

## Cat scare

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bites on the left side of her body and she was bleeding from her left ear, apparently caused by the fall from the three-foot-high bed. Doctors said she is recovering well.

Lamia was admitted to the hospital on December 5 with multiple issues related to her respiration, nervous system and she had neonatal jaundice too. She was placed on a portable phototherapy machine on her bed for treatment of jaundice.

Around 3:00am on December 6, the cat attacked.

"Oh my God! The cat is taking away the baby," screamed relatives of other patients in the ward as they saw the cat trying to drag Lamia towards the exit of Ward-2.

Champa, maternal grandmother of Lamia, was standing in with her that night. Champa had gone to sleep moments before.

"I could not believe it. But I saw the cat... white in colour... running away following the hue and cry. The baby was already dragged several feet towards the exit," said Champa.

She believes that the fall from the bed has perhaps damaged Lamia's head.

Champa chose not to let her daughter know about her child as it has been only a few days since had to undergo a C-section in Pabna. Champa also fears insult from her daughter's in-laws since she "failed to protect Lamia".

Doctor Mashur Rahman, on duty at the ICU yesterday afternoon, told The Daily Star, "The baby has recovered from the injuries she sustained from the cat attack. Her condition is improving."

The incident induced fear among other patients in the hospital. Relatives and parents of babies were seen keeping an eye on the doors of their wards since cats are seen in and around the hospitals in groups.

Cats appeared to have liked the hospital as left-over from meals of patients, their relatives and hospital staff are littered around it. The Daily Star correspondent, even yesterday, saw several cats roaming the hallways of the hospital.

The mother of a one-and-a-half-year-old child patient preferring anonymity told The Daily Star, "It reveals the extent of negligence the hospital is being run with..."

The Daily Star tried to reach the hospital director several times for his comments and for information on what has been done to put an end to the cat problem in the hospital. But the director on every occasion did not pick up the calls on his mobile phone or respond to the text sent by the paper.

## Dhaka renews

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adverse impacts as well as benefits to be accrued from the project, the statement added.

It then mentioned repeated assurances from New Delhi that nothing harmful to Bangladesh would be done in implementing the project.

The foreign ministry release came a week after New Delhi issued a statement after two advisers to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina went to the Indian capital to convey Dhaka's concern over the project.

A foreign office spokesman said the statement was issued to remove confusion in the public mind and to negate impacts of "misleading campaigns".

The statement noted that the past BNP-led government took no step to raise Dhaka's concern to India.

It read: "(The) Leader of the Opposition may like to explain why she did not use the opportunity of her visit to India [as prime minister] and her discussions with the Indian leadership to raise this issue and obtain some binding according to her commitment that India would not construct the Tipaimukh dam since it would have such adverse impact on Bangladesh."

## Khaleda elections

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a private organisation. The government has no link with it. But the prime minister had ordered to file a case against Khaleda Zia accusing her of buying land for the charity. This is nothing but a conspiracy to declare her disqualified for the next elections," he told a rally at the city's Tejaon truck stand.

The rally was organised to protest the splitting of Dhaka City Corporation into two and attack on former DCC mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka during a day-long hartal in the capital on Sunday.

Even the government has accused Tarique Rahman in a case which was filed at least eight years ago, mentioned Fakhrul. "People are not fool. They can understand everything. No conspiracy will be allowed to be implemented."

The ruling party knows that its candidates will lose the deposit money if a free and fair poll is held and that is why the 15th amendment to the constitution has been adopted to hold the next elections under the incumbent government, the BNP leader maintained.

He further complained that though some ministers are involved in corruption, the prime minister is trying to save them. "World Bank has suspended fund release for Padma Bridge due to a minister's corruption. Even

Canada is also conducting a probe into this."

Citing that former DCC mayor Khoka was stabbed under police custody during the hartal, he said there is no security of people's lives and property in the country.

The livelihood of around three crore Bangladeshis will be affected if India builds the Tipaimukh dam, pointed out Fakhrul adding, the government is not lodging strong protests to force India cancel the project.

Sahabuddin, joint convener of Dhaka city BNP, presided over the meeting.

On August 8, the Anti-Corruption Commission filed a case with Tejaon Police Station against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and three others for abusing power in setting up Shaheed Zia Charitable Trust.

A High Court bench on Thursday granted Khaleda bail for eight weeks in the case.

Meanwhile, BNP's Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday alleged that the government opted for repressing the opposition to stop the movement against splitting DCC.

