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11 burnt to death as robbers torch house

ABDULLAH -AL MAHMUD, Back
From Banskhali, Ctg

Eleven members of a family, including a four-day-old baby, were burnt to death as robbers set fire to a two-storey earthen house in a remote village at Banskhali coast, 30 miles off Chittagong city, early yesterday.

The 11 charred bodies lay in rows on the floor of the burnt house as the only survivor of the arson, Bimalendra Shushil, narrated the horror.

The incident occurred when about 20 robbers raided the house of Tajendra Lal Shushil at Shilpara of Banskhali upazila at around 12:30am.

The robbers barged into the house, breaking the front door.

As the panicked family took shelter upstairs locking the wooden door, the robbers looted whatever they found on the ground floor.

The robbers could not break the first floor door, which enraged them. They started shouting at the family members, threatening them with dire consequences unless they did not open door. Bimalendra, the only surviving son of Tajendra and a

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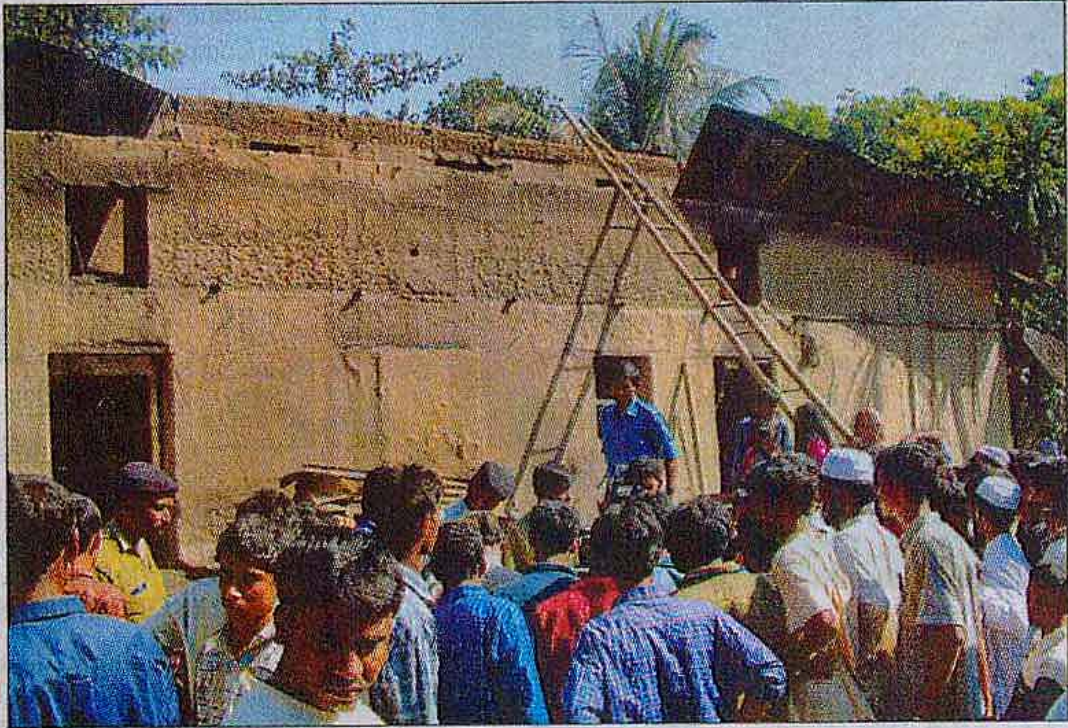


PHOTO: STAR

Shell-shocked villagers mill around the house of Tajendra Lal Shushil yesterday after robbers incinerated 11 of his 12-member family in an overnight arson attack in a remote Banskhali village.

4,000 Bangladeshis to return from Oman in December

RAFIQ HASAN

Some 4,000 Bangladeshis are set to lose job in Oman after the oil-rich Gulf nation has asked expatriate foreign workers, mainly managers and businessmen, to leave the country by December.

Sources at the Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment told The Daily Star that the low-level workers would be affected by the Omani decision. Around 1.15 lakh Bangladeshis live in Oman of whom only a few hold managerial posts or own business establishments.

Oman is trying to ensure top jobs for its citizens, according to sources.

Bangladesh has asked Oman to ensure that those returning will be able to be repatriated with funds and movable property.

A high-powered committee led

by Secretary of the ministry Dalil Uddin Mondal is also working to arrange smooth repatriation of the returnees.

Oman has stopped recruiting Bangladeshi workers for several years following an altercation between Bangladesh ambassador and an Omani high police official during the mid-1990s.

However, it started recruiting again in agriculture, fisheries and textile sectors two years back. Around 5,000 Bangladeshis have been employed in those sectors since then, claimed a high official of the ministry.

Meantime, around 20,000 Bangladeshis living in South Korea without valid documents are going to be deported as Seoul has gone strict on illegal foreign workers. There are more than 1.30 lakh Bangladeshis in Korea.

Bhuiyan invites AL to talk, end JS stalemate

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday invited the main opposition Awami League (AL) to a dialogue to end a five-month-old standoff in parliament.

