



A DAY AFTER THE FIRE... Monday morning's fire in Mirpur's Rupnagar slum did not just raze houses, it engulfed dreams of people, most of them marginalised. Yesterday, old and young alike were busy trying to pick through the remains of what used to be their lives, salvaging charred valuables. As many as 400 shanties were gutted in the devastating fire, rendering around 5,000 people homeless. Meanwhile, a signboard of the housing and public works ministry says the site is designated for a housing project for rehabilitation of lower and lower-middle class families.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Aftab Alam passes away

CITY DESK

Aftab Alam, founding managing director of Colour Quest Limited and an independent director of Bangladesh General Insurance Company (BGIC) Ltd, passed away on March 11.

He was 76, says a press release.

Aftab Alam left behind his wife Fancy and sons Zubair, Adnan, Adib, daughter-in-law Ishrat, grandson Zahran and a host of relatives, friends and admirers to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Azad Mosque in Gulshan after the Juma prayers today, the press release added.

Members of the board and the BGIC family expressed deep grief at his passing.

Digital transactions ensure transparency

Speakers say about social safety net programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said digital financial transactions saved time and expenses of social safety net programme beneficiaries across the country, and ensured transparency of transactions.

The programme, titled "Social security allowance: use of digital payment system" was organised by Bangla daily Prothom Alo in association with USAID and World Vision at the newspaper's office in the capital.

Speakers said there are still some challenges, but it can be overcome through raising awareness on digital security.

Speaking at the meeting, Senior Secretary Shamsul Alam, a member of the Planning Commission, said only 13 percent of people were under the coverage of the social safety net programme in 2009, but now around 58 percent people have been brought under this programme. Due to increased usage of technology, the problem of middlemen has been resolved, and now poor and pregnant women, widows and the elderly get their allowances directly.

He mentioned security-related problems, like hacking PIN numbers, as "teething problems" that mobile literacy can overcome, and asked service providers to reduce their service charges.

Fred Witteveen, country chief of World Vision Bangladesh, said they are providing long-term financial assistance to the rural poor, especially women and youths, which is impacting future generations.

"The effectiveness of special safety net programme has been increased because of digital transactions," he added.

Syed Nurul Basir, director of Department of Social Services, said the social welfare ministry has implemented the G2P (government-to-people) only in 18 districts of five divisions, but they are confident of implementing the project all over the country by 2021.

Director of Institute of Public Health Nutrition Khalilur Rahman, Deputy Secretary of PMO Innovation Unit Monirul Islam, Chief External and Corporate Officer of mobile financial service Bkash Sheikh Monirul Islam, National Project Director of "Sopno", a project in coordination with the LGRD ministry and UNDP, also spoke at the event.

Govt for speedy trial of Abrar Fahad's murder



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to transfer Buet student Abrar Fahad murder case from Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's court to the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka for finishing its trial proceedings quickly.

The decision was taken under Section 6 of the Speedy Trial Tribunal Act, 2002, and Law Minister Anisul Huq has approved the relevant file regarding the transfer.

Earlier, Abrar's family met the minister and requested him to transfer the case to a Speedy Trial Tribunal, a law ministry official told The Daily Star yesterday.

On October 7 last year, Abrar, a second-year student of electrical and electronics engineering department at Buet, was beaten to death by a group of BCL men at the university's Sher-e-Bangla Hall in Dhaka.

'India must assure its citizenship law wouldn't affect us'

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said the Citizenship Amendment Act in India must be an internal matter of the country, and the Indian government should promise CAA would not affect Bangladesh.

People in Bangladesh become concerned when many Indian ruling party leaders say people who are living there illegally would be sent here, although the issue is still a sub-judice matter, they claimed.

They were speaking at a discussion on Bangladesh-India relationship, at Cirdap auditorium in the capital.

Delivering a keynote paper, advocate Abu Hena Razzaki, chief executive of Bangla Foundation, said the Indian government has not yet formally made any statement that CAA would not affect Bangladesh, though Indian foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla assured it to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during a recent visit.

"No doubt CAA is an internal issue of India, but I condemn the disorder what have been witnessed in the country in last few months" he said.

Citing the rise in deaths of Bangladeshis near Indian borders, he said the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) should play a responsible role to stop extra-judicial killings on the borders.

He also condemned the violation of human rights in India centring the Kashmir issue.

Bimal Sankar Nanda, a professor at University of Calcutta in India, said India always hails development activities in Bangladesh, as those would also benefit India.

"The Indian government wouldn't take any initiative that could hamper the development of Bangladesh. However, national security would be the first priority of India."

Chairing the discussion, Abul Quasem Fazlul Haque, a professor at Dhaka University, stressed on boosting bilateral ties between the two neighbouring countries.

