

One burnt alive, properties worth Tk 12 lakh gutted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

An unidentified youth was burnt alive and properties worth over Tk 12 lakh were gutted in two fire incidents at Hathazari in the district in the last two days.

The youth, aged around 25, was burnt alive while some seven shops were reduced to ashes when a fire broke out at Hathazari Sadar Bazar at around 12:45am on Friday.

The fire originated from an electrical short circuit and the loss of property was estimated at around Tk 7 lakh, sources said.

In another incident, eight semi-pucca shops were gutted when a fire broke out at Aman Bazar at around 1:15pm yesterday.

The fire, which originated from an oven, gutted properties worth around Tk 5 lakh.

Bangladeshi expat woman killed in NY

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi housewife was allegedly killed by her husband at New York City in the United States on Saturday, reports News World from New York.

The victim was identified as Shahida Sultana Lovely, 32. Police recovered the body from her apartment at Queens' Jamaica in the morning and arrested her husband Mohammad Sulaiman, 49.

Police said Sulaiman stabbed Shahida to death when she was sleeping in the early hours of Saturday.

Their four-year-old daughter Tanzia Zenifar was sleeping beside Shahida.

Police, however could not confirm the reason for the killing, but the neighbours said the killing resulted from conjugal conflict.

Ferdousi Begum, elder sister of



Shahida Sultana Lovely

Shahida and a resident of the same apartment building, said one Bangladeshi neighbour informed her about the killing over phone at 4:00am.

Ferdousi also admitted that her sister had problems with Sulaiman, regarding their conjugal life.

Shahida, who hailed from Rajshahi, was married to Sulaiman of Chittagong in 2002.

Nora Ali in city to stand by deprived children

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladeshi origin America's Junior Miss Nora Ali arrived in the city yesterday at the invitation of Kachi Kanther Asar to stand by the deprived children and help them educate.

Nora, who attended South St Paul High School in Mendota Heights, is the daughter of Zaki and Mahfuza Ali.

Nora, 18, was awarded the title of America's Junior Miss 2007 at the 50th Annual America's Junior Miss National Finals on June 30 in Mobile, Ala.

She received a scholarship worth \$50,000, in addition to the \$4,000 in scholarships that she won in scholastics, talent, self-expression, and interview during the preliminary competition.

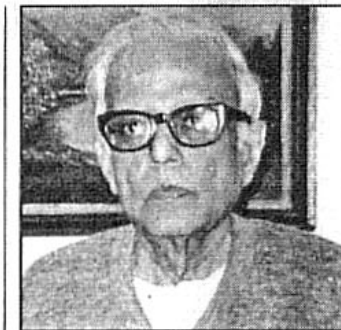
On her arrival, Nora visited the National Mausoleum in Savar to pay homage to the liberation war martyrs.

Although she was born in the USA, Nora feels Bangladesh is her home and she expressed her determination to work for the poor children in the country.

She plans to attend Harvard in the fall to prepare for a career in Business Management or Finance.



President Iajuddin Ahmed exchanges Eid greetings with foreign diplomats at Bangabhaban on Friday.



Ex-BB governor Nurul Islam passes away

BSS, Dhaka

Former governor of Bangladesh Bank Md Nurul Islam passed away due to a cardiac arrest at the Square Hospital in the city on Saturday at the age of 83, an official handout said.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

Nurul Islam, the eldest brother of former secretary Md Matul Islam, joined the civil service of Pakistan in 1950 and held various important positions in the government. He had been the governor of Bangladesh Bank for 10 years from 1976.

He was buried at the Banani graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Gulshan Azad Mosque yesterday, family sources said.

His qulhwani will be held at 4:00pm tomorrow at his Banani residence.

Governor of Bangladesh Bank Dr Salehuddin Ahmed yesterday expressed his deep shock at the death of Nurul Islam.

In a statement, he said the country as well as the nation had lost a brilliant son of the soil with his death.

Dr Salehuddin conveyed his sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and also prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.



Journo Fazlul Karim dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fazlul Karim, a senior journalist and language movement veteran, passed away at his Banani residence in the city on Saturday night at the age of 79, says a press release.

Karim, who was the city editor of the now-defunct Dainik Bangla, had been suffering from cancer.

