

100 shanties gutted in city slum fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 100 shanties were gutted in a fire at a slum at Shahidnagar at Lalbagh in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Valuables worth around Tk 7 lakh were damaged, said firefighters.

The fire was originated from an electric short circuit at 1:35am. The fire engulfed the makeshifts of the slum burning its households.

The firefighters with eight vehicles from four stations extinguished it at 4:00am.

Meanwhile, another fire broke out from a gas pipe leakage at Killarmore near Rahmat Ullah School under Lalbagh Police Station

yesterday. It created a panic among the residents for a short time.

Firefighters rushed to the spot immediately and doused the fire in half an hour.

Zonta Club Spring Ball April 23

The Spring Ball organised by Zonta Club of Dhaka III scheduled to be held tomorrow has been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances, says a press release.

It will now be held at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel Ballroom at 8:00 pm on April 23.



PHOTO: PID

Tower Hamlets Mayor Manir Uddin Ahmed called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office in the city yesterday.

Uphold culture, heritage in foreign lands

PM urges expatriates

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the expatriate Bangladeshis to uphold Bangladesh's culture and heritage in foreign lands.

She made the call when the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, London, Manir Uddin Ahmed, made a courtesy call on her at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

The Bangladesh-origin Mayor of

Tower Hamlets, an area with concentration of non-resident Bangladeshis, apprised the Prime Minister of the local government system in London.

He also praised the functioning of local government bodies in Bangladesh at different tiers, including the 'Gram Sarkar'.

Khaleda appreciated Mayor Manir for his election to a local government body in a foreign land and his contribution to the mainstream politics of that country.

"You are not only contributing to

social development of the host country but also enhancing Bangladesh's image there," she said, adding the foreigners can be informed about Bangladesh through the non-resident Bangladeshis.

Referring to development in different sectors in Bangladesh in recent times, the Tower Hamlets Mayor said he is hopeful about Bangladesh's future.

Prime Minister's Political Secretary Haris Chowdhury was present at the meeting.

'Close down garment factories with faulty design'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An organisation of garment workers yesterday urged the government to close down all factories which are not properly designed and constructed with a view to safeguarding the lives of over 20 lakh workers.

More than one thousand garment workers were killed in accidents at their workplaces in last five years, but the factory owners and government still remain indifferent to their safety, alleged the leaders of Bangladesh National Council (BNC) of Textile Garment & Leather Workers at a press conference in the city.

They said faulty design and construction were mainly responsible for the accidents.

The leaders demanded of the government to bring to book all the persons responsible for the collapse of the Spectrum Sweaters Factory at Savar.

"We urge the government to form a body for giving proper compensation to the victims and their families," said Dilruba Alamgir, a member of BNC and general secretary of Bangladesh Home Workers' Association while reading out a keynote paper.

"The garment owners construct strong and luxurious houses for their own use, but make death traps for the workers by constructing factory buildings with faulty design," said Nurul Islam, acting general secretary of BNC.

General Secretary of Bangladesh Bastra Poshak Shilpa Sramik League Kamrul Alam Belal, President of Garment Tailors Workers League Badruduza Nizam, and BNC member Chana Rahman were also present at the press conference.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Awareness campaign launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A network of 14 women's and human rights organisations yesterday launched an advocacy campaign project, aiming to raise awareness about domestic violence against women.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is funding the project titled 'Collective advocacy campaign to criminalise domestic violence'.

Under the project, the network will run advocacy campaign in 32 districts for 16 months, said Syed Nurul Alam, executive director, South Asia Partnership (SAP) - Bangladesh, at a press conference in the city.

Susan Ward, chief of party,

Academy for Educational Development (AED), was also present. The SAP and the AED are two members of the network titled 'Action Network to Combat Violence Against Women'.

The 14 member organisations will conduct the campaign at grass-roots level to make women aware that domestic violence against them by their husbands is an offence, which always remains out of focus.

To put an end to domestic violence, the network will also formulate a draft policy during the project period and urge the government to turn the policy into a law, said Nurul Alam.

Quoting several studies, Nurul Alam said between 50 and 67 percent of women reported that they

have faced some forms of domestic violence.

Susan Ward said domestic violence is a global problem. The project was launched in order to change the mindset and behaviour towards women.

Earlier at the launching session of the project, US Ambassador Harry K Thomas was present as chief guest while Dr Hameeda Hossain, founder-member, Ain O Salish Kendra, and Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman, Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) attended as special guests.