

100 shanties, 5 shops burned in Lalbagh fire
One injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was injured as a fire gutted around 100 shanties, five shops and a printing press at Lalbagh in the old part of the city last night.

The injured Mohammad Solaiman, 32, was admitted to the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Fire Service and Civil Defense sources said the fire originated from a tin shed house in Shahid Nagar around 10:30pm. Ten units from Lalbagh, Polashi, Sadarghat and the headquarters rushed to the spot and managed to douse the flames around 12:40am.

LOKMAN MURDER
Three more accused get bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

A Narsingdi court yesterday granted bail to three more charge-sheeted accused in the Narsingdi municipality mayor Lokman Hossain murder case.

The accused are Tareq Ahmed, former vice-president of Narsingdi Government College BNP, Monowar Hossain Khan Moin and Kabir Sarkar.

District and Sessions Judge Dr Mohammad Shahjahan passed the order after defence lawyers including district AL president Advocate Asaduzzaman, Advocate SA Hadi and Advocate Abul Kalam Azad sought bail for them.

Earlier on Sunday, businessman Monowar Hossain Khan, accused No 6 in the murder case, surrendered before a Narsingdi court.

The number three accused Mobarok Hossain Moba, a leader of Narsingdi AL and Nurul Islam, the town unit BNP general secretary and No 5 accused, are still at large.



Guests at the launching of "The Daily Star Spelling Bee - Powered by Horlicks" at The Daily Star Centre in the city yesterday. From left are Richard Gregory, senior teacher and head of Courses, British Council Teaching Centre; Shykh Seraj, director and head of news of Channel i; Soumendra S Das, marketing director of GlaxoSmithKline; and Russell T Ahmed, CEO of Champs21.com.

PHOTO: STAR

First-ever English spelling contest launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first-ever English spelling competition "Spelling Bee" was launched by Champs21, an initiative of The Daily Star, yesterday to help school students enhance their language skills.

Titled "The Daily Star Spelling Bee - Powered by Horlicks", the contest will kick off on February 1. Students of class VI to class X from both English and Bangla medium schools are eligible to take part in it.

Spelling Bee, where participants are asked to correctly spell English words, is an internationally acclaimed competition quite popular in the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, Indonesia, Pakistan and India. Spelling Bee first began in the US in 1925.

Russell T Ahmed, CEO of Champs21.com, the first e-learning web portal of Bangladesh, said it is a national event and the students can prepare from now on by registering at the website of

champs21.

The main purpose of the contest is to help students improve their English spelling, increase their vocabulary, learn concepts, and develop correct English usage, he said.

He also said the champion will be awarded Tk 500,000 in cash and a trip to Washington DC, the city of Spelling Bee, with one parent. The first runner-up will get a cash of Tk 100,000 and the second runner-up a cash of Tk 50,000.

Detailed information about the competition format and rules of participation is available on www.champs21.com

The education-based programme has three phases--online round, divisional round, and TV round. A contestant must undergo the rounds to reach the top.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said Spelling Bee is an educational programme where everyone of a family can join.

"Globally, when the Spelling Bee contest

is telecast it becomes a family event and the beauty of this programme is everybody is a participant", he said.

He said English education is a serious challenge for Bangladesh and, of all subjects maths and English seem to be holding the country's students back.

"We think we will encourage our students to learn spelling amid an enjoyable environment through this contest", he said, adding that this programme is going to have a tremendous impact on the entire learning process of the students.

Shykh Seraj, director and head of news of Channel i, the telecast partner of the contest, said Spelling Bee is directly an educational programme which will help to learn correct spelling and pronunciation.

Because of the impact of social media, young people are using short forms of texts, which unconsciously get inculcated in their minds, he said, adding that Spelling Bee will help remove this.

He said Channel i would hopefully telecast the episodes of the competition's TV round from last week of February.

Richard Gregory, senior teacher and head of Courses, British Council Teaching Centre, said, "We are passionately concerned with the level of English in Bangladesh and hope that this will be the first of our engagements with a much wider community".

He also said if Spelling Bee becomes successful, it will be great a springboard to a much wider range of activities that will interest, entertain, and help the kids learn English.

British Council is the knowledge partner of Spelling Bee.

Soumendra S Das, marketing director of GlaxoSmithKline, the power sponsor of the competition, said the initiative will have a positive impact on learning culture and growth of knowledge of the society.

Teachers of different schools were present at the launching ceremony.

Ghulam Azam referred to orthopaedic specialist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer Ghulam Azam, detained in connection with crimes against humanity during the Liberation War, was referred to an orthopaedic specialist yesterday due to pain in his bones, said Dr A B M Abdullah of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

BSMMU's medicine faculty Dean Prof Dr Abdullah, chief of a three-member medical board for Ghulam Azam's medical care, told The Daily Star, "Ghulam Azam had been suffering from osteoarthritis pain, a most common joint disorder caused due to old-age, for long before his arrest. But as he informed us of his pain, we have referred him to the orthopaedic specialist of BSMMU Dr Nakul Dutt".

