

Businessman Osman demands punishment to Aman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Businessman Osman Gani yesterday demanded exemplary punishment to BNP leader and former lawmaker Amanullah Aman on charges of attempting to kill him.

The businessman also sought security for him and his family members.

Gani, inhabitant of Hazratpur union under Keraniganj, placed the demand at a press conference at Crime Reporters' Association Bangladesh (CRAB) office in the city.

He alleged that on May 29 last, some associates of Aman shot him in Mohammadpur area for not showing loyalty to the BNP leader.

Before the national elections, Gani said, he did not work in favour of BNP candidate Principal Matiur Rahman who was supported by Aman.

Since then, Aman became angry with him and tried to harm him in different ways and finally made an attempt to kill him.

A case was filed in this regard with Mohammadpur Police Station on May 30. But two accused Sohel Rana and Alampur Hossain, who were later freed on bail, are continuously threatening me over phones," he added.

Gani further said that he was a member of the executive committee of Keraniganj thana BNP.

JU classes resume tomorrow

A CORRESPONDENT, JU

Classes of Jahangirnagar University (JU) will resume tomorrow after a 24-day vacation of Eid and Durga Puja.

The university went into Eid and Puja vacation on September 12 and its officers reopen on September 30.

The students of the university already have started to return their dormitories.



A big patch of crumbling plaster falls off a ceiling in room No. 167 of age-old Surya Sen Hall at Dhaka University, while a resident student studies in his room No. 172 beside a dilapidated wall.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Vulnerable halls pose threat to DU resident students

RAKIB AHAMMED, NAJMUL ALAM NOBIN

age-old, and students three to four times more than their capacity are living there.

For instance, the Surya Sen Hall was initially built for around 575 resident students and later the university administration introduced a system under which another 575 students were allowed to reside there.

He woke up and found that it was a piece of crumbling plaster from the vulnerable roof.

Such incidents had occurred at DU several times in the past.

Twenty-five years have passed since the October 15 tragedy when around 39 students and employees of Jagannath Hall died in a roof collapse.

Such incidents may occur again as a large number of students have been residing in vulnerable buildings.

Most of the DU dormitories are

midst of a catastrophe.

Repair work of these buildings are seldom carried out and the engineering section of the university do not even know when the lifetime of these buildings would expire and what is the highest capacity of these buildings.

At present, the Sontosh Chandra Bhattacharya Building, popularly known as East Building of Jagannath Hall, a part of Shahidullah Hall and Surya Sen Hall, middle block of Haji Mohammad Mohsin Hall and the Honours Building of Begum Rokeya Hall are at vulnerable stage.

Resident students of 87-year-old Salimullah Muslim Hall, Shahidullah Hall and Jagannath Hall and 43-year-old Surya Sen Hall and Mohsin Hall have been passing days amid fear of a moderate to strong earthquake.

Moreover, the buildings of some halls have become so old that their walls and roofs are gradually falling apart leaving the students in the

midst of a catastrophe.

Repair work of these buildings are seldom carried out and the engineering section of the university do not even know when the lifetime of these buildings would expire and what is the highest capacity of these buildings.

At present, the Sontosh Chandra Bhattacharya Building, popularly known as East Building of Jagannath Hall, a part of Shahidullah Hall and Surya Sen Hall, middle block of Haji Mohammad Mohsin Hall and the Honours Building of Begum Rokeya Hall are at vulnerable stage.

Students residing in these halls told these correspondents that they always remain in tension as the buildings may collapse at any time.

They also said falling of roof plaster on the floor and sometimes on them is a common phenomenon.

In July last year, more than 50

students were injured when they jumped out through the windows following two light tremors that jolted the city.

After the quake the syndicate decided to shift a large number of students to university gymnasium from Mohsin Hall, Jagannath Hall and Honours Building of Rokeya Hall.

Over 800 students of Jagannath Hall are living in a dangerous situation at the East Building which was declared vulnerable to earthquake by an expert team from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Geology department of DU in 2006.

Although the damaged pillars of the central block of Mohsin Hall were given support by timbers and iron clamps but no permanent repair work has so far been done compelling the students to leave

there amidst danger.

The university authorities have decided that the Honours Building of Rokeya Hall would be built afresh after fully demolishing it and sent a scheme to the government in this regard.

The authorities are also constructing a new five-storey building on the Jagannath Hall premises to shift students of the East Building, but it would take one year more to accommodate the students there.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Arefin Siddique said, "A number of buildings at the university is vulnerable and we will form an expert committee involving BUET experts to assess the vulnerability of the buildings to earthquake."

