

Two cops, bus helper killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Two policemen and a bus helper were killed in separate road accidents yesterday in Shariatpur and Kushtia, according to the reports from our correspondents.

A bus helper was killed and several passengers were injured when a bus rear-ended another that had suddenly stopped on the Padma Bridge in Shariatpur's Zajira upazila.

The accident occurred last night near Pillar No 29 on the south side of the bridge. Injured passengers were rescued by bridge authorities and fellow commuters and taken to nearby hospitals.

Police later recovered the body of the deceased helper and sent it to the morgue of Shariatpur Sadar Hospital for post-mortem examination. SI Kabir Ahmed of Padma Bridge South Police Station told The Daily Star.

The deceased was identified as Md Tofayel Mia, 27, son of Selim Mia of Dakshin Para in Madaripur Sadar. He was living as a tenant in Fakir Mahmud Akand Kandi area of Jajira upazila.

According to police, the Dhaka-Kuakata-bound Padma Special Paribahan bus came to a sudden halt on the bridge when a Bhanga-bound Basumat Paribahan bus rammed it from behind, killing the helper on the spot.

SI Kabir Ahmed said legal proceedings in connection with the incident are under way.

Abu Sad Niloy, executive engineer of the Bangladesh Bridge Authority, said the buses were removed using a wrecker without causing traffic congestion. "We repeatedly caution drivers against stopping on the bridge," he said.

Meanwhile, two policemen were killed in another road accident in Kushtia's Bheramara upazila when a covered-van rammed their motorbike near the Lalon Shah Bridge.

The deceased were identified as Inspector Mozaharul Islam, 48, and Assistant Sub Inspector Koyed Uddin, 47, both of the Special Branch in Ishwardi upazila of Pabna.

Police said the two were travelling from Ishwardi to Kushtia around noon when the covered-van hit their motorbike from behind, said Abu Obayed, officer-in-charge of Chourashri Highway Police Station.

They were thrown onto the road, and the van ran them over before fleeing the scene, he said.

The bodies were later handed over to the victims' families.



PHOTO: STAR

CARMICHAEL COLLEGE IN RANGPUR

Teacher shortage, infrastructure crises hamper academic activities

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The Carmichael College in Rangpur, a historic educational institution in northern Bangladesh, has been facing a myriad of crises, including a shortage of teachers, insufficient classrooms, dilapidated infrastructure, and poor accommodation facilities for students.

Established in 1916 by JN Gupta, the then magistrate collector of Rangpur town, on 321 acres and named after Lord Baron Carmichael, the then governor of undivided Bengal, the institution has nurtured generations of students – shaping leaders in knowledge, politics, literature, and culture – over the past 109 years.

At present, 18 of the 183 approved teaching posts across 18 departments of the college are vacant. With nearly 25,000 students enrolled, the college has a teacher-student ratio of roughly 1:151. Students say the lack of teachers often causes class cancellations, while forcing them to rely on private coaching.

According to National University regulations, 60 percent of classes are mandatory, but the existing

teacher shortage prevents it.

College sources say academic activities are being severely disrupted due to a shortage of classrooms and laboratories, a lack of an auditorium, and poor transportation. The eight dormitories of the college can barely accommodate only around five percent of students, while the rest live in numerous private hostels in the surrounding areas at much higher costs.

"My monthly costs at a private hostel exceed Tk 5,000, including accommodation and food, which is a heavy burden for me. If I had a seat in a college dormitory, it would have cost much less," said Sujon Islam, a student living in a nearby hostel.

"Almost all the hostels that students stay in lack healthy living conditions. There is also no guarantee of hygienic food and safety," he added.

Recently, a delegation of students and college representatives held discussion with the Ministry of Education

to resolve the teacher shortage and other issues.

Earlier in June this year, students of the college carried out a three-day 'complete shutdown' protest to press home their demands, including recruitment of teachers, expanding dormitories, renovating academic buildings, and improving transportation facilities. They later submitted a 25-point demand to the college administration and a 12-point memorandum

to the education adviser and vice-chancellor of the National University.

