

Fun tragedy kills 2 at Foy's Lake park

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Tragedy stole away the happiness of the visitors to the Concord Amusement Theme Park in the city's Foy's Lake on Saturday afternoon as three riders, including an elderly woman, were thrown off the park's Ferris wheel and two of them died.

The dead were identified as Azadul Islam, 50, forest ranger of Sylhet Forest Division, and Sufia Khatun, 60, elder sister of another forest official Saiful Islam.

Their companion, Aziza Islam Moyna, 35, was seriously injured.

Md Emdad, younger brother of Sufia Khatun, yesterday filed a case with the Khulshi Police Station, accusing the Concord authorities of mismanagement.

"I along with my elder sister Sufia, other relatives and colleagues went to the park at around 4:00pm on Saturday and boarded different boxes on the Ferris wheel," Banskhal Range forest official Saiful Islam told reporters.

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Riots fan out in French cities

1,300 cars, shopping mall, 2 schools torched

REUTERS, Paris

Gangs of youths torched 1,300 vehicles overnight in the 10th consecutive night of violence in Paris's poor suburbs and major French towns, despite the deployment of thousands of extra police.

Cars were burnt out in the historic centre of Paris for the first time on Saturday night. In the normally quiet Normandy town of Evreux, a shopping mall, 50 vehicles, a post office and two schools went up in flames.

Authorities have so far found no way beyond appeals and more police to address a problem with complex social, economic and racial causes.

Evreux Mayor Jean-Louis Debre, a confidant of President Jacques Chirac and speaker of the lower house of

parliament, told France Info radio: "To those responsible for the violence, I want to say: Be serious ... If you want to live in a fairer, more fraternal society, this is not how to go about it."

The deaths 10 days ago of two youths apparently fleeing police ignited pent up frustrations among young men, many of them Muslims of North and black African origin, at racism, unemployment, their marginal place in French society and their treatment by the police.

"Many youths have never seen their parents work and couldn't hold down a job if they got one," said Claude Chevallier, manager of a burnt-out carpet depot in the rundown Paris suburb of Aulnay-sous-Bois.

But authorities now say the rolling

nightly riots are being organised via the internet and mobile phones, and have pointed the finger at drug traffickers and Islamist militants.

Overnight, 1,295 vehicles were torched across France, the highest total so far, police said. An extra 2,300 officers have been drafted in.

Seven police helicopters buzzed over the Paris region through the night, filming disturbances and directing mobile squads to incidents. Overnight, police made 349 arrests.

The number of incidents in the Paris region was similar to the night before, but in the provinces it was up sharply.

The violence has tarnished

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Rickshaws banned from Elephant Road to press club

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The traffic department of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday banned all non-motorised vehicles including rickshaws, rickshaw vans and pushcarts from the stretch of Elephant Road to Jatiya Press Club via Shahbagh due to the upcoming Saarc summit.

According to DMP sources, the non-motorised vehicles will not be allowed to ply the aforesaid streets from 8:00am to 10:00pm from now on.

The DMP officials said the ban was imposed temporarily for the Saarc summit but the rickshaw-pullers apprehend it will be made permanent.

Contacted, Syed Jahangir, an official of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), said he had no knowledge of the ban.

The government has a plan to restrict the movement of rickshaws in some VIP roads to reduce traffic congestion.

As part of that plan, the stretch of Mirpur Road from Kalabagan Crossing to Azimpur via New

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PHOTO: STAR

Painters make ready the portraits of heads of state and government of Saarc countries scheduled to participate in the November 12-13 regional summit on the Public Works Department premises in the city yesterday.

Govt forms now on website

A way to reach services to citizens easily, says PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated a website and publication of a compact disc (CD) containing the digitised forms of Bangladesh government as part of a project to make those easily accessible to people as the government gradually goes online.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) with UNDP assistance undertook the initiative to develop the CD and the website under a project styled 'e-citizen service'. The project aims at increasing transparency and accountability of the administration as well as strengthening the ICT system of the PMO.

Various widely used government forms will be digitised in phases

under the initiative. According to an official concerned, out of total 1,200 government forms of various categories some 250 to 500 forms will be digitised within the next three years.

The website has been developed to make the digitised government forms available to people having internet access, while the CD is for the ones still out of the reach of internet network.

The CD will be distributed free of charge through various government and private institutions so that people can get those without having to queue up at government offices.

"Government service will reach people more easily following the introduction of the website and the CD," Khaleda Zia told the inauguration function.

The prime minister also thanked the UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner, who was present at the function, for extending support to the project.

In response Lissner expressed his satisfaction at being involved with the venture, which he believes will take the governance to a higher plane in this age of information technology.

Khaleda Zia is also the chairperson of the National ICT Task Force, while her principal secretary, Kamaluddin Siddiqi, is the chief of the steering committee on implementation of the taskforce decisions.

Kamaluddin Siddiqi, Secretary Khandokar Shahidul Islam and PMO ICT project director Mahbub Sarwar were also present at the event.



