# Of a heartless employer

Tiny house help ends up with 40pc burn in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

With 40 percent of her body burnt, 10-year old Tamanna was writhing in pain on a bed at the burn unit of Chittagong Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The little girl, who worked as a domestic help at a house in the port city's Shulakbahar area, caught fire when lighting a gas oven to boil water.

She is now fighting for life at the hospital with burns over her neck, chest, abdomen, back and hands.

Talking to The Daily Star, Tamanna said that on Friday morning her employer Ayesha Akter asked her to boil water. When she heated water for her, Ayesha beat her up saying the water was not boiled properly.

"Then she [Ayesha] ordered me to boil the water again. At the kitchen, while lighting the gas oven, my clothes took fire," said Tamanna.

Ayesha said the fire spread all over

Tamanna's body as the girl got panicked and ran to and fro. "Hearing her screams, we rushed to the kitchen and doused the fire."

Tamanna was taken to CMCH. Dr Mishma Islam, medical officer at the

CMCH burn unit, said Tamanna's condition was critical and she might need ICU sup-Tamanna's mother Saleha Begum, who

works as a domestic help, said Ayesha used to torture Tamanna ever since she joined the work on December 16 last year.

"When I went to the house three to four days ago, Tamanna was crying to come back with me as she did not want to stay there for physical and mental torture by Ayesha over trivial matters."

Tamanna echoed her mother.

They both looked terrified and could not talk properly in the presence of Ayesha at the hospital. It was after Ayesha had left that the two could tell their stories.

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as a house help where she was allegedly beaten up right before a gas stove accident that left her in this state on Friday.

**ANURUP KANTI DAS** 

## Most abused at homes

FROM PAGE 1 husbands' further actions.

The survey published last month presents an alarming picture of the

husbands having permanent habit of abusing their wives as 77 percent respondents said the last time they were abused happened within last 12 months.

Compared to this, only 8 percent of women said they had never been abused by a man other than their husbands.

The nationwide survey titled "Violence Against Women Survey 2011" was conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund.

"The reality is that domestic violence exists in almost every household and it is a daily occurrence," said Hamida Hossain, women rights activist and founder member of Ain o Salish Kendra (Ask).

Just five days ago, Joya Pal, housewife at Hathazari in Chittagong, was allegedly burned alive by her hus-

band and in-laws.

Earlier this month, a newly married bride, university student Afia Zaman Mita, 22, succumbed to critical burns in Parbatipur in Dinajpur. Her family alleged she was set on fire by her husband and in-laws.

"Domestic violence has not yet been brought under law as people don't perceive it as a punishable offence. Even the police don't do anything about it terming it family matters," said Hamida Hossain.

Salma Ali, rights activist and legal expert, described how even judges are not helpful regarding this.

"Last Wednesday I sat and fought with the judges of a Sylhet court in my efforts to make them accept the law. They don't consider domestic violence to be a crime," said Ali.

Most of the women who face domestic abuse see the violence culminating into marital rape. The survey reveals that around one-third of the married women have been raped by their husbands. Many of them said they had not protested

because they were afraid of their husbands.

"This happens because women grow up believing that they are weak and need protection and in exchange they must serve the men," observed Hamida Hossain. A study conducted by the

ICDDR, B, also finds that a vast majority of the men in the country rape because they believe sex is their entitlement. The survey titled "Men's attitudes

and practices regarding gender and violence against women" was published in November 2011. Many of the women are tortured

to the point where they commit suicide. As many as 126 of the women respondents claimed to have a family member who had committed suicide due to domestic violence.

they have no way out. The law is not protecting them. Their families are not beside them if they decide to go through a divorce, and many are not equipped to be able to live on their

own because of the way they are brought up. Death becomes the only option," said Salma Ali. On January 10, a mother in

Chapainawabganj took her three

daughters aged 8, 6 and 2, and jumped into the Padma river allegedly following an altercation with her husband. The mother, Akhtara Begum, and

On November 28, Rupa Rani Das from Narayanganj died an agonising death at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Even on her deathbed Rupa was too scared to accuse her husband or her in-laws when the police came to "Women commit suicide when file a case, said her uncle Shudhir

> care of my two children if my husband and mother-in-law are arrested?'," added Das.

