

## 150 shanties gutted in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 150 shanties were gutted at a slum in Rupnagar and a plastic factory was burned down at Kamrangirchar in separate incidents of fire in the city yesterday.

Fire Service and Civil Defense (FSCD) officials said no casualties were reported from the incidents till 5:30pm.

In Rupnagar under Pallabi Police Station, the fire broke out at Arambagh Bosti around 3:30pm, and nine units of firefighters brought the blaze under control at about 5:00pm.

Police and locals said the fire originating from an oven at a kitchen burned down around 150 shanties.

The dwellers said they could not save their cash money and other valuables as the blaze engulfed the entire slum in a few minutes.

Slum dwelling garment worker Anwara Begum said the fire gutted her Tk 10,000 that she was paid as salary by her factory.

"We just saved our lives," said Mukta Begum, another resident of the slum.

Deputy Director Abdur Rashid of the FSCD told The Daily Star the fire originated from the kitchen, and it gutted the shanties within a short time.

In the other incident, a plastic factory caught fire at about 3:00pm, and six units of the firefighters fought for about an hour to douse the flame.

The FSCD officials said the fire originated from an abandoned burning cigarette butt, and later it engulfed the roadside plastic factory.

Police and locals said the tin-shed factory was anonymous.

## World Health Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country will observe the World Health Day today as elsewhere across the globe.

This year the theme of the day is 'Urbanisation and Health'.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate statements on the occasion.

Health Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque at a press briefing yesterday said urban health service in the country is still inadequate compared to public demand.

"The steps of the government aims at halving the number of slum dwellers in the city and to develop the quality of life of the slum people," he said, adding that the government has taken various steps for health development, increasing quality of health service and management.

Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital and Jaago Foundation will jointly organise health fairs at Salahuddin Hospital at Tikatuli, AIUB at Banani, AG Breast Care, Sandhani - Dhaka Medical College and Bandhan - Dhaka University.

Mother Teresa Memorial Society Bangladesh will hold a discussion and rally to mark the day.

## Punishment to stalkers demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political and socio-cultural organisations yesterday strongly protested against the lack of punishment to the stalkers.

Aparajeyo Bangladesh, an NGO working with disadvantaged children, formed a human chain at Karwan Bazar in the city where several hundred children participated in to press home their demands, says a press release.

Wahida Banu, executive director of the organisation, said due to indifference of the law enforcement agencies, the wicked youths are becoming uncontrolled gradually and committing crimes one after another.

She demanded an increase in budgetary allocation for ensuring social safety.

Meanwhile, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front of Jagannath University unit and Bangladesh Chhatra Union Dhaka city unit called on all to resist stalkers unitedly.

## 'Create awareness of physical activity'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ICDDR,B observed the World Day for Physical Activity yesterday with a view to increasing awareness in society of physical activity for living a healthy and long life.

A rally was held on its premises followed by a discussion where the experts underscored the need for physical activity.

The programme was jointly organised by ICDDR,B and Agita Mundo Network, a Brazil-based organisation.

The theme of the day this year was 'Active cities: Healthy life'.

The experts said physical activities could prevent and control chronic health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, asthma and obesity.

## Make JS a centre of discussions

President urges lawmakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Zillur Rahman yesterday called on both the ruling and opposition parties to turn parliament into a centre of all discussions in order to make it more functional.

"In a democracy, there would be differences in opinions and ideologies among the political parties but all need to show respect for others for expanding the democratic system."

The president said this while unveiling a book titled 'Sangsad Bitarka' (parliamentary debate) by Awami League leader Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

Presided over by former chief adviser to a caretaker government Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, the programme was also addressed by LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam, Prof Syed Anwar Hossain and columnist

Golam Akbar Chowdhury, husband of the writer.

Zillur Rahman called on all to show their mutual respect, patience and tolerance for others' opinions for democratic development.

"The House plays a vital role in fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of people in the parliamentary democratic system," he added.

The president further said that right decisions could be made through live discussions on various national issues by the lawmakers belonging to both the parties.

Terming the book a new milestone for democratic growth, he said Sajeda in her book discussed various national issues, including poverty reduction, women's empowerment, fulfilling basic needs of people and providing subsidies and loans to farmers.

Ministers, lawmakers, writers and cultural activists were also present.

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