before the next national parliamentary election.

NCP Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain yesterday said that without providing and implementing a legal basis, the July Charter will fail to contain people's aspiration for freedom.

If the National Consensus Commission does not announce a new constitutional proposal through a constituent assembly election to incorporate the July Charter into the constitution, then it is a failure.

"There is no meaning on the part of the NCP in signing the failed charter," he said.

Jamaat's Zubair said that all proposals can be implemented before the election.

"On another point, we have clearly said that a presidential proclamation or a referendum is a must to give the July Charter a legal framework. Finally, we have told the commission that the 13th parliamentary polls must be held in light of the July Charter."

Apart from this proposal, Jamaat has submitted a separate note to the commission in which the party demanded that the election be held under the proportional representative system, claiming that a large number

of people support the PR system.

"We have mentioned to the Consensus Commission that the PR system is one of the ways to thwart fascism and autocracy. Besides, everyone's opinions would also be reflected through the PR system," Zubair added.

CPB in its feedback said they had proposed excluding the four principles enshrined in the constitution from the discussion as reaching a consensus on the issues was not possible.

"For this reason, we decisively boycotted the meeting. Yet, without consulting us, there has been an implicit attempt to secure our consent to alter those fundamental principles. This is entirely unacceptable," it said.

Mojibur Rahman Monju, chairman of AB Party, said they have proposed giving constitutional status and legal basis to the July Charter.

"The implementation process of the July Charter must begin immediately, and we demand that the upcoming 13th National Assembly election be held based on the July Charter," he said.

Ali Riaz, vice-chairman of the National Consensus Commission, said they will soon sit with experts to discuss the process of making the charter legally binding and explore ways for its implementation.

"We will also hold discussions with political parties," he added.

Until yesterday, 24 parties submitted their feedback to the consensus commission regarding the draft of July Charter.

Housing, food may top

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commitment, especially with a clear pledge to stop politics in dormitories and academic premises.

"We are also working on the idea of 'One Student, One Bed'. This mainly aims to ensure a seat for each student."

Jabir Ahmad Jubel, AGS candidate from Pratirodh Parshad, said their panel is prioritising four issues: accommodation crisis, transport shortage, food quality and affordability, and administrative complexities.

"Non-residential students face major difficulties with transport. According to the current bus schedule, they have to leave by 5:00pm. We want to make sure that university buses run at least till 8:00pm."

Independent VP candidate Umama Fatema of "Swatantra Shikkharthi Oikya" earlier said, "My goal is to build a politically conscious and academically sound campus." She promised teacher evaluation by students, syllabus redesign, and expanded classroom facilities.

The Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed "Oikoboddho Shikkharthi Jote" will address accommodation and student security, especially for women. Its VP candidate Abu Shadik Kayem said, "Security at halls and the safety of students' food are also included."

Other panels include Chhatra Odhikar Parishad-backed "Ducusu for Change"; Islami Chhatra Andolan's "Socheton Shikkharthi Sangsad"; former NCP leader Mahin Sarkar's independent panel "DU First"; and Aparajeyo 71-Adomyo 24 Parishad, a left-leaning coalition of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and BCL (Jasod).

ALLEGATIONS AHEAD OF POLLS
Shibir's VP candidate Abu Shadik Kayem alleged rivals were spreading propaganda and cyberbullying female candidates. "Our opponents are

failing to face us ideologically, so they are resorting to propaganda. They are bullying our sisters online. We call on them to compete with ideas, merit and new initiatives instead."

GS candidate for Shibir SM Farhad accused the election commission of favouring one side. "Even after clear violations of the code of conduct, the commission is protecting one side. We are worried about the fairness of the polls."

Abu Baker Majumder, GS candidate of Boishommo Birodhi Shikkharthi Sangsad, accused JCD nominee Tanvir Baree Hamim of repeatedly violating election rules.

"During nomination collection, Hamim entered with slogans, which is against the code. He posted campaign content on Facebook and even used posters with Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman's photos. These too are violations."

Chief Returning Officer Prof Zashim Uddin said no formal complaints of code violations had been submitted. "By August 25, candidates may withdraw. We hope to conduct this election in a safe environment for the benefit of students and the country," he told reporters.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan described the Ducusu polls as a major event and urged all candidates to maintain discipline. "As long as you hold my hand, I will stay on the ground. If you let go, I will make it clear to everyone where I am being obstructed."

The appeal period for cancelled nominations ended yesterday, with 34 appeals filed. The final list of candidates will be released on August 26. According to the preliminary list, 48 candidates are contesting for VP, 19 for GS and 28 for AGS posts.

In total, 565 nomination forms were collected for the 28 central posts, while 1,226 were collected for the 18 hall unions.