

Doctor couple severely burnt in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A doctor couple was burnt severely in a fire, reportedly igniting after a cigarette came in contact with hand sanitiser at their home in Dhaka's Hatirpool area early yesterday.

They are: Rajib Bhattacharjee (36), a neurosurgeon at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, and his wife Anushua Bhattacharjee, physician at a private medical college.

They were rushed to the Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute after the fire started around 1:00am. Dr Samanta Lal Sen, chief coordinator of the institute, said Rajib was put on life support with 87 percent burns while his wife sustained 20 percent burns.

Talking to reporters at the hospital, Rajib's friend Dr Sudip Dey said they came to know that Rajib was smoking when he was pouring hand sanitiser in a smaller bottle. Suddenly, he caught on fire and it spread. His wife sustained burns as she tired to douse the fire to save Rajib. The couple's only daughter Rajashree Bhattacharjee (5) was at her grandfather's house in Cumilla during the incident, Sudip said.

Rasel Sikder, duty officer of Fire Service, said they were not informed about such fire.



For the past seven years, Jibon (left) has been buying old computer parts from households across the capital for Tk 200-300. He then tries to repair the parts and make working computers, and if possible, sell them to poor students or shop owners at a low price. Whatever is irreparable goes to scrap shops. The photo was taken recently from Segunbagicha area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Roads & Highways to sign first major contract since virus outbreak

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Roads and Highways Department's ongoing projects had slowed down. Today, the department will sign its first major contract since the virus hit Bangladesh.

Under the deal, three companies will build 21 bridges in different parts of the country, said RHD officials. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader is expected to join the contract signing ceremony, which would be held at RHD's Banani office, through Zoom, they added.

"We were supposed to sign the deal in April but it got delayed due to the pandemic. This is the first major contract RHD is going to sign since the outbreak began. Some small contracts might have been signed in the meantime," Abdus Sabur, additional chief engineer of RHD, said.

Abdus Sabur is also the project director of Western Bangladesh Bridges Improvement Project (WBBIP), under which all the bridges will be constructed.

"We have resumed works of the project after more than two months of halt due to pandemic and works is now going on in full swing," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

RHD Chief Engineer Quazi Shahriar Hossain recently said the implementation of their projects was hampered by the pandemic as work of those projects was suspended for more than two months since late March.

"We have resumed work but still cannot work in full swing as many foreign experts are yet to return," he told The Daily Star on July 13.

Replying to another question, Shahriar said, "The pandemic will affect every project, and we have to extend the deadline by at least three months. We have already got such indications from the project officials."

The government declared shutdown of all public and private offices

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MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

Charges pressed against Enamul-Rupon, 8 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday pressed charges against "Casino Brothers " -- Enamul Haque Enu and Rupon Bhuiyan -- and eight others in a case filed over laundering Tk 17 crore.

Inspector Mehedi Maksud, also the case's investigation officer, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, showing 25 people as prosecution witnesses.

Enamul is a former vice-president of the Gendaria unit of Awami League while Rupon is joint general secretary of the same unit.

The other accused are -- their three brothers Shahidul Haque Bhuiyan, Rashidul Haque Bhuiyan and Merajul Haque Bhuiyan, general secretary of Wanderer's Club in Motijheel Joy Gopal Sarkar and their accomplices Tuhin Munshi, Nabin Hossain Sikder, Saiful Islam and Pavel Rahman. Of them, Enu, Rupon, Joy Gopal, Tuhin, Nabin

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Police foil LDA demo in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police yesterday foiled a demonstration staged by Left Democratic Alliance in front of deputy commissioner in Sylhet, to press home its eight-point demand including free Covid-19 test for all.

At least 10 people were injured in a scuffle with police, LDA said, although law enforcers denied it.

They later rallied at Court Point, where speakers demanded healthcare for all, increasing the number of coronavirus tests and sample collection booths, and quick report delivery.

Leaders and activists of BSD, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Juba Union, Chhatra Front and Chhatra Union were present at the programme.

COVID-19 AFFECTED AREAS HC refuses to pass order on cattle markets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday refused to pass any order asking the government to stop setting up cattle markets in coronavirus-affected areas -- including Dhaka, Chattogram, Narayanganj and Gazipur cities. The bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim dropped a writ petition filed, seeking its directive on the government to stop setting up such markets in the virus-affected areas from its hearing list.

