



INFERNO AT DCC MARKET

(Clockwise from centre left) Smoke billows from the Gulshan 1 Dhaka City Corporation market in the capital after a fire erupted there in the wee hours yesterday. Firefighters continue to battle the blaze after a portion of the two-storey building housing a kitchen market collapsed. They work right beside the spot where a signboard identifying the market collapsed. At one point, they had to manoeuvre the jet of water to get past the debris. Meanwhile, nearly half of the road till National Shooting Complex gets blocked by furniture brought out by shopkeepers. Other goods, such as bicycles, were hurriedly kept right outside the market. A man peeks out from a pile of clothes while trying to maintain his balance. Another runs for cover during the collapse.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Boxer enrolling at CU beaten up

Father claims one attacker a student who had been trying to extort Tk 3.5 lakh from him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A national-level boxer from Bangladesh Kriya Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP) who recently got admitted to Chittagong University's (CU) physical education and sports science department was hospitalised yesterday on being beaten up at AF Rahman Hall.

With bruises on his hands, back and head, Monayeb-ur-Rahman Khan is being treated at Chittagong Medical College Hospital's neurosurgery department.

He came in the morning from his Jessore Sadar residence, attended classes and had gone to the hall with a classmate around noon, his father Dr Mahbubur Rahman Khan quoted him as saying while talking to The Daily Star.

Some five persons arrived, took him to a room on the first floor and beat him with iron rods and sticks for over one hour before he managed to escape, he said, adding that police found him on the road and took him to the CU health complex.

Monayeb stated to have recognised one young attacker with whom he got acquainted with during the admission test at October's end, said Mahbubur.

Monayeb had met the youth following suggestions of a paramilitary force member from whom Monayeb collected rations as he also served as a member of the force, and who claimed that the youth was his brother-in-law studying in the computer science and engineering department, he said.

The paramilitary force

Gender gap in draft electoral roll this time too

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The enrolment of female voters, like the previous time, has become lower than the male ones in the latest draft of electoral roll, raising concern among the Election Commission (EC) officials.

Around 15 lakh new voters have been included in the draft of updated electoral roll that was revealed on Monday. Of them, around 5 lakh are female voters, whereas over 9.02 lakh are male ones, according to EC statistics. After completing necessary scrutiny and correction, the commission will reveal the final voter list on January 31.

EC Secretary Muhammad Abdullah said, "The ratio of male and female population in Bangladesh is almost same, but the enrolment of female voters is lower than the male ones. This is a matter of concern."

In the previous electoral roll published early last year, over 44.32 lakh new voters were included in the electoral register. Of them, 23.32 lakh were males and 21 lakh females.

Taking into consideration the lower enrolment of female voters, the EC in the last year formed three probe bodies to find out the reasons in around a dozen of districts.

The probe bodies then found that social stigma, the tendency of showing

girls' age lesser than the actual age, and a lack of interest of women, were the main reasons behind the low enrolment of female voters, said EC officials.

As the condition remains unchanged this time around, the EC now plans to investigate the issue again and chalk out a plan for increasing the number of female voters.

"We will revisit the documents of our previous probe reports. If necessary, we will form probe bodies again," Abdullah told The Daily Star last night.

Currently there are around 10.14 crore voters in Bangladesh. Of them, 5.12 crore are males and 5.02 crore are females.

Rich-poor income disparity creates social inequality

Kholiquzzaman tells Asiatic Society lecture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The national income of wealthy people is increasing while that of people living in extreme poverty is decreasing, creating inequality in the society, noted economist Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad said yesterday.

"Inequality is a big challenge for development," he said while delivering the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh Foundation Day Lecture in the capital.

The economist said the state must include every citizen and ensure their due rights -- economic, social or political -- in the process of achieving development.

"A process characterised by a stable, peaceful and enabling environment can provide steady progress towards ensuring human rights and human dignity for all," he added.

The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organised the lecture on "Bangladesh Marching Ahead: Reality Check and a Look Forward" at its auditorium, marking its 65th founding anniversary.

Poverty elimination constitutes a key element in human development, but a comprehensive human development approach is needed for a sustainable march forward, he further said.

He said it is important to find out the causes behind poverty and address those accordingly while social movement alongside government initiative is required to eradicate corruption.

In his lecture, Kholiquzzaman, chairman

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Labour rights bodies seek stop to 'HR violations' in Ashulia

Hand over letter to NHRC boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of an alliance of 12 labour rights bodies yesterday gave a letter to National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque demanding a stop to the "human rights violations" occurring through harassment and filing of cases against garment workers over the Ashulia labour unrest.

Workers of 59 factories started a work stoppage on December 11 demanding a minimum monthly wage raise from Tk 5,300 to Tk 16,000.

The factories were shut over fears that the neighbouring ones would also witness demonstrations. They reopened on December 26 following the prime minister's directives.

Meanwhile, several cases were filed against 1,500 unnamed workers and over 1,600 sacked.

"It is a legitimate right of garment workers to demand wage hike but filing of cases against them under the special powers act and code of criminal procedure is irrational," said one leader, Mushrefa Mishu.

The cases caused panic and many of the workers have gone into hiding, said Mishu, who is the president of Garments Sramik Oikya Forum, when Garments Sramik Odhikar Andolon leaders met the NHRC chairman at the latter's office in the capital's BTMC (Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation) Bhaban. The andolon Coordinator

Anniversary of BCL today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), a pro-Awami League (AL) student organisation, will observe its 69th founding anniversary today.

The BCL, formerly East Pakistan Student League, was formed in 1948 under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, then student leader and a law student of Dhaka University (DU).

Since the inception of the organisation, it contributed a lot to 1952 Language Movement, 1959 Mass Uprising, 1971 Liberation War, 1990 Anti-Autocracy Movement.

The BCL has chalked out elaborate programmes across the country, said its central president Saifur Rahman Sohag and general secretary SM Jakir Hossain.

The programmes will start through placing

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Logos for BSCI, WRAP, Sedex, Intertek, and Global Recycle Standard are shown at the bottom.

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