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At least 18 killed as bus plunges into Padma

Vehicle pulled out of river at Daulatdia ferry terminal; 14 bodies found inside

SUZIT KUMAR DAS, from Rajbari

At least 18 bodies were recovered early today after a bus fell into the Padma from the pontoon of Daulatdia ferry terminal in Rajbari yesterday afternoon.

The deceased include three children and 11 women, said Dewan Sohel Rana, deputy assistant director of Rajbari Fire Service.

Rescuers recovered 14 bodies from the Souhardo Paribahan bus after BIWTA salvage vessel Hamza pulled it out from the

riverbed 80 feet below around midnight, more than six and a half hours after the tragedy. Two other bodies were found under water.

Two other women were found dead earlier. Rehana Begum, 60, and Marjina Begum, 55, were dead on arrival at Daulatdia Upazila Health Complex, the facility's Resident Medical Officer Md Shariful Islam said.

According to police and local sources, 11 passengers managed to swim to safety.

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Screengrabs of footage widely circulated on social media show a bus falling into the Padma river from a pontoon of Daulatdia ferry terminal in Rajbari around 5:15pm yesterday. The Dhaka-bound bus of Souhardo Paribahan was from Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila.

Independence Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation observes the 56th Independence Day and National Day today in tribute to the martyrs and valiant sons who laid down their lives for the country's independence.

The armed struggle for independence began in the early hours of March 26 following the brutal crackdown on the unarmed Bangalees by the Pakistani occupation forces on the Black Night of March 25, 1971.

After nine months of war and a sea of blood, victory came on December 16.

A 31-gun salute at dawn will kick off the day. The national flag will be hoisted atop government, semi-government, autonomous and private buildings, and the national anthem will be performed.

In the morning, President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman will lay wreaths at the National Mausoleum in Savar.

Later, the families of the Birshreshtha, war-wounded and other brave freedom fighters will lay wreaths, joined by people from all walks of life, including foreign diplomats, political leaders, and representatives of social, cultural and professional organisations.

At 7:30am, a parade and SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

Witnesses to GENOCIDE

What American diplomats and doctors saw in Dhaka during and after Operation Searchlight

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

March 1971. The signs were ominous. There were uncomfortable developments, and people spoke of them in hushed undertones. Something was brewing and it did not bode well.

The political impasse appeared to have reached a breaking point by March 25. Dhaka seemed to hold its breath amid the suffocating tension.

There were a number of foreign diplomats, professionals, doctors, and aid workers who



witnessed what happened that evening and later at night. They spoke of the Pakistan Army's atrocities they had seen.

They saw how the army was unleashed on civilians. Others said they heard explosions, machine gun fire, and tank shells, and saw tracers streaking through the night sky.

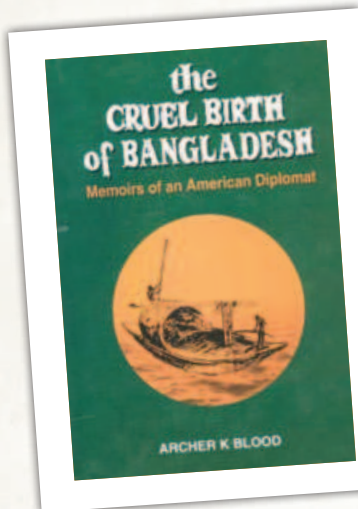
Their accounts, written in dispatches and letters, or recounted to friends, remain among the earliest eyewitness records of the crackdown that marked the beginning of Bangladesh's Liberation War.

Archer K Blood, then US consul general in Dhaka, captured the magnitude of that night in words that still resonate. "December 7, 1941 is remembered by Americans, in Franklin D Roosevelt's [then US president] memorable words, as a 'day that will live in infamy'. So too should the night of March 25, 1971 live on in the annals of the young nation of Bangladesh as a night of infamy."

DHAKA ON FIRE

Earlier that evening, Blood had hosted a dinner for 16, trying to maintain a sense of normalcy amid rising tension.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Fuel queues eating into earning hours

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Abdul Alim, 45, a rideshare driver for the last four years in Dhaka, did not go home to Jhenaidah for Eid this year.

He chose to stay, hoping to cash in on the holiday rush. In the days leading up to Eid, his plan seemed to be working: he was earning Tk 3,500 to Tk 4,000 a day by working long hours.

But that momentum did not last. In the days after Eid, Alim found himself spending hours not on the road, but in fuel queues.

"I stood in line for an hour on Tuesday and got Tk 300 worth of fuel. That lasted four to five hours, then I was in the queue again."

Alim's ordeal mirrors that of many others.

At the Trust filling station, queues of cars stretched nearly a kilometre. Many had been waiting for hours.

Rajibul Hasan, a private company employee, said he left home with his bike around 9:00am and visited at least seven filling stations in areas including Shanir Akhra and Jatrabari, only to find them closed or out of fuel.

He eventually found one open at Tejjagon and stood in line for five to six hours.

"I told my office I was going to the pump. But if I end up spending the whole day here, when will I work?" he said.

