

Two sustain burns in gas cylinder blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two youths suffered burn injuries in a fire yesterday evening, supposedly caused by the explosion of a kitchen gas cylinder in Shyampur area of the capital.

The injured were identified as Md Sajib (24) and Hafizul (23). They were rushed to the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The duo live at a tinshed house near Dhaka Match Factory in the old part of Dhaka.

Zakir Hossain, a roommate of the injured, told reporters that both of them work at a workshop. They came home from workplace in the afternoon and were preparing to cook.

The cylinder exploded when the stove was lit around 6:30pm, he said.

Quoting physicians of the burn unit, DMCH police outpost in-charge Bacchu Mia told reporters that Hafizul suffered 30 percent burns, while Sajib eight percent burns.



GROWING PAINS... Pedestrians and vehicles alike have to zigzag through this road in Sylhet city's Zindabazar area due to "unannounced and unfinished" development work. According to locals, the city corporation shut down the busy road from East Zindabazar to Barutkhana to repair a box culvert. The work is not only affecting commuters but also businesses in the area, as the authorities did not arrange any alternative option for them. The photos were taken on Monday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

I am a victim of conspiracy: Nasir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

After losing the Awami League party ticket for the mayoral post in the upcoming city polls, incumbent mayor of Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) AJM Nasir Uddin yesterday told journalists that he was a victim of "conspiracy, propaganda and lies".

"The post of mayor is not the biggest thing for me... politics is my main priority. Had anyone come to me and asked me to leave the post, I would have left it gladly," said Nasir, adding, "There was no need to spread false propaganda against me."

Nasir, also general secretary of Chattogram city unit AL, was looked over for the party's nomination on Saturday, which instead went to Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, joint general secretary of the same unit.

Speaking at a views-exchange meeting at Chattogram Press Club, Nasir said he did not have any grief, anger, or frustration over missing out on the nomination.

"I was just hurt to see false propaganda in social media against me," he said. "My photo with a relative of a killer of Bangabandhu went viral on social media in a bid to establish that I have a relation with the killers, which is hundred percent false... I do not know the person."

"I was inaugurating a business in the port city and its owner was a former vice president of Chittagong University unit Bangladesh Chhatra League," he said.

"When I go to a programme, many people come to me and take photos; I do not necessarily know them all. I had never met the person in the photo [before then]. Now that person may be a relative of a killer of Bangabandhu, but I do not know him," he said, adding that "conspirators" had propagated the photo to spread propaganda.

"I did politics against the killers of Bangabandhu putting my life at risk. I have been doing politics holding the ideology of Bangabandhu throughout my life, and I

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Road crashes claim 4 lives

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and three injured in road accidents across the country in the last two days, report our correspondents and news agencies.

In Bhola, Jihad (16) was killed and three were injured after an auto-rickshaw collided with his motorbike in Boilderpud area of Borhanuddin upazila yesterday noon.

Officer-in-Charge (investigation) of Borhanuddin Police Station Abdul Quader said the accident left Jihad dead on the spot. The injured were admitted to Bhola Sadar Hospital.

In Panchagarh, Md Masud (20) was killed after two tractors collided in Banglabandha Land Port area of Tetulia upazila around noon yesterday, said police.

Due to the collision, Masud was run over by one of the tractors, leaving him dead on the spot, they added.

In Chapainawabganj, Wasim Ali (49) was killed after a truck ran him over while he was crossing the road in Kansat Abbas Bazar area of Shibganj upazila around 7am yesterday, said police.

The truck driver and his helper fled the spot after the accident.

In Satkhira, Shamsur Rahman Sana (40) died after a speeding truck hit his motorbike in Patkelghata area of Tala upazila around 2pm on Monday.

The deceased was a manager working for Dutch-Bangla Bank.

Witnesses said Shamsur lost control of his motorbike and fell off. At that moment, a speeding truck hit Shamsur, killing him on the spot.

Police were trying to catch the truck and its driver.

BUS DRIVER HELD OVER DEATH OF TWO STUDENTS

Police yesterday arrested a bus driver over the death of two students in a road accident in Bangabandhu Bridge area in Tangail.

The arrestee is Shahinul Islam (25), driver of a Govindaganj Special bus, reports our Tangail correspondent.