Sazzad Hossain, a student of the Bangla Department, said, "Although there has been some progress, the teacher recruitment process remains slow. Only five teachers have joined recently, which is insufficient."

"Three of the college's five academic buildings are in poor condition. Most classrooms lack adequate benches, fans, and lighting. Due to overcrowding, many students are forced to

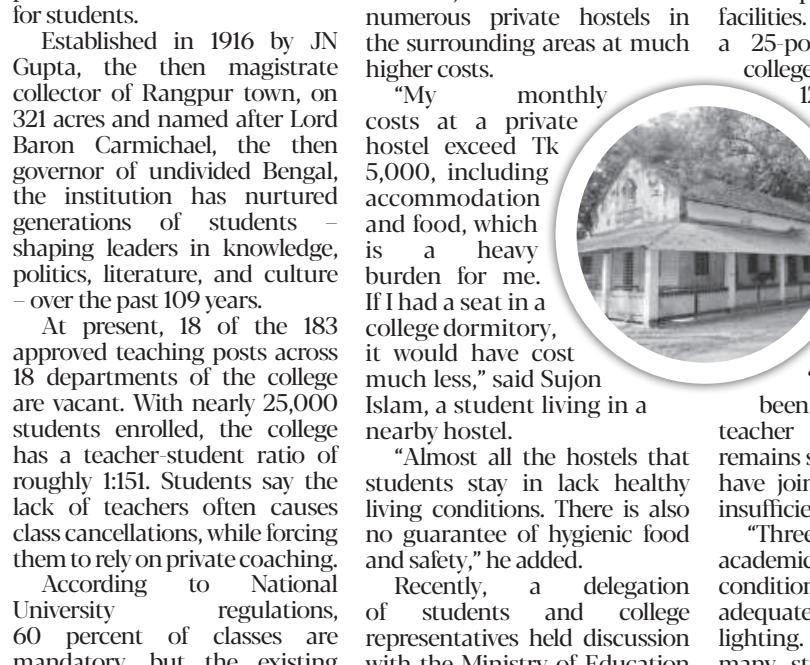
attend classes while standing," he added.

Shafiqul Islam, an English Department student, said, "If the existing crises are resolved, Carmichael College will be able to play an even greater role in educating the youth across the region."

Professor Dhiren Chandra Sarker, a former teacher and alumnus, said, "The college lacks proper supervision and planned development. This historic institution now lies in neglect. Steps are needed to restore its dignity."

Professor Mostafizur Rahman, principal of the college, said, "Letters have been sent to the education ministry to address the teacher shortage, and the process is ongoing. We are also working on other infrastructural issues. Hopefully, some of those will be resolved soon."

In the current fiscal year, Carmichael College has received a government allocation of Tk 2.5 crore, which is insufficient for modernisation and long-term development. A special project-based allocation is urgently needed to this end," he added.



Ensure justice for Hadi

FROM PAGE 3
for reform to rebuild Bangladesh."

He also criticised Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "viewing Bangladesh's December 16 as India's victory day," on a post on X (formerly Twitter), urging the interim government to issue a statement against this distortion of history.

NCP Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary demanded accountability from the Election Commission over its response to the shooting and criticised the EC chief for calling it an "isolated incident". "The Chief Election Commissioner should be brought before the Supreme Judicial Council for such remarks," he said.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam said it is now their responsibility to carry on

Hadi's fight, alleging that an attempt is being made to deceive people in the name of elections. "But the polls cannot be prevented. We will move for fair and independent elections to reform democracy and build a new constitution," he said. Speaking about security, he added, "When the police fail, we will counterattack. We must take care of our own safety. There is no security force other than the people."

Also present were NCP Chief Organiser (North) Sarjis Alam, Chief Organiser (South) Hasnat Abdullah, Senior Joint Conveners Ariful Islam Adeeb and Samntha Sharmin, Joint Convener Khaled Saifullah, and Joint Organiser Saifullah, alongside leaders and activists of NCP's youth and labour wings Jubo Shakti and Sramik Shakti.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam said it is now their responsibility to carry on

increased ahead of Tarique's arrival.

Party leaders said the government has assured security for Tarique, and BNP leaders expressed satisfaction with the assurances so far.

