

Cargo aircraft catches fire at Shahjalal Airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A freighter of Sky Capital Airlines made an emergency landing at Hazrat Shahjalal (R) International Airport yesterday as one of its engines caught fire.

Of the six people on board, no casualty was reported, said AKM Rezaul Karim, public relations officer of Civil Aviation Authority, Bangladesh (CAAB).

The cargo aircraft, transporting garment products, caught fire soon after it took off at 9:45am. It was heading for Muscat, Rezaul Karim said.

The plane managed to land at the airport shortly after 11:00am, after flying for over an hour—as an aircraft is much too heavy to land when its fuel tank is full, he added.

A three-member committee was formed to investigate the fire. Wing Commander Quamrul Islam, director of Flight Safety and Regulation of Civil Aviation will lead it.

The fire brigades and ambulances at the airport rushed to the landed flight apprehending major casualty and disaster, said airport sources, adding that normal functioning of the airport was not hampered.

The damage to the plane and goods it was carrying is yet to be ascertained, they added. Meanwhile, locals of the city's Badda and Satarikul areas witnessed the burning plane flying low around 10:15am. They claimed they saw fuel leaking from the plane.

The unprecedented incident triggered curiosity and panic among the people.



PHOTO: STAR

The road from Fakirapool intersection to Kakrail intersection has been made off-limit to rickshaws yesterday.

'Boycott war criminals everywhere'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Industries Minister Dilip Barua yesterday urged the countrymen to boycott war criminals at all social gatherings and resist them everywhere in the country - from village market to the capital.

The war criminals must be tried to implement the dream of Sheikh Hasina to build a new Bangladesh, he said while addressing as the chief guest a public rally at Karwan Bazar in the city.

He urged all to raise their voice to ensure speedy trial of the war criminals.

Dhaka city 14-party alliance organised the rally demanding trial of the war criminals with local lawmaker Asaduzzaman

Kamal in the chair. Dilip Barua, also general secretary of Samyabadi Dal, asked all to express their hatred towards the war criminals whenever they see one.

Qamrul Islam, state minister for law, said prosecution tribunal and investigation to bring the war criminals to book would start within two or four days.

"The trial of the war criminals is now only a matter of time. Only criminals would be punished irrespective of party affiliations," he said.

Awami League leaders Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Bahauddin Nasim and MA Aziz and JSD leader Sharif Nurul Ambia also addressed the rally.

Reform in JCD bodies soon

BNP to encourage outgoing student front leaders in mainstream politics

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Opposition party BNP is taking initiatives to incorporate the outgoing district unit leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) to the party and its front organisations aiming to encourage young leadership in mainstream politics.

The JCD districts and upazilas committee will also be reformed soon with placing regular students in top-tire posts beside the rehabilitation process of its aged leaders.

"We are going to hold district level councils to bring new leadership and at the same time we want to see our senior leaders who served the organisation for long in main-

stream politics," said Amirul Islam Alim, general secretary of JCD central committee while talking to The Daily Star.

JCD central committee has already started groundwork to prepare a list of the district unit leaders who are expected to get important posts in district committees of BNP and its front bodies after their farewell from JCD.

The list will be handed over to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia soon.

Those who will not get posts in BNP will be included in party's front organisations including Juba Dal and Swetchasebok Dal's district units considering their long-term contribution to the

organisation.

Party insiders said a good number of outgoing JCD leaders will be given posts in BNP's district and upazila unit committees as most of the district committees of BNP and JCD will be reorganised soon.

The tenure of all the district committees of JCD was expired in 2005.

Earlier, on February 17, former JCD president and present Organising Secretary of BNP Fazlul Haque Milton proposed offering the JCD leaders post in BNP and its front organisation at JCD extended meeting.

JCD leaders also raised the issue to BNP chairperson who attended the programme as

chief guest.

Milton, a former lawmaker of BNP, yesterday told The Daily Star that the BNP high command took their proposal positively expecting that the outgoing JCD leaders will get senior level posts in BNP committees.

Referring the newly formed Juba Dal central and City unit committees, he said top leaders of these committees except Juba Dal central President come from JCD.

Earlier on October 11, 2009 former JCD president Habibun-Nabi Sohail and central leader Mir Sarafat Ali Safu were made president and general secretary of Swetchasebok Dal.

Dr Mostafiz, not Salam Azad, made deputy high commissioner

Says Dipu Moni

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday dismissed press reports regarding the appointment of 'controversial' writer Salam Azad as the deputy high commissioner in Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata.

She also said Dr Mostafizur Rahman, a career diplomat, has been appointed as the deputy high commissioner and he will take over in June.

Replying to a question at a press briefing, the foreign minister expressed surprise about the press report.

The report on appointment of Salam published in the Indian media caused a strong reaction from the Muslims and intellectuals in West Bengal.

A Bangla daily in Bangladesh and an English daily in Kolkata published reports that the people of West Bengal sent a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 11 requesting her not to appoint Salam Azad to the post as he has seriously hurt Muslim sentiment through his writings.

Currently Syed Masud Mahmud Khandakar is the deputy high commissioner in Kolkata.

Arsenic puts food security at stake, say experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food security is at stake due to the growing threat of arsenic contamination of groundwater and the possible entry of arsenic into food chain, which is posing health hazards, experts said yesterday.

They also called on the government, non-government organisations and other stakeholders to address the issue of arsenic contamination of water and food immediately to reduce its impacts on health.

