

Fire guts several shops in Lalbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire that broke out at several tin-shed structures in Dhaka's Lalbagh area last night, was doused at about 11:50pm without any casualty.

On information, seven firefighting units rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control around 10:30pm, and were able to douse the fire completely around 11:50pm, said Abdul Halim, deputy assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

The cause of the fire or the extent of losses could not be ascertained immediately.

Fire fighters said the blaze destroyed at least four scarp material shops and several others shops, and a bangle-making factory at "Chhoy Number Goli" of Shahidnagar area. However, no one was injured in the incident, they said.

Halim said hundreds of residents from the area came down from their houses after seeing the billowing smoke.

An effort to nurture political discourse

Abdur Razzaq Foundation launches advanced course

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An advanced course on social sciences and humanities was launched at the Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Bidyapeeth in the capital's Dhamondi yesterday.

The "Advanced Course on the Social Science and Humanities-1: Political Ideas Theories and Debates" for March-July 2019 is being organised by Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation in association with University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). Some 30 students are going to join the course from March 27.

Speaking at the ceremony as chief guest, political scientist Dr Rounaq Jahan said the studying of society and humanities is facing a crisis now, as different university authorities are putting emphasis on studying business and engineering



Dr Rounaq Jahan speaks at the ceremony.

PHOTO: STAR

due to the influence of capitalism.

"This course will increase students' capacity to think widely about society and humanities," said Rounaq, a distinguished fellow of the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

She said there are many people who are discussing politics, but they are failing to analyse critically due to a lack of in-depth knowledge. "This course would enable a student to be more in-depth in the study of political theories."

Citing the contribution of Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq, Rounaq said Professor Abdur Razzaq was a nurturing

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DHAKA TODAY

FAIR

Parbatya Mela 2019

Organiser: Ministry of

Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs

Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala

Academy

Time: 10am

SEMINAR

Genocide 1971: International

Responsibility and Recognition

Organiser: Sector

Commanders' Forum-

Muktijuddh '71

Venue: Jatiya Press Club

Time: 11am

TRADE FAIR

Top Thai Brands 2019

Organiser: Royal Thai Embassy

Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon,

Banglamotor

Time: 11am

LECTURE

That Which Flows: Across

Borders of Fiction and Film

Organiser: Centre for

Advanced Theory - CAT

Venue: University of Liberal

Arts Bangladesh

Time: 4pm



PHOTO OF THE DAY

ANISUR RAHMAN



As a national uproar for road safety sweeps the country, here is the flipside of the coin: a man carrying his family of four -- including three children -- on a motorbike. The photo was taken in Chawkbazar's Churihatta area yesterday.

Lack of governance to blame for traffic anarchy: Dr Kamal

UNB, Dhaka

Gono Forum, led by Dr Kamal Hossain, yesterday demanded that steps be taken to free the transport sector from political influence and laws be properly enforced to restore discipline in the sector.

The party came up with the demand at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

"Political influence not only helps corruption spread but also make people indifferent to law. Ultimately, the rule of law is hampered. It is applicable for all sectors, including transport," said Dr Kamal Hossain.

The main reason behind the prevailing anarchy in the transport sector is lack of good governance, said the eminent jurist. "It's necessary to ensure impartial and effective enforcement of laws to ensure good governance."

Dr Kamal, also the convener of Jatiya Oikyafront, said police must enforce laws so that the goal for which these are framed can be achieved. But if the police are influenced by anybody then they become weaker, and deviate from the rule of law.

Gono Forum will form a human chain in the capital on April 1, to push for its 14-point demand to ensure safe roads, and restoration of discipline in the transport sector.

The programme, which will be held in front of Jatiya Press Club, is also meant for registering the party's protest against the government's move to hike gas tariffs.

Gono Forum general secretary Mostafa Mohsin Montu announced the programme at the press conference.

"We took to the streets demanding safe roads earlier when students waged a movement to this end. We're also going to form a human chain from 3pm to 5pm in front of Jatiya Press Club on April 1 with the same demand in line with the students and youths," he said.

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No injustice to businesspeople

Rab DG assures about relocation of warehouses from Old Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab Director General Benazir Ahmed yesterday said drives against chemical warehouses in Old Dhaka will go on, but it will be ensured that no businessperson is affected unjustly by the raids.

"Our intention is not to put businesspersons in a difficult situation," Benazir said at the views-exchange meeting in the city after a business leader demanded immediate stop to ongoing drives by the taskforce.

Rab-10 organised the programme with businesspersons of Old Dhaka regarding relocation of chemical, plastic and other flammable objects from residential area of the old part of the city.

Terming chemical factories "ticking time bombs", the Rab DG said, "We do not want to see a third incident like Nimtoli and Chawkbazar fire incidents."

He thanked businessmen who have already relocated their chemical warehouses from Old Dhaka, but said those are being stored in other residential places to avoid drives, posing risk in those areas.

Benazir urged the authorities concerned to arrange a place for safe relocation of

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Impose higher tax on tobacco products

Experts demand at press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-tobacco campaigners and economists yesterday demanded that the government, considering the growth of people's purchasing capacity and per capita income, impose higher tax on tobacco products to make Bangladesh tobacco-free by 2040.

They also demanded imposition of 15 percent value added tax (Vat) on all tobacco products, make the taxation procedure simpler, formulate a separate tax policy for tobacco, and take strict measures to bring all smokeless tobacco brands undertax.

The demands were placed at a pre-budget press conference held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the capital. Progga, an anti-tobacco research organisation, and Anti-Tobacco Media Alliance

RECOMMENDATIONS

Set tax on the base price

Impose specific supplementary tax

Impose 15% Vat on all products

Merge cigarette into 2 price categories

Reduce price gap between categories

Merge bidi into one category

Bring all smokeless brands under tax

Formulate a separate tax policy

products' tax structure, which is very complex and old, said Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF).

"Relevant government bodies like NBR [National Board of Revenue] agreed with our demands, but we didn't see any reflection of it," said the noted economist.

"We are again demanding to impose such a tax so that it becomes effective to increase the price of tobacco products. It will help protect people from the dangers of tobacco," added Kholiquzzaman, also chairman of National Anti-Tobacco Platform.

Dr Mahfuz Kabir, research director of Bangladesh Institute of International and

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