A police team of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station, led by Sub-inspector Jayed Bin Abdullah, arrested him from Govindaganj Bus Stand area in Gaibandha, said Kazi Aiyubur Rahman, OC of the police station.

On Sunday, two students of Medical Assistant Training School (MATS) in Tangail -- Mayen Uddin Hamim Turjya and Sadia Islam Nodi -- were killed after a bus ran them over while they were crossing the highway.

After the accident, driver and helper of the bus fled the scene, leaving the vehicle behind. Turjya's brother filed a case with the police station on the same day.

CHOLERA, DIARRHOEA

Vaccination campaign starts today

BSS, Dhaka

A six-day vaccination campaign kicks off today in the capital to immune people from cholera and diarrhoea.

The information was unveiled during a press conference at Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in Mohakhali.

The campaign will be conducted in Mohammadpur, Adabor, Darus Salam, Kamrangirchar, Hazaribagh and Lalbagh's wards 9, 10, 14, 22-25, 29-34 and 55-57 under Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC).

The vaccination will be given to persons -- aged one year and above -- from 8am to 4pm everyday at 360 centres. Some vaccination centres will remain open till 7pm.

GOPALGANJ SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

10-day standstill prevails as students continue protests

MD ABBAS

Administrative and academic activities at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) in Gopalganj have been halted since February 9, as students of history department are demonstrating, demanding University Grants Commission (UGC) approve their department.

The protests escalated several days ago after UGC asked BSMRSTU authorities to shut the department down and complete academic activities of the existing batches.

Protesting the move, history students went on a sit-in programme in front of the administrative building, padlocking its gate on February 6. On February 9, they also padlocked gates of the academic building, leading to a complete halt of academic activities.

Mentionable, then BSMRSTU vice-chancellor Prof Khondoker Nasiruddin introduced the history department in 2017 under the Institute

of Bangabandhu, Liberation War and Bangladesh Studies, with "verbal approval" of UGC. Some 300 students enrolled at the department each year.

After students learned that their department is not approved, they started demonstrating.

Meanwhile, general students expressed concerns that halting of academic activities will result in huge session jams. They urged authorities to take measures to resume classes and examinations.

University students also formed a human chain on February 9, demanding resumption of classes and exams, saying the movement was disrupting their academic life.

Niaz Mahmud, a final-year student of computer science and engineering department, said, "We know their demand is logical, but they have to think about the academic lives of rest of the students. We are greatly suffering for their movement."

Fahim Sikder, a former student of the university, said he got scholarship

to go aboard and needs to collect his transcript urgently. But he could not collect it as administrative activities are halted.

Many students echoed Niaz and Fahim, criticising university authorities for not taking proper steps to resolve the crisis.

