

While the country spent an anxious day yesterday with cyclonic storm "Fani" set to make landfall, these two youngsters are just happy to have some rainwater to splash around in. The photo was taken from the Khelaghar field in Tejkunipara.

Stand beside people during disasters

Info minister urges BNP

Bss, Dhaka

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday urged BNP to stand beside people during natural disasters.

"BNP always does dirty politics with disasters. The comments of the BNP secretary general reveal it," he told reporters at Awami League president's Dhanmondi office before a meeting of AL publicity and publication sub-committee.

Noting that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is monitoring the cyclone situation, Hasan said the government has already taken all-out preparation for "Fani".

He said Awami League constituted a team and the publicity and publication sub-committee held a meeting to face the disaster situation. The party's disaster and relief sub-committee has also taken steps to deal with the cyclone.

Criticising BNP, the minister said BNP only issued statements over natural disasters, but the government took all-out preparation.

People have not forgotten BNP's role during the 1991 cyclone, which claimed to contact at 0244611915, 0244611912, lives of over 2 lakh people, he said, 0244611913 and 0244610003 to provide adding that many aircrafts and ships were information about any affected area.

destroyed at the time due to lack of proper decision-making.

The Daily Star | 3

BNP leader Khaleda Zia had made mockery over the 1991 cyclone, but Mirza Fakhrul has forgot about it, he alleged. "We have taken steps to face Fani. You [BNP]

also should stand by people," Hasan said. About Bangabandhu's upcoming birth centenary celebration, he said AL

leaders will hold dialogue with youths in divisional cities on the occasion. Replying to a question, the information minister said AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, who is now in Singapore

consultation with doctors and the PM. Publicity and publication subcommittee secretary Aminul Islam Amin, among others, was present.

for treatment, will return home soon in

CELL TO MONITOR 'FANI'

Awami League has opened a monitoring cell at the party president's office in Dhanmondi to monitor the cyclonic storm round the clock, said a press release.

All concerned have been requested

Accused as an afterthought?

Youth shot by police says he was framed in assault case; cops deny allegation

Shaheen Mollah

Twenty-year-old Shahadat Hossain Shyamol sits on the floor on the space between the elevators and stairs of the fourth floor of Dhaka Medical College Hospital's burn unit, a gunshot-wound in his foot and police cuffs on his hand, and two police personnel keeping watch.

"People pass by all day, and often give oblique looks; maybe they think I'm some kind of criminal," says an embarrassed Shahadat, who claims he received the injury near Munshiganj while crossing a police check-post on the night of March

Police shot him apparently by mistake, Shahadat says, then apologised to him, admitted him to the hospital and even spent Tk 7,000 for his treatment, only to put him in cuffs three days later and accusing him in a case for preventing police from discharging duty.

Shahadat, an AC mechanic of Ghatarchar in Keraniganj, was going to Sirajdikhan to see off one of his friend's relatives along with three other friends in three motorcycles. The bikes were stopped by police at a check-post at Shekanagar. "Though I stopped my bike, police fired on my right foot immediately without asking

anything," said Shahadat. "When I asked them what my fault was, they asked me to go to the hospital immediately," he said in a choked voice. Policemen brought him to DMCH and admitted him there, and also provided around Tk 7,000 as initial treatment cost.

and promised to bear his treatment cost, Shahadat told this newspaper recently. But just after three days, police put him in handcuffs, and told him a police assault

They apologised to him at the hospital

case was filed against him, said Shahadat. Shahadat's father Ohab Ali said police initially promised to provide necessary treatment cost, and asked them not to

make any trouble in exchange. "But when I went to the [Sirajdikhan] police station around two weeks later, a police official denied it, and informed me that they filed a case against him and five others as they assaulted police during

duty," he said. Four others, who were arrested by police after the incident, are now on bail in the case. Another accused in the case is absconding.

Jinnatun Nesa, mother of Shahadat, said his son's life was ruined by the incident.

They did not file any case against police as they were assured of continuing his treatment, she said, adding, "But after a few days, we heard that police filed a case against him; it is a false case. He [Shahadat] has no criminal record, and has a reputation of being a decent man among his neighbours," she said.

Partha Sankar Paul, resident surgeon of DMCH burn unit, said they are continuing his treatment, but did not make any comment on whether he will be able to walk again.