He requested the speaker to invite the opposition to sit for the dialogue with the government party any day to sort out the dispute.

"We're ready to do whatever you will ask us to resolve the problem," Bhuiyan said in his speech in parliament.

The Awami League MPs walked out of parliament on June 25 to protest the switching off of the microphone of Leader of the Opposition and AL chief Sheikh Hasina and later began abstention protesting State Minister for Works Alamgir Kabir's 'derogatory'

remarks about Sheikh Hasina.

Referring to the main opposition party's three-point demand, Bhuiyan said the government party also wants to run the House as per rules of procedure. Regarding the second demand, he said unparliamentary words were already expunged. On the third demand as regards tendering apology by the state minister, he said there had not been any precedent of seeking apology after expunction of unparliamentary words.

"Still, if somebody used unparliamentary words, you can examine the records and expunge those," the BNP leader told the chair.

Bhuiyan recalled the past initiative by the deputy speaker to resolve the stalemate through discussion and said the opposition did not respond to that.

The speaker made it clear that if

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Speaker rejects all opposition proposals for discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar yesterday rejected all opposition proposals for discussion on a raft of issues in parliament.

Shahajan Khan and Panchanan Biswas of the Awami League and Golam Mohammad Quader and Mashur Rahman Ranga of Jatiya Party (E) gave about 150 notices proposing general discussion on issues including the law and order, price hike of essentials and *monga* (famine-like situation) in the northern region. They observed that these should be debated in the House.

While disposing them off, the speaker said some notices lacked

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4 die in road accident at Banani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people were killed in a road accident at Dhaka gate, Banani last night.

The incident happened when a covered van moving towards airport collided head-on with a city-bound passenger bus from Tongi at 8:30pm.

One of the driver of the two vehicles died on the spot while three unknown people from the van died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at 10:00pm. The bodies were kept at the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Ex-AC Akram gets 3-month interim bail

SC CORRESPONDENT

A High Court Division Bench yesterday granted three months' ad-interim bail to former assistant commissioner (AC) of police Akram Hussain in the sensational BBA student Shamim Reza Rubel murder case.

The bench also issued a rule on the government to explain why the petitioner should not be granted bail in the case.

The HC Division Bench of Justice Goura Gopal Shah and Jubayer Rahman Chowdhury passed the order on medical grounds.

AC Akram was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Court of Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge on June 17, 2002.

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PHOTO: STAR

Left to right: Taleb Hossain Rana, Kangali Zakir and Zakir Hossain are led out of court yesterday after conviction in the murder of Sergeant Ahad Parvez.

2 to die, 1 gets life for killing Sgt Ahad

Acquittal of 10 blamed on cop neglect

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A court in Dhaka yesterday sentenced two muggers to death and another to life in prison for beating Sergeant Ahad Parvez dead on duty in 1999.

Judge Hussain Shaheed Ahmad of the Court of Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge cleared 10 others of the charges and blamed the acquittals on the neglect of investigation officers.

Abdul Kahar Akand, assistant

superintendent of police of CID (Criminal Investigation Department), and Sub-Inspector Jalal Uddin probed the case but did not carry out the test of identification parade (TIP), blocking the

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Tears roll down her cheeks

SHAMIM ASHRAF

The actress cried her heart out all day.

Rokeya Prachi went to court yesterday alone, as lonely she has been since some muggers took the life of her husband Sergeant Ahad Parvez at the Shapla Chattar in Motijheel on October 28, 1999.

She continued weeping throughout the pronouncement of the verdict in the Ahad murder case.

After two of the 13 accused were awarded death sentence and one life imprisonment, an expression of dissatisfaction crept in her eyes. "I wanted death to all," she said with a tinge of pang.

"The judge was fair in his job, but the investigation officers did not do justice to their job," she sobbed.

Judge Hussain Shaheed Ahmad of the Court of Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions' s

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Rokeya Prachi

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One-sixth of children work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A sixth of the country's children at age 5-17 are engaged in economic activity, according to the National Child Labour Survey, released yesterday.

The survey is the second standalone national child labour study after the first in 1995-1996.

It has been undertaken to develop a comprehensive statistical database on working children and mitigate the deficiencies of data relating to child labour.

Of the total 42.4 million children, 2.4 million were reported engaged in

economic activity but also attending school, says the survey conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

As many as 4.1 million children were found neither at work nor in schools. They worked in households, were sick, disabled or beggars.

As Bangladesh ratified the ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour in the sectors like automobile workshop, welding establishment, battery recharging and recycling, road transport and

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Saifur slams survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday expressed dissatisfaction at Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) for viewing 17-year olds as children in its child labour survey, released yesterday.

The survey, the second standalone national child labour study after the first in 1995-1996, included the 5-17 age group as the child population.

Saifur accused BBS officials of

not considering the country's socio-economic condition in preparing the survey, conducted by the BBS and the International Labour Organisation.

"In my view, people at age 17 are not children," he said, addressing the launch of a seminar on findings of the survey.

With the inclusion of people of the 5-17 age bracket as children, Bangladesh's number of children now stands at 42 percent of the total

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