He left behind his wife, a son, two daughters and a host of admirers to mourn his death. Shahrar Karim, a correspondent of BBC, is his son.

He was buried at Banani graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at Banani Jame Mosque and on the National Press Club premises yesterday.

His qulhwani will be held at his residence at House-48/C, Road-11, Banani after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Fazlul Karim was born in Noakhali in 1928. He was arrested in 1952 for his role in the language movement.

National Press Club President Shawkat Mahmud and General Secretary Kamal Uddin Sabuj and Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) leaders Mozammel Haq, Ruhul Amin Gazi and Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan condoled the death of Fazlul Karim and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Comrade Nani Gopal

Comrade Nani Gopal Dutt, general secretary of Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal (BSD M-L), passed away due to brain hemorrhage at Chittagong Medical College Hospital on Saturday night at the age of 80, says a press release.

Nani Gopal was member of Chhatra Federation, student wing of undivided Communist Party of India, during his student life. He was also member of East Pakistan Communist Party.

He struggled through out his life for establishing an exploitation-free society and made a lot of contribution to the communist movement in Bangladesh.

Leaders of Gonatantrik Bam Morcha, a platform of 11 left-leaning political parties, condoled his death.

Workers Party of Bangladesh and Samrajibi Mukti Andolon also condoled the death.

Alhaj Abdul Halim Suruj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Alhaj Abdul Halim Suruj, a freedom fighter and son of late Amjad Ali Moral of Auka Madhya Para in the district town, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) yesterday at the age of 52.

Halim was the deputy commander of Muktiyoddha Sangsad District Command and vice president of Town Defence Party Central Unit.

He left behind his mother, wife, one son and one daughter.

He was buried at his family graveyard with state honour.

Left-out eligible voters can enlist names even day before polls

Says Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat

UNB, Dhaka

There is nothing to worry for those who could not become voters till now, since anyone can become a voter even on the day before the parliamentary election is held.

"The Election Commission wants everyone to be enlisted in the voter list," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Hussain told reporters at his office yesterday afternoon.

About the left out voters, he said there would be a server (stored with voter's particulars) in each thana or upazila.

So, even on the day before election, people could be enlisted in the voter list by contacting the election officials of the area concerned, Sakhawat said.

He informed that 1,66,00,617 voters have been enlisted in the list till December 17 across the country and 25 per cent task of the photo voter list project would be completed by the first week of January 2008.

"We started the task of preparing voter list aiming to enlist nine crore voters. But after starting the task, we are observing that this time, the number of total voters across the country will be less than eight crore," said the election commissioner.

Voter listing has been completed at 47 places and is now on at 82 places in the country, he said, adding that from January 1, 2008, the task would start in 183 upazilas in phases.

"The current progress of voter-listing task is highly satisfactory... it will gather more speed and the task may be completed much earlier than the timeline mentioned in election roadmap," Sakhawat said.

He declined to mention any specific timeline when asked how earlier the task would be completed.

"Everyone will see when it will be completed... how much earlier the entire task will be finished depends on the 'completion of

voter list in Dhaka City Corporation. So, the Election Commission is stressing more on the task in Dhaka," he added.

About the progress of voter listing in Dhaka, he said photograph and fingerprint of 12,38,627 voters have been taken and particulars of around 20 lakh others have been collected so far.

"Meanwhile, voter-listing has been fully completed in 14 out of 90 wards in Dhaka city. Moreover, the task is going on in 27 out of 28 metropolitan thanas," Sakhawat said, adding that the task would start in the remaining Gulshan thana in January next year.

The voter-listing task of DCC would resume on December 26 since the seasonal holidays for the officials involved in the task have been extended till December 25, he said, and expected the voter listing task to be completed by January 31 in Dhaka as announced earlier.



(Left) Awami League leaders and workers pray for detained party President Sheikh Hasina near the sub-jail in Sangsad Bhaban area on Eid day. (Right) BNP leaders and workers wait near the sub-jail in Sangsad Bhaban area as they brought various foods for detained party Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Eid day.

Family wants Chiang Kai-shek buried in China

AFP, Taipei

The family of Taiwan's late Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek want his body to be removed from a mausoleum in the island and to be buried in China, a relative said Sunday.

