

One killed in bus-bike collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

A man was killed in a head-on collision between a bus and a motorcycle in Madaripur yesterday.

The victim, Masum Pyada, 24, was heading home on the motorcycle.

The accident occurred around 2:40pm yesterday near the Asmat Ali Khan Bridge area under Madaripur Sadar Police Station. Locals took him to Madaripur Sadar Hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

A d d i t i o n a l Superintendent of Police Md Jahangir Alam confirmed the matter to The Daily Star over the phone.

Citing locals, he said the victim, Masum Pyada, was the son of Bulu Pyada of Char Brahmandi village in Jhaudi Union of Sadar upazila.

On Tuesday afternoon, Masum was heading towards his home on a motorcycle. When he reached the area near the Asmat Ali Khan Bridge, an oncoming bus collided head-on with the motorcycle.

Masum was critically injured and thrown onto the road.

MONIRAMPUR IN JASHORE

Waterlogging disrupts edn in 25 schools

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Educational activities have been disrupted in 25 institutions in Monirampur upazila of Jashore due to widespread waterlogging.

Most houses and schools have been inundated, and the situation has persisted for the past month. Despite this, classes have continued, with primary lessons now being held in tents set up in the courtyards of local homes.

Students of Bholbari Government Primary School are attending classes in the house of the school's PTA president, as the school grounds have been submerged under knee-deep water for the past month. The alternative arrangement allows lessons to continue despite the challenging conditions.

The floodwaters have caused immense hardship for both students and teachers, particularly in the Bhabdah area, where nearly three lakh people have been stranded due to continuous rainfall and water from upstream.

Several other government primary schools, including Kumashima, Hatgacha, Panchkatia, and Mahishdia, have also shifted classes to temporary shelters in private homes.

Fourth-grader Devbrato Biswas

and fifth-grader Anushka Biswas said the roads to their school remain submerged, forcing them to wade through water and mud to attend classes.

Pranesh Biswas, headteacher



lessons.

Monirampur Upazila Secondary Education Officer Zillur Rashid said the grounds of at least 25 schools, colleges, and madrasas have been submerged, leading to the suspension



of Bholbari Government Primary School, said a tent had been erected at the home of the PTA president to allow classes to continue.

PTA president Nityo Biswas confirmed that bamboo and poles were collected from the village to construct the temporary structure, which is now hosting regular

of classes in many institutions.

Abu Motaleb, upazila education officer, said while the grounds of 14 government primary schools remain submerged, alternative education activities are ongoing, and the learning process will continue in this manner until the water recedes.

From homes to streets, sexual violence persists

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while harassment was most often committed by "familiar criminals" or "miscreants (31 percent) and teachers (24 percent).

Cyber abuse was primarily carried out by boyfriends, ex-husbands, classmates, and neighbours.

Perpetrators ranged in age from adolescents to men over 60, with young people heavily involved in rape.

Twenty-eight percent of accused rapists were between 11 and 30, with the highest proportion aged 21-25.

A significant portion of gang rapists (24 percent) were aged 16-25. In harassment cases, 17 percent of perpetrators were aged 16-30, and half of cybercrime offenders fell within this age range.

The report also highlighted risk patterns in public and private spaces.

Children were notably at risk within their own homes or neighbouring houses, highlighting that presumed safe spaces can be dangerous as well.

Besides, the highest incidents of rape occurred at the hands of classmates or boyfriends, indicating that trusted social circles can be major sources of danger.

Public transport and interactions with drivers exposed women and girls to harassment and violence during commutes, while politically and socially influential individuals often exploited their power to commit sexual abuse, reinforcing systemic vulnerabilities.

Meanwhile, the report observed a positive trend that more rape cases are being legally filed compared to the past, with very few incidents remaining unreported.

However, a comparison

of 2024 and early 2025 showed deeply concerning trends.

In 2024, 364 rape cases were reported, while in the first six months of 2025 alone, 354 cases were recorded, nearly matching the previous year's total.