They added that a specially equipped SUV purchased for him has already arrived in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, the government has declared Khaleda Zia a very important person and deployed the SSF for her protection.

RESIDENCES AND OFFICES PREPARED

BNP has completed preparations for Tarique's residence and offices.

Party leaders said he will move into house number 196 on Gulshan Avenue.

Khaleda Zia currently resides at a rented house, "Firoza",

next to the property.

Aging engines keep northern trains on risky track

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Passenger train services in Bangladesh Railway's Lalmonirhat division are being operated largely with long-expired locomotives, heightening the risk of serious accidents and disrupting schedules in the northern region, railway officials and employees said.

The division runs 20 pairs of passenger trains daily, including 10 intercity, eight mail and two local services, making it a crucial transport link for northern districts. But a severe shortage of engines has forced the authorities to rely on 16 locomotives that have exceeded their service life, some by decades.

Railway records show the division needs at least 30 locomotives but has only 22; of these, 16 have exceeded their service life. Among the remaining six, one has long been out of service after an accident and remains unrepainted at the Parbatipur railway workshop.

Locomotive masters stationed in Lalmonirhat warned that operating passenger trains with expired engines is highly risky. "These old locomotives can fail without warning and often lose power mid-journey," said a senior locoman, requesting anonymity. "Despite repeated requests, we have not received new engines. Delays and disruptions have become routine."

Railway employees said the division has long suffered from neglect, despite serving a large volume of passengers. Saiful Islam, a railway staffer in Lalmonirhat, said several mail and local trains have already been suspended due to frequent breakdowns. "If the situation continues, more services may be withdrawn," he added.

Moniruzzaman Monir, president of the Bangladesh Railway Posso Society, said expired locomotives cannot operate continuously without mechanical failures and are unable to maintain the speed needed for scheduled movements.

Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Loco) Dhiman Bhowmik of Lalmonirhat acknowledged the severity of the crisis. "There is a nationwide shortage of locomotives, but the situation here is far worse," he said. "Running trains with expired engines keeps me constantly worried about potential accidents, for which I would be held responsible." He added that the damaged locomotive at Parbatipur has remained unrepainted for a long time and that he has repeatedly sought additional engines from higher authorities.

Bangladesh Railway Additional Director General (Rolling Stock) Ahmed Mahbub Chowdhury also admitted to the nationwide shortage, saying there is a plan to procure 30 modern locomotives, though no specific timeline has been set. He added that developing skilled manpower is currently an even more pressing challenge for the railway.



A farmer prepares a tree before attaching a jar which will gather date juice from it. This is the prime season to collect the precious syrup from the trees. The photo was taken from the Fatepur area of Charghat in Rajshahi yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Preparations on to make Tarique's homecoming

FROM PAGE 3

leaders or activists gather at Sylhet airport," the leader said.

Party leaders said that supporters coming from outside Dhaka have been assigned specific locations in Dhaka and nearby areas.

Digital screens will be set up at each location, allowing people to watch Tarique live.

He has been living in London with his wife Zubaida Rahman and daughter Zaima Rahman.

Zubaida arrived in Dhaka on December 5 to attend to the medical treatment of her mother-in-law, Khaleda Zia.

At the meeting, Standing Committee members discussed maintaining organisational discipline and ensuring security during and after Tarique's arrival.

District- and unit-level leaders have been

instructed to take positions at designated points to welcome him in an orderly manner, sources said.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said party leaders and activists would stand along both sides of the roads in a disciplined way to welcome Tarique.

Leaders and activists at all levels will stand on both sides of the road to welcome our leader. We are preparing for that," he told this newspaper yesterday.

Party leaders identified crowd management as a key challenge, as supporters from different parts of the country are expected to converge in Dhaka on the day of his arrival.

Ensuring Tarique's security was another major issue discussed at the meeting, sources said.

Party sources said a letter seeking enhanced security arrangements may be sent within the next few days.

The number of personnel in the Chairperson Security Force (CSF), the party's private security unit responsible for Khaleda Zia's protection, has been

increased ahead of Tarique's arrival.

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