

Two ministers stuck in lift for 20 minutes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two ministers got stuck in a lift for about 20 minutes after the lift went down several floors at speed in the Ekushey TV building in Karwan Bazar early Friday.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid Bipu and State Minister for Information and Communications Technology Zunaid Ahmed Palak along with several others were leaving the building after taking part in the "Ekushey Raat" programme of the TV station when the incident happened, said sources in the channel.

At 1:05am, the lift dropped (not a free fall) from the seventh-floor to the ground floor at speed, said fire service and civil defence sources.

All the people inside were rescued and they did not have any major injuries. The talk-show anchor Anjan Roy posted in his Facebook page that the state ministers were invited to attend the talk-show on the occasion of Awami League's founding anniversary.



Of the 19 words in the banner fastened to this lorry, there are four spelling mistakes. Bangladesh sent nine truckloads of rice as relief for the Nepalese earthquake victims but someone was seriously careless about the banner. The photo was taken at LSD warehouse of Bangladesh Food Control Department at Phulhat in Dinajpur on Friday.

PHOTO: KONGON KARMAKER

'Pak militants'

FROM PAGE 16

the territory, according to the Indian army. Hours before the violence, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti was yesterday elected to the state parliament. She was appointed as chief minister earlier this year after her father died in office but was required to win a local poll within six months to continue in the role.

India regularly blames Pakistan for sending armed militants to launch attacks in the territory. Islamabad denies the allegation.

'Surge' in searches

FROM PAGE 16

reveal actual volumes of searches.

On the financial implications, Google Trends said it had recorded the highest-ever search interest in sterling.

During the early hours of the morning, the pound fell by more than 10% -- to a level not seen since 1985 -- before slightly rebounding.

And there was a spike in searches for "Move to Gibraltar" -- from London users -- after the EU referendum polls closed.

Tobias Preis, at Warwick Business School, cautioned that search data should be interpreted with special care as only relative figures are known, so spikes in some specific activity could be caused by a small number of people.

Prof Preis added that the phrase "David Cameron" vastly outperformed searches relating to Irish passports and "what happens if we leave the EU" between the hours of 04:00 and 06:00 BST.

"It could be the case, for example, that people supporting or opposing the idea of leaving the EU are trying to understand the position of the other party," he also told the BBC.

"It's pretty unlikely that all those people who are searching for answers will up sticks and move," added Jonathan Freeman, director of digital consumer insights firm i2 Media Research.

"Certainly a lot of people were pretty shocked, it was very close -- people would have just been wanting to find as much information as they could," Mr Freeman - who is also a psychologist at Goldsmiths, University of London - told the BBC.

Although it might not immediately be obvious, Google Trends graphs do not track the absolute volume of searches over time.

Instead, they give an indication of relative search popularity.

"To do this, each data point is divided by the total searches of the geography and time range it represents, to compare relative popularity," explains Google on the Trends website.

"The resulting numbers are then scaled to a range of 0 to 100."

For example, the firm adds, users in Fiji and Canada could have the same value for a given search term if they're equally likely to look for it during the same period - regardless of the actual number of searches made.

Luxury train

FROM PAGE 2

The carriages have been purchased under a project that is run by loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Indian Line of Credit (LoC), said the railway officials.

RENEWED SILK CITY EXPRESS

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also inaugurated new carriages of Silk City Express that runs on Dhaka-Rajshahi route.

All the 12 old carriages have been replaced with new Indian ones, said railway officials.

There are 630 non-AC Chair seats, 156 AC Chair and 48 seats in AC berths. The carriages are financed under the first Indian LoC to Bangladesh, said a press release of the Indian High Commission.

Railways Minister Mazibul Hoque, Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla, among others, also attended the inauguration programme yesterday.

No need to be 'nasty'

FROM PAGE 1

"We join together in saying that this process must begin as soon as possible so we don't end up in an extended limbo period," said German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault went further, directly urging Cameron to go quickly. "A new prime minister must be designated, that will take a few days but there is a certain urgency," he told AFP.

Ayrault also warned of the dangers of delay. "We have to give a new sense to Europe, otherwise populism will fill the gap," he said.