Gang rape incidents totalled 148 in 2024 and 106 in the first half of 2025, while cases of murder following rape rose from 112 in 2024 to 127 in January-June 2025.

On the other hand, sexual abuse and harassment increased from 224 cases in the entirety of 2024 to 320 in the first half of 2025, while dowry-related incidents rose from 68 to 96.

Afroza noted that both the perpetrators and the victims are young, which is extremely concerning, as it shows that adolescents are becoming involved in incidents of sexual violence.

She also highlighted a positive aspect.

"Although there are still attempts to cover up rape cases, pressure to withdraw cases, and efforts to reach compromises through local arbitration instead of ensuring punishment for the accused, the tendency of victims to file cases has increased," she said, adding that social activism and initiatives to protest such incidents are also on the rise.

Other speakers noted that the study revealed children remain unsafe both at home and outside, demanding urgent attention to their protection.

They highlighted that grassroots incidents are more frequently reported in the media, as they are harder to conceal.

They also said Mahila Parishad has achieved a 98 percent success rate

in pursuing legal cases, though delays remain a challenge, with some trials taking up to 25-26 years to conclude.

Presiding over the event, Mahila Parishad president Fauzia Moslem noted that the growing culture of misogyny fuels violence against women, while rising communalism, hatred toward women, and criminal tendencies push women and children into marginalised positions, making them frequent victims during instability.

She stressed the importance of replacing misogynistic culture with a women-friendly one and urged the media to play a stronger role in keeping public discussions on these issues alive.

She also called for greater collaboration between the media and the women's movement to prevent violence against women.

Protesters were shot from above

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case against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her two top aides. He said he treated a large number of gunshot victims between July 19-21 and August 4-5 last year, most of them aged 20-30.

Recalling one harrowing case, he said a father and son arrived with bullet wounds, but the father died in hospital as his injured son mourned helplessly.

The doctor alleged that some colleagues affiliated with Swachip (Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad), a pro-Awami League doctors' association, asked them not to be over enthusiastic in treating the victims and said that criminals should not be treated. He added that five doctors were transferred on July 25 last year to obstruct treatment of the injured.

Mostak further said that during the anti-discrimination student movement, Chhatra League activists stopped ambulances near Dhaka University's Dr Muhammad Shahidullah Hall, asked about patients' identities, and obstructed the injured from reaching the hospital.

"During treatment, armed Chhatra League activists entered the

hospital and inquired about the injured. Students pleaded us to hide their identities," he said, holding Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and law enforcers responsible for the brutality and demanding justice.

Apart from Mostak, four other witnesses testified yesterday.

Nasir Uddin, a trader from Feni, testified that he was shot twice by armed members of Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League when they attacked an anti-discrimination procession that he participated in Feni town on August 5 last year. One bullet pierced through his right heel while another one hit below his left knee and got stuck in a bone.

He told the tribunal that he later heard that seven or eight people were shot dead in Feni on August 4 that year.

He said with the under of Sheikh Hasina, AL ministers Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and Obaidul Quader, Awami League men led by local lawmaker Nizam Uddin Hazari shot protesters.

Saidur Rahman, grandfather of deceased Shariar Khan Anas narrated how the 10th

grader left home, joined the protest and was killed with five others in Chankharpul on August 5.

Mafizur Rahman, assistant director of Mitford Hospital, testified that investigators seized three bullets from hospital officials, removed from bodies of wounded protesters.

DMCH Assistant Registrar Monirul Islam in his testimony said 23 bullets, pellets and bullet fragments were also seized from the hospital.

During a cross-examination, state defence counsel Amir Hossain, representing Hasina and Asaduzzaman, claimed that the witnesses had made false statements. He alleged Mostak testified due to "ideological differences", which Mostak denied.

Amir also disputed the claims that shots were fired from helicopter and from high places.

Prosecutor Mizanul Islam told the tribunal that they hope to finish presenting the prosecution witnesses within the next two weeks. The number of prosecution witnesses in the case is 81 and 29 have testified so far.

