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Unclaimed bodies rotting at DMC

Charity organisation denied burial places by city graveyards; Stench from morgue hampers academic activities

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Thirty-three unclaimed bodies have been decomposing at Dhaka Medical College mortuary, releasing an unbearable stench which has been defunct for almost two months, reducing the storage capacity to eight bodies only at a time, morgue sources said.

The situation at the mortuary is now unbearable as three of its five freezers have been defunct for almost two months, reducing the storage capacity to eight bodies only at a time, morgue sources said.

The unclaimed bodies, sent by police, have been kept haphazardly inside the country's largest morgue for the last 10 days.

Anjuman Mufidul Islam, a charitable organisation that buries unclaimed bodies, has not been able to bury the bodies as officials of other graveyards in the capital refused to accept unidentified bodies, said an official of the organisation.

The situation at Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue is no better.

The authorities have been in a fix for almost two weeks as two-thirds space of the morgue's freezer, which can store 12 bodies, is occupied by unclaimed bodies.

UNBEARABLE SMELL
The air around DMC morgue has become so heavy with strong odour that the anatomy

department wrote a letter to the morgue authority on Sunday, saying its academic activities were being hampered.

Morgue staffers told The Daily Star that they couldn't do much as the freezers were already occupied.

Anjuman Mufidul Islam, which usually collects bodies three or four times a week, has not been doing so in the last 10 days.

Apart from the graveyard in Jurain, Azimpur graveyard once allowed unidentified bodies to be buried there.

But the authorities at Azimpur have not been taking unclaimed bodies for the last one year, said Mahmudul Hasan, assistant director (service) of Anjuman Mufidul Islam.

Hafizur Rahman, in-charge of the Azimpur graveyard, said it was already getting more bodies to bury than it could accommodate.

Meanwhile, the 7.5 acres designated for the burial of unclaimed bodies at Jurain has gone under rain water, said Soaib Hossain, in-charge of the graveyard.

The problem may persist for two months, he added.

"We advised Anjuman to look for other graveyards under Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC)," Soaib said.

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PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS



Holding an umbrella, a commuter rides a boat on a flooded street amid heavy rain in Agrabad area of Chittagong city yesterday afternoon. Many areas of the port city have gone under knee to waist-deep water due to incessant rain since Sunday night, leaving the city dwellers in trouble.



In desperation

Schoolgirl cuts her tendons to stop being married off

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Bithi Akter's mehendi is still peeping out from under the bandage wrapped around her wound on the left hand. The 15-year-old inflicted the injury on herself by cutting her tendons on Friday when she saw no other way to escape a forced marriage.

In her frantic efforts to stop the marriage, she even communicated the matter the day before to Abu Nasar Beg, upazila nirkarhi officer in Kalihati where she lives with her family.

She told the UNO that her parents had arranged her marriage with a bus driver, from Khayerpara in adjacent Ghatai upazila, against her will.

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2 'criminals' killed in 'shootouts'

One was accused in a Feni UZ chairman murder case

STAR REPORT

Two alleged criminals, including a charge-sheeted accused in Fulgazi upazila chairman Ekramul Haque murder case, were killed in "gunfights" with law enforcers in Feni and Rangpur yesterday.

Deceased Sohel alias Ruti Sohel, 35, stood accused in eight criminal cases, including one for the murder of Ekramul, reports our Feni correspondent, quoting Rashed Khan Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Feni Sadar Police Station.

Rab members raided Birinchi area in Feni town around 4:30am, acting on information that some criminals were taking preparation for committing a robbery, said Squadron Leader Shafayet Jamil Fahim, commander of Rab-7.

Sensing the presence of Rab, the robbers opened fire. In retaliation, Rab returned fire, triggering a "gunfight". During the gun

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Qatar gets two days to accept Gulf demands

AFP, Kuwait City

Qatar yesterday responded to a list of demands from Saudi Arabia and its allies after they agreed to give a defiant Doha another 48 hours to address their grievances.

Details of the response were not immediately available, but a Gulf official told AFP that Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani had delivered it during a short visit to Kuwait, which is acting as a mediator in the crisis.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt had announced in the early hours of yesterday they were pushing back a deadline for Qatar to agree to a list of 13 demands they issued on June 22.

A joint statement said they were extending the ultimatum, which had been due to expire at the end of the day on Sunday, at the request of Kuwait's emir.

The demands included Doha ending support for the Muslim Brotherhood, closing broadcaster Al-Jazeera, downgrading diplomatic ties with Iran and shutting down a Turkish military base in the emirate.

Sheikh Mohammed had earlier said the list of demands was "made to be rejected".

Saudi Arabia and its allies announced on June 5 they were severing ties with their Gulf neighbour, sparking the worst diplomatic crisis to hit the region in decades.

They accused Qatar of supporting extremism and of being too close to Saudi Arabia's regional arch-rival Iran, which Doha has strongly denied.

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Aztec skull tower discovered



REUTERS, Mexico City

A tower of human skulls unearthed beneath the heart of Mexico City has raised new questions about the culture of sacrifice in the Aztec Empire after crania of women and children surfaced among the hundreds embedded in the forbidding structure.

Archaeologists have found more than 650 skulls caked in lime and thousands of fragments in the cylindrical edifice near the site of the Templo Mayor, one of the main temples in the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan, which later became Mexico City.

The tower is believed to form part of the Huey Tzompantli, a massive array of skulls that struck fear into the Spanish conquistadores when they captured the city under Hernan Cortes, and mentioned the structure in contemporary accounts.

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Dhamrai Ultro Rath Jatra held, Mela resumes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Amidst strong police presence, Dhamrai Hindus celebrated Ultro Rath Jatra (reverse journey) festival yesterday like their peers across the country.

People of Dhamrai, a town known for organising traditional Rath Jatra Utsab, were perturbed by the sudden suspension of the fair on the previous day following an overnight commotion allegedly over rivalries between some local political leaders.

On Saturday night, the fair in Dhamrai was shut allegedly over a rift

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Firefighters dousing flames that swept through the Sea Shell Hotel in the capital's Uttara area yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Uttara blaze kills two

Both were boarders at hotel; cause of fire still unknown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were killed in a fire at a hotel in the capital's Uttara.

The fire originated on the ground floor of the four-storey Sea Shell Chinese Restaurant around 4:00am at sector 4 in Uttara and spread to the two adjoining buildings including the six-storey Sea Shell hotel and Ekushey Restora, said Sohel Gani, manager of the sales and marketing department of the hotel.

Bodies of Mohammad Rasel, 35, assistant manager of a private company and a 25-year-old woman, whose identity could not be known immediately, were pulled out from Sea Shell Hotel and Residence.

They were among five boarders who had spent Sunday night in the hotel, now badly damaged by the fire. The three other boarders could come out safely, hotel authorities and firemen said.

Rasel's family members said that he went out from his Pallabi residence at around 10:00pm on Sunday, saying that he would spend the night at his friend's house and attend his office from there the next day.

Both individuals died of smoke inhalation while some burn injuries were seen on their bodies. The bodies were kept at DMCH morgue, a source at the morgue said.

It took 15 fire fighting units around six hours to douse the blaze. After searching the six-storey hotel building, two bodies were found inside a room on the second floor. The reason behind the fire is under investigation.

Major Shakil Newaz, director (operations) of

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