

RISKY BUILDINGS, FIRE INCIDENTS

Call for strict enforcement of laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Strict enforcement of laws related to urban plan and fire safety measures is a must to prevent loss of innocent lives in any further human tragedy, said experts at a roundtable in the city yesterday.

They called upon the authorities concerned to retain the natural hydrant sources like ponds, canals, lakes and wetlands in the city to fight any devastating blaze in future.

The Prothom Alo organised the roundtable titled "Risky building, deadly blaze: Remedies" at its office in the city.

There are adequate legislations to prevent the fire incident like Nimtoli that claimed 119 lives, said Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury.

"The laws related to building construction and fire safety are adequate," he said, adding, "What is missing is enforcement."

He called for enforcement of building construction act, Bangladesh National Building Code, fire prevention act, building rules, Detailed Area

Plan and Dhaka City Corporation ordinance.

Most of the city buildings are non-engineered and of low quality construction, said Prof Shamimuzzaman Basunia of Buet civil engineering department.

The buildings may collapse due to faulty design, earthquake and storms, he said.

Prof Sarwar Jahan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said implementation of community-based planning is required for safety against hazards of building collapse and fire incident.

Brig General Abu Nayeem Md Shahidullah, director general of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said, "Chemical warehouses can no way run in a residential area."

All the risky buildings, except the heritage ones, have to be identified and marked in an easily visible manner so that people do not use them, said Abdul Mannan, state minister for housing and public works.

Md Nurul Huda, chairman of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk), said



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PHOTO: STAR

Rajuk is unable to properly implement the building rules and master plan with inadequate manpower and logistics in a 1530-square kilometre

city of 1.5 crore people. Urban researcher Prof Nazrul Islam, Prof Mehedi Ahmed Ansary of Buet, architect Iqbal Habib of

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, Dr Shamontal Sen of Burn Unit at Dhaka medical College Hospital and Monira Rahman, executive director of

Acid Survivors Foundation also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Abdul Quayum, joint editor of the Prothom Alo.

Obituary

METRO DESK



Syeda Mahbuba Alam (Rana), wife of Md Khurshid Alam, passed away on

Thursday, says a press release. She was the daughter of Syed Md. Ameen of Gokarana Nawab Bari, Brahmanbaria.

She left behind her three children.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at her family residence at House # 17, Road # 35, Gulshan # 2 (behind Gulshan Agora) after Asr prayers tomorrow (Monday). Friends and relatives are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The 34th death anniversary of LA Chowdhury, a social worker and politician, will be observed today, says a press release.

LA Chowdhury was a close associate of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq. He was general secretary of the then Jukta Front and president of Krishak Sramik Party, Chittagong unit.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held at his grave in Chittagong after Maghrib prayers and Naya Paltan Jame Mosque (VIP Road) in the city after Esha prayers.

Amanat Ali Mallick

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 16th death anniversary of Amanat Ali Mallick, a patron of education and father of former chief election commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena, says a press release.

He was the headmaster of Sengram High School under Pangsha upazila in Rajbari.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Rajbari.

Shamsul Alam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 13th death anniversary of Shamsul Alam (Nana Bhai), a close aide to Huseyn Shaheed Subhray and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at the Bangladesh Jewellery Association office at Baitul Mukarram and at the office of Alim's nephew Kazi Sirajul Islam after Asr prayers.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the milad.

'Eliminate worst forms of child labour'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Elimination of the worst forms of child labour is the most urgent task Bangladesh should undertake in line with the new national child labour elimination policy, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

A social movement should be forged across the country against child labour, the speakers told the seminar styled National Child Labour Elimination Policy and Next Steps held at the BIAM auditorium in the city.

The labour and employment ministry, International Labour Organisation and Unicef jointly organised the seminar marking the World Day Against Child Labour.

Speaking as the chief guest, Labour and Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said elimination of poverty and ensuring education for every child are essential to overcome the trend of

involving children in vulnerable jobs.

"No parents want to push their children into vulnerable work. But they do it being the victims of the situation," the minister told reporters after the seminar.

Replies to a query, Mosharraf said the government has already revised the Child Labour Act, 2006 and it would be placed before parliament in next session.

He said bringing every child under the education net should be the prime target to curb the years-long poverty in the society.

On the child labour policy adopted by the government in March this year, he said, "This policy is well complemented by the recently adopted national education policy, which is extending free compulsory education till class eight."

ILO Director in Dhaka Gagan Rajbhandari, government officials and Unicef representative were present.

Of them, nearly 13 lakh

children are involved in vulnerable jobs in the country, they said.

They called upon the government to establish a strong social safety net, ensure education for all children and rehabilitate street and rootless children to eliminate the trend of using children in vulnerable jobs.

Bangladesh National Council of Textile Garments and Leather Workers arranged the discussion in the city, says a press release.

HUMAN CHAIN

Child workers observed the World Day Against Child Labour yesterday with a call to eliminate worst forms of child labour.

