47 shanties burnt in Ctg fire incidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 40 shanties of a slum were burnt to ashes in a fire in Tiger Pass area of Chittagong port city

yesterday. The fire originated from a house around 1:30pm and soon engulfed other houses in Jhautola Chinnomul Slum. Fire fighters doused the flame around 3:30pm.

Fire service officials suspect that the fire originated from an electric short circuit or oven, said Jashim Uddin, deputy assistant director of Agrabad Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters.

Two locals sustained minor wounds in the fire which damaged valuables worth at least Tk 25 lakh, estimated fire service officials.

In another incident,

seven tin-shed houses were burnt in another fire at Moulobi Bhari in Morichha Para in Satkania upazila of Chittagong early yesterday. Fire service officials

suspect that the fire originated from an electric short circuit around 12:50am, said Satkania Fire Station officer Shahadat Hossain.

The damage has been estimated to be around Tk 5 lakh, he added.

Section of RU teachers happy with polls

RU CORRESPONDENT

A section of teachers of Rajshahi University yesterday expressed their satisfaction that the 10th parliamentary polls were held, and said that the polls were free and fair.

Under the banner of Progressive Teachers' Society, a total of 402 RU teachers in a statement also condemned the countrywide mayhem of the opposition alliance.

They said the BNP-Jamaat activists are committing crimes against humanity like they did during the Liberation War, adding that the activists have set hundreds of schools on fire.

They demanded stern action against those who are involved in such heinous crime.

The teachers also hoped that the existing political crisis will be eliminated through a fruitful dialogue among the politicians for the sake of the country's democracy.

The signatories to the statement include professors -- Ananda Kumar Saha, M Jalal Uddin, Sadequl Arefin, M Elias Hossain, SM Abu Bakar, M Akhtar Faruk, Dulal Chandra Roy, and Hasibul Alam Prodhan.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

of climate change in the vast Barind tract.

in Barind

BSS, Rajshahi

the area.

BRRIDHAN-57.

BRIDHAN-33.

Farmers switch to

cereals from paddy

Farmers are switching from cultivation of paddy to less

irrigation-dependent cereals in the wake of adverse impact

farmers have reduced the cultivation of irrigation

dependent crop especially Irri-Boro paddy in the drought-

On the other hand, farming of various crops like wheat

Agriculturist Abu Muhammmad Musa said around

maize, chickpea and black gram is gradually increasing in

3,500 litres of water for irrigation is needed to grow one

kilogramme of paddy. Whereas, less than 1,000 litres of

He advised development and dissemination of appropri-

ate farm machineries like power tiller operated seeders, strip

till and zero till, bed planter, reaper and thresher to enhance

Wheat Research Station, said irrigation has been reduced to a

Extension (DAE) has taken an initiative to launch two

drought-tolerant paddy varieties BRRIDHAN- 56 and

span of BRRIDHAN-57, a short duration and drought toler-

ant variety, is 10 days less than that of BINADHAN-7, an

early and high yielding variety, while 15 days less than

Rice Research Institute (BRRI) has developed the two variet-

ies for the farmers of the drought-prone areas of the region.

yield without any irrigation during the rain-fed transplanted

After a long research, the regional station of Bangladesh

Despite scanty rainfall, these varieties will give a satisfactory

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

greater extent in Barind resulting in a decline in Aman farming.

Dr Israil Hossain, principal scientific officer of Regional

To address the problem, the Department of Agriculture

Saleh Ahmed, Paba Upazila agriculture officer, said life

water is required for the drought-tolerant plants.

especially the production of wheat.

prone Barind tract, known as the country's food storage.

According to the agriculture officials and scientists,

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manzur-ur-Rahman Ruskin, an income tax lawyer and former

senior vice president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and

Industry (DCCI), passed away at the capital's Apollo Hospitals on Saturday. He was 63, says a press release.

Ruskin had been quite ill for some time. He left behind two sons, a daughter and a host of relatives, friends and well wishers to mourn his death.

Brother of former minister and secretary Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly, Ruskin was involved with various social and business bodies to promote local and

foreign trade. He was buried in the Azimpur graveyard. The qulkhwani will be held at his Green Road residence after Maghrib prayers on January 10.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Shubhadda canal in Kadamtali of Keraniganj was dug out during the last caretaker government, but now it is slowly being filled with garbage and other chemicals, which are polluting the environment. Locals claim that while authorities are turning a blind eye, a vested quarter is waiting for the canal to be filled completely before grabbing the land.