Fang Chih-yi made the comments while paying respects at Chiang Kai-shek's mausoleum in Tahsi, northern Taoyuan county. She also said one of the leader's sons, Chiang Ching-kuo, should be buried in China, too.

"I think they have fully displayed their love to this land and this country. Now it's time for them to go home peacefully," said Fang, Chiang Ching-kuo's daughter-in-law and now the de facto family head.

Her remarks came hours before the independence-leaning government of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) planned to shut down Chiang Kai-shek's mausoleum and that of his son in a nearby village.

The defence ministry has said the mausoleums will shut Sunday evening and the remaining honour guards will be withdrawn, as it works to transfer supervision of the sites to the county government.

Whether the mausoleums, which have attracted hundreds of thousands of tourists each year, will reopen depends on the local government, the ministry has said.

President Chen Shui-bian defended the controversial site in an interview with a local television station a few days ago, citing budgetary and manpower shortages.

But the leading opposition Kuomintang (KMT), which the Chiangs had led, say the closure of the mausoleums was the latest effort by the government to downplay their legacy ahead of parliamentary and presidential votes next year.

Kamol Gomes re-elected Dhaka YMCA president

Kamol Gomes, a lecturer of Notre Dame College and a social worker, has been re-elected president of Dhaka Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) for the year 2007-2008, says a press release.

At the 41st Annual Business Meeting (ABM) of YMCA at Botomli Home Girls' High School auditorium at Farmgate in the city on November 30, Badal Camillus, Marcel A Gomes, Albert Joy Haider and Swapon K Halder were elected members of the Board of Directors of Dhaka YMCA for the next three years.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of the ongoing academic and humanitarian projects of the association.

Later, in a joint meeting of the Board of Directors on December 21, Kamol Gomes was elected president. Other office bearers are Mina Philomena Costa and Anthony Gomes, vice president, Denis Ojha, treasurer and Tarsicius Palma, general secretary.

28 hurt in Narsingdi clash

UNB, Narsingdi

Some 28 people, including eight policemen, were injured during a clash between two groups of villagers at Belabo yesterday.

Police said residents of Char Belabo and Baznab village were engaged in a bloody clash with spears and stick at about 12:00 noon over row over repayment of loan between Angur Miah and Sohrab Hossain.

Policemen Alamgir Hossain,

Mizanur Rahman, Rafiqul Islam, Parimal Das, Sobel Rana, Miah Hossain, Sirajul Islam and Habibur Rahman were injured when they tried to bring the situation under control.

Army personnel from the district town rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control at about 2:00pm.

The injured were rushed to Belabo Upazila Health Complex for treatment.

PBCP leader killed in shootout with Rab in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A regional leader of outlawed Purbia Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) Janajudha faction was killed in a shootout with the elite force Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Thursday.

The dead was identified as Md Sahai, 28, son of Abu Taleb Mollah of village Purbia Banagram under Ataulika upazila in the district.

Three Rab members and one sub-inspector of police were injured in the incident.

They are Assistant Director Md Sanwar Hossain, Corporal Md Amjad Hossain and Constable Md Kamrul Haque of Rab and Sub-Inspector of Ataulika Police Station Md Moktar Hossain.

Rab said they were informed that the criminals were planning to

commit robbery at the village Purbia Banagram.

Following the information, a joint team of Rab and police raided the Bottola of Purbia Banagram village to nab the criminals in the early hours of Thursday.

As the law enforcers advanced, the criminals from their hideout opened fire on them.

Rab returned the fire in self-defence. The gunfight continued for 25 minutes.

Sahai received a bullet and died on the spot during the gunfight.

Rab said the dead was an accused in nine cases including six for murder.

Rab recovered one rifle, three shutter guns, four hand bombs, six bullets of rifle, and 27 bullets of revolver from the spot.

RMG trader, another shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A readymade garments trader and a service holder were shot in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Identified as Omar Faruq alias Manik, 35, the garments trader was shot in his chest, right leg and right hand at Rupnagar Ring Road under Pallabi Police Station at around 10:00pm.

Meanwhile, service holder Jasim Uddin, 35, was shot in his abdomen and left leg at Banashree Project in Madartek area under Sabujbagh Police Station while he was returning home in a rickshaw at about 6:30pm.

