

BUILDING COLLAPSE AT TEJGAON

Raking through rubble

TAWFIQUE ALI

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"My little daughter was crushed under a huge slab, as the six-storey Phoenix building collapsed in the blink of an eye," said a wailing Tajul Islam Shahin, father of five year old Shaila.

A student of KG-1 of Dhaka Pre-Cadet and High School in Nakhla, Shaila went missing just after the huge building at Shahid Tajuddin Sarani of Tejgaon, collapsed Saturday morning.

Shaila's bereaving parents broke down and were hardly in any mood to say anything.

"As Shaila went missing, we immediately began searching for her all around," said her uncle at their east Nakhla house.

"One of us suddenly saw a glimpse of Shaila's red frock under a huge concrete slab in an adjoining alley," said Shahin. "We rescued her body from underneath the rubble in a pool of blood."

"I can only appeal to the government to take stern action against the owner of the building for such negligence. I am just an ordinary man, I can not do anything," Shahin said.

A day after the accident, the area surrounding the collapsed building was filled with hundreds of people though the law enforcers cordoned off the area for smooth rescue operation. The monotonous roars of heavy rescue equipment, attempts to find any survivors under the rubble and anxious looking near and dear ones waiting for any kind of news of the missing made the surroundings bleak.

Elderly parents of Humayun Kabir, believed to be trapped under huge pile of rubble, stood helplessly leaning against an army lorry watching the rescue work with a hope that was gradually fading.

"My two sons, Humayun and Shamim, were working in two different



Hanif did not wait for the rescuers to find his cousin Humayun who has been missing since the building collapsed Saturday morning.

rooms on the first floor of the building when it caved in," said Shahjahan Jamaddar (60), who rushed to Dhaka with his wife from his village Shankarpasha under Nalchhiti Thana in Jhalakathi to Dhaka yesterday morning, after hearing the news.

"It turned pitch dark when the roof collapsed covering the whole area with thick dust", said Shamim's mother quoting him. "He could see nothing. He said that before being rescued he called for Humayun once but got no response."

Both Shamim (22) and Humayun (20) came to Dhaka three months ago and had been working as sanitary masons

where he was, Nikhil asked me to forget about him and save my life instead by getting out," Rincon said.

"I finally found an opening after trying to get out from several corners but was obstructed by concrete slabs," he said.

"After I got out of the debris, I lost my senses."

The rescuers comprising of the army, BDR, police and Rab personnel were busy with pneumatic and manual hammers, pickaxes, gas cutters, excavators, drilling machines, dumpers, bulldozers and cranes.

"We are taking utmost care in handling the rescue operation. Especially

The monotonous roars of heavy rescue equipment, attempts to find any survivors under the rubble and anxious looking near and dear ones waiting for any kind of news of the missing made the surroundings bleak

with the contractor Aziz.

One of Humayun's cousin, Hanif was seen removing debris himself from a place where Humayun was believed to be working. "Humayun is still trapped underneath the rubble," he said.

Rincon (20) and Nikhil, were both breaking a wall on the ground floor when the building collapsed.

Rincon, who was slightly injured, went back to the spot yesterday afternoon to see the horrific site and also help with the rescue operation. He said: "Lying under rubble, I called out for Nikhil several times asking whether he was alive."

Nikhil responded but could not move as one of his hands had been trapped in the concrete debris. "As I moved to

when someone comes to point out the location of any one still trapped under the rubble," said a Lt. Colonel preferring not to be named.

"We have also been cutting holes to get through the rubble when we locate a human body," he said.

Any human body trapped is unlikely to be alive, said a member of the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Sometimes it turns out quite risky even for rescuers to carry out such operations because of enormity of the debris.

Deputy Director Joha of Fire Service said: "Rescuers retrieved a 20-year old youth alive from beneath the rubble around 10 in the morning."

Load shedding - summer's nightmare

NOVERA DEEPIA

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With the scorching heat of summer back to stay for a quite a while, city dwellers have now begun to face unimaginable difficulties and inconvenience because of the long and unsystematic load shedding caused by the shortfall of electricity.

To cover the shortfall, an hour of load shedding has been imposed in different areas of the city by turn.

Yet people in Old Dhaka including Hazaribagh, Sutrapur, Naya Paltan, Shankharibazar and other areas often have to bear with load shedding throughout the entire night.

Two to three-hour load shed-

ding on regular basis was reported in Goran, Khilgaon, Jatrabari, Syedabad, Kalyanpur, Sheorapara and Mirpur areas.

Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination candidates are having a hard time because of frequent power cuts.

"SSC is any student's first major exam and everyone wants to do well. But due to frequent load shedding I cannot concentrate on my studies apart from the lack of light, the hot weather and the mosquito menace are additional problems," said Sharmeen Sultana, a student of Azimpur Girls' School.

"Of course, insincere students are making the best use of load shedding to bunk classes," Towfiqul Islam Minar, a student of

Government Laboratory School.

"Teachers in our school don't let us turn the fans on in this hot weather even if we are exhausted because of the heat. They say if we keep the fans off, we can save electricity and will not have load shedding problems," said Saamiul Baser Miraj of Jigatola Model School.