They followed European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, who said on Friday it didn't make any sense to wait until October to negotiate the terms of a "Brexit".

The EU later said it had appointed Belgian Didier Seeuws, a longtime aide to former EU president Herman Van Rompuy, to head the bloc's special task force to negotiate Britain's exit.

But Merkel appeared more conciliatory than others within her coalition government and elsewhere in Europe.

Europe's most powerful leader made clear she would not press Cameron after he indicated Britain would not seek formal exit negotiations until October at least.

"Quite honestly, it should not take ages, that is true, but I would not fight now for a short time frame," Merkel told a news conference.

"The negotiations must take place in a businesslike, good climate," she said. "Britain will remain a close partner, with which we are linked economically."

In another development, Britain's representative on the EU executive, Financial Services Commissioner Jonathan Hill, resigned yesterday after campaigning against a British exit.

In a sign of widening division, more than 1.9 million Britons have signed a petition on parliament's website calling for a second EU referendum because Thursday's

Uttara death

FROM PAGE 16

his condition was not improving."

Ripon's maternal uncle Sultan Badsha said Ripon along with his two children went to his office in the basement of the shopping complex to attend an Iftar mahfil from his house in Uttara-13.

Ripon's father and wife also went to the venue on a rickshaw. As soon as they arrived, the explosion occurred.

Before his death, Ripon told Moni about what he had seen there when the fire broke out.

She quoted her husband as saying, "I cannot take care of you anymore. Please forgive my inability."

Sultan Badsha said Ripon's younger son was born in the US and the family came to the country on the first week of December 2015 when the child was only 45 days old.

They were saving money to move back to the US.

Ali Hossain Khan, officer-in-charge of Uttara Pashchim police, said an unnatural death case was filed in this connection yesterday.

The police official said there was an explosion when the lift fell.

He added a primary investigation found that two to three people were inside the lift at that time.

The OC said traders at the building and the imam of the mosque, which was in the basement, had complained to Ripon about gas leaking. They told the OC that Ripon had told them he would look into the matter but he never got around to do it.

He said a Rajuk team visited spot yesterday and representatives of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd would probably visit the spot today.

Pedestrian Shapla suffered serious injuries Friday evening. She was passing the area when a glass panel of the building on fire fell on her. She is currently on life support at Uttara Crescent Diagnostic and Consultation Centre.

Tofazzal Hossain, manager of the hospital, she had suffered brain haemorrhage.

The bodies of the six deceased in the incident were handed over to their families after autopsies.

Morgue sources said two of the victims had died of burn injuries and the rest four died of impact-related injuries.

SP Babul Akter 'interrogated'

FROM PAGE 1

son to put him on a school bus.

A CMP official told The Daily Star they identified from the CCTV footage all the three who directly took part in the murder and had already detained and interrogated them.

The murder was initially thought to be an act of militants who are suspected to have killed some 50 people over the past three years. Responsibility for some of the attacks was claimed by Islamic State and Ansar Al Islam, which claims to be the Bangladesh branch of al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS).

The government denies any IS presence in the country, and blames the BNP-Jamaat and homegrown militants linked with them for the killings meant to create unrest in the country.

Hours after Mitu's murder, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal held militants responsible for it, although no groups claimed credit for the killing. On the contrary, Ansar Al Islam criticised the murder.

SP Babul, who was posted in Chittagong for several years, is credited with busting several militant dens and arresting some top militants in the port city.

Last night, the home minister told this newspaper that police took Babul to identify some suspects. But earlier in the day he said the SP was "interrogated" to verify some information given by the detainees.

"We were astonished when we found the involvement of a miscreant in the murder as he was known as Babul Akter's source," said an official of the investigation team.

"We have just heard from one side and we don't know about the authenticity of it," he said, adding, "We are not sure whether the detainees were telling the truth."

Devas Bhattacharya, CMP additional commissioner, however, said they did not arrest any source of Babul and that they detained only two suspects -- Abu Nasar Gunnu and Shah Zaman Robin.

3 lakh new

FROM PAGE 5

"Gas supply will not be a problem for the next 50 years. You come. You will get gas," said Muhith.

Discussions also wanted curbing of tax evasion, avoidance and illegal fund transfer abroad to increase revenue.