The bench came up with the order after holding a virtual hearing on the petition. Petitioner's Advocate Md Eunus Ali Akond told The Daily Star that the HC refused to interfere in the government's decision to set up cattle markets as the issue involves religious sentiments.

So, cattle markets can be set up even in Covid-19 affected areas following the health guidelines, he added. Eunus submitted the writ petition as a public interest litigation on July 16 via email, praying to the court to stop setting up such markets to protect people from the pandemic.

He said the National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19 recommend not to set up cattle markets in areas heavily affected by coronavirus. However, authorities have allowed markets in those areas, ignoring its recommendation, in violation of law, the lawyer stated.

'Same old story every year' Low-lying areas in Ctg inundated after rain

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Incessant rain brought sufferings to port city residents, as many areas went under water.

On Tuesday, Chattogram Met Office recorded 33.6 mm rainfall in 24 hours till 3pm, said Ujjal Kanti Paul, assistant meteorologist of the office, and forecast more rain in the next 48 hours.

The Chattogram Port was advised to hoist signal-3, he said.

Coupled with tidal surge, rainwater submerged most low-lying areas including Bakalia, Chawkbazar, Rahattarpool, Bahaddarhat, Muradpur, Bibirhat, Chandgaon, Sholashahar, Shulakbahar, Badurtala, Agrabad and Halishahar.

People were seen wading through filthy water to go to their destinations. Some were busy protecting their homes and shops from water while others were trying to drain and scoop water out.

"This is the second time this week rainwater entered my house," said Mina Barua, a resident of Rahattarpool area. "It's the same old story every year... seems like there's no end to our sufferings," she said while scooping out water.

Locals said canals and drains remain filled up with garbage and fail to contain rainwater, which overflows onto the road and enters their residences.

"I don't understand what the authorities are doing. Can't they see we are suffering?" said a frustrated Mina Barua.

Due to incessant rain, very few vehicles plied the roads and a handful of rickshaws and three-wheelers were seen carrying passengers -- that too at exorbitant fares.

Around 3pm on Tuesday on KB Aman Ali Road, a worried Sultan Ahmed was seen standing in knee-deep water and searching for a ride to take his son, who had a cut

injury in his right arm, to a hospital.

He said he had been waiting for a while for a vehicle. "I cannot wait any longer; I have to take him to a dispensary to bandage his arm," he said as he started walking towards a pharmacy with his 10-year-old son.

Near Bakalia DC Road area, Trishna Acharjee had to wait for almost an hour to get a rickshaw to go to Chawkbazar Gulzar Intersection for an emergency.

"It gets very difficult to survive during the rainy season. Years go by but the authorities concerned remain indifferent to our miseries," she added.

Like her, many city dwellers expressed their frustration over the authorities' failure to address the waterlogging problem.

Contacted, Mohammad Shamsuddaaha, chief executive officer of CCC, said they are maintaining the smaller drain, with a width under three feet.

"The Chattogram Development Authority has been implementing a mega project to reduce waterlogging in the port city. All the canals and large drains are supposed to be cleaned and expanded as part of the project," he said.

Asked, Lt Col Md Shah Ali, CDA project director, said, "People are already being benefited for their project works. Many areas, which went under waist-deep water during the rainy season last year, are free from waterlogging this year.

Asked about waterlogging in many areas during Tuesday's rain, he said rain coupled with tidal water submerged the areas but water drained out quickly as soon as tidal water receded. "It should not be a problem as we are installing regulators at the mouth of canals to regulate tidal water," he assured.

UN WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME Germany provides \$4.5m for Rohingyas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Germany government has contributed a new USD 4.5 million funding to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to support the Rohingya community in Bangladesh.

With the latest contribution, Germany has provided WFP Bangladesh with a total of USD 30 million since the onset of the refugee crisis in 2017, said a WFP press release issued yesterday.

Donated through German Federal Foreign Office, the new funding will be used for food support and telecommunications services for the community, the release said.

Welcoming the new funding, WFP said the support will help towards the critical work for Rohingya families and their host communities in Cox's Bazar.

"At a time when Covid-19 is exacerbating inequalities and severely impacting communities in Bangladesh and also around the world, we are especially grateful for such an act of solidarity and generosity from Germany," said Richard Ragan, WFP country director in Bangladesh.

