

Blaze at Benapole land port

Huge quantity of goods, several trucks gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A fire that broke out at a shed of Benapole land port in Jessore was brought under control after six hours of frantic efforts yesterday morning.

Thirteen fire fighting units including one from India rushed to the spot and doused the fire around 10:00am, said Parimal Kundu, assistant director of Jessore Fire Service and Civil Defence.

One of the fire fighters was given primary treatment for minor injuries, he added.

Nearly Tk 100 crore worth of goods inside shed 23 as well as several Indian trucks were damaged in the fire, claimed Mafijur Rahman Sajon, president of Benapole C&F Agents' Association.

Nitai Chandra Sen, director of Benapole land port, told this correspondent that the fire originated from an electric short circuit inside shed 23 of the port around 4:00am yesterday.

Shipping Minister Sajahan Khan,

Sheikh Afil Uddin MP of Jessore-1, Jessore Deputy Commissioner Humayun Kabir and Benapole Customs Commissioner Shawkat Hossain visited the spot.

Three Probe Bodies Formed
Meanwhile, three separate committees have been formed to investigate the fire incident at the Benapole land port.

A three-member committee has been formed by shipping ministry with Joint Secretary Shihab Uddin as its chief.

Benapole port authority has formed a five-member committee, headed by Abdul Jalil, assistant director (operations).

Additional Commissioner Firoj Uddin of Benapole customs has been made head of a five-member committee formed by Bangladesh Customs authority.

All the probe committees will have to submit their reports within ten working days.



A thick cloud of smoke billowing from a shed of Benapole land port in Jessore after a fire broke out there yesterday. The flame was brought under control after six hours.

PHOTO: STAR

Mashrafe fan freed

Police say he entered the cricket ground out of curiosity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police last night released the youth who had entered the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium ground during the third and final ODI between Bangladesh and Afghanistan on Saturday.

The youth, Mehedi Hasan, claimed himself to be a fan of Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, police said.

"We released Mehedi Hasan after taking an undertaking from him around 9:00pm," said Bhuiyan Mahbub Hasan, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Model Police Station.

Police sources said Mehedi gave the undertaking that he would never repeat what he did on Saturday.

Following repeated interrogation, police came to know that the youth entered the ground simply out of "curiosity", said police.

Three friends of Mehedi who had also gone to the stadium that day were quizzed as well.

Police were trying to figure out how Mehedi entered the ground and who was responsible for the security loophole.

Around the 30th over of the match, Mehedi hogged the spotlight when he ran onto the playing surface from the VIP stands apparently to embrace Mortaza.

He was eventually whisked off the ground by the security personnel after big voluntary hug from the Bangladesh skipper.

Two workers killed in city wall collapse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two construction workers were killed and another was injured when a portion of a boundary wall collapsed on them in the capital's Gulshan yesterday.

The dead are Shamsul Arefin, 28, of Chandpur, and Ariful Islam, 18, of Netrakona, said police.

The identity of the injured who was sent to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor), popularly known as Pongu Hospital, could not be known immediately, added police.

Police quoting locals said Shamsul and Ariful along with the injured were knocking down a boundary wall of a house at Kalachandpur, opposite to Jamuna Future Park.

Suddenly, a part of the wall collapsed on them around 12:45pm, added police.

Rafiqul Islam, assistant commissioner (Gulshan zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said the incident killed the two on the spot.

Holy Ashura

FROM PAGE 16

the Hijri year of 61, Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) along with his family members and 72 followers embraced martyrdom at the hands of soldiers of Yazid at the desert of Karbala to uphold the teachings of the Prophet (SM).

The day is a public holiday.

Farmlands near Payra in peril

FROM PAGE 1

Mohammad Selim, is in the process of buying 1,500 acres of land while another person Sultan Ahmed Mridha, husband of Patuakhali lawmaker Luthfunnessa, has bought 500 acres in Kalapara, said people concerned.

All these have created tension among locals and complicated resettlement. The locals do believe that establishment of the port would create a lot of economic activities and provide them with jobs and higher income.

"Well, the port will bring us fortune because of establishments of mills and factories. But it will not be good if we lose our homes due to land acquisition," said 25-year-old Mohammad Masum.

However, Akkash Ali Mridha, a landless labourer was rather upbeat.

"We will work regularly for the port and will no longer need to go to Dhaka for income," he said.

Monowara Begum, 65, was worried.

"These pieces of land have fed us for a long time. How shall we survive if they take away our land," said Monowara standing a few hundred yards away from the area developed by the PPA. It was when the prime minister inaugu-

rated official operation of the port on August 13.

There is a concern whether locals will get fair prices for their land to be acquired.

During the video conference to inaugurate the port, Humayun Kabir, chairman of Baliapara union under Kalapara, urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to pay higher prices for the land to be acquired by the government.

Hasina assured him that the demand would be considered.

The PPA officials and locals said the main port, to be built on the west bank of Rabnabad channel, was yet to be set up.

The PPA is in the process of acquiring land to build the required infrastructure such as terminals and other facilities in the vicinity.