They also took part in an art competition, discussion and cultural events organised by the Voluntary Association for Family Welfare and Social Development (VAFWSD) in association with the Manusher Jonno Foundation at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) in the city.

Child workers from automobile and welding workshops and other establishments also formed a human chain near the IEB, says a press release.

Media personality M Hamid, cultural activists, owners of welding workshops attended the programmes presided over by VAFWSD chief executive Dr Abdul Qaiyum Laskar.

Speaking on the occasion, M Hamid called on the children to study alongside their work.

He also called upon the owner of different institutions not to involve children in hazardous jobs.



Foreign Minister Dipu Moni launches a survey report titled 'Bangladesh: The Next Generation' at a ceremony at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday. On her right are British Council Director Charles Nuttall and British High Commissioner Stephen Evans and on her left is singer Ayub Bachchu. (Story on Page 16)

PHOTO: STAR

3D SURVEY BY CHEVRON
Villagers to get compensation

UNB, Dhaka

The compensation issue has come to a resolution regarding Chevron's three-dimensional (3D) seismic survey in Moulvibazar district where some local houses were allegedly damaged by the survey.

Chevron Bangladesh Blocks Thirteen and Fourteen Ltd, a sister concern of the US-based international oil company Chevron, conducted the seismic survey in the Moulvibazar area in 2008 in order to delineate the hydrocarbon reserve position in the gasfield there.

During the survey, the company had carried out small scale drillings and blasted explosives in the underground.

After the works, some villagers alleged that their houses were damaged because of the explosions.

The issue had remained

unresolved for a long time. The officials of the district administration, energy ministry and Petrobangla, owners of damaged houses and the Chevron officials at a meeting last week decided that Chevron would pay compensation for the houses within 100 meters from charging points.

Deputy Commissioner of Moulvibazar district Md Mustafizur Rahman presided over the meeting.

As per the decision, 730 mud-wall houses will be paid Tk 1200 (US\$18) each, 84 brick-wall houses will get Tk 3000 (US\$ 44) each and seven shallow tube-wells to be re-established at actual cost (claimed to be damaged during the survey).

The total amount comes to around US\$ 19,000. The DC office will shortly circulate the minutes of the meeting with detailed information.

Five students win Youth Parliament debate contest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five students were adjudged best debaters in the BSB-Cambrian Youth Parliament Open Debate Competition held on Friday.

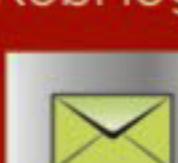
The students were selected from a total of 18 students who qualified for the selection round of the debated titled 'Youth Parliament'.

ATN Bangla, a private satellite TV channel, organised the contest, which is aired on the channel at 11:05am every Friday, said a press release.

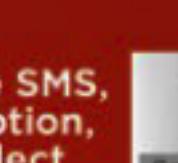
Mashrura Mariam Oysi of Shahid Bir Uttam Lt Anwar Girls' College was adjudged the best debater. Mayisha Samiha Semanti of New Government Degree College, Rajshahi, and Imsat Mursid Khan of Rajuk Uttara Model College jointly became the second while Babri Islam Tuli of Ideal College, Motijheel, and Raihanul Amin of Cambrian College jointly secured the third place.

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ATTACK ON HWF LEADERS, WORKERS
3 journos, 12 others hurt in Rangamati

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 people including three journalists were injured in an attack allegedly by Bangladeshi settlers in Rangamati yesterday.

The incident occurred during a blockade on roads and waterways enforced by Hill Women's Federation (HWF), a political platform for women based in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Around 50 to 60 settlers with sticks attacked leaders and activists of HWF around 11:30am when they brought out a procession and barricaded Rangamati-Chittagong highway at Manikchhari in sadar upazila.

The journalists-- M Solaiman and Nandan Devnath, district correspondents of Diganta Television and Bangla Vision, and Milton, cameraman of ATN-- were admitted to a sadar hospital.

The HWF leaders said the settlers made the attack in presence of police and army personnel, reports our Rangamati correspondent.

On information, a police team led by Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali Police Station Babul Uddin Sarder rushed to the spot, and brought the situation under control.

The HWF leaders also brought out processions at different places including Naniachar, Kawkhali, Manikchhari, Kutukchhari and Bilaichhari upazilas in support of the blockade.

They urged the government to publish immediately the report of the enquiry committee formed to investigate the Kalpana Chakma case.

Vehicular movements remained suspended for eight hours in the district.

The women's organisation enforced the blockade programme at 6:00am yesterday in protest at the local administration's decision refusing to let them use the town hall for a meeting.

The leaders said they had gone to the Rangamati municipality for taking permission to hold the meeting at the town hall yesterday, marking the Kalpana Chakma Kidnapping Day, but the authorities refused them.

HWF announced the blockade on Friday at a press conference at United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) office at Kutukchhari in sadar upazila.