## No room for militancy

FROM PAGE 16

route and a railway bridge if possible, reach power to each house, set up mills and factories by establishing a Special Economic Zone in the region, and build free houses for the landless and homeless people in Gaibandha.

She also expressed her firm resolve to build Bangladesh as a hunger- and poverty-free middle-income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041.

Health Minister Mohammad Nasim, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, State Minister for Textiles and Jute Mirza Azam, AL leader Abdur Razzaque, lawmakers Faruk Khan, Fazle Rabbi Mia, and Mahbub Ara Gini spoke, among others, at the rally organised by the district AL.

Earlier, the PM inaugurated and laid foundation stones of a number of development projects from the rally venue.

### PM WARNS PERPETRATORS

### OF VIOLENCE

Describing the pre- and post-election violence in the country by the BNP-Jamaat-Shibir men as a militant act, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the perpetrators of violence will not be spared.

"We won't let our country to become a den

of militants.... We won't allow any space to any militant act," she told the family members of the victims of violence while distributing cheques of financial assistance among them at the Circuit House.

The PM distributed cheques to 68 family members of those killed and wounded in violence since February 28 last year following the verdict against war criminal Delwar Hossain Sayedee till the recent post-polls violence.

Miscreants during the period damaged and

set fire to 83 primary schools and 34 colleges, madrasas and other educational institutions. Hasina also directed the district administration to take tougher steps against the destruc-

tive activities of the BNP-Jamaat-Shibir men. "It can't happen that they would unleash attacks on innocent people and we'll accept

that. We'll take stern action against all the violent activities by the BNP-Jamaat-Shibir across the country," she mentioned. Mentioning that her party men did not resort to acts of vengeance following its land-

slide victory in the January 5 national polls, the PM said the BNP-Jamaat men had also killed some 22,000 AL leaders and workers across the country after the 2001 national election.

## Counter-terrorism

FROM PAGE 1 "Most imams refused to talk against mili-

tancy ... only a few liked the idea but they didn't continue giving such sermons for long," said an official of the organisation on condition of anonymity.

Only a few imams, including Moulana Abdus Shakur, khatib of Darul Aman Trust in Pabna, have given sermons against mili-

Shamim Mohammad Afzal, director general of the Islamic Foundation, said the organisation didn't have the capacity to observe the imams in 2.60 lakh mosques across the country.

The committee asked the information ministry to make anti-militancy short films, advertisements and documentaries, and arrange for airing those regularly on staterun BTV and private TV channels, and screening those in educational institutions and public places.

But the ministry didn't do much except for making arrangements for broadcasting

several documentaries on the BTV. The education ministry was also asked to organise in all educational institutions discussions on impacts of terrorism and militancy. But that too did-

n't happen. Moreover, the ministry was supposed to ensure that teachers give anti-militancy speeches in school assemblies. But it didn't monitor whether its instructions were carried out.

Considering the universities a potential target of militant outfits for spreading the malaise, the committee put emphasis on creating awareness among students, but failed to make any progress to that

bers of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party in the campaign as their networks are stretched to remote areas. But it couldn't utilise them to gather information on militants or their activities. The committee also moved to form anti-

It decided to involve about 3.5 lakh mem-

militancy cells with elected representatives, teachers and imams in all districts, upazilas and unions. But in reality, only a few committees were set up. On the committee's inaction, a deputy

secretary at the home ministry told The Daily Star, "The committee held its last meeting in June last year, and the date for the next meeting is yet to be fixed. The cam paign now exists only on papers."