They called for ensuring accountability of public officials.

"Waste rises in public expenditure," said Farahuddin, citing road construction and repairs during the rainy season.

"Rainwater washes away taxpayers' money," he said.

Citing a four lane road, inaugurated in recent time, Abdul Matin, director general of Rural Development Academy, said the road condition deteriorated soon after inauguration, and it was kept operational through repair.

"What type of road have they constructed? Why did they not get punished?" he said.

'Robber' killed

FROM PAGE 16

union around 2:00am.

Sensing the presence of Rab, the robbers opened fire on the law enforcers, prompting them to retaliate, triggering a gunfight.

Masud was caught in the line of fire and died on the spot.

Zakat clothes

FROM PAGE 16

seasonal sellers of such clothes, specifically targeting the pre-aid zakat market.

Ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, the largest Muslim festival, the scene takes a new life: the narrow alleys buzz with people, many of whom are there for a specific purpose -- buying sares and lungis for zakat, the obligatory charity and the third pillar of Islam.

People generally choose the month of Ramadan to pay off zakat, perhaps motivated by the additional rewards promised in afterlife for doing so.

Mobarak Hossain, a resident of Gulshan-1, goes to Islampur every Ramadan to buy sares and lungis for distribution to the needy as alms. His incentive for going from one end of the city to another is the bargain price that the dealers of Islampur usually offer.

"If the prices are low, I will be able to buy more and consequently more people will be benefited," he said as he was paying for 400 sares.

"I bought 380 sares at Tk 450 each. The other 20 cost Tk 550 each," he said. "The cheaper ones are for the mass; others for my own relatives who are impoverished and are eligible for zakat."

Md Abu Saeed, director of Anushandhan Lungi and Shari, a company that has been in business for 42 years, explained the market dynamics.

"Quality and durability of the fabrics are a must. People are also willing to pay more for zakat clothes for better quality."

"And the market this year seems to be doing well too compared to the last couple of years or so when there was a lot of political turmoil," he added.

Companies like Anushandhan supply sares and lungis all over Bangladesh. In Dhaka, they act as wholesalers to numerous shops in New Market, Gausia, Hawkers' Market and many others.

Islampur, however, is not the only place in town where a buyer can get good deals for quality products. Another big source of affordable, quality sares for giving as alms is the Dhaka Hawkers' Market opposite to New Market in Dhaka.

The same place also has shops selling lungis, all competitively priced.

Market, too, features a large number of retail outlets. "Contrary to popular belief, we sell the sares and lungis that are sold as zakat items all year round," informed a shopkeeper at Gausia.

"They are comfortable and durable, and even excluding the sales coming from zakat customers, we also have regular customers."

The sales go up a lot during Ramadan for zakat," he added.

So how large is the market for zakat sares? Md Abu Saleh, another small shop owner, sheds some light. "During Ramadan, I sell around 100-150 pieces of sares and lungis every day; the monthly sale goes up to 8,000 pieces or even more."

"Last year, a customer bought a thou-

sand pieces of sares and lungis each in a single purchase during Ramadan," he recalled.

For the customers, it may be said that they must make sure the items they choose are of good quality so that the donation they make yields a proper effect on the recipients' circumstances and the Almighty accepts the effort.

Opinions of Islamic scholars differ as to how zakat should be paid.

"A Muslim whose wealth is equivalent to, or more than, the value of 7.5 tolah of gold or 52 tolah of silver -- after meeting household needs throughout the year -- is liable to pay zakat at 2.5 percent [every year]," said Md Shamsuddoha, a scholar and member of the Shariah council of a leading privately-run Islamic bank.

He feels that the central authorities can help ease people's confusion in determining their due zakat by taking some simple steps.

"The Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh could help in this regard by announcing the 'nisab' -- the level of residual wealth that makes zakat a must," Shamsuddoha observed.

This is especially true as not all types of wealth, for example, the house someone lives in, fall under the category of residual wealth.

Such views were reiterated by Md Shafiqur Rahman, a scholar and the imam of Masjid-e-Quba in Mohammadpur. He said, "It would help people a good deal if there was an authoritative decision on the year's nisab."

