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"Ethics and values cannot be learned through GPA-5."
CAMPAIGN FOR POPULAR EDUCATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RASHEDA K CHOUDHURY AT A CITY PROGRAMME (PAGE 3)

"It is not possible to hold fair and flawless upazila polls if the upazila parishads are not freed from the control of lawmakers."
ELECTION COMMISSIONER MAHBUB TALUKDAR AT A PRESS BRIEFING (PAGE 3)

"I believe we need a more active role for governments and regulators."
FACEBOOK CEO MARK ZUCKERBERG ON POLICING INTERNET CONTENT (PAGE 8)

Design deviation in 90pc buildings

Buildings in capital's key areas flout approved designs, finds Rajuk survey

TYPES OF DEVIATION

- Extension of building area
- No evacuation plan
- Construction of additional floors beyond permission
- No space between building and boundary
- Extension of veranda
- Location and size of staircase
- No parking space

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Nine out of 10 buildings in key areas of Dhaka city have been constructed flouting their approved designs, according to the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk).

A Rajuk survey conducted between January and August last year found that less than one out of 10 buildings in Rampura, Motijheel, Khilgaon, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Pallabi and Dhanmondi is built as per the specification of their designs approved by the city development authority.

Rajuk surveyed at least 2.04 lakh buildings, which are three-storey or more, on its 1,528 sqkm area jurisdiction.

The survey, the first of its kind since Rajuk's inception in 1987, also found that

over eight out of 10 buildings in Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Niketan, Tejgaon, Lalbagh, Sutrapur, and Keraniganj were built in deviation from their approved designs.

The designs are often flouted at the cost of safety.

The FR Tower, where at least 26 people were killed in a fire on Thursday, was one of those buildings. Its emergency staircase was narrower than what was required and floors from 19th to 22nd were built without Rajuk permission, said officials from city development authority and fire service.

Experts said Rajuk is to blame for the appalling situation.

They said Rajuk focused more on business, SEE PAGE 2 COL 2
97PC CTG HIGH RISES AT FIRE RISK—PAGE 5



There's no stopping an incorrigible jaywalker. People duck under a metal net and climb a barrier to go across Topkhana Road in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PM questions why banks didn't reduce interest rate

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government will take measures again to reduce the interest rate for the sake of the country's industrialisation.

"We'll sit again to discuss how to reduce the interest rate of bank loan," she said while inaugurating the national industrial fair in the capital.

The PM questioned why the banks did not cut the interest rate despite enjoying various facilities.

SEE DETAILS ON B1

Luck and wits got them out alive

24 survivors of FR Tower blaze narrate their ordeal to probe committees; none of them heard any fire alarm

RAFIUL ISLAM and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Once he learnt that a fire had broken out in the building, Shariful Islam on the ninth floor of FR Tower told his colleagues to run out to safety. But they could not as black smoke already had engulfed the staircases.

So they went to the washroom and broke the window grille with iron rods and a fire extinguisher, planning to reach a window of the adjacent Ahmed Tower.

"Time was running out ... I warned my colleagues that we have at best 10 to 12 minutes left," said Shariful, a senior manager of Aamra Technologies, as he was narrating their story of survival before two probe bodies at a mass hearing yesterday.

They were not able to break the window grille of Ahmed Tower.

Luckily, some of his colleagues, who were outside at the time, could be reached over phone. They went up to the ninth floor of Ahmed Tower and made an opening in the window through which Shariful and at least 30 of his colleagues moved to safety.

The probe bodies, one formed by the home and the other by disaster management and relief ministry, arranged the hearing to find out the cause of fire and ways to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

The committees recorded statements of at least 24 survivors, including some security guards of the FR Tower, where a deadly blaze claimed 26 lives on Thursday.

