

2 killed in wall collapse during Ctg fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two people were killed in a wall collapse during a fire that burnt down five godowns, destroying imported goods worth about Tk 10 crore in East Madarbari in Doublemooring on Wednesday night.

Meantime, another fire gutted valuables of 17 business establishments in Sirajdikhan Bazar in Munshiganj in the early hours yesterday.

Police said the victims in Chittagong are Jyotsna Begum, 45, and Shafiq Azam, 4.

The nightlong fire broke out at around 10:00pm at a godown of Abdul Matin Chowdhury and soon engulfed the rest.

The wall collapsed at around 11:45pm on the two, police and witnesses said. They were rushed to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) where they died at around 5:00am yesterday.

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Govt plans 1 crore new jobs in 3yrs

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) projects creation of about one crore new jobs through various programmes it would undertake in three years.

The PRSP is going to be placed at the National Economic Council (NEC) meeting on Sunday likely to be chaired by the prime minister. The PRSP envisages 91.6 lakh new jobs, raising the total number of jobs to 5.81 crore by the end of fiscal year (FY) 08.

In the rural areas, 59.3 lakh new jobs will be created during FY 06 to FY 08 while in the urban areas the number of new jobs over the same period will be 32.3 lakh, according to the PRSP projection.

It also says 27.7 lakh new jobs will be created in the first year -- FY 6.

The PRSP claims making this projection on the basis of labour force surveys, which found a rising trend in new job creation. Employment rose by 4.3 percent during FY 2000 to FY 03 while the rise was recorded at 2.9 percent during FY96 to FY2000.

A Planning Commission source also said the recent growth has been more employment friendly. Besides, under the PRSP various programmes are being taken up that would create job opportunities in a larger number and at a quicker pace.

The around 400-page PRSP outlines a roadmap for accelerated poverty reduction through the creation of an investment friendly atmosphere, facilitating greater inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI), higher private investment and securing macroeconomic stability.

With the Development Financing Investments (DFI) almost defunct and inadequate term financing by the commercial banks, the issue of term financing needs to be urgently addressed.

The PRSP says a new investment finance company is going to be set up as a joint venture under government sponsorship. Funds will be generated from a wide range of local and foreign sources and it will be run in line with the best practices of investment financing by efficient staff.

The investment finance company must be given full autonomy and allowed to operate professionally at all stages. A new agency is also going to be created for recovering

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BNP MP asks locals to beat up journalists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

BNP lawmaker Zahiruddin Swapan on Wednesday asked locals to give journalists 'a mass beating' if they publish false and fabricated news.

"If you fail to beat the journalists up, please inform me and I will take action against them," the lawmaker from Gouranadi and Agailjhara said addressing a meeting at the central Puja Mandap in Agailjhara.

Swapan, also the information and research secretary of the ruling BNP, termed the journalists as 'terrorists and toll collectors.'

He blamed the local journalists for staging a drama to falsely portray communal repression of the minority after the 2001 general elections.

Swapan told the audience at the meeting that he had won the election despite getting less votes from the minority voters.

The meeting was presided over by Amal Chandra Biswas, president of the Agailjhara Central Puja Committee.

Abul Hossain Laitu, upazila BNP secretary and Professor Ranjit Baroi, local minority leader, also spoke at the meeting.



Hindu devotees from different parts of the capital immerse idols of Goddess Durga in the Buriganga river at the end of the five-day Durga Puja yesterday.



Collapsed roof of the under construction Fortune Shopping Mall near Mouchak Market in Malibagh. Fourteen people were injured as the roof caved in yesterday.

Notorious robber killed in Rab 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A listed criminal was killed in "crossfire" during a shootout between Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices in the city suburb Koshba Kuituk early yesterday.

Rab sources said they had arrested Jamshed, a notorious robber known as "Jamshed Dakat" on Wednesday afternoon at Fenchuganj.

During interrogation at the Rab battalion office, Jamshed revealed some important information on the whereabouts of his accomplices.

Following his statement, the Rab men took him to Koshba Kuituk to catch other members of his gang including his brother-in-law Anu Dakat.

