

21 killed in Ctg slum fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Twenty-one persons, mostly women and children, were burned alive in a devastating fire at a slum in the port city in the early hours yesterday.

The fire broke out around 1:50am at Khaleq Sawdagar's slum in the densely populated Boubazar area under South Bakalia ward of the city.

Locals said the fire originated in a godown standing at the entry point of the lone narrow passage leading to the slum fatally blocking the way of exit.

Six of the eight families living in the slum got completely trapped and only 13 of the 34 members of these families could survive the raging blaze only to witness the tragedy to their dearer ones.

The ill-fated are Kamala Begum, 35, wife of Mohammad Momin of Shabdulpur, Chandina, Comilla, her daughters Nazma, 16, Roma, 12, Somena, 09, and sons Khalil, 07, and Shukur, 05; Murshid, 40, of Bara Amirchar of Murad Nagar in Comilla, his wife Nazia, 32, son Qaiyum, 10, and nine-month-old daughter Sumaiya; Banu, 30, Rumi, 14, and Mitu, 06--daughters of Late Abdur Rahim of Satmura of Murad

Nagar in Comilla, and Banu's son Iman, 04; Anisul Haq, 11, son of Abdul Baten, Baten's father-in-law Khurshid Alam, 55, and mother-in-law Apala Khatun, 45, of Kadamtali, Murad Nagar, Comilla; Parveen, 30, wife of Harunur Rashid of Boiraburi under Murad Nagar and her mother-in-law Monowara Begum, 60; Kulsuma Khatun, 12,

daughter of Jebol Hossain of Charmat Bangla Bazar under Lalmoan of Barisal, and her niece Munni, 08.

The fire reduced to ashes another eight adjoining godowns containing rags and six houses.

According to sources, the fire originated reportedly from a burning mosquito coil inside the hired

godown of rag trader Mobarak Hossain of the slum. The fire spread quickly as the godown was filled with rags.

The fire soon reached a stack of rags in front of the godown on the passage to the slum and erased the chance of survival of the residents living in the eight tin-shed houses each measuring around 80 square feet.

Mobarak, who lived in a house behind the godown with his wife and four children, managed to escape but received some burn injuries.

Rickshaw van puller Shah Alam and his wife Renufa were also able to escape the fire, but the rest did not have that luck.

Six of the seven members of Mohammad Momin's family and four of the five members of Murshid's family were roasted alive.

Rickshaw puller Momin and his eldest daughter Kulsum, 16, escaped death. But pushcart driver Murshid along with his wife and two children met their tragic end though he was able to save his three-year-old son Noman by throwing him out of a boundary wall through a narrow opening in the tin-shed roof.



A woman wails for a relative killed in a devastating fire at Boubazar in Chittagong yesterday.

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Unplanned buildings hamper fire fighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Fire fighters faced extreme difficulties in extinguishing yesterday's blaze at densely populated Boubazar area in the port city where unplanned construction of buildings narrowed the roads.

Four fire fighting units that had started from Lamabazar and Chandanpura fire stations after getting the information of the fire reportedly took an unusually long time to reach the spot which is only four to five kilometres away from both the stations.

Some local residents alleged that the fire fighters reached the spot an hour after the fire had broken out.

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93 die in Ctg fire incidents since Jan '06

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Ninety-three people were burned alive in fire incidents in the port city since January 2006.

Of them, 21 were killed in yesterday's slum fire at Boubazar, 64 in KTS Textile Mills fire in Kalurghat BSCIC Industrial Area in February last year, and eight in several incidents of fire over the year.

KTS Textile Mills fire on the night of February 23 killed 54 garment workers. Later, the death toll rose to 64, as ten more workers succumbed to their burn injuries at the hospital.

Properties worth around Tk 32 crore were gutted in around 431 incidents of fire in the city since January 2006, said Shahajadi Sultana, in-charge of the fire service control room.

ACC sues 3 ex-state ministers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed cases against three detained ex-state ministers on charges of amassing huge wealth through corruption and abuse of power.

The former state ministers facing graft charges are BNP leaders Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, Amanullah Aman and Awami League (AL) leader Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir.

Besides, preparations are on to bring graft proceedings against at least 17 more corruption suspects, mostly political bigwigs now in 30-day detention, said sources in the ACC.

The rationale behind the move to sue those on an urgent basis is to resist their release, as the detention period for many of the graft suspects would soon run out, they added.

Meanwhile, in the first information reports (FIRs) on the three

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CASE OF MPs ABUSING DUTY-FREE CAR IMPORT

ntv MD arrested, his Hummer seized

Ex-BNP MP Harunur Rashid arrested; more relief goods recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Joint forces yesterday arrested the managing director of private satellite TV station ntv Enayetur Rahman and former BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid, seizing Enayet's luxury sport utility vehicle

(SUV) -- a Hummer H2.

In separate actions, joint forces arrested three local BNP leaders in Khagrachhari, two in Noakhali and seized 86 corrugated iron (CI) sheets meant for relief.