PHOTO: STAR

A roaring fire, which started Saturday night and continued until yesterday morning, engulfs an entire wholesale spice market at Moulvibazar in the city's Lalbagh area, burning some 70 shops to ashes.

Fire burns down 70 spice shops in Lalbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire that blazed until yesterday morning gutted some 70 shops at a spice market at Moulavibazar in the city's Lalbagh area Saturday night.

The blaze started at 8:35pm Saturday night and continued to rage until 11:00am yesterday, said Fire Service and Civil Defence but could not ascertain its origin, which it is still investigating to know.

The fire service said the flame engulfed the entire market, one of the biggest wholesale spice markets in the capital, and damaged goods to the tune of Tk 50 lakh.

But the traders claimed the damage was much higher. They also alleged that the firemen did not reach the spot in time.

Fire fighters had to park their fire extinguishing vehicles at Begumganj, several hundred yards off the spot, as the lane to the market was too narrow. The shopkeepers demanded for widening the lane to avoid any such future accidents.

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Schoolgirl takes own life after rape, humiliation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Another girl in Rajshahi committed suicide at the humiliation of her rape and successive arbitrations in Durgapur upazila on Friday morning.

Nazma Khatun, a class ten student of Durgapur High School, took her life by hanging herself at Sreepur village in Durgapur on the Eid day.

Nazma, daughter of day-labourer Abdul Malek, had an affair with Jalilur Rahman Pintu of the same village. She had been repeatedly asking him to marry her since the early August as he raped her.

Following the incident, Pintu and his family beat her up several times, entering into her house. They also threatened her not to make the incident public, said villagers and her family.

Before committing suicide, Nazma left a hand-written letter confirming her rape by Pintu.

Sources alleged local police station repeatedly denied registering complaints in this connection.

Her father had sought justice from village leaders and four arbitrations since August 17 were held in vain.

Nazma in the latest arbitration 15 days before the Eid said she would commit suicide if Pintu did not marry her, said the villagers.

A previous arbitration held at Durgapur municipal building on September 3 fined Pintu Tk 40,000 and

his family handed over the money to the officer-in-charge of Durgapur Police Station on October 1.

The OC took Nazma to a Rajshahi court the next day and made her sign an affidavit that she has no objection after the September 3 arbitration. But the OC never gave the money to Nazma's family.

Nazma in the mean time witnessed continuous teasing by villagers, especially by Pintu's family, and harsh scolds from her parents.

Investigation officer Alam Chand said she ended her life at utter dejection from the humiliation.

OC Khoda Bux told reporters the municipal chairman was responsible for the arbitrations. He denied he gobbled up the fine money.

Nazma's father filed a case against 11 people under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act. The accused are Pintu, his brothers Nurul Islam, Nur Mohammad, Ala Bux, Baltu, Abu Bakkar, Laltu, village leaders Abul Kalam Azad Bachchu, Nabir, Abdul Jabbar and Abdul Aziz. No-one was arrested so far.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association started investigation into the incident following resentment among the villagers.

Dejected at her rape and humiliation, Mohima of Puthia upazila committed suicide in 2001, creating an outcry across the country.

Five killed in city in last four days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people, including two boys, were killed in four separate incidents in Mirpur, Shyampur, Demra, Badda and Khilgaon in the capital in the last four days.

Four of the dead were identified as Ratul Islam Shawon, 15, a class IX student of Narinda Government Ideal High School, Taslima, 19, a drug peddler, and Arjuda Parvin Fancy, 28, a housewife, and Rashed, 11. The identity of another woman, aged around 20, could not be known immediately.

Ratul, son of Rezaul Karim Raja of South Sayedabad in Demra, went to his uncle's house at Mir Hajirbagh under the same police station yesterday morning, family sources said.

He was standing in front of the house at 10:00am when around 10 youths came and asked about his identity, said Ratul's two cousins. As Ratul gave his identity, they dragged him to a nearby place and beat him severely with cricket bat and stumps, they said.

Finding Ratul lying on the ground injured, his two cousins took him to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead at 11:00am.

The family members were clueless about the attack.

Demra police picked up one Rajon for quizzing.

Meantime, Mirpur police recovered the body of Taslima, a drug peddler and also an informant of

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Mufti Hannan remanded for 7 days

Shown arrested in Rajuk bomb blast case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Mufti Abdul Hannan, operations commander of the banned Harkatul Jihad's Bangladesh chapter, was shown arrested in another case and placed on remand again on Thursday on charges of the August 17 country-wide bomb blasts.

Hannan was shown arrested in a case filed for the blasts near the traffic island in front of the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkho (Rajuk) Bhaban on August 17.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police produced Hannan before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka at 3:00pm on completion of a three-day remand in the case filed for the blasts on the Dhaka University campus.

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PHOTO: STAR

Two government employees hug each other while another looks on at an almost empty Secretariat office room yesterday on the first working day after the Eid-ul-Fitr holiday.