Addressing a press conference at the party's central office at Nayapaltan, he said police foiled BNP's rally at Mohammapur on Thursday which indicates that the government wants to stop the movement by repression.

## Bangladeshi

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India with a hope to get back a healthy life. His family admitted him to a hospital, having little inkling that he would perish in a fire.

Gauranga, 75, was killed in the fire that broke out in AMRI Hospital in Kolkata yesterday, just three days after he was taken there.

He was the lone Bangladeshi among the 90 killed in the devastating flames.

He felt better after the first dose of medicine on Thursday, his grandson Rakkhit Roy told the Daily Star from Kolkata.

"Dadu [grandpa] said he felt much better yesterday and spoke to me last night [Thursday night]," Rakkhit said, adding that Gauranga's test results were to be available yesterday.

"Who knew my dadu would meet this fate?" a sobbing Rakkhit said.

Gauranga's son Vidya Sagar was so shocked that he could hardly speak.

Rakkhit and Sagar had accompanied Gauranga to Kolkata.

Rakkhit said the body would be brought home today by a Biman flight.

Paschimbanga Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee consoled him, Sagar and relatives of other fire victims, headed.

Gauranga, a farmer of Sirajdikhan upazila in Munshiganj, had been suffering from Hydrocephalus, which causes the brain to swell, for the last few months. He took treatment in a hospital in the capital, but his condition did not improve, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

Sagar and Rakkhit took him to Kolkata on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a pall of gloom descended on Gauranga's house as the news reached his home. His wife was wailing on hearing the news.

"He was admitted to the hospital so that he is cured. But today, he is no more," said his nephew Jotish Mondol, with tears rolling down his cheeks.

## Eurozone

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this process" after consulting their parliaments, EU leaders said in a statement.

Hungary had originally voiced reluctance, while Sweden and the Czech Republic were undecided.

The new deal, to be adopted by March, was put to the entire 27-nation bloc in the interests of maintaining unity.

The accord, which is to include automatic sanctions that can only be blocked by a majority of powerful states, aims to end past practices of overspending responsible for the two-year debt crisis ravaging Europe.

Some leaders hope this will spur the European Central Bank to step up its role in the crisis after ECB president Mario Draghi had called for a "new fiscal compact" last week.

Draghi dubbed the summit decisions a "very good outcome" for the eurozone.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said British Prime Minister David Cameron's bid to halt ongoing EU efforts to curb the City of London's huge financial services sector was "unacceptable".

"Where we can't be given safeguards, it is better to be on the outside," retorted Cameron.

A square mile in central London is home to 75 percent of Europe's entire financial services industry, but the British government is resisting French and German moves to impose a financial transactions tax, as well as new regulations controlling trading.

While the leaders split over treaty changes, they pledged to pump 200 billion euros (\$267 billion) into IMF coffers to help the eurozone, which is struggling to boost its own rescue fund to one trillion euros.

Sarkozy also said the ECB would act as an agent for the bailout fund, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF).

The EFSF's successor, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), will come into force earlier than first mooted in July 2012, with a lending capacity of 500 billion euros.

## Rising high

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Under the terms of the Building Construction Rules of 1996, any building 10 storeys or higher must keep open space as follows: 10 feet at the back, 8.4 feet on the two sides and five feet in the front.

But, as this correspondent found during a recent visit to the site, the owner of the Doreen Tower has left no open space. As per records, the total land area of the plot is 6,051 square feet while the built-up floor area is 6,052 square feet.

ASM Ismail, the chief government architect, said under the 1996 rules such a tall building could in no way be approved in Gulshan area.

"Leaving no setback [open space] is a gross violation of rules," said Ismail, who previously served at Rajuk as an authorised officer for building approval.

Survey of Bangladesh, the national surveying and mapping agency, in a report two years ago listed Doreen Tower as one of the "highly risky" buildings for air operations. Its height is more than double the permissible 150 feet.

The taller a building is, more stringent is the compliance with the fire safety, set back rule, height restriction and car park space.

Consequences of such deviations in case of a 25-storey building are many times more hazardous than what it is in case of a six-storey building.

Rajuk, the authority responsible for overseeing development and controlling construction in the city, approved the plan in January 1998 though Doreen Tower did not have the required open space and the height clearance and fire department clearance, all of which are mandatory for such high-rise constructions.

As per the building law, Rajuk must ensure that developers comply with those mandatory prerequisites.

Completed last year, Doreen Tower is set to open for commercial use soon, company officials have said. All through the decade in which the building came up, Rajuk inexplicably looked the other way as such gross violations of construction rules occurred.