He said students of the damaged parts of Mohsin Hall would be shifted to newly built tin-shed extension.

JNU team seeks president's cooperation

UNB, Dhaka

A nine-member delegation of Jagannath University (JNU) led by its Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mejbuddin Ahmed paid a courtesy call on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday.

During the meeting, the delegation apprised the president of the university's ongoing activities and sought his cooperation.

The delegation, which included university treasurer Prof Dr M Shawkat Jahangir, also invited the president to be the chief guest at the inaugural session of the Jagannath University function to be arranged marking the University Day.

President Zillur Rahman gave the delegation a patient hearing and assured his all-out support for the development of the university.

Secretaries to the president office were present during the meeting.

Amena elected coordinator of Int'l Assoc of Women Police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amena Begum, additional superintendent of police of Chittagong, has been elected coordinator of Region-15 of International Association of Women Police (IAWP), says a press release.

IAWP President Jane Townsley congratulated Amena Begum for being elected coordinator of Region-15. He also congratulated Bangladesh Police Women Network for its advancement.

Region-15 includes Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Taiwan.

Amena joined in police cadre of Bangladesh Civil Service in 1999.

Govt to retrofit public, private buildings to cut quake damages

Says food minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday said the government decided to gradually retrofit the public and private buildings in the city to bring down the damages that might be caused by any earthquake.

Retrofitting means consolidation of buildings by taking structural measures to strengthen them most vulnerable to disasters.

"Initially, a building in the ministry and a hospital in the city would be retrofitted. In need, the provision in this regard would be included in the standing order," the minister told reporters after a meeting at the food ministry on the measures to tackle earthquakes.

The issue has become of utmost importance, as the country experienced a series of mild earthquakes recently, and with the experts, saying that large-scale earthquakes may occur any time in the country.

The meeting was organised with experts and concerned public services providing organisations to assess the capacity of the government to tackle earthquakes.

Referring to a study by Comprehensive Disaster

Management Programme (CDMP), Razzaque said there are five faults within the country which may cause earthquakes.

"We have, therefore, directed all the service providers to submit their contingency plans. If needed, we will laminate the glasses of the multi-storyed buildings. Seismic data will also be updated," the minister said.

A total of 62,000 volunteers would also be trained to conduct post-earthquake rescue operations in next three years. Already, 600 volunteers have been trained and another 400 more will be trained by the end of the year, he noted.

If an earthquake measuring a magnitude of 7.5 on the Richter scale originates from the Madhupur fault, it may damage 70,000 buildings in the city, he said, adding that large-scale earthquakes will put people in greater dangers, says a press release of the food ministry.

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan, Food Secretary Mokhlesur Rahman, Bangladesh Earthquake Society President Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury and architect Mobasser Hossain were also present, among others, at the meeting.



Card recipients pose for photograph with Home Minister Sahara Khatun and UN Country Representative Renata Lok Desai at a programme organised by Police Women Network at Rajarbagh Police Lines in the city yesterday.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY TODAY

Separate pay commission for teachers soon

Nahid tells discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said the government is working to form a separate pay commission for teachers from primary to university levels to increase their salaries, facilities and social dignity.

"The process to form the commission has started," he said while addressing a discussion organised by National

Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTF) at the National Press Club in the city on the occasion of the World Teachers' Day 2009 today.

Speaking as the chief guest at the meeting titled "Build the future: Invest in teachers now," Nahid said the government would put its best efforts to increase salaries and dignity of teachers as they hold greater responsibility for building the nation with devotion.

Teachers are the torch bearers of the nation towards future and vital tools for the country to realise its dream of building a digital Bangladesh," he said, adding: "But it must be said that teachers are badly neglected in our country."

The minister said teachers should rightfully receive the respect of being the most prestigious and prominent people in both the national and social levels.

The new pay scale introduced earlier this year has increased the salaries of teachers to some extent and the new pay commission would certainly help further alleviate the problems, he added.

"We want higher education of global standards and it is a big challenge for us," Nahid said, adding that quality teachers are the key factor in this respect.

He further said that work on forming an education policy is almost in its final stages. Opinions and feedback from experts and stakeholders are being taken into consideration in formulating the policy.

"It is unfortunate that there have been six draft education policies over the years but none have been finalised due to changes in governments," he said, adding that the present government is looking forward to forming a policy

irrespective of politics and individual opinions.

Speaking as the special guest, Rashed Khan Menon MP, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on education, said the government is taking steps to enhance training and skill building programmes for teachers.

He said teachers are the artists to develop the youth and they rightfully deserve befitting facilities and social status in society.