They made the call at the publication ceremony of a research-based book 'Towards an Arsenic Safe Environment in Bangladesh' at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city.

Dr A Atiq Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) and the leading author of the publication, said arsenic contamination poses major challenges in achieving the goal of safe water for all by 2011.

According to a recent survey of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and Unicef, 12.6 percent of households, equivalent to about two crore people, still drink water containing arsenic, he said.

According to the publication, arsenic poses health risks to a significant proportion of the population. Arsenic poisoning can impair the intellectual function of children. Rice irrigated with arsenic contaminated water can contribute

substantially to the daily intake of arsenic, because it is the main staple food.

Arsenic may also enter the food chain through rice straw used to feed cattle, the experts said.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said the government has already taken steps to ensure proper management of surface water, including rainwater conservation.

Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque said the government would continue to invest in screening and treatment of arsenicosis patients.

"Urgent action is needed to re-focus the attention of the nation towards an arsenic safe environment," said UN Resident Coordinator Renata Lok Dessallien.

MEMO TO PM

Judicial probe into Sajek clash demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Representatives of five organisations of Chittagong hill tracts submitted a memorandum to the prime minister yesterday demanding judicial investigation into the recent clash between the indigenous people and Bangalee settlers at Sajek in Rangamati.

An official received the memorandum on behalf of the prime minister at the Prime

Minister's Office (PMO).

The organisations are Democratic Youth Forum (DYF), Hill Women's Federation (HWF), Greater Chittagong Hill Tracts Students' Council (PCP), Sajek Bhumii Raksha Committee (SBRC) and Sajek Nari Samaj (SNS).

Police stopped more than one hundred leaders and activists of these organisations at the Bijoynagar inter-

section when they were proceeding towards the Prime Minister's Office from Muktangon at 11:00am to submit the memorandum.

Later, a five-member team submitted the memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office at noon.

The team members include DYF Convener Muthun Chakma, PCP President Ango Marma, HWF Vice President Nirupa

Chakma, SBRC member Ripon Chakma and SNS member Josna Rani Chakma.

The demands include withdrawal of army from the hill tracts, removal of all the Bangalee settlers from the hill tracts, Tk 20 lakh for each affected families as compensation and removal of the Khagrachhari deputy commissioner for allegedly inciting the clash.

15 hurt in clash over fishing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 people, including three women, were injured as two rival groups clashed over catching fish at a disputed water body of Damalkut at Kafrul in the city yesterday.

Of the injured, six were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while the rests were taken to local clinics.

Witnesses said the clash erupted when over 100 members of Damalkut Samabaya Samity led by Osman tried to resist around 100 locals led by Kamrul from catching fish at the water body around 11:00am.

Both the groups equipped with machetes, bamboo sticks, iron rods and brickbats clashed for half an hour, leaving at least 15 people of both

the groups injured.

On information, Karful police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Injured Mukuli Begum, also member of Damalkut Samabaya Samity, at DMCH said they took lease the water body from the government for fishing but some locals tried to catch fish from the water body. Officer-in-charge Delwar Hossain of Kafrul Police Station said local fishermen cultivate fish in the water bodies under several cooperative societies and clash over fishing very often.

Yesterday was scheduled to catch fish from the disputed water body by turn by the feuding groups which was fixed earlier by police, he added.

BCL men burn Nizami's effigy

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of ruling Awami League, burnt an effigy of Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Matiur Rahman Nizami on Dhaka University campus yesterday for his crimes against humanity during the War of Liberation in 1971.

Hundreds of BCL men set fire to the effigy of Nizami near the Aparajeyo Bangla. Earlier, BCL men brought out a procession on the campus and held a rally in front of the Aparajeyo Bangla.

Leaders at the rally called upon the government to start the trial process of war criminals and the people who had committed crimes against humanity during the War of Liberation immediately.

They also demanded ban on religion-based politics in the country by enacting laws.

ATTACK ON HUMAYUN AZAD

Complete probe by April 25

Court asks CID again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again directed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to complete the reinvestigation by April 25 into the attack on late Prof Humayun Azad on February 27, 2004.

First Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ali Hossain passed the order as the prosecution submitted a petition seeking extension of time to probe the case.

On October 20 last year, the same court had ordered a further investigation into the attack on Prof Azad and directed the CID to submit the probe report by December 20. But the investigation officer

failed to complete the probe. Later the same court gave the CID directives to complete the probe by March 22.

Following the fresh investigation, CID appealed to take two Jama'at ul Mujaheddin Bangladesh (JMB) members on remand for interrogation. A gang of criminals stabbed eminent writer Prof Humayun Azad with machetes in front of the Bangla Academy in the city on February 27 in 2004, leaving him critically injured. After his recovery, Prof Azad went to Germany where he died on the night of August 11 the same year.

Monjur Kabir, brother of Prof Azad, filed a petition on October 6 last year seeking further investigation into the

attack on Prof Azad. CID Inspector Kazi Abdul Malek, also the IO of the case, submitted a charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka on November 15, 2007 against five JMB men, including executed militant leaders Shaikh Abdur Rahman and his brother Ataur Rahman Sunny.

However, names of Abdur Rahman and Sunny were dropped from the charge sheet as they had already been sentenced to death for killing two judges in Jhalakathi.

Three other accused are Mizanur Rahman Minhaz, Nur Mohammad Shamim and Nur Alam alias Anwar Hossain Shahid.

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