25 new High

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25 under Article 98 of the constitution, raising the number of High Court judges to 113. The law ministry issued a gazette notification on the same day.

The judges will serve a two-year term from the date of oath-taking. The appointments include senior judges of the lower judiciary, deputy attorneys general, and practising Supreme Court advocates.

The newly appointed HC judges are Md Anwarul Islam (Shaheen), Md Saiful Islam, Md Nurul Islam,

tortured, and killed the opposition members. There were many forces involved, all the way to the top," said co-founder Sanjida Islam Tulee.

Bangladesh ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2024 and has since drafted a prevention and redress ordinance.

However, Fortify Rights warned that provisions allowing the death penalty and trials in absentia undermine international standards.

The group called on the government to prioritise a victim-centred reparations programme, effective remedies, and dismantling abusive security structures.

"True accountability requires fair justice procedures, reparations, and unwavering transparency," Quinley said.

Political will key

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"Implementation of the July Charter requires contributions not only from political parties but also from the Election Commission and other state institutions. Some proposals may be enacted through ordinances, others by executive orders. The government too has clear responsibilities," he said.

Chief Adviser's Special Assistant Monir Haider noted that the consensus commission's progress should not be underestimated. "In other countries, it has taken an average of two and a half years to reach such achievements," he said.

Presenting the keynote, Suján national committee member Md Ekram Hossain said the July Charter, prepared after dialogues with political parties, is positive but its success depends entirely on implementation, which remains disputed among parties.

He stressed the need to distinguish which reforms require constitutional amendments, ordinances, administrative decisions, or immediate action.

The dialogue was chaired by Suján's acting president Justice MA Matin.

Former comptroller and auditor general Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury, journalist Sohrab Hasan, Dhaka University Professor Asif Mohammad Shahán, and representatives from various civic organisations also attended the event.

Sweet harvest

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this year on 16 hectares of gher banks in Dacope alone.

Agriculture Officer Md Shafiqul Islam said yields are expected to reach 28-30 tonnes per hectare. "That means 480 tonnes of watermelon will be produced in this upazila alone, with a market value of Tk 2.3 crore," he said.

In the 2021-22 fiscal year, off-season watermelon was cultivated on 315 hectares of land, producing 8,820 tonnes. The following year, 2022-23, the cultivated area increased to 374 hectares with a production of 10,472 tonnes. In 2023-24, cultivation expanded significantly to 400 hectares, with production standing at 13,280 tonnes.

In 2024-25, the cultivated area was 929 hectares, and production surged to 29,728 tonnes, significantly higher than in previous years. For the upcoming 2025-26 fiscal year, the target has been set at 920 hectares of cultivation with an expected yield of 29,440 tonnes.

Md Nazrul Islam, deputy director of the Khulna Agricultural Extension Department, said off-season watermelon is more than a financial lifeline. "It is a companion crop that fits neatly into the agricultural cycle without disrupting other farming activities. Farmers grow it alongside fish cultivation, turning what was once idle land into a productive asset."

Munshiganj, Manikganj

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favour of the draft and 259 objections raised. Hearings for Dhaka region constituencies continue until Wednesday.

On July 30, the EC published draft boundaries for 300 constituencies, reducing Bagerhat's seats from four to three and increasing Gazipur's from five to six. By August 10, it had received 1,760 claims and objections on 83 constituencies. Final boundaries will be published after the hearings.

GAZIPUR RESIDENTS PRAISE EC

In contrast to criticism from Bagerhat, Gazipur

residents welcomed the EC's decision to add one more seat in their district, increasing the total to six.

At the Dhaka regional hearing, BNP leader AKM Fazlul Haque Milon thanked the CEC and commissioners for their "honesty, dedication, and sincerity" and called the decision timely. He assured the party's cooperation in ensuring a fair election.

"We had long hoped for an increase in Gazipur's seats. We placed a few small demands politely, and whatever decision the EC takes, we will accept," said Milon, also the district BNP convener.

