

3 die after inhaling toxic gas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Two labourers and a rickshaw-van puller died of toxic gas inhalation inside a septic tank in Rajshahi's Chharghat upazila yesterday.

They are Mozammel alias Mozam, 35, Mukul Hossain, 30, and rickshaw-van puller Jamal Uddin, 40, of Baladiya village, said Khondoker Golam Mortuza, officer-in-charge of Chharghat Police Station.

The labourers inhaled toxic gas and died on the spot when they were cleaning the septic tank of a building in the village around 2:00pm, he said.

The rickshaw-van puller, Jamal, stepped inside the tank on hearing groans of the labourers to save them. He also inhaled toxic gas and died there, said the police official.

The bodies were sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsies.

"We are investigating the incident," the police official added.

Hope very

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intake. People are confused about what to eat and frustrated at the onslaught of food adulteration and contamination. So far, the public reaction has been rather muted.

But isn't it about time we said enough is enough?

We urge the government to take immediate steps to ensure our fundamental right to SAFE FOOD. We urge our lawmakers to raise the issue in parliament, and all civil society and media organisations to highlight this issue. Together we CAN stop this slow poisoning of our children.

--- Editor

Memory loss

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memory problems than those with other blood groups.

The study, published in Neurology, builds on previous research showing blood type may influence heart risk.

A charity said the best way to keep the brain healthy was a balanced diet, regular exercise and not smoking.

A US team led by Dr Mary Cushman, of the University of Vermont College of Medicine, Burlington, analysed data from about 30,000 US citizens aged 45 and above.

It identified 495 participants who had developed thinking and memory problems, or cognitive impairment, during the three-year study.

They were compared to 587 people with no cognitive problems.

People with AB blood type made up 6% of the group who developed cognitive impairment, which is higher than the 4% found in the general population.

They were 82% more likely to have difficulties with day-to-day memory, language and attention, which can signal the onset of dementia.

However, the study did not look at the risk of dementia.

The study supported the idea that having a certain blood group, such as O, may give a lower risk for cardiovascular disease, which in turn protected the brain, the researchers said.

"Our study looks at blood type and risk of cognitive impairment, but several studies have shown that factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes increase the risk of cognitive impairment and dementia," said Dr Cushman.

"Blood type is also related to other vascular conditions like stroke, so the findings highlight the connections between vascular issues and brain health. More research is needed to confirm these results."

Commenting on the study, Dr Simon Ridley, head of research at Alzheimer's Research UK, said the research did not look at risk of dementia, and it was too early to say whether AB blood group might be linked to a higher risk of the condition.

"Current evidence suggests the best ways to keep the brain healthy are a balanced diet, not smoking and regular exercise," he said.

US to hold summit on violent extremism

AFP, Washington

The White House will hold a summit on preventing violent extremism, the US Secretary of Homeland Security said Wednesday, warning that terrorists must "be engaged."

The US continues "to face real terrorist enemies and real terrorist threats" from Islamic State jihadists who have overtaken large swaths of Syria and Iraq, Secretary Jeh Johnson said, one day ahead of the 13th anniversary of September 11.

The October summit on domestic and international efforts to prevent extremism, "will address the full life cycle of radicalization to violence posed by the foreign fighters" he said.

Action after ACC probe

Minister tells JS about fake freedom fighter certificates of 5 govt officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Affairs Minister yesterday told parliament that actions will be taken against the five government high officials, who apparently obtained fake freedom fighter's certificates, after examining the Anti-Corruption Commission's probe report.

Replies to lawmakers' queries, AKM Mozammel Haque said "The ministry is examining the [ACC] probe report. I want to assure the House and the people that we must cancel freedom fighter's certificates of those government officials without considering their status, if they had obtained the certificates through forged documents."

However, expressing limitations of his ministry, Haque said they could only cancel their certificates.

"The ministry cannot take legal actions against those government officials who managed the certificates by unfair means," he said, adding that it is the public administration ministry that can take administrative and legal actions against them.

The anti-graft body, which was investigating the five, including three incumbent secretaries, sent its report to the ministry on Sept 8.

According to the report, AB Tajul Islam, the then state minister for

9/11: never ending pain

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Like Hazan, tens of thousands Americans are still suffering from illnesses or injuries acquired in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. More than 30,000 first responders or victims have at least one injury or illness from that day, according to the nonprofit 9/11 Health Watch. More than 70 firefighters and 60 New York police officers have reportedly died from 9/11-related illnesses since that day.