Recruiter held on human

trafficking charge STAFF CORRESPONDENT Police yesterday arrested a recruiting agent,

trafficking Bangladeshi workers to Iraq nearly a year ago. "We arrested him at his office in Kakrail around 3:00pm," Kibria Hasan, sub-inspector

Md Nasir Khan, of Meghna Trade

International in the capital on the charge of

of Airport Police Station, told The Daily Star. Four recruiting agencies--Meghna Trade International, Morning Sun Enterprise, East Bengal Overseas and Idea International-alongside Bangladesh Migrants' Foundation (BMF), a migrants' rights group, were accused

of labour trafficking, according to the case. These agencies had sent 27 workers to Iraq over 10 months back taking Tk 4 lakh from each for jobs, but after their arrival in Iraq, they were left confined to an accommodation facility in Najaf, without pay and

good food, said SI Kibria Hasan. Following repeated pleas of the migrants'

relatives, 11 of the workers returned home on November 30 and filed a human trafficking case with the police station the next day. In response, police arrested BMF Chairman Joynul Abedin early December and Nasir Khan yesterday.

"We shall take Nasir Khan to court and seek his remand Tuesday," the police official said, adding that they were searching for the other absconding accused.

Meanwhile, the 14 migrants, two of whom fled the accommodation, are languishing in the labour accommodation facility in Iraq.

Shaon Ali, a returnee and complainant, earlier told The Daily Star that their employer, one Haider, had assured them of repatriating the 14 migrants by December 10 but it never happened.

Javed Ahmed, additional director general (employment), Bureau of Manpower

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Cold snap to persist for some days

Says Met office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mild cold wave sweeping over some parts of the country will persist for couple of more days while Dhaka city dwellers will experience chillier weather as dense fog is set to envelope the capital and some other regions of the country,

according to the Met office. "Temperature will rise but people will feel colder as dense fog will envelop the sky and prevent the sunlight,"

said the duty forecasting officer in Dhaka. A very light drizzle at some places in the capital and surroundings areas caused sufferings to the street dwellers as

the sun was barely visible yesterday. Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky for some time in the country, and there are chances of drizzling at one or two places in Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and regions of Jessore, Kushtia and Comilla today,

the Met office said in a bulletin yesterday. Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere in the

country during midnight till morning, the report added. Mild cold wave is sweeping through the Sayedpur,

Death anniversary



Today is the first death anniversary of Lutfor Rahman,

father of Khairul Alam, senior sub-

editor of the daily Samakal. On the occasion, a doa and a milad mahfil will be held in his village home as well as in the capital's Rampura.

Lutfor died on this day last year in his residence in Rasulpur village in Nandail of Mymensingh.

All his relatives and wellwishers have been requested to attend the programmes and pray for the salvation of the departed soul, said a press release.

Burnt policeman FROM PAGE 3

Kalam and ballot boxes burnt, police said.

With 14 percent burns to the body, mostly in his face, Kalam was admitted to the high dependency unit at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Presiding officer of the polling centre Saidur Rahman, who also suffered severe burns from the attack, was being treated in a Bogra hospital. The local Election Commission withheld the results of the centre.

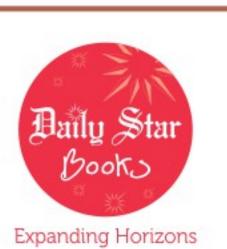
"Some early teenage boys hurled bricks at the human hauler carrying my father and others with ballot boxes. After a while, they threw a bottle with flammable liquid that set the vehicle on fire," said Sohanur Rahman, elder son of Kalam, quoting his father.

Hailing from Sariakandi of Bogra, the father of two sons was residing in Master Para in Gobindaganj for job.

Moinul Islam, officer-incharge of Gobindaganj Police Station, said a case was filed but none was arrested yet.



As a cold wave is sweeping across the country, dense fog blankets the capital causing poor visibility yesterday. The photo was taken from the rooftop of Nagar Bhaban.



FICTION

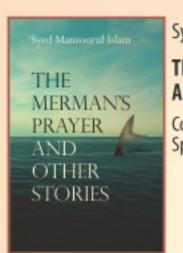
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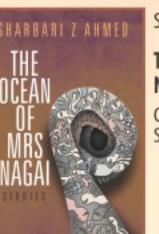
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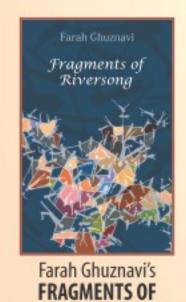


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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



RIVERSONG

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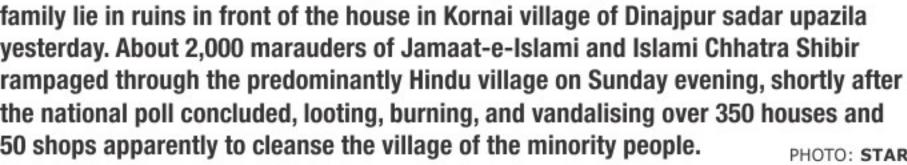
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The household furniture and an improvised engine-run goods vehicle of a Hindu

PHOTO: STAR