

# Slum fire devastates lives in capital

### Around 70 families lose all they had in their shanties

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Nur Banu has been working tirelessly as a domestic help for the last one year saving up along with her street vendor husband about Tk 70,000 for a single purpose – to meet dowry demands of the in-laws of her daughter Ratna, 20, and make sure she had a happy marriage.

But the fire that burned down her shanty in a slum in the capital's East Rajabazar yesterday morning not only destroyed the money along with her belongings. It might have ruined Ratna's future too.

"They will abandon my daughter if I fail to pay," said Banu staring at her burnt home, her tears all dried up.

She said her in-laws, with whom Ratna lives with her street vendor husband in Barisal, thought she was trying to avoid paying them when she informed them over the phone about the fire.

Banu's was one of about 70 low-income families who helplessly witnessed their belongings in Aambagan Bosti, situated on a Dhaka University property, being burnt to ashes. Luckily, most of the families were outside. Most said they paid rents ranging from Tk 2,500 to 4,000 per month.

Another victim, Shefali Begum, was already worried sick over how she would send the usual Tk 5,000 to cover the monthly expenses of her three daughters living with their grandmother in Rangpur.

Living with her day labourer Abu Bakar in a room for Tk 3,000 a month, the thought of making it past the month was weighing in on her too.

Slum dwellers alleged that at least 100 houses which were not burnt were looted.

"When the fire spread, I came out from the house with my family. But when I went back after two hours, I found nothing," said Jalal Shekh, a barber of West Tejuri Bazar. He said his younger brother Hasibul's adjoining house was also looted.

The fire broke out around 8:35am from a shanty and swiftly spread to adjacent ones, said fire service officials.

It took 16 fire engines about one and a half hours to douse the blaze, said the officials, adding that no casualty or injury was reported.

"I was getting ready to go to work and suddenly saw smoke billowing fast and heard screams of fire. I took my wife and children out of the house," said Shipon

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PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

Firefighters trying to douse a blaze that engulfed Ambagan Bosti (slum) behind the capital's Green Super Market yesterday morning, burning at least 70 families' shanties. The blaze was doused after one and a half hours of frantic efforts. No casualty or injury was however reported, as most of the dwellers were out at work. Inset, a young woman wails after finding that all her belongings were burned.



## TALKING ABOUT JOY BNP finds case against Khaleda motivated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday demanded immediate withdrawal of a "politically motivated" Tk 1 crore defamation case filed against Chairperson Khaleda Zia in Comilla for saying that the prime minister's son Sajeib Wazed Joy has US \$300 million in a bank account.

Shariful Alam Chowdhury, president of Muradnagar upazila committee of Amra Muktijoddhar Santan, filed the case on Tuesday after Khaleda made the comment during a May Day speech in Dhaka.

Condemning the case, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed, at a press briefing at BNP's Nayapaltn headquarters in the capital, said Joy must come forward with an explanation and let citizens know about the money's source.

"It is Joy's responsibility to prove himself innocent, not Khaleda Zia's," he said, adding that Khaleda "quoted a USA court" which stated that \$300 million was found in one account belonging to Joy.

"A Bangladeshi expatriate in USA bribed an FBI agent...and collected some information about the incumbent prime minister's son. Information shows a US \$300 million transaction in one account of Joy," said Rizvi, adding that the transaction was suspicious.

In a Facebook post, Joy reacted to Khaleda's statement saying, "A woman who has stolen money from orphans, one whose son is a fugitive accused by the FBI for corruption, really should not be throwing mud at Bangabandhu's grandson."

Rizvi criticised the status, saying it was devoid of political decency. "Such comments will only deepen suspicions," he alleged.

## Environmentalists slam forest act amendment

### Allege it will give forest dept emperor like power over stakeholders; recommend adding protection of rights of ethnic minority people relevant to conservation, issue of maintaining biodiversity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criticising the proposed amendment of Forest Act 1927, rights campaigners yesterday said the act will make the Forest Department a "neo emperor of forest" and encourage its officials to commit crimes.

"It is the only administration whose duties and responsibilities are not specified in the revised act. They will turn in neo emperor of forests and instead of protection, more lands will be grabbed," said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela).

She was addressing a roundtable discussion on the government's initiative to amend the act, jointly organised by the Association for Land Reform and

Development (ALRD), Bela and Movement for Protection of Forest and Land Rights in CHT at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

She said biodiversity, trees and ethnic minority people are not given importance rather any regions under the government's and forest department's control are defined as forest, which is administrative and not consistent with the concept of conservation.

