

3 workers die after fall from building in Dhanmondi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three construction workers died after falling from an under-construction building in Dhanmondi-32 area of Dhaka yesterday morning.

Ekram Uddin Miah, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station, said three construction workers fell to the ground, breaking the railing of a balcony of an under-construction building, around 11am.

One of the workers -- Shariful Islam (25) -- died on the spot.

Two others were declared dead when they were taken to Square Hospital soon after the accident.

Their identities could not be confirmed immediately.



PHOTO: TITU DAS

A giant mural of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her father, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was unveiled by Barishal City Corporation yesterday evening through a fireworks display, marking the premier's 74th birthday. The mural, measuring 50 feet by 40 feet, was painted on Bangabandhu Auditorium in the city's Sadar Road, and was unveiled by city mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah.

Barishal's polythene peril

City corporation's canal cleanup drive slowed down due to tonnes of plastic waste

SUSHANTA GHOSH

In a move to rid the city of waterlogging, Barishal City Corporation (BCC) has started a drive to clean the 43 major canals flowing through the city, but are facing an all-too-familiar obstacle -- polythene -- by the tonnes.

According to BCC's conservancy department, only seven or eight of the 43 canals are now "alive", while the rest have basically turned into drains of various sizes. Due to the closure of these canals, low-lying areas, including some major roads, get flooded during the monsoon. For example, the rainfall of the last few months have caused massive water logging all around the city.

However, the work is being prolonged due to the presence of a huge amount of polythene products in the water bodies, with at least 15 tonnes of polythene being extracted from the canals everyday.

For the drive, started over a week ago, BCC staffers are collecting garbage dumped into the canals. Once the garbage is disposed, the canals will start moving by their natural flow, which will solve the waterlogging problems of the city, which often leads to flooding of the low-lying areas of the city, authorities said.

BCC has started the cleaning operation from its own income, sources told this newspaper.

Dr Rabiul Islam, conservancy officer of BCC, said, "Initially, we thought the canal

cleaning project would not take long to complete. After starting the drive, we have been struggling to deal with the polythene. So much so, that we could not clean more than 600 metres yet in over a week."

"Due to the slow rate of action, it will end up taking a long time to clean all the canals," he added.

Gazi Naimul Hossain Litu, panel mayor and ward councilor of BCC ward-19, said, "It's astonishing how all canals across the city has been filled up with polythene." Most of these polythene comes from consumer products, which citizens from all walks of life dump indiscriminately into the canals.

BCC executive engineer Anisuzzaman said the canals project, which includes digging 43 canals, developing and constructing walkways, had come back a few months ago. However, it is very important to pass a canal excavation project for removing water logging of the city.

Bangladesh Environment Lawyer's Association (Bela) co-ordinator Lincoln Bain said, "The city will be submerged if the canals are not preserved." He demanded intensification of cleaning operations as well as removing illegal occupation from these areas.

Shah Sajeda, convener of Sacheton Nagorik Committee, said it was important to restore the canals for cultural factors too. "Barishal is called the 'Venice of Bengal' because of its canals."



Barishal City Corporation staffers cleaning up the historic Jail Khal near Nathullahbad Bridge area. This photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Mahbubey Alam laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With love, respect and grief, people from all walks of life yesterday bade farewell to Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, an eminent jurist.

The country's top law officer was laid to rest at the capital's Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard around 1:20pm, Mahbubey Alam's son Sumon Mahbub told The Daily Star.

Earlier, his coffin was kept on the Supreme Court Bar Association premises for around two hours from 11am when SC judges, former judges, lawyers, law officers, government high officials, political leaders, educationists, professionals and Mahbubey Alam's family members paid their last respects.

His namaz-e-janaza was held there.

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, Law Minister Anisul Huq, Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon, judges of the Appellate and High Court Divisions of the Supreme Court, former Appellate Division judges Justice AHM Shamuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Md Nizamul Huq, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, SCBA President AM Amin Uddin, Inspector General of Police Dr Benzir Ahmed, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam, Peshjibi Samannay Parishad President AFM Mesbahuddin and its Organising Secretary Advocate Motahter Hossain Sazu joined the janaza and paid tribute to Mahbubey Alam by placing wreaths.