Rab officials said when they reached the spot, Jamshed's accomplices opened fire on them, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate. Jamshed died on the spot when he was caught in crossfire, they added.

Two Rab members were also injured in the shootout.

One pipe-gun, one chapati, one ramdao, one rifle bullet and two cartridges were recovered from the spot after the incident.

Jamshed, hailed from the village Surukpur in Rajnagar upazila of Moulvibazar district, was accused in 19 cases and jailed for two years in 2003.

Chechen rebels kill over 60 in Russia

AFP, Moscow

More than 60 people were killed yesterday in the southern Russian city of Nalchik in attacks claimed by rebels from nearby breakaway Chechnya on government buildings, officials said.

President Vladimir Putin's special envoy to the region, Dmitry Kozak, said on state television the militants had seized hostages in a police station.

"There are clashes in more than two areas. It is at police station number three where, unfortunately, there are hostages. An operation is under way" to try to secure their release, Kozak said.

He described the attacks in Nalchik as an organized assault "on the law enforcement system of the city."

The Russian interior ministry said armoured vehicles and special forces troops were involved in efforts to subdue the attackers.

Arsen Kanokov, president of the Kalbardino-Balkario province where Nalchik is located, was quoted by ITAR-TASS news agency as saying most of those killed in fierce fighting were among the some 150 gunmen who launched the attacks.

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BNP to hold grand conference in Dhaka

BDNEWS, Dhaka

After stepping into the fifth year, the ruling BNP will hold a two-day conference at the Pradhanmontri Bhaban, beginning tomorrow.

About 3,200 grassroots leaders from 64 districts have been invited to attend the conference, party sources said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, also the chairperson of the ruling BNP, is expected to attend the conference.

The conference, where the BNP high-ups will exchange views with the leaders of the upazila, pourasabha and district units, also

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Hindu temple vandalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A group of youths vandalised a temple at a village in Singair upazila of the district on Wednesday night.

Sources said the gang entered the temple at Bainya village around 10:00pm and damaged the images of Kartik and Ganesh.

Police arrested seven people after Keshab Chandra, president of Bainya Durga Puja Ujapan Parishad, filed a case with Singair Police Station.

The arrestees include three accused, Alfaz, Humayun and Farhad, and four suspects -- Swapan Sardar, Bokul Hossain, Rohiz Uddin and Almas.

The District Puja Ujapan Parishad has condemned the attack and demanded punishment of the perpetrators.

WHO WARNING Global bird flu outbreak merely a matter of time

AFP, Seoul

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) warned Thursday that it was just a matter of time before a global bird flu epidemic broke out, with disastrous results which would dwarf the impact from SARS.

"Considering the current situation, it seems to be a matter of time before a flu pandemic takes place," WHO director general Lee Jong-Wook told Yonhap news agency.

"Such an outbreak would bring about disastrous results, which will be

huge enough to dwarf those from SARS," he said.

SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) has left 700 people dead and cost 30 billion dollars in economic damage worldwide since it broke out in 2003.

At least 60 people have died from bird flu in the Southeast Asia region since 2003, the majority of them in Vietnam.

The WHO fears the H5N1 avian flu virus may mutate, acquiring genes from the human influenza virus that would

make it highly infectious as well as lethal -- possibly killing millions worldwide as the influenza pandemic of 1918 did.

Lee, who took the helm of the UN public health arm in 2003, also warned that a bird flu outbreak in South Korea alone could affect millions of people in a short period of time.

No human cases have been reported in South Korea so far, but 5.3 million poultry were infected and slaughtered between December 2003 and March 2004.

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Lighter vessel owners go on strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Owners and workers of lighter vessels went on an indefinite strike at Chittagong Port in the early hours today, demanding release of 24 vessels 'detained' at the outer anchorage.

Traders in the port city fear the strike jointly called by three lighter vessel owners and workers associations will have an adverse impact on the country's economy.

