



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXIX No. 88

CHAITRA 28, 1425 BS

20 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE : Tk 12.00

Nusrat loses battle for life

She was set ablaze at a Feni madrasa five days ago

STAR REPORT

Madrasa student Nusrat Jahan Rafi lost her battle for life last night, five days after she was set ablaze at a madrasa in Feni -- an incident that touched off outrage all over the country.

"She died around 9:30pm," Dr Samanta Lal Sen, chief coordinator of the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery at the DMCH, told The Daily Star.

A group of four unidentified persons poured kerosene on the 18-year-old girl and set her afire on April 6 allegedly for refusing to withdraw a case against the principal of Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fazil Madrasa over sexual assault on her late last month.

At the news of Nusrat's death last night, her father AKM Musa broke down in tears and kept demanding justice for the murder of his daughter.

Referring to the April 6 incident, Nusrat's uncle Nurul Huda Shamim wondered how the incident took place in broad daylight at the madrasa where security personnel stood guard to provide security for the Alim examinations.

"Nusrat was an Alim examinee and she was supposed to get security ... she was victimised by the principal [Maulana Siraj Ud Doula] of the madrasa.

"The madrasa committee is responsible for failing to ensure her security."

He demanded that the government investigate the incident and ensure exemplary punishment to all the culprits.

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Nusrat's father AKM Musa bursts into tears after hearing the news of his daughter's death at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night. Four unidentified persons poured kerosene on the madrasa girl and set her afire in Feni's Sonagazi on April 6. Another photo on page 10.

PHOTO: STAR

MPO for new institutions in a month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to start bringing new private secondary educational institutions under its Monthly Pay Order scheme by a month, Education Minister Dipu Moni said yesterday.

"We have taken all preparations and are hoping to announce MPO enlistment by a month," she said at a meeting at the secretariat with education beat reporters.

She discussed several issues including violence against women, flawed coaching system, combined admission tests, laws and policies relating to education and private universities.

Asked how many institutes would be brought under the scheme, the minister said applications for the MPO enlistment had been sought from private educational institutes.

According to the applications, she said, around 2,500 institutions are eligible to get the benefits.

The ministry is now scrutinising the applications for finalising the list, Dipu Moni added.

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Research can help keep up GDP growth

Says PM, lays stress on R&D

UNB, Dhaka

Scientists and researchers have responsibilities to find out sustainable ways to maintain Bangladesh's current economic and GDP growth, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday.

"We have to sustain our economic growth [and] only research can give us that solution," she told a programme marking the distribution of Bangabandhu Science and Technology Fellowship, National Science and Technology Fellowship and cheques of the grants for special research.

"We have formulated National Science and Technology Policy 2011 so that we can sustain our economic and GDP growth," she said at the event organised by Science and Technology Ministry at Bangabandhu International Conference Center.

Minister Yafesh Osman was in the chair

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Indian polls kick off amid high alert

Voters in 91 constituencies will exercise their rights in first of seven phases of voting today

AGENCIES

India went on high security alert yesterday ahead of the start of its marathon election today, after a campaign dominated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership that has focused on keeping the country safe from attack.

Polls predict Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party-led (BJP) alliance will just win a parliamentary majority, a sharp drop from his commanding mandate five years ago, when he vowed to turn India into an economic and military power.

A bomb blast Tuesday blamed on Maoist rebels killed five people, including a lawmaker campaigning for Modi, heightened fears of election bloodshed.

Some 80,000 troops, police and paramilitaries will be deployed in troubled Chhattisgarh state -- where the attack was carried out -- when voting starts today, state



police chief D M Awasthi said.

Maoist rebels are behind many of the long-simmering insurgencies in at least nine Indian states.

But the Election Commission, which organises the world's biggest democratic election with 900 million eligible voters choosing 543 MPs, insisted the attack would not change its schedule.

Polling will take place in 91 out of 543 constituencies spread across 20 states and Union Territories (UTs) in the first phase today.

BJP is seeking a second term, defending a landslide win over the opposition Congress party in 2014. The result is predicted to be close however.

Various opinion polls have indicated National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by BJP will win up to 273 of the 543 parliament

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BUSINESS BANGLADESH AMONG THREE FASTEST GROWING ECONOMIES: IMF

Bangladesh is among the three fastest growing economies in the world, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) -- in yet another thumping endorsement of the country's extraordinary growth momentum.

The economy will grow at 7.3 percent this year, which will be second highest in the world, as per the Washington-based multilateral lender.

The IMF's projection comes on the heels of similar forecasts from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

FULL STORY ON B1

MAKING CAR INTERIOR COMPONENTS Jute fibre shows huge potential

French firm wants JV for increased use of Bangladeshi jute in automobile industry

WASIM BIN HABIB, back from Normandy, France

As the world is now keener on natural fibres and eco-friendly products, a French company is thinking of setting up a joint venture in Bangladesh for making jute-based car interior components.

"Bangladesh is the best place to buy jute. But you have to ensure quality jute," said Karim Behloul, chief executive officer of NatUp Fibres, a leading French company based in Normandy.

Talking to journalists visiting from Bangladesh in his office at Yvetot in Normandy last month, he said Bangladesh has a huge potential to become one of the major suppliers of jute to the global car industry.

If the natural fibre is used in cars, it reduces the vehicle's weight and improves fuel efficiency.

NatUp Fibres is one of the major suppliers of car components. It makes dashboards, door panels, parcel shelves, wheel arches, headliners, spare

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