Officer-in-Charge of Sirajdikhan Police Station Farid Uddin said they filed a police assault case accusing six, including Shahadat.

He said police did not shoot him intentionally; rather it might have happened while a scuffle was going on between a police constable and Shahadat. He also denied apologising to the youth,

or promising to pay for his treatment.

"When he is in a condition to be produced before court, we will produce him. He will likely get bail in the case," the OC said.

"Why would I engage in physical altercation with police? I am not a criminal. did not have any weapons," Shahadat told The Daily Star. "If I had assaulted police, why did they put me in handcuffs three days later?"

Rab's hot pursuit of elephants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It's rather simple for law enforcers to take action if they see the law being broken by people, but when such an incident involves creatures too big for the standard prison cell, things get a little trickier.

A Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) executive magistrate yesterday "seized" two elephants, who were allegedly being used for extortion by blocking roads, and handed them over to the Mirpur Zoo. Their mahouts were given two-year jail sentences for the offence.

"Me and my colleagues were at Hotel Super Star on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue] for a snack SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Saudi Road Crash Deceased Bangladeshis

identified STAFF CORRESPONDENT

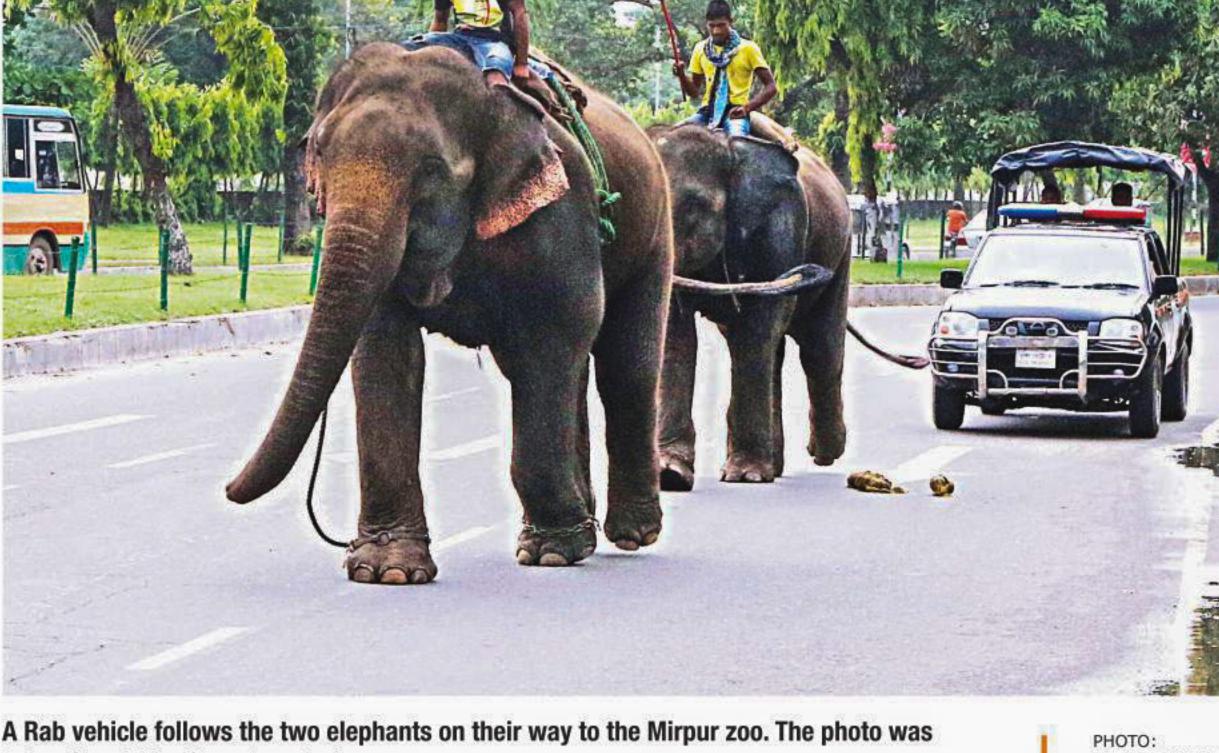
Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh has identified the ten Bangladeshi workers who were killed in a road crash on Thursday morning in Shaqra, Saudi Arabia. A minibus was transporting them from Dammam to Madina when it fell into a ditch after a tyre burst.

