

## GONOJAGORON MANCHA CONFERENCE Activities at grassroots level suggested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Representatives of different Gonojagoron Manchas from across the country yesterday suggested spreading its activities at grassroots level to raise awareness among people about its demands.

They also urged everyone to be united to fight against Jamaat-Shibir and move forward collectively to realise their demands including capital punishment for war criminals and banning of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student body Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Around 300 representatives of 167 Gonojagoron Manchas from the country's seven divisions attended a daylong repre-

sentative conference at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban at Dhaka University to share their views and put suggestions to strengthen the movement.

Gonojagoron Mancha Spokesperson Imran H Sarkar announced a mass rally to be held in Mymensingh on May 18; and a grand rally to be held in Shahbagh's Projonmo Chattar in Dhaka on May 31.

Urging the representatives to spread the movement throughout the country, he said the main target of the mancha was to build a happy and beautiful Bangladesh through the spirit of Liberation War.

The mancha will not compromise with any government to achieve its target, he said.

## Highest penalty for war criminals sought

DU CORRESPONDENT

People from all walks of life yesterday staged a demonstration in the capital demanding capital punishment for war criminals.

The family members of freedom fighters of 1971, cultural activists and academicians who took part in the "token silence rally" at Central Shaheed Minar in the capital also demanded a ban on Jamaat-Shibir politics and a stop to funding militant groups.

Projanmo Ekattor, an organisation of the children of the martyrs in the Liberation War, arranged the programme with a demand to continue the war crimes trial even if there was a change in government.

It also demanded ensuring of security for the prosecution witnesses under the International Crimes Tribunals.

During the one-hour demonstration, the protesters held placards that read "We waited for 42 years for justice". Those also pictured the images of the martyred war heroes in the Liberation War.



President Abdul Hamid yesterday talks to rescuers at the site of the wreckage of the nine-storey Rana Plaza that collapsed in Savar on April 24.

PHOTO: STAR

## Listed 'risky' buildings yet to be demolished

UDAY SANKAR DAS, From Chittagong

Despite more than 60 buildings in Chittagong city having been declared risky and now in dilapidated condition, no serious steps have been taken to demolish these and protect lives of thousands of people who either live in or use them on a regular basis.

As far back as 2005, the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) handed over a list of such buildings to the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) for their demolition.

It is alleged that CCC has confined its duties and responsibilities in this regard to just putting notices in newspapers and issuing warnings to the owners. And the owners have just turned a deaf ear.

Experts say these buildings are in such precarious conditions that there is no alternative to razing those to the ground.

Kadam Mubarak School is housed in an abandoned building though it is not on the list of the risky buildings. Last Thursday, following the Rana Plaza tragedy, the students refused to sit for their classes in this building, and the authorities were compelled to decide to knock it down, and shift the classes to another school.

Paharika School on Buddhist Temple Road in Nandankanan, another listed building, was erected more than 80 years ago. At present over 400 children attend this school. With walls and pillars recently painted, it becomes difficult to gauge the risks the children are exposed to.

Among the listed risky buildings is a cinema hall on KC Dey Road called Cinema Palace. Movie-goers could meet fatalities any time here.

After the Savar tragedy, the CCC sealed a 30-year-old building, JACKS Shopping Complex, on Sk Mujib Road, which housed 33 shops, an insurance company and a garment factory.

According to Article 109 of the Chittagong Municipal Ordinance, 1982, the jurisdiction over removal of risky buildings has been given to the CCC. Accordingly, the CDA passed the list to the CCC, which contains names of build-

ings as old as 50 to 100 years.

Experts provide two main reasons for buildings failing to meet safety requirements-- construction without adherence to rules and "callous" attitude of authorities.

Zarina Hossain, an architect and urban planner, says that of the three stages of construction, only one stage, construction, is evident and planning and surveillance were conspicuously absent.

Hossain says after construction of a building, issuance of "occupancy certificate" is of utmost importance. He suggests that an effective "building inspection office" with "high-powered skilled officers" should be there to check if the occupancy certificate is being followed.

The chairman of an established property development firm in Chittagong city, Moinul Islam Mahmud, blames the owners for carrying out commercial and industrial activities in buildings not designed for such purpose.

He also fears that if permission is given to construct high-rises on narrow alleys, then emergency services like ambulances and fire brigade would fail to work during any disaster.

Sarwar Uddin Ahmed, deputy chief town planner of the CDA, admitted to The Daily Star that they lacked in proper monitoring of buildings, and a skilled team was the solution.

Ahmed added that they had initiated a new drive to find out "deviated" buildings. "We have also decided to have a new organogram in the CDA to increase efficiency."

