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SUHRAWARDY EVACUATION

Heroes born out of blaze

OSAMA RAHMAN with MD FOISAL AHMED

Around 5:00pm, Dr Noor Ahmed Talukder along with others was in the middle of an operation at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

Suddenly towards the end of it, electricity went out. Muffled screams could be heard from outside the operation theatre hinting that something had gone wrong.

They, however, continued the surgery using light from their mobile phones.

By the time Noor, who is pursuing his diploma at Suhrawardy Medical College, and two of his colleagues -- Dr Fattah and Dr Sagor -- came out, they had heard about the fire that had broken out at the hospital.

They then mulled their next course of action -- safety was a few steps below, but their sense of responsibility would lead them through a fiery and smoky path.

As attendants wheeled out two patients of the OT to the building's exit, the three doctors immediately rushed towards the intensive care unit of the hospital, housing nine patients, which was on the third floor of the building.

Flickering lights illuminated their passage, as the main electricity supply had gone out due to the fire.

Somewhere near the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), they could hear the ominous beeps coming from the ventilators being used in the unit. It was a signal that the batteries were dying. And once they ran out, the nine lives dependent on them would come to an end too.

"They would survive for three more minutes after the batteries ran out," Noor told The Daily Star over phone, while recounting the harrowing incident.

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Doctors and hospital staffers evacuating a patient from Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital in the capital after a fire broke out at the hospital on Thursday. About 1,200 patients were evacuated by firefighters, hospital employees and volunteers.

PHOTO:
FILE

Worker 'burnt to death' at paper mill

Mystery over how he caught fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A paper mill worker died after "suffering burn injuries" at a factory in Kalurghat BSCIC industrial area of the port city early yesterday, police said.

However, the death remains shrouded in mystery as the police and fire service officials could not shed light on how the worker caught fire.

The deceased, Md Arman, 17, was a machine operator at the Asia Pacific Paper Mills and a resident of Mohora area in the city.

Quoting the victim's co-workers, Sohel Rana, additional commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, said Arman was sleeping beside a furnace inside the factory where wastages of the paper mill were being destroyed.

"The co-workers recovered the burnt body around 4:00am," he added.

Contacted, Jasim Uddin, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

RMG worker shot dead in Ashulia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A garment worker was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Ashulia's Jamgora area early yesterday.

Police said Russel Khan, 27, of Madaripur, was shot while he and several others were apparently guarding their neighborhood against muggers in the dead of the night.

One of them was mugged in the area a few days ago, said Javed Masud, inspector of Ashulia Police Station.

Quoting witnesses, he said around 1:00am yesterday Russel and about 10 young men asked two men walking down the street to stop.

As the two men started running away the vigilantes chased them, he said.

At one stage, the two men started shooting at them. Russel was shot and he died shortly after being taken to Enam Medical College Hospital.

Police are trying to find the suspects, he added.

Russel's body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for autopsy, he added.

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KILLING OF TROOPS IN KASHMIR

US backs India's right to defend

REUTERS, New Delhi/Srinagar

The United States has told India it supports its right to defend itself against cross-border attacks, the government said yesterday, as New Delhi considers retaliation against a car bombing in disputed Kashmir claimed by Pakistan-based militants.

Tensions between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan have risen again after New Delhi, incensed by the deadliest attack in Kashmir in decades, demanded that Pakistan act against the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militant group behind the bombing.

Pakistan condemned Thursday's attack in which 44 paramilitary police were killed when the bomber slammed into a military convoy and denied any complicity.

U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton spoke to his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval on Friday night, promising to help bring those behind the attack to justice, the Indian foreign ministry said in a readout of the phone call.

"The two NSAs vowed to work together to ensure that Pakistan cease to be a safe haven for JeM and terrorist groups that target India, the U.S. and others in the region," the foreign ministry said.

"They resolved to hold Pakistan to account for its obligations under U.N. resolutions," it added.

India has for years accused Muslim Pakistan of backing separatist militants in divided Kashmir, which the neighbours both claim in full but rule in part.

Pakistan denies that, saying it only offers political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people in their struggle for self-determination.