Rajuk Chairman Nurul Huda told The Daily Star last month that he would initiate an investigation into how the approval of the tower plan went through.

Asked why Rajuk had not addressed these concerns while the construction was going on, he said, "I cannot say that without going through the files." He then left for Hajj.

Doreen Tower has parking arrangements for some

40 vehicles in its basement against parking requirement for nearly 140 vehicles.

As per rules, a commercial building like Doreen Tower must provide for a 248-square-foot car park for every 2,153-square-foot floorspace.

The building lacks fire-protected emergency dedicated escape route, including staircase, fire fighting lift and fire-protected shelter space to facilitate safe exit in the event of an emergency. This is mandatory under the National Building Code.

The owner obtained a provisional clearance from the fire service department last year, while fittings of basic fire safety features like alarm bells, sprinklers, fire extinguishers and hose reels are still going on.

Fire service laws say any building above six storeys must obtain prior clearance from the fire department and fire fighting system should be installed at the time of construction.

On giving clearance after completion of the construction, Zohurul Amin Mian, assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they did so thinking that the building was under construction.

Contacted for comments, Tanzeer Alam Siddique, managing director of Doreen Tower, responded to this paper's queries on November 1.

He said Rajuk had approved the plan the way it had been submitted.

"It was Rajuk's duty to ensure if the rules were being followed," said Tanzeer, son of Noor-e-Alam Siddique, the building owner.

Noor-e-Alam is a former student leader and politician. He avoided answering the question why a plan, blatantly violating set back rules and height restrictions, was submitted to Rajuk in the first place.

On not keeping the required room for parking, Tanzeer Alam said the traffic situation had not been as bad a decade ago, when construction of the building began, as it is today. When pointed out that specific rules about parking were in existence then, he remained silent.

Tanzeer, however, said the shortcoming would be "compensated" by arranging a car park in another building, which is about 500 yards away from Doreen Tower. Rules do not permit such an arrangement.

The "so called other building" is a six-storey commercial structure with a narrow entry surrounded by residential plots. Much of its space for 64 car parks is required for its own tenants.

While his brother Tahzeeb Alam Siddique said

the firm would convert one of the two staircases into an emergency exit, Tanzeer claimed it had already been done.

On October 17, four Doreen Tower officials, including a general manager, an electrical engineer and a former Rajuk engineer, sat with this correspondent at the tower to explain their position.

All of them spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The Rajuk officials who approved the plan are responsible for the anomalies," said the ex-Rajuk engineer, who is an adviser of the project.

The general manager said, "We don't know why the owner didn't comply with the building rules."

## Fraud alert

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After a nine-month civil war in Libya, local and foreign companies are in the process of resuming their operation to rebuild the country. They are now seeking to re-employ foreign workers on a very limited scale, and regular recruitment of workers will take a few more months, officials at the expatriates' welfare ministry said in Dhaka.

Since the civil war began in February this year, over 36,000 Bangladeshi workers returned from Libya. The companies concerned prefer recruiting their old workers, and more than 60 returnees were re-employed until December 1. Presently there are around 10,000 Bangladeshi workers in Libya.

According to a recent letter to the expatriates' welfare ministry from the embassy in Tripoli, housing companies mainly employ Bangladeshi workers. Both local and foreign companies have huge amounts of money due from the Libyan authorities before the civil war. Besides, most of their capital machinery, transport and other materials were looted during the war.

"Therefore, before beginning fresh work, these companies are seeking their dues and compensation from the Libyan government," says the letter. The Daily Star has got a copy of it.

Ahsan said that in such a situation, it is difficult for the companies to re-start work immediately. And they (embassy officials) are now very careful about recruitments in Libya as many of the companies had earlier failed to pay the dues of foreign workers including those from Bangladesh.

Contacted, Begum Shamsunnahar, joint secretary at the expatriates' welfare ministry, said an inter-ministerial taskforce is already keeping a close watch on the airports, and also on the recruitment agencies so that none can illegally send workers to Libya.

## Iran TV

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government said "the American RQ-170 spy plane violated 250 kilometres inside Iranian airspace before confronting the reaction of Iran's armed forces," the website reported.

"Provocative and secret actions by the American government against the Islamic republic in recent months" have been on the increase, it charged.

It said Tehran had lodged "a strong protest against this violation of international rule by the US government" and warned against any "repetition of such actions."

Iran called for the United Nations to condemn "this violation," in the letter addressed to the UN secretary general as well as the presidents of the Security Council and General Assembly.

State television on Thursday aired footage of what it said was the captured drone, showing what appeared to be an RQ-170 Sentinel aircraft with little visible damage.