Dr Namrata Kothari, a teacher at South Calcutta Girls College; Shahab Enam Khan, a professor at Jahangirnagar University; and journalist Keramat Ullah Biplob spoke at the discussion, among others.

Journalist missing for three days

He's accused in Digital Security Act case filed by MP Shikhor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol, an accused in a case alongside 31 others under Digital Security Act has been missing since Tuesday afternoon. His family filed a general diary with Chawkbazar Police Station in this regard yesterday.

"We could not establish any contact with him, as his phone was found switched off till now," his son Monorom Polok told The Daily Star last night. "We want his safe return," he appealed.

Kajol, the editor of Pokkhok magazine, worked as a photojournalist in various national dailies including the daily Samakal and Bonik Barta, his colleagues said.

He was accused alongside editor-in-chief of Bangla daily Manabzamin and 31 others in a case filed on Monday by Awami League lawmaker Saifuzzaman Shikhor, with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

Shikhor alleged that Manabzamin published a report on expelled Jubo

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'Freeze 91 accounts of Enamul, Rupon'

Dhaka court orders authorities

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered to freeze 91 bank accounts of former Awami League leader Enamul Haque Enu and his brother Rupon Bhuiyan in two money laundering cases filed with Gandaria and Wari police stations.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after two CID inspectors submitted two separate petitions for freezing the accounts in which Tk 19 crore was deposited.

CID Inspector Sadeque Ali submitted a petition for freezing the accounts of Enamul and CID Inspector Mehedi Maksud submitted another for freezing Rupon's accounts. The cases were filed on September 25 last year.

The same court yesterday rejected their bail petitions in two other corruption cases for illegally acquiring Tk 21 crore and Tk 14 crore -- respectively by Enamul and Rupon -- widely known as "Casino Brothers".

Enamul is former vice-president of Gandaria unit Awami League while Rupon is its former joint general secretary.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the corruption cases against the two brothers with its Integrated District Office-1 of Dhaka on October 23 last year.

On January 13, they were arrested in Dhaka's Keraniganj along with one of their accomplices Sheikh Sunny Mostofa. Sunny, who was also arrested on charges of giving shelter to the brothers at his house in South Keraniganj.

Enamul and Rupon went into hiding after law enforcers launched a crackdown on illegal casinos, bars and spas in September last year.

Wanderers Club, of which Enamul was the director, was first raided by Rab on September 18.

On February 25, a Rab team launched a drive at their house on Wari's Lalmojon Saha Street and recovered Tk 26.55 crore in cash and FDR worth Tk 5.15 crore.

They also recovered around one kg of gold, 9,300 USD, 174 Malaysian ringgit, 5,350 Indian rupees, 1,195 Chinese yuan, 11,560 Thai baht, 100 UAE dirhams and some gambling chips from the flat.

Rab suspected that the money was collected from their illegal casino business. Enamul and Rupon were the directors of a casino at the Wanderer's Club in Motijheel.

MEASLES-RUBELLA

Vaccination campaign to begin Mar 18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will start a 25-day measles-rubella vaccination campaign throughout the country on March 18.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque disclosed the information at a press conference at the ministry yesterday.

"Around 3.40 crore children aged between nine months and 10 years will be given vaccination in two phases," he said.

Students up to grade-IV or equivalent classes of around 1.73 lakh schools will be brought under the campaign from March 18 to March 24.

The remaining children will get this vaccine at some 2.44 lakh permanent and makeshift vaccination centres, said the health minister.

All children will be brought under the campaign, Zahid Maleque said.

The minister said the number of people infected with measles-rubella rose to 27.1 in 10 lakh people in 2019.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

This young man selling coconut sprouts and oil at the capital's Paltan area gets his supplies all the way from Bagerhat. Each piece of sprout goes for Tk 10 to Tk 20, depending on size. On the other hand, the oil is sold at Tk 180 per litre. This photo was taken yesterday.

DHAKA TODAY

LECTURE

On Bangladesh: Between Sorrow and Hope
Organiser: Centre for The Study of Genocide and Justice
Venue: Liberation War Museum, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
Time: 4pm

Organiser: BYLC
Venue: KIB, Farmgate
Time: 2pm

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EVENT

Wander Ventures
Organiser: Wander Women
Venue: Midas Centre, Dhanamondi-27
Time: 10am

COMMEMORATION EVENT

Remembering Moin Hossain Raju
He was gunned down in 1992 while protesting violent student politics.
Organiser: Bangladesh Chhatra Union
Venue: Raju Memorial Sculpture, University of Dhaka
Time: 11am

CAR EXPOSITION

Millennium Vintage Expo
Organiser: Millennium SsangYong Motors Ltd
Venue: 206/1-207/1, Bir Uttam Mir Shawkat Sarak, Tejgaon
Time: 10am

CELEBRATION

Marking International Women's Day

MUSIC

Folk Nights
Venue: Jatra Biroti
Time: 7pm