She recommended incorporating natural elements, local habitats and their way of lives in the definition of forest.

She harshly criticised a section of the proposed act which states persons concerned will get 18 months time to raise objection against government's decision on setting up reserve forests.

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## 528 spots designated in capital for slaughtering sacrificial animals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As this year the holy Eid-ul-Azha will be observed during the rainy season, the government has taken a set of initiatives as part of an early preparation, including designating spots for slaughtering sacrificial animals in the capital.

The government fixed 528 slaughtering spots and prepared a list of 696 imams to slaughter animals and 480 butchers to process the meat.

The decision was made at an inter-ministerial meeting in the LGRD ministry conference room yesterday.

Representatives of 11 city corporations and different union parishads attended the meeting chaired by Local Government Division Secretary Abdul Malek.

Dhaka North City Corporation so far selected 204 slaughtering spots and prepared a list of 336 imams and 205 butchers, while Dhaka South City Corporation will have 324 spots, 360 imams and 275 butchers.

Some 387 spots were selected in Chittagong City Corporation, 155 in Khulna, 190 in Narayanganj, 414 in Gazipur, 150 in Rajshahi, 33 in Rangpur, 140 in Barisal and 27 in Sylhet.

The meeting also decided to increase the involvement of all district administrators in the cleaning activities.

## 'PLOT TO KILL JOY' Mahmudur Rahman put on five-day fresh remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Daily Amar Desh acting editor Mahmudur Rahman on a five-day fresh remand in a case filed over alleged plot to kill prime minister's son Sajeib Wazed Joy.

Metropolitan Magistrate Pranab Kumar Hui passed the order after Detective Branch senior Assistant Commissioner Hasnan Arafat, also investigation officer of the case, produced Mahmudur before the court with a seven-day remand prayer.

Mahmudur was produced on completion of his

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## EMPOWERING PARLIAMENT TO IMPEACH JUDGES HC verdict today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver its judgement today on a writ petition that challenged the legality of the 16th constitutional amendment empowering parliament to impeach Supreme Court judges for incapacity or misconduct.

A special HC bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice Md Ashraf Kamal is set to start announcing the verdict at 2:00pm.

The bench on March 10 fixed today for the verdict. The House led by the Awami League on September 17, 2014 unanimously passed the 16th amendment and regained the power available in the 1972 constitution to impeach judges.

Earlier, SC judges were removed by the president following the recommendation by the Supreme Judicial Council, a body formed by the chief justice and two senior most Appellate Division judges.

On November 5, 2014, nine SC lawyers, including Asaduzzaman Siddique, Aklas Uddin Bhuiyan and Sarwar Ahad Chowdhury, filed the petition, saying that the amendment might have been motivated from a "malafide" intention and the judges might feel at risk before passing an order against a lawmaker.

Four days later, the HC issued a rule upon the government asking it why the amendment should not be declared unconstitutional and annulled.

The three-member HC bench started hearing the rule on May 21 last year and heard expert opinions from five amici curiae (friends of court), including eminent jurist

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in other news...

**STAR WEEKEND**  
in other news...  
May 6, 2016

**THE SECRETS OF HER KITCHEN**  
FATEKA ZAREEN SIDDIQIA  
WITH KAZI HOSNOU

Siddiqua Kabir was born on May 7, 1951. A household name, it would be difficult to find anyone in Bangladesh who does not know, and eating that has earned her the title of 'Bangladeshi Queen of Her Kitchen'. However, she has been a part of the country's history since her very first recipe was published in 'Siddiqua Kabir's Recipes', which was first published in 2012. Fans and admirers were fascinated when Siddiqua Kabir came back to the country to promote her new book 'The Secrets of Her Kitchen' on January 31, 2015. She is still remembered with love and awe of affection. On the occasion of her 65th anniversary, the Star Weekend looks into the secrets of her kitchen and offers some recipes from the wonderful 'The Secret' to inspire you to get it for the full story.

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5 LADIES IN BERICAN...  
6 THE SPIRIT OF READERS SPEAKING...  
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This week, the *Star Weekend* has an array of interesting articles for our readers. The spotlight is dedicated to the life of the woman who taught the entire nation the value of food, nutrition- Siddiqua Kabir on her 85th birth anniversary. We also have an article on the four girls who were selected to be shadow ambassadors for four foreign embassies in Bangladesh. Don't forget your copy of the *Star Weekend*, coming out tomorrow, Friday!

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রাগেও কীবন ইচ্ছেমতন



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