"Most students at the madrasa I teach at are orphans and have no-one to take care of them. They deserve to receive help, like in the form of zakat, from the more blessed ones in the society," Rahman added.

Many of these institutions have bank accounts and mobile payments can also be made after initial contact, he said.

People can take the responsibility of sponsoring one such child till they reach adulthood or deposit their contributions to the general fund of those institutions used for such children.

Organisations like Jaago Foundation also allow citizens to sponsor a child for as low as Tk 2,000 a month. Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like Ahsania Mission and some foundations run by private banks also accept zakat donations.

There are eight categories of people who are eligible to receive zakat, but the basic principle is that they must be from among the society's least privileged and distressed.

Above all is the spirituality and righteousness of the almsgivers.

"It is not necessary that the recipient should know of the gift or donation being part of the givers' zakat obligations. Especially, if zakat items like the popular saree and lungi are given with loud fanfare, it destroys the intent and purpose of the activity," Shamsuddoha noted.

US renews offer of help

FROM PAGE 16

Shannon told the meeting that his country was proud of its partnership with Bangladesh and was looking for deeper engagement with Dhaka in future.

The foreign secretary said the bilateral ties between the two countries have matured over the years.

The Partnership Dialogue, established in 2012, is a regularly planned policy consultation designed to advance the common agenda and opportunities for cooperation.

During the discussion, the US side wanted to know about the progress in the investigation into the killing of Xulhaz, also an LGBT rights activist.

The US officials said they were hoping to see a transparent investigation and conclusion of the government efforts to bring the perpetrators of the murder to justice.

Xulhaz and his friend Mahbub Tonoy were stabbed to death inside the former's Kalabagan flat on April 25.

The Bangladesh team apprised the US team about the progress in investigations into various targeted murders, especially the secular bloggers, religious minorities, intellectuals and foreigners.

Both the delegations observed that terrorism is a global threat and agreed to work together globally and jointly.

According to meeting sources, the USA expressed its interest in employing armed Bangladeshi private security

personnel for ensuring security of US officials in Dhaka.

Bangladeshi officials in response said the local law does not allow private security staff to use arms. They informed the US side about the effective security measures taken by law enforcement agencies. They also mentioned setting up of a security centre at the diplomatic zone in Dhaka.

Money laundering and terror financing, migration, capacity building of law enforcement agencies, trade and investment, environment and education also came up for discussion in the meeting.

In the plenary session of the dialogue on Friday, the progress of the working group discussions was reviewed by the co-chairs. Foreign Secretary Haque told the session about the Bangladesh government's vision and strategy to become a middle income country by 2021 with the intrinsic values of democracy, secularism and pluralism.

On the sidelines of the partnership dialogue, the foreign secretary met with senior US officials Nisha Desai Biswal, assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs; Anne C Richard, assistant secretary of state for population, refugees and migration; and Bathsbeba Crocker, assistant secretary of state for international organisations; among others.

Youth dies of 'heart attack'

FROM PAGE 1

was taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) around 9:00pm that day, he claimed.

Dilip Kumer Sarker, a doctor at the hospital's emergency unit, told The Daily Star that Pranto had been "brought dead" to the hospital.

He also said the reason behind his death could be known only after an autopsy.

Family members and neighbours said Pranto, second of four siblings, was neither an addict nor a drug peddler.

"He was physically fit and had no heart issues," said Mithu Chandra Dey, the elder brother of the deceased.

Pranto, a school dropout, had been working as a salesman at a store in Mymensingh town for the last two years.

He left the job last month.

He went out around 5:00pm on Friday, said Mithu, adding that they came to know

about his detention in the evening.

"My aunt and younger sister went to the police station and saw Pranto lying on the floor. He was unconscious," he said.

Being informed, the brother rushed to the MMCH and saw his body later at night.

"There was an injury mark on Pranto's chest. It was probably because he was tortured," said Mithu, demanding a fair investigation into the incident.

Yesterday, Pranto's mother Neelon Rani Dey, a cancer patient, was brought to Mymensingh from Dhaka, where she was undergoing treatment.

"Police have killed my son. I want justice," she said.

The body was handed over the family members after an autopsy.

The autopsy report was being prepared as of filing of this report at 11:30pm yesterday.