For some of those victims and first responders, including Hazan, the support they expected to get from the government has been slow in coming.

After a years-long process that ended with a ruling from a New York appeals court, Hazan finally received his first check from the WTC Volunteer Fund just this week. Yesterday was the last day for 9/11 first responders and volunteers to apply with the New York Workers Compensation Board (WCB) for benefits from the WTC Volunteer Fund, and a spokeswoman for the board told CBS News that their phones have been "ringing off the hook." Close to 2,000 people have registered with the fund in just the last month.

Meanwhile, thousands of people are still waiting to find out if they'll receive a check from the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF). The VCF was reactivated in 2011, after Congress passed the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. The fund got off to a slow start, though its pace of work has picked up in recent months. Still, 44 percent of cases are still pending, the fund reported this

week. Hazan's case is one of them.

"We have a moral obligation as a country to take care of the people who get sick during war," Hazan said. "In my case, it was an attack in my own city, in my backyard, and I had no choice but to respond."

With the VCF set to expire in 2016, a group of New York congressmen are rolling out a bill this week to extend the Zadroga Act for an additional 25 years.

Hazan has requested funding from the VCF and the WTC Volunteer Fund to help him pay for health care related to his 9/11-caused respiratory problems, including three surgeries.

Initially, the WTC Volunteer Fund rejected Hazan's application because he wasn't registered with an authorized volunteer organization like the Red Cross. A judge confirmed the ruling, and the rejection left Hazan in "complete shock," he said.

He appealed the ruling, and in June, a three-judge panel from a New York appeals court ruled that the WTC Volunteer Fund couldn't exclude legitimately injured volunteers simply because they weren't part of an official volunteer group.

"They fought me tooth and nail to pay this money," Hazan said. "It's hard enough to fight for your health -- fighting the law is a whole other fight."

The New York WCB says it hasn't identified any other pending cases like Hazan's, in which lack of affiliation with an official group was the "sole issue" with the case. However, "if those cases are filed, the agency will follow the court's direction," the WCB said in a statement to CBS News.

Killing, not a murder

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faced at least 25 years behind bars for premeditated murder, sat sobbing in the dock, tears streaming down his cheeks.

A verdict on the less serious charge of culpable homicide is to come on today.

Although Masipa described the 27-year-old as a "very poor" and "evasive" witness, she did say it did not mean the track star was necessarily guilty in a case she said was based entirely on circumstantial evidence.

"Viewed in its totality the evidence failed to establish that the accused had the requisite intention to kill the deceased let alone with premedita-

Karzai downsizes retirement home

AFP, Kabul

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has decided a lavish residence specially built for his imminent retirement is too big and he will move into a more modest home instead, an official said Thursday.

Karzai was due to settle down in the imposing new property next door to the presidential palace --

fuelling speculation that he intends to play an active role in the country's politics when he leaves office.

But he has changed his mind and decreed that the colonnaded building with sweeping marble staircases would be more suitable as a guest house for foreign dignitaries and other visitors traveling to Kabul to meet the next president.

Karzai was due to settle down in the imposing new property next door to the presidential palace --

Turag not freed

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Asked why the BIWTA did not challenge the HC order and media reports, he kept mum.

The same official earlier said they could not mobilise adequate equipment for eviction drives due to low clearance under bridges across the river.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach BIWTA Chairman Md Samsuddoha Khandaker over the phone for his comment.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said private individuals cannot own land on the foreshore, but they manage fake ownership documents in connivance with some unscrupulous district administration officials to grab the river.

"The BIWTA and administration of the districts concerned faultily installed river demarcation pillars along the Turag and other rivers around Dhaka excluding their extensive foreshores to save fake land owners," she mentioned.

The joint authorities during the eviction drive merely dismantled some bamboo poles, two structures of corrugated iron sheets, and some iron rods in three days, leaving enormous sand-filling concrete walls and pillars in the Turag and its foreshores.

According to an official estimate, the encroachers have grabbed several acres of land in the river and its foreshores for a proposed private medical college, a memorial foundation and a cattle market.

Gazipur Executive Magistrate Tofail Ahmed, who led the eviction drive, said they could not arrange drill hammers for dismantling the strongly-built retaining walls and concrete pillars. Neither could they mobilise a bulldozer due to swampy foreshores.

