

TILTED N'GANJ BUILDINGS
Most residents evacuate

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Narayanganj

Most residents evacuated three five-storey buildings at Hajiganj in Narayanganj town on Saturday night after the buildings tilted and subsided, creating a panic among the local people.

Some others shifted their furniture and belongings to safer place yesterday morning.

The owners of the buildings are Hosne Ara, a teacher, and expatriates Ashraf and Bhulu Mia. Local people noticed on Saturday evening that Hosne Ara's building tilted and leaned against the building of Ashraf and the building of Bhulu Mia tilted towards the building of Ashraf.

Fire service officials said the buildings subsided more than one foot as the owners constructed them on water bodies after filling up them with sand.

Local people fear that disaster may take place anytime, resulting in huge casualties.

On receiving information, the police and high officials of the district administration visited the spot on Saturday night. They asked the families living in the buildings to evacuate immediately.

The police were deployed in the area to protect the properties of the residents, said Fatulla Model Police Station Assistant Police Superintendent Mir Abu Touhid.

Shamsuddin, a local resident, said teacher Hosne Ara constructed a four-storey building in 2001. Later, one more floor was built on the top of the building, although it was built on a foundation for four floors.

Cracks have developed on the roof and walls of the building.

Ashraf Hossain said his five-storey building was built on a foundation for six floors. But his building has become vulnerable as the adjacent building tilted and leaned against his building.

He also said all his tenants have already evacuated.

Executive Engineer of Narayanganj Public Works Directorate Aminul Islam Khan said the owners of the buildings and their tenants have been asked to vacate the building for security reasons. However, the possibility of any major disaster at the moment is slim, he added.

Deputy Commissioner Shamsur Rahman said Rajuk chairman has been informed of the matter. Rajuk will send an expert team to inspect the buildings. And action will be taken on the basis of their suggestions.



Three five-storey buildings at Hajiganj in Narayanganj tilted on Saturday evening.

PHOTO: STAR

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY OBSERVED
Mental health to be included in medical courses: Ruhul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhul Haque yesterday said the government would include mental health education in the medical courses, including MBBS, to extend the health services to the country's 16 percent mentally ill people.

He called on the medical students to come forward to treat mentally ill people, saying, "Most of the medical students want to become physicians of cardiology, gynaecology and go into

some other lucrative areas, neglecting the area of mental ailment."

The minister asked the director of National Mental Health Institute to get recommendations from the patients as well as professionals to reform the age-old Mental Health Service Act (1912).

Ruhul made the observations as the chief guest at a view exchange meeting on 'Mental health in primary care: Enhancing treatment and promoting mental health' at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

To mark the World Mental Health Day, ActionAid Bangladesh and Jatiya Protibandhi Forum jointly organised the programme with Khandakar Jahurul Alam, president of the forum, in the chair.

The minister expressed his concern over the sorry state of the only government-run mental hospital in Pabna.

At the meeting, a number of relatives of mentally ill people shared their experiences about the mental health treatment facilities in the country and their agony to handle such patients without any government assistance.

Parents and health professionals urged the government to increase budgetary allocation for the treatment of mentally ill patients, as the current allocation is not enough to deal with such a big portion of patients.

Ruhul acknowledged the realities and assured them that his team would work to solve those pains of the mentally ill patients.

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, moderated the meeting, while Secretary General of Jatiya Protibandhi Forum Jawaherul Islam Mamun, Rabeya Sultana of ActionAid, Badrul Mannan of the forum, Prof ASM Atiqur Rahman, Prof Rokeya Begum, Associate Prof Salahuddin Kawsar, Director of Mental Health Institute Prof Golam Robbani and DGHS Director General Shah Monir Hossain also spoke.

CONTRABAND LIQUOR
Manju acquitted of charges

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday acquitted Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman and former communications minister Anwar Hossain Manju of charges in a case in which he was earlier sentenced to five years' imprisonment in absentia.

Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court cancelled the sentence and conviction that was given by another court sentencing him to five years' imprisonment and acquitted him upon an appeal by Manju.

Manju was present at the court during the delivery of the judgment. He told journalists that he got justice from the court as the political government was in power. He also said the case was filed to harass him politically.

He filed an appeal with the court on June 28 seeking cancellation of the sentence saying that the lower court had given the verdict illegally.

The joint forces seized 21 bottles of contraband liquor from Manju's Dhanmondi residence on March 8 in 2007.

Judge Jahed Mansur of the Fourth Assistant Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka sentenced Manju to five years in jail and fined him Tk 10,000 on June 26 in 2007 in absentia for committing the offences.

Manju was sent to jail on May 6 this year after he surrendered before a Dhaka court in connection with four cases in which he was convicted on different terms in absentia.

He was also handed down 14 years' imprisonment in bribery cases on May 18 and June 10 last year and awarded 13 years' imprisonment on August 26 the same year in a case filed for amassing wealth worth Tk 1.72 crore illegally and concealing wealth information about Tk 2.10 crore from Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Mymensingh BNP factions scuffle outside central office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers of Mymensingh BNP factions yesterday were locked into a scuffle in front of the party's central office at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday, leaving at least 10 people injured.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Khandakar Delwar Hossain inducted nine local leaders into Munshiganj BNP convening committee. Five leaders were also dropped from the committee.

The action has been taken following an order of the party Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Delwar said in a letter to the convening committee.

The scuffle between the supporters of Mymensingh BNP factions took place in front of the party's central office around noon, sources said.

They came to Dhaka along with their leaders, Mymensingh BNP convener Afzal H Khan and local leader Ali Asgar, as the party's Joint Secretary General Abdullah Al Noman called in them to

resolve internal conflicts.

Witnesses said when Noman was talking with the leaders of Mymensingh district (north) BNP and city BNP committees in the party office, supporters of the two factions who gathered outside got locked into a scuffle.

Later, law enforcers brought the situation under control.

Supporters of Ali Asgar alleged that Afzal H Khan

inducted his family members into the convening committee and left out a number of dedicated leaders, including Asgar. But supporters of Afzal Khan denied the allegations.

When asked about the incident, Noman said they have already resolved the disputes involving some party units in Mymensingh and the process is going on to solve other problems.

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