The home ministry said in the 24 hours up to 6:00am yesterday, police

and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 1,604 people including 826 wanted criminals and 31 convicts while the armed forces arrested 15 including eight criminals.

ENAYET-HARUNARREST Rab spotted Enayet's Hummer in

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The sport utility vehicle, Hummer H2, owned by Enayetur Rahman, managing director of private television channel ntv, was seized by Rab yesterday.

2 Iraq bombers kill up to 90

9 US troops die in attacks

AP, Baghdad

Two suicide bombers blew themselves up yesterday in a crowd of Shia pilgrims streaming toward a shrine south of Baghdad, killing up to 90 people, police said.

The coordinated attack happened on a main street in Hillah,

about 60 miles south of Baghdad, said Capt. Muthana Khalid. More than 150 others were wounded in the blasts, he said.

Earlier yesterday, the US military announced that nine American soldiers died in explosions north of Baghdad on Monday.

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Ex-minister Azad sued for 'cheating'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A cheating case was filed against former state minister and also BNP leader Lutfar Rahman Khan Azad with the first class magistrate's court in Tangail on Monday.

Azfar Hossain Khan, brother of a director of the now closed Islamic Trade and Commerce Ltd (ITCL), filed the case.

According to the case, former state minister's cousin Helalur Rahman Khan assured ITCL Chairman Ismail Hossain Siraji, arrested in 2002, of freeing him if given properties to Lutfar, former state minister for Expatriate

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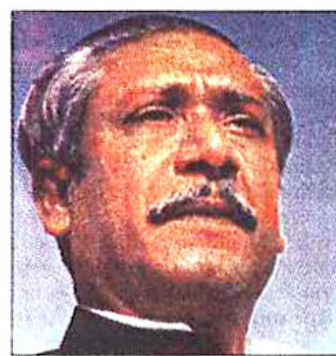
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Announcement

Today's issue of The Daily Star includes Star Special with colour photographs of the eighth award presentation ceremony for the outstanding students of O and A levels on page 24. We regret the inconvenience caused to our valued readers for dropping today's Star Chittagong page.



Historic March 7 today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the historic March 7.

'Ebarer Sangram Amader Mukti Sangram, Ebarer Sangram Swadhinatar Sangram' (this struggle is for our freedom, this struggle is for independence), declared Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in a voice that resonated throughout the country from the

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Condemned JMB leaders won't be allowed to talk to media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said the government will not allow the six condemned JMB militants to speak to the media since there is no instance of allowing any convict to do so.

Hunt is on for arresting those who patronised the militants and they will also be brought to book, Mainul told newsmen at the Secretariat.

The six top militants including Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdur Rahman and his second-in-command Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai might be executed in the first week of April.

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ACC probes alleged graft by ex-adviser Fazlul Huq

Mulls investigation into Faizee's certificate forgery; finds anomalies in wealth reports of ex-AL minister Nasim, wife

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) has launched an inquiry into graft allegations against Justice Fazlul Huq, former law adviser to President Iajuddin Ahmed-led caretaker government.

ACC Secretary Delwar Hossain told The Daily Star that they are probing into the graft allegations against the former adviser.

This is the first time an adviser to a caretaker government has been subjected to a probe for alleged corruption.

ACC sources said the alleged



Fazlul Huq

corruption was committed by Fazlul Huq during his 72-day stint in the office of the adviser of law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry, land ministry, and environment and forest ministry.

The ACC might also launch a separate inquiry into the reported examination result tampering by High Court Judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee.

The anti-graft commission is also going to file a fresh graft case against Awami League leader and former home minister Mohammad Nasim for concealing assets worth

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Banks asked to report transactions of Falu, Hasnat Abdullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday asked banks and financial institutions to submit transaction statements of BNP leader Mosaddak Ali Falu and Awami League (AL) leader Abul Hasnat Abdullah and their families by March 18.

The central bank issued the order in response to a request from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The BB directed the banks and financial institutions to submit the transactions statements along with details of the individuals' credit and locker use since 2001, sources

said.

Apart from Falu and Abdullah, other people whose bank statements have been asked for are -- Mahbuba Sultana, wife of Falu, Hasmat Ali, brother of Falu and publisher of the daily Amar Desh, Nooruddin Ahmed, another brother of Falu and a photographer for Khaleda Zia during her immediate past term as the prime minister, and Mohammad Abu Taher Golam Maruf, an employee of Dhaka Shanghai Ceramics company owned by Falu.

The letter also sought bank statements of Abdullah's three

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SC Bar writes to president for steps to remove judge Faizee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) in a letter yesterday requested President Iajuddin Ahmed to take immediate measures to remove controversial High Court (HC) Judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee to protect the image of the judiciary.

It said Faizee has lost the qualifications mandated by the constitution for one to be or continue as a judge after the Chittagong University Syndicate had stripped him of his Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree on charge of certificate forgery.


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