Formulate Journalist Protection

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often face harassment after investigative reports. "There is a persistent gap between journalists, editors, and media owners that cannot be solved individually," he said.

Lars Heiberg Bestle, regional director for Asia at IMS, said, "Independent media is not a luxury; it is a necessity for democracy."

Media Reform Commission members -- Financial Express Editor Shamsul Haque Zahid and DW Akademie Project Manager Jimi Amir --

expressed frustration over the non-implementation of the commission's recommendations.

Jamuna Television CEO Fahim Ahmed, another member of the commission, said it would have been better if their proposals had been incorporated into discussions of the National Consensus Commission.

Press Institute of Bangladesh Director General Faruk Wasif said, "The government is bound to reform media, but it cannot control everything by regulation.

Adopt data protection measures

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"The protection of personal data is essential to safeguard human rights, foster an open and inclusive digital ecosystem, and enable innovation and economic growth in Bangladesh," it said.

Civil society groups have previously voiced concerns that certain provisions under consideration could allow arbitrary surveillance, restrict cross-border data flows, and give disproportionate authority to regulatory bodies.

ARTICLE 19 underscored that without meaningful safeguards, such measures risk undermining public trust and stifling the digital transformation Bangladesh is seeking to promote.

The organisation set out a series of "non-negotiable red lines" to guide the legislative process.

These include embedding strong legal protections

against arbitrary or disproportionate surveillance, ensuring restrictions on rights are lawful and proportionate, and clarifying vague terms such as "public interest" and "operational necessity" that could otherwise be misused.

It also demanded establishment of an independent and transparent Data Protection Authority, shielded from political interference through secure tenure, financial autonomy, and accountability mechanisms.

ARTICLE 19 also highlighted the importance of protecting citizens' right to freely given and revocable consent, particularly for vulnerable or marginalised communities, and ensuring individuals have timely and effective avenues for redress when their rights are violated.

The group further called for narrowing exemptions

Bangladeshi startups

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Consumer Technology category. Pathao raised \$12 million in a pre-series B round last year led by VentureSouq, taking its total funding past \$50 million. The fresh investment is aimed at expanding its fintech arm, including Pathao Pay, a digital wallet, and Pay Later, said Forbes.

"Pathao's inclusion in the Forbes Asia 100 to Watch is a recognition of our enduring commitment to building products that our customers love and are happy to pay for," Fahim Ahmed, CEO of Pathao, told The Daily Star.

Shomvob, a newer entrant founded in 2022 and headed by CEO Rifad Hossain, focuses on democratising employment opportunities in Bangladesh.

"Shomvob is helping Bangladeshis find jobs that match their skills and goals. Through its platform, job seekers can create digital profiles to apply for roles or participate in online training programs," said Forbes.

Companies can use Shomvob to review candidates, outsource recruitment, and manage payrolls. Initially focused on finding work for low-income women, Shomvob received a Gates Foundation grant of \$3,00,000 in 2023. Last May, it raised \$1 million in pre-seed funding led by Singapore-based VC firm Cocoon Capital.

Forbes Asia's selection process involved rigorous

evaluation based on factors such as industry impact, innovation, business model, revenue growth, and funding attractiveness. Companies were required to be headquartered in the Asia-Pacific region, privately owned, and have no more than \$50 million in annual revenue or \$100 million in total funding as of August 15, 2025.

Bangladesh

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energy cooperation, security and the situation of the Rohingya, alongside other regional and global issues of mutual interest.

They identified new avenues of cooperation, particularly in science and technology, artificial intelligence, energy transition, fisheries, biotechnology, climate change, agricultural mechanisation and modernisation of marine ports and shipyards.

The Korean side reiterated its commitment to support Bangladesh's high-quality infrastructure projects under both loans and grants, and to encourage South Korean manufacturing plants and production houses to expand their industrial value chains to Bangladesh.

The Korean side commended Bangladesh's humanitarian role in hosting the Rohingya, and assured continued support for their early repatriation to Myanmar, alongside sustained humanitarian assistance.