Around the port, according to the government plans, will also be an exclusive economic zone, development of a tourism zone centring the beach town Kuakata (near the port), and an airport, which is expected to bring a new lease of life to the south.

The government expects that it will be possible to create facilities for establishing garment factories, pharmaceuticals, cement, fish process-

ing zone and shipbuilding yards, near the new port and thus generate thousands of new jobs.

Because of the greater depth than that Chittagong and Mongla ports, the new port will allow bigger ships to come through, enabling users to do overseas trade at costs lower than that of Chittagong and Mongla.

However, little visible work has been seen on the ground.

So far, the PPA has acquired 16 acres of land and established its office to facilitate shipments. It has also awarded contract to build a warehouse and a five-storey administrative building on the land.

As land acquisition is yet to be complete, it may take several years to build adequate infrastructure for loading and unloading goods from ships, construct a 14km dual carriageway including a bridge to connect the port to the Patuakhali-Kuakata highway. Users would have to rely on waterways to transport goods from the port until then.

PPA Chairman Saidur said they were at the final stage of the start of land acquisition and building port infrastructure. "We expect to start construction work next year," he said.

Diplomatic ties with Pakistan

FROM PAGE 1

be differences of opinion and the defeated forces could say anything. "It matters little what they say about us, but the main thing is we're doing our works, like holding war crimes' trial, properly."

She said: "They'll [the defeated forces] feel pain in their hearts as they're [war criminals] their *Piari Bandas* [beloved ones]. So, they'll shed tears a bit for them [war criminals]."

Apparently referring to the BNP, the PM also questioned whether those who had made war criminals ministers and stopped the trial of war criminals have any right to do politics in the country.

She said Ziaur Rahman, "grabbing power illegally" after 1975, had stopped the trial of war criminals and freed some 11,000 war criminals from jail. He also withdrew some 22,000 cases against the war criminals, she alleged.

Asked whether Saarc would remain intact in the coming days, Hasina said she would not be able to say anything personally as the current chairperson of Saarc is Nepal and a united decision is needed in this regard.

"...we must find out a way on how

we could work together towards ensuring socioeconomic development of the South Asian countries."

Asked about the ongoing tensions between the two nuclear rivals Pakistan and India, the PM said the matter is really worrying. "We don't want any such tension between these two countries or any apprehension of war."

"We want these two countries to resolve their bilateral problems through talks. There's no such conflict in this region. We need to keep in mind if such incident happens, then we'll be affected and our pace of development would be deterred. So, we don't want such thing [conflict and tension]," she said.

When her attention was drawn to the willingness of BNP to reconstitute the Election Commission, Hasina said the party wants that kind of an EC which would make fake voter list.

The EC constituted during their tenure had made a voter list comprising over some 1.23 crore fake voters, Hasina alleged.

"The present Election Commission did not make any such fake voter list and this is not liked by the BNP as it wants such an EC which would make a false voter list," she added.

"If we accept their suggestion, we'll have to constitute such Election Commission which will make fake voter list. And my question to you is whether you really want this," Hasina said.

The PM said she would be happy if the AL men gave her the scope to go on retirement after 35 years of relentless works from the top post.

The AL leaders who were present at the press conference said "no".

Replying to another question on introducing a separate TV channel dedicatedly for sports, the PM replied in the negative, suggesting that games and sports could be broadcast by the existing Sangsad TV channel alongside the telecast of various events on government's development when the Sangsad is not in session.

AL General Secretary and Public Administration Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam, LGRD Minister Engineer Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, PM's Media Adviser Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahrir Alam were present on the dais.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim conducted the press conference.

Man with a mission

FROM PAGE 1

attendance problems and a troubling dropout rate. But since Sharif-ul-Islam implemented his idea, the situation has changed."

"Nowadays our students are much more attracted to the school," continues Siddique, who won a national Best Primary Teacher award in 2010.

"To see their enthusiasm and participation, not to mention the improved attendance rates, is extraordinary."

When Sharif first took his Kulaura posting in 2013, he arrived with the long-term objective of improving education quality and the condition of local schools.

"I talked to the government primary school teachers," he says, "I listened to their problems and offered what help I could, within our capacity."

"At the same time, I tried to communicate a vision of schools where teachers are respected and appreciated for their contribution," he says.

As a part of this vision, and starting with a single school, Sharif decided to

make the school building and grounds more attractive. "Under the title 'My Dreams, My School', I motivated staff and students to take pride in their institution," he says.

His hope was that renovated infrastructure would foster qualitative change within the classroom, by motivating teachers, parents and students alike.

With Sharif's encouragement, old school buildings became bright, with paint and supplies provided through local contribution. Classrooms are well-decorated; school grounds feature flowerbeds and newly-built Shaheed Minars to commemorate those killed during the 1952 Language Movement.

It's a transformation that has been repeated across Kulaura.

"Even from a distance our upazila's schools are eye-catching," says Khaleeda Yesmin, the head teacher of Pachpir Protapi Government Primary School.

"The boundary and building walls at our school feature sketches of national poets Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi

Nazrul Islam; there are many other illustrations of various flowers, fruit, trees and birds."