The authorities during the eviction drive floated an auction to remove the massive earth-filling within three days. But those who won the auction did not do the job in Machhimpur mouza and near the Dhour Bridge.

Seeking anonymity, locals said as the participants of the auction were assigned by river grabbers, they only helped the grabbers retain their encroached area.

Convicted Adflame

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Shafail also said the government will not appeal to the Supreme Court against the HC order.

In the first-ever instance of conviction for drug adulteration in the country, a Dhaka court on July 22 awarded 10 years' rigorous imprisonment to Helena, director of Adflame Pharmaceuticals, Mizanur Rahman, manager and her brother, and Nriegendra Nath Bala, production officer of the company.

The three were also fined Tk 2 lakh each under the Drug (Control) Ordinance, 1982.

Adflame's paracetamol syrup Flammadol containing toxic chemical diethylene glycol was responsible for the deaths of a number of children between 1982 and 1992.

The Adflame trial proceedings, which had remained halted for 16 years, resumed in 2009 after The Daily Star ran a report, exposing how corruption and manipulation had been delaying the trial.

"That the patient visited the Medicine ward, the Nephrology ward, the Haematology ward for pain is not true. Because he had not collected the ticket, he was not taken care of by the doctor and when he reported to a doctor, the attendant doctor advised him to collect a ticket and by this time he had committed suicide."

OUR REPLY

The fact that Nurnobi had to commit suicide in very tragic circumstances after suffering several hours in severe pain with no doctor or nurse to attend

him in the biggest state-run hospital of the country speaks a lot about the indifference public health facilities show to patients. Shockingly, the DMCH authorities did not even feel it necessary to express regrets at the tragic end of a patient's life on its very own premises.

While the rejoinder claimed Nurnobi was not suffering from anaemia, the copy of the patient's medical investigation report, a snapshot of which is on our reporter's cell phone, discards the claim and proves that he indeed had anaemia.

Nurnobi, who had already undergone treatment at the DMCH earlier in August and was advised to come later on September 2 as his health condition deteriorated.

He waited for six long hours inside the DMCH from 3:00am and yet none attended him on the excuse that he had not collected a ticket.

His wife and son didn't think collecting a ticket was necessary as it was very early in the morning and Nurnobi had come there on the advice of the DMCH doctors themselves.

The DMCH claimed the patient's family had left against the hospital's advice and "under their own risk bond (DORB)" on August 25.

But the patient's son Rakib explained the circumstances leading to their departure from the hospital. The reason was non-availability of bed at the hospital.

Nurnobi jumped to death after a ticket had been bought around 9:00am, with his son still waiting outside a room at the Hematology department for the doctor to arrive. It is a clear case of a hospital that is so bureaucratic that a patient's life was not a factor, but a "paper ticket" was.

We stand by our report.

Extortion syndicate runs illegal market

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between Tk 2,500 and 3,000 daily, the sources added.

Dozens of women who live in the nearby slums sit on the rail track to dress fish. They, too, have to share their paltry income with the gang.

"We need to pay for selling fish here," said a vendor, who was selling fish on the track when the accident happened around 8:45am.

Scores of permanent and temporary shops and shanties have also been set up along the rail track.

Siraj, whose full name is Sirajul Islam, disappeared after the accident. He, however, appeared at the scene in the afternoon.

Over the years, the BR has tried to stop the illegal business but failed due to resistance by the syndicate.

"We demolished the illegal structures built by the rail track several times, but they were rebuilt within 24 hours," said Abu Taher, the immediate past director general of railway.

The railway authorities also made several attempts to knock down the slums

Obama orders Syria airstrikes

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principle of my presidency: If you threaten America, you will find no safe haven."

Obama's plans amounted to a striking shift for a president who rose to political prominence in part because of his early opposition to the Iraq war.

While in office, he has steadfastly sought to wind down American military campaigns in the Middle East and avoid new wars -- particularly in Syria, a country where the chaos of an intractable civil war has given the Islamic State space to thrive and move freely across the border with Iraq.

Speaking on the eve of the anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks, Obama's plans were also an admission that years of American-led war in the Middle East have not quelled the terror threat emanating from the region.

Obama insisted he was not returning

CU teachers stage protest

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Police and the CU authorities filed the cases with Hathazari Police Station on Wednesday night, naming 25 Shibir leaders, activists and supporters as accused. The 66 others accused are unnamed.