Other speakers at the programme stressed the need to increase salaries, facilities, skills and dignity of teachers in the social and national levels.

"Quality of education has dropped, because quality teachers have dropped. Without quality teachers, dreams of changes will remain as dreams as teachers are the torch bearers of the nation," said Prof Kazi Shahidullah, vice chancellor of National University.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique also stressed the need to increase salaries and facilities of teachers as well as taking proper measures to increase their quality.

He, however, pointed out that teaching profession should be freed from any form of commercialisation.

NFTF Chief Coordinator Principal Kazi Faruk Ahmed chaired the event.

Child Rights Week begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Child Rights Week 2009, organised by Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), begins today with the hope to protect children from hazardous working atmosphere.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the programme at Osmani Memorial Auditorium at 10:00am where around 250 children involved in hazardous job will attend.

Kafil Uddin, director of BSAF, informed this at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. International Labour Organisation and Terre des Hommes Netherlands are supporting the programme.

The programme also includes: Talk Show and Magazine program on child rights in ATN Bangla at 6:30pm everyday from October 5 to 11, rally of 500 children at Bangladesh Shishu Academy (BSA) auditorium on October 7 and a cultural feast by them, and rally of 500 children engaged in domestic labour at BSA auditorium on October 10.

The BSAF, a network of 265 NGOs working with child rights across the country, will

also publish a poster on the occasion and awareness programme will also be organised at all the districts and divisions.

BSAF President Wahida Banu and ILO representative Sharifuddin Khan were present at the press conference.



Four-colour camouflage uniform for BDR men

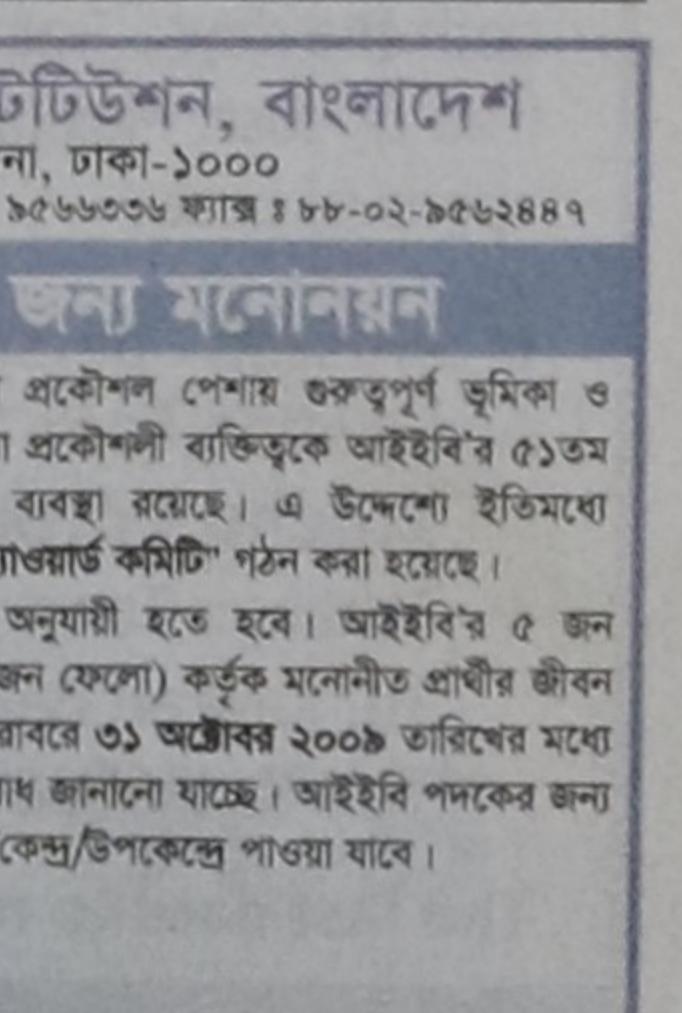
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire gutted properties worth around Tk 7 lakh of a four-story building at New Distillery Road at Gandaia in old part of the city yesterday.

Firefighters said the fire broke out from an electric short circuit at the generator room of the building at 4:04pm. They brought the fire under control at 4:40pm.

They estimated loss worth Tk 7 lakh in the fire. They also saved valuables worth around Tk 50 lakh.

The old uniform will also remain applicable for the BDR members alongside the new dress until the stock of old uniform is exhausted.



Maria Sarraf speaks at a seminar jointly organised by Ministry of Environment and Forests and World Bank at a city hotel yesterday. On her right are Mohammad Shahjahan and Mohammad Nasiruddin and on her left is Dr Mostafa Kamal Faruk.

PHOTO: STAR