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NIMTOLI INFERNO TRAGEDY

Chemical storing goes on unabated

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Septuagenarian Chan Mia now runs a tiny tea stall and has been living hand to mouth since the devastating Nimtoli inferno in 2010 gutted his precious semi-grocery shop.

All he has in his eight-feet-by-five-feet tin-made stall are two kettles, two pairs of cups, a small jar of sugar and two cans of condensed milk. He buys the sugar and condensed milk on credit. And there are days when he makes few sales.

Chan Mia lives with his wife in a room just behind the tea stall. His two daughters were married off during his better times, when he used to have the grocery.

The room the elderly couple live in has been parted into two levels with a false floor half way up the walls. They have been living on the upper portion, with the lower half being rented out.

"I never thought that our last days would be like this," said Chan Mia, making no effort to hide his deep sigh.

On this day two years ago, the devastating Nimtoli fire claimed at least 123 lives, mostly of women and children, and left more than 200 others injured.

According to fire fighters, the fire started from a stove in a building that housed a combustible chemical depot on the ground floor. When the fire came in contact with the chemicals it engulfed eight residential buildings and some 20 shops in a few minutes.

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No lessons have been learnt, or so it appears. Two years after the Nimtoli inferno, flammable chemicals are still stored, sold and bought in Old Dhaka. A palm trader, inset, keeps the photo of the son he lost in the flames.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH/STAR



Mubarak jailed for life

BBC ONLINE

An Egyptian court yesterday sentenced ex-President Hosni Mubarak to life in prison for complicity in the killing of protesters during last year's uprising.

The 84-year-old is the first former leader to be tried in person since the start of the Arab Spring in early 2011.

But Mubarak suffered a "health crisis" as he was being transferred to prison, Egyptian state TV reported.

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BRUTAL HIMU MURDER

Parents turn to PM

One accused arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detectives early yesterday arrested an accused in the sensational Himu murder case from Shah Pori Island in Teknaf of Cox's Bazar.

On information, a team of Detective Branch of police raided a house there around 1:30am and arrested Shahadat Hossain Shaju, one of the five accused in the case.

The arrestee had been hiding in his friend's house, said SM Tanvir Arafat, assistant commissioner (DB) of



Shaju

Chittagong Metropolitan Police.

Eighteen-year-old Himadri Majumdar Himu, a student of Summerfield School and College, died on May 23 in the capital's Square Hospital, 26 days after his friends pushed him off the rooftop of the four-storey Farhad Mansion in Panchlaish Residential Area in the port city.

Before pushing him off, they beat him up mercilessly and also had three dogs set upon him.

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JS BOYCOTT

Suranjit asks Khaleda to quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suranjit Sengupta, minister without portfolio, yesterday asked BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to relinquish her post as leader of the opposition owing to her absence at parliament sessions.

"Moudud Ahmed, you along with your party chief (Khaleda Zia) should

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Politics puts police against people

Roundtable calls for an end to political interference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The chain of command in the police administration is not properly maintained due to political interference. The law enforcers who are recruited politically ignore their supervisors and always try to make the political leaders happy, thus distancing themselves from citizens.

The observations came at a roundtable on the subject, "Recent incidents and accountability of police", organised by the Bangla daily Prothom Alo at its conference room in the capital.

The speakers at the discussion said some recent incidents surely pointed to problems in the department and those needed to be resolved through taking a holistic approach.

Saadat Hussain, former home secretary and Bangladesh Public Service Commission chairman, said the problems should be taken up seriously, as otherwise they could spell disaster for the nation.

"The government should realise that the problems are administrative and

social, not political. That is why it should go to experts for solution without considering their political affiliations."

Political interference should be stopped in order to have the police chain of command restored, he said.

"Police recruitment should be made transparent and exemplary punishment should be given immediately to policemen who have committed crimes."

Nurul Huda, former inspector general of police, said political leaders' control over recruitment and transfer and promotion of police had created a vulnerable situation in the law enforcement agency.

He recommended forming a compliance committee comprising experts from different professions to ensure accountability in the force.

He said the background -- recruitment, education and political affiliation -- of the policemen accused of crime should be examined.

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PHOTO ON PAGE 5



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

This rare Lesser Adjutant stork was spotted in Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur last week. Solitary in character, the large bird stalks around wetlands feeding mainly on fish, frogs, reptiles and large invertebrates, and small birds and rodents during the breeding season. It prefers tall trees for its nests. Its nest diameter is more than a metre and up to a metre deep. Lesser Adjutants are also found in India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Laos, Singapore, Indonesia and Cambodia. According to the IUCN, it is on the Red List of threatened species.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Hillary in Arctic to see impact

AFP, Norway

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton took a first-hand look yesterday at the way a warming climate is changing the Arctic, opening the region

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

Biman flies into a tailspin

Glitches in aircraft lead to chaotic flight schedule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has been failing to maintain its flight schedules since May 1 due to technical glitches in a number of aircraft.

In the latest incident yesterday, a Kathmandu-bound A310 airbus returned to Dhaka Hazrat Shahjalal International

Airport because of a fault in its hydraulic system.

The pilots, however, managed to land the aircraft safely at 12:45pm in Dhaka with 67 passengers on board, said sources in Biman's flight operations department. It took nearly six hours to fix the problem before the plane took off again for

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The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with Home Minister Shahara Khatun's claim that newspapers misquoted Shamsul Haque Tuku's advice to journalists to keep a safe distance from police?

Yes (8.0%)

No (90.4%)

No Comments (1.7%)

TOTAL VOTES: 477

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that the media is now enjoying full freedom in the country?

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PRAYER TIMING June 3

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

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