



PHOTO: STAR

Protest programmes of different organisations narrow down Topkhana Road in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital hampering smooth movement of traffic. The photo was taken around 11:00am yesterday.

BEGGARS' REHABILITATION 'ANOMALIES' JS committee wants expenditure details

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the parliamentary standing committee on social welfare ministry yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over anomalies regarding the expenditure of around Tk 7 crore government funding for the rehabilitation of the capital's beggars.

Beggar numbers did not go down through the use of the Tk 7 crore last fiscal year, said the parliamentary body, asking the ministry to provide a report at its next meeting detailing the money's expenditure and the beneficiaries.

"Beggars were not rehabilitated. We still see their usual presence on the streets. We sought to know how the money was spent but the ministry's officials could not give a

satisfactory reply," said one member, Apu Ukil, after a meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The ministry spent Tk 6.70 crore out of the Tk 7 crore to implement a rehabilitation project for beggars by providing them alternative employment.

The parliament secretariat, in a press release, said the committee asked the ministry to investigate the alleged irregularities in the expenditure and the money's distribution among non-government organisations.

The committee also asked the ministry to come up with the list of 10,000 beggars, surveyed in the pilot project, with their photographs and bio-data.

The government allocated Tk 10 crore in the current fiscal year to rehabilitate beggars.

SURANJIT'S PORTFOLIO HC to pass order on writ Thursday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed Thursday for passing order on a writ petition that challenged the legality of Suranjit Sengupta's appointment as a minister without portfolio.

The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Khan set the date after concluding hearing on the petition.

Advocate Tuhin Malik, who filed the petition on September 26, argued before the court yesterday that there is no post of minister without portfolio under the constitution.

If a minister submits a resignation letter to the prime minister, it is considered that the minister has already resigned, he said, adding that the person has to take a fresh oath to be restored to the post.

But Suranjit has not taken a fresh oath after his resignation on April 16, he added.

Additional Attorney General Murad Reza opposed the petition, saying that the power to distribute the portfolio to any minister is vested upon the prime minister as per the constitution.

On April 17 this year, the government appointed Suranjit as a minister without portfolio, just a day after he stepped down as the railways minister amid a railway-gate scandal.

Qamrul's nephew burnt to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A nephew of State Minister for Law Md Qamrul Islam was burnt to death at his West Kazipara residence in the capital yesterday morning.

Neighbours broke open the door to the flat of Ahmed Shawkat Masud, 39, at about 8:00am after they saw smoke emanating from it.

He was first taken to a local hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

Nazrul Islam, security guard of the building where Masud lived, said after seeing smoke, residents of neighbouring houses and locals rushed to the building. They knocked on Masud's door and after receiving no response they broke it down.

They took Masud, who was critically

injured, to the hospital.

Visiting the spot, The Daily Star found part of Masud's bed completely burnt and the whole flat blackened due to smoke.

Sources at DMCH said the body from the waist down had deep burn marks.

Mohammad Rasel, victim's cousin, said Masud had been frustrated recently.

Masud had left his job at a bank to manage a family business and had been living alone for a year as he and his wife were estranged, Rasel said.

He said Masud's family believes either Masud committed suicide or the fire started accidentally. They do not think it was a case of arson, he added.

Nasimuddin, station officer at Mirpur Fire Station, said they visited the spot and found a burnt laptop but it did not burst.

The reason for the fire is still unknown, he said.

200 shanties gutted in Sattola slum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 200 shanties of Sattola slum in the capital's Mohakhali were gutted in a fire last night, leaving 12 people, including two fire fighters, injured.

Fire service sources said the fire, originating from a shanty around 7:30pm, spread quickly to adjacent tin-shed, bamboo and wooden houses, giving no scope for residents to save their belongings.

Nine units of fire fighters doused the flames after an effort of over one hour.

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