"Our classrooms are decorated with charts, educational toys including puppets and student art," says Samsunnahar, head teacher of Sadapasa Government Primary School. "We have cards with inspiring messages written in large letters, like 'I Want to be a Doctor', 'I Want to be a Scientist'."

So far, 185 of the upazila's 193 government primary schools have benefited from the change. In recognition of his efforts, Sharif has received several awards, including being presented with the Sylhet-wide 2016 Best Upazila Education Officer award.

"Sharif's motivating style, his charisma makes him a role model for the entire teaching fraternity in his upazila," says Tahmina Khatun, deputy director of primary education in Sylhet.

"His innovative concept has substantially contributed to the development of primary education."

Tahmid freed on bail

FROM PAGE 1

duo was taken on a fresh remand on August 13 as police claimed to have gleaned vital information during the previous remand.

This time, the court placed Tahmid on a six-day remand against a police prayer for seven days' while Hasnat was placed on an eight-day remand.

In the remand prayer for Tahmid, Inspector Humayun Kabir said, "He has given vital information about the incident and he needs to be remanded for seven days for interrogation."

While Tahmid and Hasnat were on the first-round remand, some media outlets published several photos of Hasnat and Tahmid with one of the Gulshan attackers, apparently Rohan Imtiaz.

In the photographs, "collected from unknown sources", the trio was seen on the rooftop of the bakery. Tahmid was seen holding a small firearm.

On July 1, five militants stormed

the Holey Artisan Bakery of Gulshan and held diners hostage at gunpoint.

They murdered 20 hostages -- nine Italian, seven Japanese, two Bangladeshis, one Indian and one Bangladesh-born US citizen -- and two police officers who tried to end the standoff soon after it began around 8:40pm.

Tahmid had gone to the restaurant with two female students of a private university.

Hasnat had gone there with his wife and two children for celebrating the birthday of one of his daughters, family members said.

Tahmid and Hasnat were taken in by detectives for interrogation immediately after the bloody siege ended on July 1.

Before August 4, when they were produced in a court for the first time, police kept claiming they had released Hasnat and Tahmid after questioning, but the families insisted that the two never returned home and could not be reached by any means.

Prevent cross-border

FROM PAGE 1

successfully holding the summit with participation of all member states," the statement said, adding, "As the current chair of Saarc, Nepal underscores the need for creating a conducive regional environment for the Saarc Summit."

The country's formal announcement came in the wake of six Saarc member states expressing their unwillingness to take part in the summit citing almost identical reason of increasing cross-border terrorist attacks and growing interferences in the internal affairs of member states by one country.

"Nepal strongly believes that an environment of peace and stability is essential for a meaningful regional cooperation," it said.

"Nepal unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and expresses its solidarity in the global fight against terrorism."

"Nepal has always condemned all acts of terrorism in our own region. Most recently, Nepal has condemned the terrorist attack on an Indian army base in Uri, Kashmir on September 18,

2016 that resulted in the loss of life of Indian soldiers."

Diplomatic sources have said leaders from most of the Saarc countries will be in Goa, India for the outreach Summit of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec).

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 16 will meet Bimstec leaders -- Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and Myanmar's Foreign Minister Aung San Suu Kyi.

The sources added that India is reportedly considering inviting the leaders of Afghanistan and the Maldives, who are not Bimstec members, to the summit and thereby hold a Saarc-minus-one meeting in India.

It would be a signal to Pakistan that the neighbourhood is prepared to isolate it for supporting terrorism, they said.

22-day hilsa fishing

FROM PAGE 16

Drives against catching, selling, hoarding and transportation of hilsa would be conducted at fishery ghats, fish markets, bazars and chain shops across the country, the note said.

The fisheries and livestock ministry, department of fisheries, navy, air force, coastguard, police, river police, Border Guard Bangladesh and district administrations will work together to make the government decision successful, it added.

The decisions were taken at a meeting at conference room of the fisheries and livestock ministry yesterday. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sayedul Hoque chaired the meeting.

Earlier, Anisur Rahman, chief scientific officer at Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute in Chandpur, said the annual ban, usually 15 days long, was extended this year for ensuring safe spawning of hilsa during its peak breeding season.

The ban was extended as researchers found that spawning hilsas were caught before and after the 15-day ban in the last few years, Anis added.

swimming upstream from the sea towards the rivers, weeks before the full moon in October (Ashwin in Bengali calendar), and they return to the sea after spawning, he added.

The government has been imposing fishing bans since 2003-04 to protect hilsa spawning.

The catch of hilsa rose significantly this year due to the successful implementation of ban over the last couple of years, said a fisheries officer in Chandpur.

Trump

FROM PAGE 16

"Mr Trump is a highly-skilled businessman who has a fiduciary responsibility to his business, his family and his employees to pay no more tax than legally required," the Trump campaign statement said.

"That being said, Mr Trump has paid hundreds of millions of dollars in property taxes, sales and excise taxes, real estate taxes, city taxes, state taxes, employee taxes and federal taxes, along with very substantial charitable contributions," it said.