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PM leaves for Abu Dhabi today

BSS, Munich, Germany

After concluding a three-day visit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was scheduled to leave Germany for the UAE early today to attend the International Defence Exhibition (IDEX-2019).

An Etihad Airways flight carrying the PM and her entourage was scheduled to depart Munich International Airport at 2:40am on Sunday (9:40pm on Saturday, Munich time)

The flight was scheduled to reach Abu Dhabi International Airport at 8:45am (6:45am, Abu Dhabi time)

Bangladesh Ambassador to the UAE Mohammad Imran will receive the PM at the airport.

During the visit, Sheikh Hasina will attend the opening session of the IDEX-2019 at Abu Dhabi

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Cabbage grown as big as a person!



ANI, Melbourne

If you love your veggies, you will love what this Australian couple achieved. It turns out that they managed to keep off pests for more than nine months to grow a giant cabbage almost as big as a person.

Rosemary Norwood along with her husband Sean Cadman, who live in Jackeys Marsh managed to achieve this feat, reported CNN.

The couple began growing the giant vegetable in April last year at their eco-tourism guesthouse.

Speaking to CNN, Norwood said while it did not always succeed, she attributed the success to "a good, wet spring, good rainfall and hot weather in the early summer." The couple also pruned nearby cabbages to allow the mammoth vegetable to grow at its own pace.

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8-year-old girl 'raped'

One held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday detained a Bangladesh Betar artiste for allegedly raping an eight-year-old girl in Dhaka's West Agargaon area.

The detainee is Abdur Razzak Khan, 45.

Zanea Alam Munshi, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said Razzak took the girl to his house luring her with snacks and raped her around 11:45am when her parents were out of their home.

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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 17					
	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	5-25	12-45	4-30	5-57	7-15
JAMAAT	6-00	1-15	4-45	6-01	7-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

2 'Neo JMB' men held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Counterterrorism officials yesterday claimed to have arrested two alleged operatives of "Neo JMB" in the city's Jatrabari and Demra areas.

The arrestees are Al Amin, 27, regional commander of the banned outfit's Sylhet chapter, and Sheikh Golam Hossain alias Milad, 27, said Najmul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of the cyber security unit of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit.

Acting on a tip-off that some militants were holding a meeting in Jatrabari's Matuail area to carry out targeted killings and attacks on important establishments, a CITC team raided the place around 4:30pm on Friday and arrested Al Amin, he said.

Two other suspects managed to flee. But later police, based on information gleaned from Al Amin, arrested Milad in Demra Staff Quarter area around 7:30pm, Najmul said.

During primary

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The channel of the Padma river in Radhakantapur area of Chapainawabganj's Shibganj upazila is so dry that even water buffalo carts can cross it. However, the entire area goes under water during monsoon. The picture was taken last week.

PHOTO:
RABIUL HASAN

PRIVATE MANAGEMENT

Hajj expenses up by Tk13,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An aspirant pilgrim will have to spend a minimum of Tk 345,800 to perform hajj this year under private management, around Tk 13,000 more than the previous year.

The Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab), a platform of private hajj tour operators, yesterday announced its lowest hajj package rate at a press conference at a city hotel.

Although the government has cut the airfare by Tk 10,000 for each pilgrim, each of them will have to spend Tk 13,000-Tk 20,000 more to perform the ritual this year either under government or private management.

The hikes in house rent and other service charges in Saudi Arabia have mainly contributed to the increase in total expenses, Haab Secretary General Shahadat Hossain Taslim said at the press conference.

Last year, the minimum cost for performing hajj was Tk 332,886, including an airfare of Tk 138,191. The previous year, the airfare was Tk 124,723.

In 2017, a pilgrim had to spend at least Tk 319,000 to perform hajj.

The Haab secretary general also said every pilgrim under private management would have to pay an additional Tk 11,812 for a Qurbani (sacrificing animals) coupon from the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia.

Earlier on February 11, the cabinet approved the hajj and umrah policy and the draft of the Hajj Package-2019, fixing the maximum cost at Tk 418,500 for performing hajj under government management, Tk 20,571 more than the last year.

The minimum expenses under the arrangement have been fixed at Tk 344,000, which is around Tk 13,000 more

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