The minutes of the meeting show that the participants mostly discussed the same topics and took similar resolutions over and over again without following up whether their previous decisions were implemented or not

Former state minister Shamsul Hoque Tuku, who led the campaign till the new government was formed on January 11 claimed the campaign had been successful in creating awareness among people against militancy.

## Deadly clashes

FROM PAGE 16

clashed with Islamist backers of ousted president Mohamed Morsi, who was deposed in July after a single turbulent year in

Egypt was already on edge after four bombs exploded in Cairo on Friday, including a massive blast outside police headquarters. The attacks, which were claimed by a Sinai-based extremist group, killed six people.

Hours before yesterday's rallies, a small bomb outside a police training centre in north Cairo wounded one person, the health ministry said.

And a car bombing at a police base in the canal city of Suez wounded at least nine people, the health ministry said.

An al-Qaeda-inspired group --Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, or Partisans of Jerusalem -- claimed responsibility for Friday's bombings, all of them targeting police, and urged ordinary Egyptian "Muslims" to

stay away from police buildings. Police deployed across Cairo as supporters of Morsi launched small counter-demonstrations to the commemorations called by the authorities, which were concentrated in Tahrir, epicentre of

the 2011 revolt.

Police fired tear gas and birdshot to disperse one protest outside a Cairo mosque, an AFP correspondent reported.

ince of Minya to the south, the health ministry said, after 15 people were killed nationwide in similar clashes on Friday, according to the health ministry. One of the dead in Cairo was a member of the April 6 movement, which spearheaded the uprising

against Mubarak and had also opposed Morsi, a member of the group told AFP. Police, who have killed hundreds of Islamist protesters in street clashes since Morsi's over-

throw, have vowed to halt all such demonstrations. But they have encouraged Egyptians to turn out in support of the government, and some politicians called for rallies to back Sisi, the general who overthrew Morsi and whose popularity has skyrocketed among

three years of turmoil. In the restive Sinai Peninsula, meanwhile, five Egyptian soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash,

administered by Maulana

Three more devotees including a

Yemeni national died yesterday,

taking the death toll to six in two

Zihad Ali, 55, of Daulatpur

upazila in Kushtia, died of cardiac

arrest around 1:00am and 5:00am

respectively, said Ismail Hossain,

officer-in-charge of Tongi Police

of Gazipur, said the Yemeni

national was identified as Ahmed

Abdullah Jarun, 70, son of Ahmed

Abduhu Abdullah Rukuh.

Shah Alam Sharif, civil surgeon

Shamsuddin, 60, of Gafargaon

Zubairul Hasan.

Station.

for foreigners.

THREE MORE DIE

medics said.

The military said it was investigating the cause of yesterday's

seized Egypt's cultural attache and three other embassy staff in Tripoli yesterday a day after a group snatched another Egyptian official in the city.

#### CALLS TO EXECUTE THE BROTHERHOOD

on February 11, 2011 after 18 days of demonstrations that left some 850 people dead, ending his three-decade rule of the Arab world's most populous country.

The military took power until Morsi's election in June 2012, but then toppled him a year later, in July, after millions took to the streets demanding his resignation, accusing him of betraying the "revolution" that toppled Mubarak.

In Tahrir yesterday, tanks Egyptians craving stability after guarded the entrances to the square as demonstrators waved Egyptian flags and carried posters of Sisi.

"The people demand the execution of the Brotherhood," demon-

strators chanted, as several took their pictures with police officers, soldiers and tanks.

Government and military officials have hinted for days that the turnout at yesterday's progovernment rallies could be a bellwether for a run by Sisi in a presidential election promised for later this year.

Sisi is widely seen as a strongman who can restore order and fight militancy, which the interim government blames on Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood condemned Friday's bomb blasts, as they have previous attacks on the police and

But following a previous attack on a police building in December, also claimed by Ansar Beit al-Magdis, the authorities declared the Brotherhood a "terrorist organisation," making even expressions of verbal support punishable by heavy prison sentences.