In his statement, Shariful's colleague Mostafa Kamal Chowdhury said he could not recall any fire drill since Aamra SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

3 suspected drug peddlers shot dead

Rohingya woman among dead in Teknaf 'shootouts'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three alleged drug peddlers, including a Rohingya woman, were killed in "gun-fights" with police and Border Guard Bangladesh in Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

The victims are Mahmudur Rahman, 28, of Ali Akbar Para in the upazila; Mohammad Absar, 25, Paschim Shikder Para of the same upazila; and Rumana Aktar, 20, an inhabitant of an unregistered Rohingya camp in Teknaf.

Police and BGB officials claimed that the three were involved in yaba trading. Pradip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, said a police team went to Moulvibazar Bridge area around 4:00am on information that two groups of yaba peddlers were exchanging bullets. SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Low turnout, yet again

Sporadic violence, irregularities mark fourth-phase UZ polls

STAR REPORT

The fourth phase of upazila parishad elections yesterday saw sporadic violence and irregularities in a number of places.

The voter turnout in the 107 upazilas that went to polls this time was low as in the previous three phases.

Voting was suspended in all the 46 centres in Cumilla's Titas upazila following allegations of ballot stuffing and vote rigging.

Besides, 12 centres in five upazilas of three districts saw polling suspended over the same allegations, Election Commission Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed said at a post-polls briefing.

He claimed that the elections, by and large, were peaceful and fair. According to results provided by the returning officers at 12:15am today, Awami League-nominated chairman candidates emerged victorious in 37 upazilas. The party's rebel contenders won in 24 upazilas.

Independent candidates secured victory in three upazilas, a Jatiya Party (Manju) contestant in one upazila and a BNP rebel in another upazila.

So far a total of 108 chairman candidates have been elected unopposed—39 in the fourth phase and 69 in the previous three phases. All of them are SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

4 Rohingyas detained at airport

They were set to fly to Indonesia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed Police Battalion (APBn) held four Rohingyas at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka while they were all set to fly to Indonesia yesterday.

The detainees are Anwar, 30, Marijan, 23, Rokeya, 19, and Amena Begum, 26. All of them fled Myanmar's Rakhine State and took shelter at Rohingya refugee camp at Cox's Bazar in 2017, said Abdur Rahman, assistant superintendent of police at APBn.

The anti-human trafficking cell of APBn found suspicious behaviour among the four Rohingyas and started questioning them. When they were asked about their home addresses, upazilas and others, they could not respond properly. At one point of the interrogation, they admitted that they were Rohingyas, Abdur SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A car badly damaged by a tree that got uprooted in last night's storm in the capital. A government official was reportedly injured in the incident on Hare Road.

PHOTO: STAR

Storm kills 6 in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six people were killed and 18 others injured in the capital, as a nor'wester lashed Dhaka and some other districts across the country yesterday evening.

The nor'wester, this year's first, began around 6:22pm and lasted for over a minute, according to the Met office.

The wind speed of 74km was recorded per hour during the storm, Ruhul Kuddus, meteorologist at the office, told The Daily Star.

Tea vendor Md Hanif, 50, of Paltan, pick-up driver Dudal Mia, 40, of Shewrapara, and rickshaw puller Md Hasan, 40, of Shanir Akhra, were killed as bricks fell on them from under-construction buildings.

Mili de-Costa, 62, a resident of Monipuripara, died after a tree fell on her near the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, said Jan-e-Alam Munshi, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police.

Officials of the fire service and civil defence headquarters said divers recovered two bodies from the Buriganga river in Keraniganj's Kholamora area last night as a trawler capsized in the river during the storm.

The identities of the two victims could not be known immediately.

Besides, 18 people were injured during the storm and they were undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said officials at DMCH police outpost.

Trees were felled in Tejgaon Satrasta, Bakshibazar, New Market, Demra, Bailey Road, Gendaria, Mintoo Road and Motijheel areas in the capital. Traffic was disrupted in the areas, said fire service officials.

The fire service officials were removing the trees from streets till filing of this report around 11:00pm, the officials added.

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