A similar experience was shared by car

- Motorists are spending 3-4 hours in queues
- Filling stations have started rationing fuel
- Diesel stocks at 1.7 lakh tonnes, octane at 9,800 tonnes



When this newspaper found Alim in a queue outside the Trust Filling Station near the Bijoy Sarani intersection around 4:00pm yesterday, he had already been waiting since 11:00am.

"If it takes five hours just to get fuel, when will we work?" he asked.

During Eid, when Alim works almost round the clock, his fuel needs rise to eight to nine litres a day.

"Before Eid, I somehow managed. But after Eid, I'm barely getting any."

driver Mahbubur Rahman Sheikh, who joined the queue around 9:30am, but at one point fuel ran out before his turn.

Supply resumed after a gap of around five hours, leaving him waiting until the afternoon.

"My family keeps calling, asking why it's taking so long. If I spend the whole day here, how will I do anything else?" he asked.

Trust was the only pump providing full- SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Iran rejects US ceasefire plan

Counters 15-point proposal with five conditions of its own; fighting continues amid reports of fresh US troop deployments to Middle East

Iran hits targets across Israel, Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain

Pakistan hands over US 15-point peace plan to Iran

Iran says Hormuz open to 'non-hostile' oil vessels

61% Americans oppose US ops in Iran

AGENCIES

Iran yesterday rejected a 15-point ceasefire proposal by the United States, setting out its own conditions for peace, according to Iranian state media.

"Iran will end the war when it decides to do so and when its own conditions are met," reported Press TV, quoting a "senior political-security official".

The official offered Iran's own five-point plan, which consisted of a halt to killings of its officials, the means to ensure no other war is waged against it, reparations for the war, the end of hostilities and Iran's "exercise of sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz".

Earlier in the day, Iran's military took a jab at the Trump administration's push for a deal to end the war, saying Washington is "negotiating with itself".

US President Donald Trump has sent a 15-point plan to Iran via Pakistan, which has offered to



Smoke rises from the area of the Kuwait International Airport after a reported drone strike hit a fuel depot yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

mediate a possible end to the war, a senior Iranian source, on condition of anonymity, told Reuters.

The plan - which has not been made public - reportedly includes Iran dismantling nuclear facilities in exchange for the lifting of

sanctions. "Has the level of your inner struggle reached the stage of you negotiating with yourself?" Ebrahim Zolfaqari, spokesperson for the unified command of Iran's armed forces, Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, told the

state media.

"People like us can never get along with people like you," Zolfaqari said, adding that investments and pre-war energy prices would not return as long as

Washington does not accept that the regional stability is guaranteed by Iranian armed forces.

Zolfaqari's remarks came a day after Trump said Tehran wants to make a deal "so badly" to end the war.

Despite Trump's optimism that a deal with Tehran is in sight, reports suggest that the US was sending more troops to the Middle East for a possible ground intervention.

Fighting in the nearly four-week war raged on yesterday, with Iran targeting US assets across the Middle East with a fresh volley of missiles and US-Israeli strikes hitting key military targets in Iran, Lebanon and Iraq.

The conflict that began on SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

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“সাপ্রিমেন্ট আমদানি সম্পর্কিত গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি”

এতদ্বারা সাপ্রিমেন্ট সম্পর্কিত সকল আমদানিকারকদের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ঊষধ ও কসমেটিকস আইন, ২০২৩ মোতাবেক ডায়েটারী সাপ্রিমেন্ট, হারবাল সাপ্রিমেন্ট, নিউট্রিশনাল সাপ্রিমেন্ট, মেডিকেল নিউট্রিশন বা থেরাপিউটিক নিউট্রিশন বা খাদ্য পথ্য বা সম্পূরক পথ্য-জাতীয় পদসমূহ নিবন্ধন/পূর্বানুমোদন ব্যতীত উৎপাদন, আমদানি, রপ্তানি, বিক্রয়, বিতরণ, মজুদ বা প্রদর্শন করা দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।

এমতাবস্থায়, আমদানি পরবর্তী পণ্য খালাসসহ অন্যান্য জটিলতা নিরসনে ঊষধ প্রশাসন অধিদপ্তরের নিবন্ধন/পূর্বানুমোদন ব্যতিরেকে ডায়েটারী সাপ্রিমেন্ট, হারবাল সাপ্রিমেন্ট, নিউট্রিশনাল সাপ্রিমেন্ট, মেডিকেল নিউট্রিশন বা থেরাপিউটিক নিউট্রিশন বা খাদ্য পথ্য বা সম্পূরক পথ্য-জাতীয় পদসমূহ আমদানির নিমিত্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রতিকায় প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে Letter of Credit (LC)/ Telegraphic Transfer (TT) না খোলার জন্য আমদানিকারকগনসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল কর্তৃপক্ষকে বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা হলো। উল্লেখ্য যে উক্ত তারিখের পর হতে ঊষধ প্রশাসন অধিদপ্তরের নিবন্ধন/পূর্বানুমোদন ব্যতীত LC/ TT খোলা হলে কোন প্রকার ছাড়পত্র প্রদান করা হবে না।

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