Security forces have waged a bloody crackdown since Morsi's overthrow that has seen at least 1,000 people killed and thousands of Islamists arrested, including virtually the entire top Brotherhood leadership. Morsi has also been jailed.

# Akheri munajat today

parties, foreign dignitaries, and government high-ups are expected to join the prayer.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is also expected to join the prayer through a video confer-

Around four million devotees

might turn out for the prayer. While visiting the venue yesterday, this correspondent found that the heaps of dust were causing problems for the devotees.

over around 160 acres virtually became dusty as the devotees continued to pour into the Ijtema venue.

The entire ground stretching

The influx of devotees from home and abroad had started gathering the site on the bank of the river Turag since Friday.

The second phase of the congregation will be held after a fourday gap from January 31 to

#### February 2. ROUTES OF INTER-DISTRICT VEHICLES CHANGED

routes of several inter-district buses have been changed for today.

Entrances at Bhogra on Dhaka-Mymensigh highway, Mirerbazar and Kamarpara in Gazipur; Baipail and Abdullahpur in Dhaka would remain closed for all types for vehicles from 5:00am to 6:00pm, said Shakhwat Hossain, additional superintendent of police (Traffic) in Gazipur.

Buses plying between Chandra-Baipail-Abdullahpur will use Chandra-Baipail-NabinagarGabtoli route to enter the capital, whereas vehicles using Bhogra-Mirerbazar-Tongi route will take Mirerbazar-Kanchpur Bridge route to enter the capital.

Moreover, as many as 40 shuttle Due to the concluding prayer, the buses would operate from Bhogra to Tongi Station road since 5:00am blessings. to carry the devotees to the venue, the ASP added.

#### SERMONS THROUGHOUT THE SECOND DAY Religious scholars from home and

abroad delivered sermons, explaining the Islamic philosophy in the light of the holy Quran and Hadith. The day started with sermons by

Pakistani scholar Maulana Abdul Wahab immediately after the Fazr prayers.

Maulana Mohammad Jamshed

Another Pakistani scholar

Hasan after the Asr prayers, and Maulana Ahmed after the Magrib prayers. They talked about the worldly life and the way to achieve divine

gave lecture after the Johr prayers,

Indian scholar Maulana Zubairul

Human souls will not be puri- upazila in Mymensingh, and fied unless the lust for wealth is overcome; everyone needs to work hard to achieve such purity, the scholars observed. The sermons were instantly

translated into Bangla, English, Hindi and Malayalam for devotees belonging to different language groups. DOWRY-FREE WEDDING

## Before the Asr prayers, a total of

108 couples yesterday got married through a traditional ceremony of the Tablighi Jamaat, which was

her elder daughter Shaheeda were rescued immediately by fishermen, but the younger daughters did not

Unable to take the torture from her in-laws, she set fire on herself.

Chandra Das to this correspondent. "She said, 'Uncle who will take

crash in a region that has seen escalating militant attacks target-Five were killed in clashes in ing the military and security greater Cairo and two in the prov-And in Libya, kidnappers

Mubarak was forced to step down

Economy

He said the disruption in the last six months "seriously"

affected the service and the retail sectors. CPD Distinguished Fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya said the current government, however, has the leeway to take the

economy back to the right track. "The macroeconomy is enjoying stability, which may not be giving a jump to investment, but the economy is not going through any major ups or downs."

ceptable and within control", which will give the government room to increase expenditure. "But the government will have to ensure productive expenditure." He said the excess \$2 billion in the balance of payments

Although the income is sliding, the budget deficit is "ac-

result, the exchange rate, the rate of interest and the inflation have, to some extent, remained stable." Besides, the prices of food, fertiliser and fuel are stable or on the declining trend in the global market. "So, it will not be impossible for the government to utilise the opportunity

would give the government flexibility to raise imports. "As a

and take the country forward until the next budget." He died of old-age complica-"Maybe, we will not be able to jump to 6 to 7 percent tions around 8:00am at the tent GDP growth, but it will be possible to keep the growth in the region of 5 percent.'