The Pentagon said American experts were analysing the footage.

The footage showed a cream-coloured aircraft being examined by two commanders of Tehran's elite Revolutionary Guard Corps, who are in charge of the country's air defences.

Aerospace unit Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh said the drone had been captured through a cyber attack. "It fell into the trap of (the Guards) electronic warfare unit who then managed to land it with minimum damage," he said.

A leading conservative MP, Mohammad Kossari, yesterday delivered a stern warning of retaliation in case of further violations.

"Iran will target all US military bases around the world," said the deputy head of parliament's foreign affairs commission, quoted by Fars news agency. Its response would be "terrifying."

The RQ-170 Sentinel is a high-altitude stealth reconnaissance drone made by Lockheed Martin whose existence was exposed in 2009 by specialised reviews and later confirmed by the US Air Force in 2010.

Iranian media said on December 4 that the unmanned aerial vehicle was shot down after making an incursion into the airspace of eastern Iran, which borders Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The crash came at a time of heightened political tension over Iran's nuclear programme, with speculation rife that Israel is mulling air strikes against Iranian atomic facilities, with or without US backing.

## Govt mulls

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criminals will be completed within the shortest possible time and that is why the second tribunal will be constituted shortly," he told a discussion at Dhaka Reporters Unity organised by Bangabandhu Academy.

"If the trial process is to be completed in expected timeframe, we would need to constitute another International Crime Tribunal (ICT)."

He blasted BNP for "openly siding with the war criminals" saying "day by day they are becoming restless to stop the trial".

Constituted in March last year along with a special investigation agency and a prosecution cell, the ICT is on proceedings against five top leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami and two of the BNP.

Contacted, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed told BSS that the possible inclusion of more suspects in the list of accused to be tried would require the constitution of another tribunal.

"More number of accused could be included in the list after investigations and therefore another tribunal would be needed to expedite their trial," he said.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Shahara Khatun yesterday said the ICT would remain functional till it gets complaints against the war criminals.

"Trial of war criminals have already started and all the war criminals would have to face the trial in phases after completion of investigations," she said while addressing two separate occasions in Gazipur.

If convicted the accused could face the highest death penalty and the lowest 10 years of imprisonment for crimes like massacre, murders, arsons and rapes. But under the International Crimes Tribunal Act, the convicts could file appeals before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

## Workers block road

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They started their rally at CEPZ Intersection.

Participants at the meeting demanded the house owners issue receipts on payment of rents, maintain government rules while increasing the rents, ensure supply of gas, water and electricity and stop evicting tenants.

A huge number of police had taken position at the CEPZ main gate.

Rezaul Karim, senior assistant director of Chittagong unit Industrial Police, told The Daily Star around 7:00pm that they did not go for a tough action as the demonstration was still peaceful.

Around 7:30pm, a section of workers started throwing stones at the nearby shopping malls and ATM Booths, said witnesses.

They burned tyres, smashed windowpanes of five shopping malls and shutters of several shops near the intersection and vandalised at least 12 vehicles including three-wheelers, buses and trucks.

A large number of vehicles, many of which

headed for Chittagong airport, were caught in half-a-kilometre tailback.

Rezaul Karim said the workers had no permission for a meeting on the Labour Colony ground. The rally was not called under any banner or by any organisation.

"We also had information that some vested quarters could cash in on the workers' grievances ahead of December 11," he added.

On December 11 last year, workers of different factories of CEPZ demonstrated against the newly announced wage board.

The following day, the export processing zone erupted into violence.

Rezaul Karim told the reporters that they would arrange talks among house owners, local representatives and workers.

Talking to The Daily Star, Jesmin, a worker of Pacific Jeans, said she shares a room with two others and have to live in severe water, gas and power crisis.

rent was increased from Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,500 in several phases over the last one year.

A resident of the Labour Colony, Shamim said he and his wife live in only one room of a two-room tin-shed house. The owner has recently told him that he has to pay extra Tk 500 from January.

"I cannot afford the house rent as I receive only Tk 4,086 every month as salary," said the Shamim who works as an operator at the Knitting section of the factory.

## JP long march

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Government Alia Madrasa ground once the long march reaches there in the afternoon. Ershad and other central leaders will address the rally, said JP sources.

The march will leave Sylhet for the frontier Zakiganj upazila tomorrow. Another public meeting will be held there.

At a press conference on Thursday, Ershad urged the Indian government to conduct a joint study to assess the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of Tipaimukh Dam project before going for its implementation.