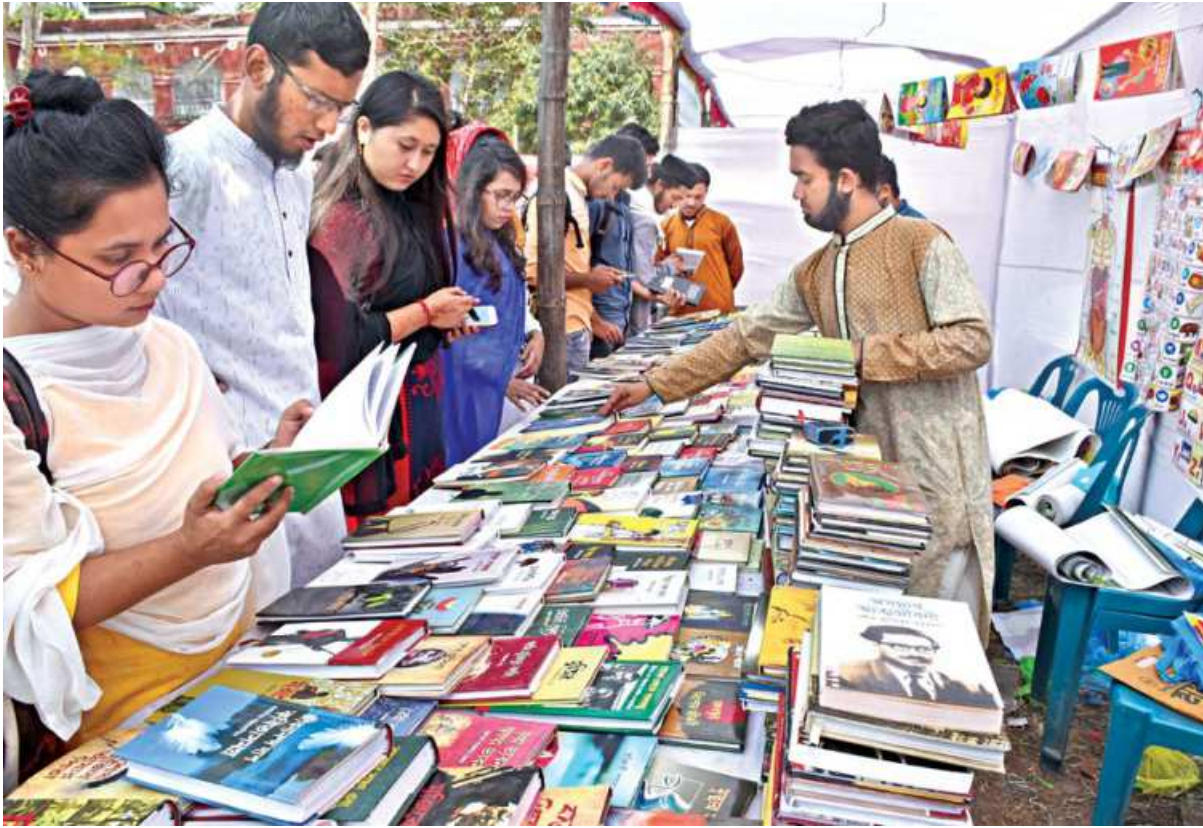
UGC FORMS PROBE BODY

Taking the issue to cognisance, UGC yesterday formed a seven-member probe body, led by its member Prof Dil Afroz Begum, to resolve the matter.

BSMRSTU Vice Chancellor Prof Md Shahjahan said they have already held a meeting with the probe body yesterday in this regard.

University authorities will take measures as per recommendations of the probe body, he said, hoping that the issue will be resolved soon.

Both Prof Dil Afroz and UGC Chairperson Prof Kazi Shahidullah could not be contacted over phone despite repeated attempts.



Visitors leaf through books at a stall at Govt BM College in Barishal yesterday. Uttarayan, a cultural organisation, arranged the event as part of a three-day "Jibanananda Das Fair" to observe the 121st birth anniversary of the one of the most popular poets of modern Bengali literature.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

BANGLADESH RAILWAY EVICTION DRIVE

Concrete block fall kills one, injures four in Kishoreganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A youth was killed and four persons were injured when a chunk of concrete fell on them during an eviction drive conducted by Bangladesh Railway (BR) in Sarachar station area of Kishoreganj yesterday.

Authorities said the five gathered in the area just to see the drive.

The deceased -- Nimai Chandra Banik (25) -- was from Uttar Sarachar in the district's Bajitpur upazila. He was declared dead at Jahurul Islam Medical College Hospital, according to police.

The injured -- Antor Saha (18), Rubel Mia (24), Kamal Mia (37) and Siam Al Sadi -- who are from

adjacent villages -- were taken to Bajitpur Upazila Health Complex, said Bajitpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Khalilur Rahman Patwary.

Of them, Rubel was referred to Dhaka as his condition deteriorated, said the OC.

BR started the eviction drive against illegal structures on its land around 9am.

"As soon as the accident occurred around noon, we postponed the operation," said Md Nazrul Islam, estate officer of BR, who led the drive.

When asked whether they ensured that there was no people inside or around the illegal structures before the action, the BR official said, "We

repeatedly asked people or onlookers through a loudspeaker to move to safety."

The drive started when there was no one on the spot. "The victims came to the spot all of a sudden while the buildings were being demolished," said Nazrul Islam.

The official said they gave Tk 20,000 to the deceased's family and Tk 5,000 each to other victims' families, he said.

"We are planning to allocate shops to the victims, which will be set up on the BR land on completion of the drive," he added.

The official said they were able to demolish around 120 structures till the postponement.

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