The CCC mayor instructed last week to set up inspection teams to find the present condition of the listed "risky" buildings and submit a report as soon as possible.

CCC Chief Engineer Yakub Nabi said it had completed the survey, and a report would be placed before the chief revenue officer for taking lawful actions against the offenders.

Till then, the city dwellers can only pray that it is not too late that another tragedy strikes.



To attract students, owners of coaching centres hang banners from electrical wires, paste posters on walls and electric poles destroying the aesthetic appeal of the area near capital's Farmgate.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Sramik Dal man murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Unidentified miscreants hacked a Sramik Dal activist to death and stabbed another in the district town early yesterday.

The dead is Sazzad Hossain Dipu, 25, son of Abdul Kader of Islamia Madrasa area in Noakhali town.

The injured, Arman Hossain Babu, 22, was referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated in Noakhali Medical College Hospital.

Police found Sazzad's body, with his hands and legs tied, and a critically injured Arman in a ditch.

Meanwhile, agitated locals barricaded the Sonapur-Maizdee road protesting the murder.

Local BNP observed a half-day hartal in Sonapur area yesterday.

## AL leader found in four pieces

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Three days after going missing, an Awami League (AL) leader of Jessore's Abhaynagar upazila was found dead, cut into four pieces, inside a drum in a house in the upazila's Noapara bazar yesterday.

The head and two legs were severed from the body of the deceased Farid Hossain Mollah, 35, AL's Shreedhorpur union unit organising secretary, said police.

Police arrested one Mizanur Rahman from the upazila's Buikra village on Thursday after checking the call list on Farid's cellphone.

As per information gleaned from him, they raided the house, rented by one Abdus Samad, a close aid of Jubo League's Noapara unit President Alamgir Hossain Shemul, said Abhaynagar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdus Saleque.

The locals, however, said a stench coming from the house raised suspicions and they informed police.

Mizanur informed that Farid had enmities with Samad over a girl both of them were seeing and with Alamgir over taking lease of a 100 bigha water body. Both are on the run, he said.

## Media urged to up entrepreneurship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The media should project the success stories of entrepreneurship in order to encourage the young generation in taking business ventures rather than running after jobs, speakers viewed at a roundtable in Chittagong city yesterday.

New enterprises will resultantly create more employment opportunities too, they said.

Shawkat Hossain, managing director of BD Venture Ltd, said the universities as well as media should come forward in promoting entrepreneurship. There are good entrepreneurs in the country and the people should be informed of their success stories, he added.

The discussion on "Challenges and opportunities for young entrepreneurs in Chittagong" was jointly organised by The Daily Star and Bangladesh Open Source Network (BDOSN) at the daily's Chittagong bureau office.

The new generation has to explore new ideas and take up challenges to become successful entrepreneurs, said Dr Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain, associate professor of the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences at Chittagong University.

Demand has to be created through unique and exclusive ideas and creations, said Ivy Hasan, designer and proprietor of Doll's House, Chittagong.

The roundtable was moderated by Prof Abdullah Mamun, director of Centre for Business Studies of CU.

Among other speakers were M Nasirul Huq, city editor of the local daily Suprobat Bangladesh; Raisul Huq Bahar, chief of The Daily Star, Chittagong bureau; Munir Hasan, general secretary of BDOSN; Amran Harun, lecturer of Chittagong Independent University; Asikul Islam Khan, CEO of Spondor IT Ltd, Dhaka; Minhaz Bahar, proprietor of Nahar IT, Chittagong; and Sharmin Robeya, a entrepreneur.

The photo taken recently shows the building of Paharika Girls High School on Chittagong city's Nandankanan Road in a precarious state. The building has been declared risky.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS



### Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Journalist Abdul Mannan died of lung cancer yesterday in National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital, Dhaka. He was 58.

He left behind his wife, a son and three daughters to mourn his death.

Mannan was Basail upazila correspondent of the daily Amar Desh.

He was buried in his family graveyard at Andirapara in Basail upazila headquarters of Tangail district.

The Daily Star

**Star Campus**

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This week's Star Campus, a weekly publication of The Daily Star, has some interesting articles for the readers. The Spotlight is on the recent national tragedy that took place in Savar and how the youth can be more prepared when it comes to emergencies of this kind. The Campus Trends this week is on how riding a bicycle might just be the healthiest trend to have started in Bangladesh. There is an interesting piece on how Shwapno, the departmental store, is now offering fruits that are formalin free to ensure a healthy future to their customers, by Sumaiya Ahsan Bushra. The Star Chat is with artist Salzar Rahman as he shares stories from his childhood and talks about his inspirations and aspirations. And, as always, have a great read!

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