The deceased are Bahadur from Tangail, Rafiqul Islam from Kushtia, Yunus Ali from Mymensingh, Jamaluddin Majhi from Narsingdi, Giasuddin Mridha from Naogaon, Md Jewel from Kishoreganj, Imdadul from Narsingdi, Md Manik from Naogaon, Md Al Amin from Narsingdi and Md Monir Hossain from Tangail.

The workers were employed by Al Habib Company, according to a statement of Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh.

Of the seven others who were injured in the accident, two are undergoing treatment at a hospital in Riyadh and three others at another hospital in Shaqra. Two were released after primary treatment, the statement said.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Golam Moshi said the bodies will be sent home after completing legal procedures, and the injured will be provided proper treatment.



taken from Bijoy Sarani yesterday.

PALASH KHAN

Media for democracy Free flow of information vital to stop spreading

of rumours: speakers STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday stressed the need for developing journalistic competence among the country's alternative media including those based on the internet to tackle rumours and disinformation.

Chances of spreading rumours and disinformation have increased due to limitations in free flow of information, imposed by the state, they said.

Voices for Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICE), an organisation working for press freedom, organised the discussion on "Media for Democracy" at Dhaka Reporters Unity, marking World Press Freedom Day.

Addressing the discussion, Prof Gitiara Nasreen of mass communications and journalism department of Dhaka University said the best way to stop rumours is to ensure free flow of information.

Alternative media should not be stopped. Instead, focus should be on how they can be efficient and can disseminate right information, she said, adding that journalistic competence of mainstream media has to be developed as well.

Senior journalist Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul said proper use of technology is important to increase journalistic quality in the country. He also stressed the importance of critical analysis of contents produced by media outlets to increase quality journalism.

Lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said ensuring freedom of expression and press will not be possible if formulation of "repressive law" is not stopped.

Ahmed Swapan Mahmud, chief executive officer of VOICE, and Irin Zaman of PEN International, among others, spoke at the discussion.

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Elegy for Himu

Friends recall Rana Plaza volunteer

DU CORRESPONDENT

Isolation and loneliness aggravated Himaloy Himu's sufferings, and his untimely death by suicide may have been averted by providing him with proper psychological support, said speakers at a programme yesterday in the capital.

Bangladesh Garments Shramik Sanghati Andolan and

Bangladesh Chhatra Federation jointly organised the

programme in remembrance of Himu -- a volunteer who rescued many victims during the Rana Plaza collapse -- at the Sirajul Islam Lecture Hall in Dhaka University. Nawshad Hossain Himu, fondly known as Himaloy

Himu by his friends, was found on fire by neighbours outside his rented house at Birulia in Ashulia around 9pm on April 24, the sixth anniversary of the disaster. "We have created a society in which we cannot even

sense that people are becoming lonely day by day. May be we are too busy, but we need to be connected with each other, talk with each other. Otherwise, we will lose such active souls like Himu, who wanted to change this world through their work," said Samina Luthfa, a Sociology professor at DU.

Speaking at the programme, Himu's cousin Arman Babu said they are responsible for Himu's death too.

"Had the persons closest to him understood his loneliness, it would have been possible to see him alive. SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Leather waste dumped on the Beribadh road in Hajaribag is a clear sign that tanneries are still operating there, albeit secretly, long after the area was cleared of the industry. The knocked-down buildings in the back were dismantled by BIWTA a couple of months back as they were built encroaching government land. The photo was taken last week. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

DHAKA TODAY

MUSIC

Rushlan's Acoustic Night Venue: Counter Culture Club, Dhanmondi Time: 4:30pm

TALK

Think Publishing A talk on Google Adsense. Organiser: Google Business Group - Dhaka Venue: EMK Center Time: 3:30pm

CONCERT

GET Unplugged 7 Organiser: Get Amped Series Venue: L'espresso Coffee, Banani Time: 3pm

LECTURE

Policies and Dynamics of Bangladesh Labor Market Venue: EMK Center Time: 2:30pm

CONCERT

Love Beyond Borders Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka Time: 6pm

WORKSHOP

Street Photography by **Enamul Kabir** Venue: Sony Flagship Store, Bashundhara City Shopping Mall

MUSIC

Time: 11am

Deep in Dhaka #4 Venue: Jatra Biroti Time: 7pm

THEATRE Jononi Shahoshika

Venue: Jagannath University Time: 6:30pm