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Protesting the rise in rape, killing and sexual abuse across the country, rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday took to the streets at Manik Mia Avenue area near the National Parliament, demanding exemplary punishment for the perpetrators. They also demanded that the government ensure justice for the victims and establish a women-friendly state.

PHOTO: STAR

TB elimination activities must pick up amid Covid

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tuberculosis (TB) elimination activities are being hampered due to Covid-19 emergencies, despite the contagious disease causing some 107 deaths every day in the country, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

To address this public health issue, there is a need for immediate plan and response to accelerate the detection of TB in line with Covid-19, they said at the programme, held at the Brac Center in Dhaka.

It was jointly organised by the Brac TB programme and the National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) of the health ministry.

According to the Global TB Report 2020 of the World Health Organization, Bangladesh had around 2.93 lakh TB patients last year -- one of the top 30 countries in the world.

Last year, around 221 new patients were detected and 21 died per one lakh population, according to the global report.

Dr Rupali Shishir Banu, National Programme Coordinator of NTP presented the latest TB situation at the time of Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

In her presentation, she showed multiple similarities between symptoms of TB and Covid-19 -- cough, fever and difficulty in breathing.

Both diseases also attack primarily the lungs, and both biological agents transmit mainly via close contact, spread through droplet nuclei, cough, sneeze, shouting, or singing, and people who inhale them can get infected.

Besides, elderly people, and other comorbidities like diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) cause same risk in case of the both diseases.

The one difference between these diseases is that the incubation period from exposure to disease in TB is longer, often with a slow onset than Covid-19.

It is anticipated that people ill with both TB and Covid-19 may have poorer treatment outcomes, especially if TB treatment is interrupted.

"TB treatment should continue with Covid-19 infection," Dr Rupali Shishir Banu said in her presentation.

She said the implementation of training

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'Take steps so expats can return to work'

Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairperson and Deputy Leader of the Opposition GM Quader yesterday expressed deep concern over the complex process and harassment Bangladeshi expatriate workers have to go through to get air-ticket for returning to their workplaces in Saudi Arabia.

In a statement, he also strongly condemned the brutal torture and rape of a housewife at Sylhet's MC College.

Quader said it is unfortunate that the country's remittance earners are facing harassment to get tickets.

He urged all concerned to take necessary steps to ensure that the stranded workers get tickets before their visas expire.

Besides, the Jatiya Party chief urged the ministry concerned to take effective measures for those whose visas have already expired.

On the recent incident of rape in Sylhet, he said, "The brutal and evil incident at MC College cannot be accepted in the civilized age."

Exemplary action should be taken against whoever is the culprit, so that such heinous crimes do not occur in the future, he added.

Each division to get school-college for cops' children

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The police authorities are planning to establish eight high-quality schools and colleges with residential facilities in eight divisional headquarters to bring an end to officers' intense attempt to stay in Dhaka on ground of their children's education.

In those institutions which will be from primary to 12th grade, 80 percent students, as proposed, will be the children of police members while the rest 20 percent from outside.

Police Headquarters (PHQ) has already conducted a feasibility study on 1,38,315 police personnel, out of the total 2,02,320 through web-based questionnaire.

Ninety percent of respondents expressed willingness to get their children admitted to the educational institutions, officials said. Some 79 percent of SP to upward-ranked officials, 83 percent of inspector to additional SP officers, 90 percent of constable to SI ranks and 81 percent civil staff agreed to it. Officials at the PHQ said police officers serving in different units do not want to go outside Dhaka as their families settled there for their children's education.

"If one is transferred outside the capital, he or she resorts to all legal and illegal ways and lobbying to stay in Dhaka. They even resort to corruption," said an officer wishing anonymity.

So, the IGP thought if eight cadet college

standard or even better educational institutions can be founded, officers or other policemen can go wherever they are posted getting their children admitted to one of their preferred residential schools, he added.

Besides, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed took the initiatives as officers from across the country told him during view exchange meetings that education of their children is seriously hampered during their new postings, said officials.