Load shedding seems to have gripped the diplomatic areas of Gulshan and Banani as well. The area faces a four-hour scheduled load shedding at any time during the day, according to sources of the Dhaka Electricity Supply Company.

"Unscheduled load shedding at times causes a lot of inconvenience as we cannot plan our day's work," said a foreign resi-

dent of Gulshan.

Tamanna Husein, a Dhaka University student who lives in Badda area said: "I cannot study by the dim candle light, lantern or even the emergency rechargeable lights as it hurts my eyes."

"I cannot preserve any food in the refrigerator without electricity in this scorching heat. If there are frequent power-cuts or voltage fluctuation, the electrical household items like air coolers, freezer and even the tube lights lose their longevity," said Mehzebaben Khan, a retired librarian.

Shaheda Kader, a housewife of Khilgaon area, complained that the time of load shedding is never announced beforehand. "My three-year-old daughter got

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Continuous loadshedding in the city has been severely disrupting normal life.

Dogs, obedience trials on show

SILVERINE SHRIKANTHAN

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Squeaky shrieks, soft and deep barks were heard once again as owners of almost 76 dogs gathered on Saturday morning at the Begum Rowshanara Sharak in Bashundara Residential area to put their animals on show.

This was the second show organised by the Bangladesh Kennel Club (BKC), the first one

being in last March. Dog shows were held previously but this was the club's second effort in building a platform for club members and other dog owners to participate.

It was a day with a difference. From the little Chihuahua of Mexican origin and Pomeranian to the Great Dane, they all produced a unique opportunity for people to see the different breeds of dogs and learn about

the varying characteristics.

For the judges Arabindra Singh, president of North Kolkata Kennel Club, and JBS Menon, life member and licensed ring steward of the Kennel Club of India, this was their first time to judge dogs in Bangladesh.

These animals were judged on their overall performance including how well-groomed they were and their intelligence and obedience - beauty and brains.

They started with a Ring Show, where all 76 dogs took a walk around the ring along with their masters proudly showing off their shiny well brushed and groomed selves, all ready to compete to be the best.

Although semi competitions were to be held for various categories, the organisers changed their minds and all competed within their breeds for the Best of Breed (BOB) title.

Dog lover Alia Khan had her pair of beautiful Pomeranians, Panda (male) and Peaches (female) parading and clinched the Best of the Breed title in the Toy category.

"We have seven dogs in our family," said Alia. "Five of them belong to the Toy group, while one belongs to the sporting group and my Great Dane, Valentino, who is still in Thailand, belongs to the working group," she added.

The little Chihuahua came next and was quite bewildered at the thought of being handled by anyone but her master.

Most dogs belonged to individual owners, some who were members of

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Century old building set to be demolished

CITY CORRESPONDENT

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The century old building at 27, Park Avenue, presently the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) headquarters will be completely demolished to construct a six-storey building in its place, said Public Works Department (PWD) sources.

Although the Archaeology Department is responsible in conserving buildings of historical value, a senior official, when contacted said the department was unaware of such decision.

This building is connected with historical events and memories of renowned and prominent personalities like Muhammad Ataul Gani Osmani, the supreme commander of Mukti Bahini and Bangladesh Armed Forces and former minister Abdur Rab Serniabat.

Residents in the area are not happy with the decision.

"Many old buildings and monumental structures are preserved in the world, but we are trying to demolish them," said Ahmed Sharif, an ex-government officer.

"Historic buildings provide a link to our past, which allows us to establish some knowledge of our history and time," he added.

"The designs and structures

give us an idea of the times from the past, and with preservation of such buildings, we can marvel at the accomplishments of our ancestors," said Sharif.

Other officials from both the archaeology department and PWD said this particular building

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city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"He came to office this morning and since the incident his cellphone remained silent"

-- Qazi Mamun
Brother of a victim
Told reporters desperately looking for his brother was trapped under the rubble of the collapsed building in Tejgaon, on Saturday.
Source: The Daily Star

"I do not want to be the best player of the Bangladesh team only. I want to be the world's best player."

-- Aftab Ahmed
Cricketer, Bangladesh National Team
Said after Bangladesh won the ODI against Sri Lanka in Bogra where he was adjudged Man of the Match, on Wednesday.
Source: Prothom Alo

"Even we can go to power like Hamas if we unite"

-- Mufti Fazlul Haque Amini
Factional chief of Islami Oikko Jote
Said at a meeting at Engineers Institute in Dhaka, on Thursday.
Source: Prothom Alo

"One of the two collapsible gates on the floor was padlocked. Finding it impossible to come out through the milling crowd at the other gate, I jumped out of the window onto the roof of a nearby building"

-- Farzana
A garment worker
Said after being rescued from blazing fire at a garment factory in Chittagong, on Friday.
Source: The Daily Star

"I know the minority (the main opposition) have made their case or (are) attempting to make their case in parliament and I hope that response from the majority (the government) will be done in a way to settle the issue"

-- Joseph Crawley
US Congressman
Said at a press conference at the end of his visit to Bangladesh, on Wednesday.
Source: The Daily Star

"There is no oil crisis in North Bengal. Media is projecting few sporadic incident as an overall picture around the country"

-- Mahmudur Rahman
Adviser, Energy Ministry
Said at a seminar in Dhaka, on Wednesday.
Source: Prothom Alo