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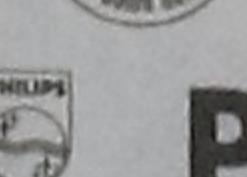
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A woman with a baby in her lap crying as she lost everything she had in a fire at a slum at Maniknagar in the city yesterday (Left) and other victims searching for their belongings in the debris.

--Star photo

## 25 shanties gutted at Maniknagar

By Staff Correspondent

At least 25 shanties in a slum at Shandergali of Maniknagar in the city's Sabujbagh area were gutted in a fire yesterday morning, fire brigade sources said.

The fire originating from an earthen oven in a shanty at about 11:45 a.m. quickly engulfed other shanties in the slum, police and fire brigade sources said. Local people, however, extinguished the fire before the firefighters reached the spot.

There was no report of casualties.

## Kalam murder: Alam yet to be rescued

From Our Correspondent  
RAJSHAHI, Oct 8: Police is yet to rescue Kalam's kidnapped son Alam Sheikh.

The terrorists kidnapped Alam immediately after the murder of his father Abul Kalam Azad known as Kalam.

Mathar thana said police was not confirmed if Alam was kidnapped. "He may be absconding or in hiding," a police official said.

Kalam was beaten to death in presence of police at Char Khidirpur under Mathar thana on Thursday.

A total of 50 people have been accused in the Kalam Murder Case. Most of the FIR named accused are residents of Laxmipur in the city who went to Char Khidirpur along with police, Mathur police said.

Meanwhile, local people alleged that police was trying to divert the case.

Officer-in-charge of Mathar thana Abdul Qayyum went to Char Khidirpur on Friday night and stayed till Saturday.

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## No further progress in setting up of Grameen Adalat

By Nazmul Ashraf

Despite substantial progress initially, noting has been done in more than a year now to replace the virtually non-functioning Gramya Adalat (rural court) with a more effective one due to government's indecisiveness.

The structure and powers of the proposed Grameen Adalat went through scrutiny several times earlier. But there was little progress since the Cabinet approved the idea in March last year.

A law ministry official said the lack of progress was due to government's indecisiveness about the structure of the proposed court.

Gramya Adalat, headed by the Chairman of Union Parishad, was introduced in 1976 to lessen district court's burden of cases centring ordinary disputes. Effective functioning of rural courts could greatly ease the pressure on district courts which lack adequate manpower, it said.

A rural court needs no infrastructure facility and operating cost as required by a formal court as it operates in open place and the jurists volunteer their services.

On the basis of the UNDP report, the government in 1997 decided to replace the Gramya Adalat with an effective Grameen Adalat and assigned a three-member committee headed by the then Law Secretary Aminullah to formulate policies for the proposed court.

The committee submitted its report the same year. It suggested that a three-member body comprising the district sessions

become ineffective as people lost confidence in it. It failed to deliver justice due to the 'biased role' of the UP chairman, the report said.

The UNDP report had also revealed that 80 per cent of the cases in district courts came from villages, centring ordinary disputes. Effective functioning of rural courts could greatly ease the pressure on district courts which lack adequate manpower, it said.

A rural court needs no infrastructure facility and operating cost as required by a formal court as it operates in open place and the jurists volunteer their services.

The committee suggested that disposal of a case and execution of the verdict would be completed by 90 days.

The village chowkidar, backed by police, will execute the verdict.

In late 1998, an inter-ministerial meeting disapproved the suggestions of the committee.

The meeting suggested that a two-member committee comprising a senior assistant judge and an assistant judge would appoint

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## Jute godown gutted in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent  
NARAYANGANJ, Oct 8: A jute godown was gutted in a fire in Kashipur area under Fatullah thana today.

Witnesses and police said the fire originated from a nearby welding shop at Hatcholia in Kashipur area at 1:30 pm and soon engulfed the godown. The workers of the jute godown and local people tried to extinguish the blaze but failed.

Later, two fire fighting units from River Fire Station and Mandalpara rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze.

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