This contribution will support the Bangladesh government to meet its

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Covid-19 cases on rise in Rangpur city

1,060 test positive, 18 die as of Tuesday

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

The number of Covid-19 patients is increasing alarmingly in Rangpur city, as the residents are not aware enough of using masks and maintaining social distance.

However, the figure is comparatively low in the upazila areas under the district.

According to data from the civil surgeon office, 1,515 people were infected with Covid-19 in the entire Rangpur as of Tuesday. Of them, 1,060 alone tested positive in the city. The rest 455 are in the eight upazilas.

In Rangpur city, 18 people died from the coronavirus, 253 persons are undergoing treatment and 788 fully recovered, it said.

Outside the city, 34 people tested positive in Sadar upazila; among them, 27 recovered and seven people are receiving treatment. No death was reported there.

Fifty-six people were infected in Kaunia upazila; 30 of them recovered, and 26 are being treated. In Pirgachha upazila, 56 persons tested positive, two persons died and 44 recovered. Ten people are receiving treatment.

Seventy-four were infected in Gangachara upazila; of them, 40 recovered while 34 are undergoing treatment. In Taraganj upazila, 29 persons were infected and all of them recovered.

In Badarganj upazila, 50 persons tested positive for Covid-19 and 31 of them recovered. In Mithapukur, 88 persons tested positive; of them, 65 got cured and two died.

In Pirganj, 68 persons were infected, four people died and 23 recovered while 41 are undergoing treatment.

So far, 26 people died in entire Rangpur. Among them, 18 deaths were reported in the city; four in Pirganj, and two each in Mithapukur and

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DSCC to plant one lakh trees

Says mayor Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday announced to plant one lakh trees in DSCC, to increase forestation and protect the environment of the city.

He made the announcement while inaugurating a tree plantation programme at Nagar Bhaban premises.

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has intended to plant one crore trees across the country, and DSCC wants to be a part of that initiative.

The mayor planted three Krishnochura and two Radhachura trees at Nagar Bhaban premises.

Among others, chief executive officer Shah Md Imdadul Haque, chief waste management officer Md Badrul Amin and secretary Akramuzzaman were present at the event.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Braving rain and waterlogged road, family members take a wheelchair-bound woman to a hospital on an auto-rickshaw from Prabartak intersection in port city.

Shahed accused in NRB Bank scam case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against chairman of Regent Hospital Mohammad Shahed and three others for misappropriating about Tk 1.51 crore of NRB Bank.

Other accused are, Regent Hospital Managing Editor Ibrahim Khalil; former vice-president at SME Division of NRB Bank Wahid-bin-Ahmed, and former principal officer of the bank Sohanur Rahman.

ACC's Assistant Director Sirajul Hoque filed the case against them as the anti-graft body has primarily found their involvement in misappropriation of about Tk 1.51 crore between November 2014 and January 2018.

Shahed came under the limelight after he was

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Heavy waterlogging in the capital has brought misery for the whole city, even animals. These street dogs at Moghbazar's Wireless area have been stranded on small spaces that are still above the water, as the entire area is waterlogged after three days of rain.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

12 Nigerians, one Bangladeshi held for duping people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) claimed to have arrested 13 persons, including 12 Nigerian nationals, on Tuesday from Dhaka's Pallabi area on charge of duping people out of crores of taka. The arrestees used to impersonate customs officials while talking to the victims online, said Sheikh Md Rezaul Haider, additional deputy inspector general of CID.

At a press briefing at CID headquarters yesterday, the official said they carried out the raid based on a complaint from a victim who lost Tk 3.73 lakh to the gang's scam. Of the 12 arrested Nigerian, only three have their passports but do not have visas, he said.

CID also arrested Rahat Ara Khanam alias Farzana Mohiuddin (27), a Bangladeshi national, who used to identify herself as a customs officer, said Rezaul.

About the process of the scam, CID officials said the arrestees are members of an organised racket, who allegedly swindle money from people in name of developing friendship on social media and alluring them with expensive gifts.

Rezaul said the arrestees first befriends a target by pretending to be citizens of countries like the US or UK on social media.

In case of the victim who filed the complaint, a Facebook user named "Katherine Cullen Sophia" first connected

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RHD engineers asked to stay at work during Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All engineers of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) have been asked to stay at workplaces during Eid-ul-Azha vacation to ensure hassle-free movement of Eid holidaymakers.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader gave the directive yesterday while talking at

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