After a small piece of silent gallstone was detected in his gall bladder, he was referred to a hepatobiliary specialist on Sunday, Dr Abdullah said.

Ghulam Azam was sent to jail on January 11 by the International Crimes Tribunal in connection with 62 counts of crimes against humanity during the War of Liberation in 1971.

Forensic training instt for cops opens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first-ever forensic training institute for police was inaugurated at Criminal Investigation Department (CID) headquarters in Malibagh of the city yesterday in a bid to develop expertise in investigation to ensure scientific and authentic investigation.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Hassan Mahmood Khandker inaugurated the institute situated on the first floor of a new building at the headquarters following a discussion with the CID officials around 11:00am.

Additional IGP of CID Mokhesur Rahman chaired the discussion.

The IGP said police had entered the era of scientific investigation through the inauguration of the institute.

Members of police will be provided with the forensic training by local and foreign experts in the institute to keep pace with modern method of investigation, he added.

Police authorities have given more emphasis on setting up forensic labs in every divisional headquarters, Hassan said.

A forensic lab in Chittagong had already been set up and setting up another lab in Khulna was under process, he added.

He said the forensic institute would get at least hundred experts per year and provide training to two thousand investigation officers.

The IGP later inaugurated a DNA lab where he told reporters that police department was trying to intensify CID's activities at district level.



Save the Environment Movement forms a human chain before Faculty of Fine Arts of Dhaka University yesterday demanding effective steps to prevent dust pollution.

PHOTO: STAR

WAR CRIMES

Submit formal charges against Alim by Mar 15

Tribunal asks prosecution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday asked the prosecution to submit formal charges against former BNP lawmaker Abdul Alim by March 15 in connection with crimes against humanity committed during the War of Liberation in 1971.

The tribunal passed the order after prosecutor Syed Haider Ali told the court that the ICT had received the investigation report against Alim earlier in the morning.

The prosecution will prepare the formal charges based on the investigation report. The tribunal also extended Alim's bail till March 15.

Alim was arrested on March 27 last year in Joypurhat. The tribunal granted him

bail on several conditions four days after his arrest.

The court asked Alim, member of late president Ziaur Rahman's cabinet, to appear before it on March 15.

Chief Investigator Abdul Hannan Khan on Sunday told The Daily Star that Alim's involvement in 17 incidents of crimes against humanity during the War of Liberation had been found.

His crimes include genocide, murder, rape, looting, arson, forcing people to leave the country and abduction, said Mohammad Abdul Hannan Khan, chief of the investigation agency.

Alim was active in greater Bogra district during the War of Liberation, Hannan added.

Bank official 'kills himself'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A senior official of Al-Arafah Islami Bank died after falling from the seventh floor of its office building at Motijheel in the city yesterday.

Enamul Haque Ratan, 48, first assistant vice president of the bank, fell on the cornice of the third floor of the 18-storey building around 9:15am, said Hasanuzzaman Mollah, inspector (investigation) of Motijheel Police Station.

The inspector suspected that Ratan might have committed suicide as a suicide note was found from his possession. He said Ratan might have pushed aside the windowpane and jumped off to the ground.

The note read, "I have finished off myself because of the behaviour of some people." He also mentioned names of some persons in the note. Police denied to disclose the names for the sake of investigation.

Fire Brigade and Civil Defence personnel recovered the body and handed it over to

police. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Managing Director of the bank Ekramul Hoque told The Daily Star that Ratan joined the bank as an officer in 2001. He had been holding the present post at the head office at Motijheel since 2005.

Ekramul Hoque said after talking to his staff and scrutinizing the office records, he found that he had no feud with any of them and was not superseded by anybody in the service.

He said if police had found any suicide note it will investigate and take action accordingly.

Hoque said Ratan usually came to office at around 9:30am but yesterday he came at 9:00 am, security guards of the bank told him.

Ratan's brother Shahidul Haque could not ascertain any reason behind the incident.

Ratan's wife Selina Begum is a teacher at a college at Keraniganj. They have a son who is a student of class-IX at University Laboratory School. They live at Azimpur New Paltan in the capital.

Khaleda condoles death of Kazi Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday condoled the death of valiant freedom fighter, Kazi Kamal Uddin.

Kazi Kamal Uddin was a true patriot. He, ignoring his own life, fought against the Pakistani occupation army courageously for the independence, she said in a press release signed by BNP Joint Secretary General advocate Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

Khaleda said the nation will remember him for his outstanding contributions to sports too, adding that his death created a vacuum in the country.

She prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and expressed sympathy for the bereaved family members.



Citizens' Rights Movement, Green Club of Bangladesh and Unnayan Dhara Trust hold a rally before Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding expansion and modernization of rail communication to reduce road accidents.

PHOTO: STAR