Local people rushed them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in critical condition.

Moudud acting BTTB chair

DM Moudud Chowdhury has been appointed as the acting chairman of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone (T&T) Board on Wednesday, says a press release.

He replaced former chairman of the board Anwarul Azim.

Moudud joined T&T as an assistant divisional engineer in 1976. Later he served the T&T Board in different capacities, including the director general at the Telecom Staff College.

Death anniversary

Today is the 17th death anniversary of Shaheed Faruquzzaman Faruque, vice president of Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree Chittagong University unit, says a press release.

He was a frontline activist during the anti-Ershad movement and the movement against declaring Islam as the state religion.

In 1990, after the fall of Ershad's autocratic regime, he was chopped by Shibir cadres at a victory procession on December 23. He succumbed to his injuries the next day.

Since then, Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree has been observing the day as Shaheed Faruque Day.

Different organisations have chalked out various programmes to mark the day, including hoisting black flag atop the central office of the organisation, wearing black badges and paying tribute to him at the Central Shaheed Minar at 10:00am. Same programmes will also be observed in Chittagong and his village home at Brahmanbaria.



Latifur Rahman, chairman, Holcim (Bangladesh) Ltd and Transcom Group, hands over two cheques for Tk 30 lakh and Tk 20 lakh to Chief Adviser Fakhrudin Ahmed for the cyclone-affected people at the latter's office in the city on December 15 on behalf of Holcim Ltd and Transcom Group. In addition, Latifur Rahman donated medicine worth Tk 10 lakh on behalf of Transcom Group. Jasim Uddin, GM (Finance) of Holcim Ltd, is also seen in the picture.

Fukuda to seek law to solve hepatitis row

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said yesterday his ruling coalition would seek new legislation to compensate all the victims of dirty blood products contaminated with hepatitis C.

Fukuda came under fire after a court-mediated settlement package collapsed on Thursday. Victims criticised him for succumbing to pressure from bureaucrats.

"I decided that my party will submit a bill to rescue all the patients of the drug disaster," Fukuda told reporters. "I want the legislation to be made as quickly as possible."

At least 10,000 people are estimated to have contracted the potentially fatal disease after being given fibrinogen, which is used to stop bleeding.

It was widely used in Japanese hospitals until 1988, mostly during surgery or after childbirth, even though the United States had warned of its danger in 1977.

Plaintiffs cautiously welcomed the government's move.

"This is the time when politics has to show its leadership," said Michiko Yamaguchi. "I have a great expectation that the political leadership will bring about justice."

Another plaintiff, Eriko Fukuda, said: "I will carefully watch until the day thorough legislation will be created."

The Osaka High Court has proposed a settlement plan, recognising the responsibility of the state and Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corp., which produced the coagulant for about three years up to June 1988.

Plaintiffs have rejected any deal setting a cutoff date for when people were infected, demanding the state and the drugmaker compensate all victims alike regardless of when they received the tainted products.

Public anger grew after it emerged that a list of hundreds of victims -- who had not been notified of the risk of illness -- had been gathering dust in a basement for years.

Health Minister Yoichi Masuzoe approved of Fukuda's decision.

"It was very good," he told reporters. "I think patients' hopes will come true."

Fukuda has suffered a sharp fall in his public support due to a string of bribery scandals involving the Defence Ministry and the government's handling of missing pension records, in addition to the tainted blood controversy.

2,500 tonnes of Afghan drugs enter Iran annually

AFP, Tehran

Some 2,500 tonnes of narcotics enter Iran from neighbouring Afghanistan annually, more than a quarter of which are consumed in the Islamic republic, an anti-drugs official said yesterday.

"Afghanistan produces 8,200 tonnes of narcotics, 2,500 of which enter Iran," the Fars news agency quoted Mohammad Reza Jahani, deputy head of Iran's anti-narcotics organisation, as saying.

"Of this amount, 700 tonnes are consumed in the country, 500 tonnes are seized by the police and the rest, which is about 1,300 tonnes, is transited through the country," he said.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

Bangladesh Freedom Foundation (BFF) organises a roundtable on assistance from home and abroad in the country's development in the light of Bapa-BEN experience. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.