The associations are Coastal Ship Owners Association of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners Association, and Inland Vessel Owners Association of Chittagong. Members of these associations own

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2 die after falling into Mirpur well

14 workers hurt as market roof collapses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two workers died in Pallabi as they fell into an abandoned well while at least 14 workers were injured in a separate incident as the roof of an under-construction building in Malibagh collapsed yesterday morning.

Witnesses said three residents of Begun Tila slum in Pallabi fell down the 150-foot deep well while repairing a

tube-well inside it at around 11:00am. Local people informed the incident to police.

Later, fire brigade divers retrieved the dead bodies of Shafiq, 30, and Hashem, 25. Police sent the bodies to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital for autopsy.

The other person Badal, 18, was rescued unconscious from the well

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British writer wins Nobel literary prize

AFP, Stockholm

Leading British playwright Harold Pinter won the 2005 Nobel Literature Prize yesterday, the Swedish Academy announced.

Pinter, "who in his plays uncovers

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Sehri-Iftar			
Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
9	14		5-37
10	15	4-36	5-36

20 arrested for crossing Indian borders to puja mandaps

UNB, Feni

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) arrested 20 Bangladeshi nationals who went to the Indian part of Belonia to see the Durga puja on Wednesday night.

"The BSF action was in violation of unwritten gentleman's agreement on allowing people to cross from both sides on the puja occasion. Many Indian nationals came to our side and joined the celebration without restriction," said a senior officer of BDR requesting anonymity.

Sources said 20 Bangladeshis were picked up from Bankar puja mandap in Belonia at about 10:00pm. Accusing of theft and robbery, they were handed over to the police.

Terming the arrest "unfortunate" the BDR official said many Indian devotees came and went back through the 133-km border of Feni district, "but we have arrested none".

Quake rescue teams face grim truth

Bulldozers move in as search for survivors winding down

AFP, Muzaffarabad

The search for survivors was winding down yesterday five days after Pakistan's massive earthquake even though vast isolated stretches of the lower Himalayas remain cut off, officials said.

Teams from Turkey and Britain gave up their search in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistani-controlled Kashmir, which was almost completely levelled, as attention turned to bringing relief to desperate survivors.

"The teams are leaving but the decision to announce the end will be taken by the government," said Alain Pasche, the UN search team coordinator.

But many frantic residents refused to lose hope, with parents digging with their bare hands through the rubble of the Rizwan school, hoping their children will not add to Pakistan's more than 25,000 earthquake dead.

Man Sabar Naqui, 50, was looking for his two sons aged six and seven.

"I have found one of the bodies of one of their friends but there is only a 10 percent chance that my sons are alive," he said.

Russian and South Korean teams kept up their work here, while Spanish and Dutch teams were also refusing to give up at a collapsed school in nearby Bagh.

"There is little chance of finding anyone alive but still there is a sliver of

hope and that's why we're working," said Andrei Fiodorov, a Russian team member with a sniffer dog.

"When the excavators are being used it means there is no hope anymore."

But the army was doing just that, bringing in heavy earth-moving equipment to parts of the ravaged Himalayan city.

"We have done what we could manually. Now we need a machine to clear the dead bodies," said an army officer in charge of one of the clearing operations.

Villagers who kept pouring into the major population centers of northern Pakistan said that no

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4-party govt responsible for the graft

Says Alamgir about 2 projects sent to ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday protested putting the blame of corruption in two projects on the Awami League government after the projects were sent to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for investigation.

Alamgir in a statement said the Awami League government is not responsible for the irregularities as it had only approved the projects. The expenditures were increased during the rule of the present BNP-led four-party government, he added.

The former minister said the alliance government sources had told the media that the AL government was responsible for the corruption in 16-town electricity supply and Mymensingh Bypass projects, which is false, misleading and malicious.

"Ecneec approved the Tk 225.55 crore project for electrification of 16 towns in May 1999. But the alliance government increased its expenditure by Tk 270 crore at an Ecneec meeting in May 2005 and approved the revised expenditure of Tk 495.92 crore," he said.

Similarly, Alamgir said, the Ecneec approved the Mymensingh Bypass project at an expenditure of Tk 19 crore in March 1998 during the AL

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