"Quality education to the children of police members stands as a big obstacle in the postings of officers," Ruhul Amin, additional inspector general (human resource management) at the PHQ said recently.

He said the development department at the PHQ is pondering on constructing the schools.

Replying to a query, he said it is yet to be decided how the funding will come -- from government or private or any other ways.

"So far decision is eight quality schools will be established in eight divisions," he told The Daily Star recently.

The finance department at the PHQ will work for funding. "We have police welfare trust; how much support can be given from the trust... Then final decision will be taken," he added.

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Another 700 illegal household gas lines disconnected in Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A mobile court yesterday disconnected 700 more illegal gas connections to households in Bororangamatia and Goshbagh Pukurpar in Savar.

Savar upazila administration and zonal office members of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd jointly conducted the drive, said a Titas official.

The court removed illegal pipelines across one kilometre and cut off connections to 700 households, said Engineer Abu Sadad Md Sayem, manager of Titas' Savar zonal office.

Pipes and other materials were also seized during the drive, said the official.

"Earlier, we had conducted separate drives in the area and disconnected lines, but during ongoing pandemic such lines were reinstalled," said Sayem.

When asked about the people behind providing these connections, the engineer said they are investigating the matter.

A case will be filed against the illegal users and those involved in the illegal gas connections, he added.

Earlier on September 9 and 16, two separate mobile courts disconnected around 2,000 illegal gas connections to households in Johorchanda and Kathgora Amtola areas of Ashulia.

TRAFFICKING GIRLS TO INDIA

Five more members of the gang held: CID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday claimed to have arrested five members of an organised trafficking syndicate which was involved in trafficking girls to India and forcing them into sex trade.

This syndicate allegedly trafficked around 20 girls from Bangladesh so far and sold them to their counterparts in India.

Two members of the syndicate, acting as husband and wife first used to take a house on rent in a locality, and then targeted young girls in the neighborhood by alluring them of a better job abroad, said Sheikh Md Rezaul Haider, an additional deputy inspector general of CID, at a press briefing at its headquarters.

The five arrestees were identified as Md Shaheen, Md Rafiqul Islam, Biplob Ghosh, Aktarul, and Md Bablu. A CID team arrested them from Jashore, said Haider.

Before the arrest of five, four other members of the syndicate including the ringleader Mohemunuzzaman, also known by the names Pratik Khandaker and Babu, were arrested last month.

According to CID, arrestee Shaheen is a driver by profession, and used to carry victims out of Dhaka to a bordering area by car.

Rafiqul has a house in Sharsha area of Jashore; he used to keep the victims in his house before trafficking them to India. Biplob and Bablu are associates of Rafiqul, said CID officials.

There has a canal on the border between Bangladesh and India in Sharsha of Benapole. Bablu was responsible to take the victim to the Indian side by crossing the canal on boat, they said.

Quoting victims, special superintendent of CID Kaniz Fatema -- who coordinated

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KHAGRACHHARI GANG RAPE

Six arrestees confess at court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Six of the seven arrestees in the case filed over rape of a Chakma girl have confessed to court of their crime.

A Khagrachhari court recorded their statements under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), said Md Rashid, officer-in-charge of Khagrachhari Sadar Police station.

"The court recorded their statement from 3pm to around 10pm on Sunday", the OC said.

"The main suspect, arrestee Md Amin alias Nurul Amin did not confess. We pleaded the court to grant a seven-day remand for him", the OC said.

The court set Wednesday for Amin's remand hearing, the OC added.

In the early hours of Thursday, a group of nine criminals with sharp weapons broke into the house of an indigenous Chakma woman at Bolpaiye Adam area of the district.

They tied up her mother and stepfather and raped her. The perpetrators beat up her mother when she tried to save her daughter, and looted cash and gold ornaments from the house.

The arrestees are Md Amin alias Nurul Amin (40), Belal Hossen (23), Iqbal Hossen (21), Abdul Halim (28), Shahin Mia (19), Antor (20), and Abdur Rashid (37).

All the accused are settlers who lived in different upazilas of Khagrachhari district, said the police official. They all have previous criminal records; they met each other in jail, he added.