



PICKING UP PIECES... As far as eyes could see, everything was burnt with thousands becoming homeless overnight. Friday night's fire at this slum in Mirpur's Chalantika area razed more than a thousand shanties to ashes. Yesterday, amid charred remains and rising smoke, residents, mostly low-wage earners, tried to salvage whatever they could. Children held on to utensils, women threw away burnt food and collected pots and pans while men recovered metal frames -- anything that could be used again.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

1 Haji dies, 17 injured in Madina road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi female haji pilgrim died and 17 others were injured in a road accident in Madina, Saudi Arabia on Friday night.

A bus carrying 35 Bangladeshi pilgrims lost control in Wadi Al Farah area around 11:30pm (local time) while it was going to Madina from Makkah, Muhammad Maqsudur Rahman, councilor [hajj] to the Bangladesh Hajj office in Makkah, told The Daily Star over telephone.

Name of the deceased could not be known immediately. Seven hajjis with severe injuries were admitted to King Fahad Hospital at Madina, said Maqsudur.

RETURN HAJJ FLIGHTS BEGIN

The maiden return hajj flight arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday.

Flight SV-808 of Saudi Arabian Airlines landed at the airport with 335 hajjis at 1:30pm Bangladesh time, said Tasnim Akhter, manager (public relations) of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

Talking to the media, several hajjis expressed satisfaction over the overall hajj management by the private hajj tour operators.

Two return hajj flights of Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Saudi Arabian Airlines were scheduled to land in Dhaka last night, she said.

A total of 126,701 hajj aspirants from Bangladesh performed hajj this year.

Secretary to the Religious Affairs Ministry Anisur Rahman, before going to Saudi Arabia on August 5, had told The

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Terrorism emerged under patronage of BNP: Hanif

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbub-ul-Alam Hanif yesterday said terrorism emerged in the country under the patronage of BNP.

He was addressing a human chain formed by Awami Swachhshasebak League on Manik Mia Avenue, marking the anniversary of countrywide simultaneous bomb attacks carried out by the banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) on August 17, 2005.

"BNP-Jamaat clique, who patronised the series-bombing, is still hatching conspiracy against the country. Awami League along with people will resist all conspiracies," he said.

Hanif said the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on Awami League rally and August 17, 2005 countrywide series bombings were carried out under patronage of Pakistani intelligence agency ISI.

Swachhshasebak League General Secretary Pankaj Debnath, Dhaka City North unit of Swachhshasebak League President Mobashwer Chowdhury, its City

South unit President Debashish Biswas and Liberation War Affairs Secretary Rafiqul Islam Liton, among others, attended the human chain.

INFO MINISTER SEEKS INQUIRY INTO BANGABANDHU ASSASSINATION PLOT Meanwhile in another programme in the capital yesterday, Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud said formation of a commission for in-depth inquiry into the plot of Bangabandhu's assassination has become "a demand of time."

"An in-depth inquiry by an independent commission has become indispensable to let the future generation know about the killers, mastermind and others who created the plot of the carnage," he said.

The minister said this at a discussion marking National Mourning Day, organised by "Muktijudder Chetonar Sangbadik Forum", a platform of journalists, at Jatiya Press Club.

"Names of Bangabandhu's killers, masterminds and connivers should be unmasked for the new generation," the

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'Govt depoliticised country to enforce one-party rule'

Alleges Mirza Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the government has depoliticised the country in a planned way, to enforce a one-party rule.

"They [government] repeatedly amended the constitution as part of their plot to eliminate politics from Bangladesh. Their main target is to keep only one party in the country," he said.

He made the remarks at a programme marking the joining of Abdul Karim, former acting mayor of Gazipur municipality, to BNP, along with some one hundred followers of his.

Karim formally joined BNP by presenting a bouquet to Mirza Fakhru at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

Formerly a Jatiya Party leader, Karim served as the acting mayor of Gazipur municipality during Ershad's rule. Later, he joined Awami League, said BNP chairperson's media wing member Sayrul Kabir Khan.

In his speech, Fakhru said Awami League is now out to establish one-party Baksal rule as it did it 1975.

Fakhru said the country is now in a very bad shape, due

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Act against those behind rawhide price slump: JP

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party yesterday urged the government to take action against those who have resorted to foul play to push down prices of rawhide during Eid-ul-Azha.

"What unscrupulous businessmen have done with rawhide is an ill-motivated act. They've created such a situation to give the sellers a throwaway price," said party secretary general Moshir Rahman Ranga while talking to reporters after a meeting of JP presidium members and lawmakers at party chairman's Banani office.

He also called on the government to provide victims of Mirpur slum fire with proper compensation and rehabilitate them.

Replying to a question, Ranga said their party will select its candidate for Rangpur-3 constituency by-election as per the party charter. Rangpur-3 constituency fell vacant following the death of Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad on July 14.

He said as HM Ershad's chehlum coincides with Hindu community's Janmashtami on August 23, they will hold a discussion, doa mahfil and a food distribution programme

on August 31.

RAWHIDE EXPORT SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENSURE FAIR PRICES: GM QUADER Meanwhile, Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader on Friday said rawhide export should continue to protect the interests of the poor and orphans.

"Those who want to do leather business must do it in a competitive way. So, export should continue. The government can give incentive to the tanners in another way instead of harming the interest of the poor and the orphans," he said.

Quader made the remarks while exchanging views with leaders of the party's Dhaka north and south units at the chairman's Banani office.

He said people were forced to sell skins of the sacrificial animals at throwaway prices during Eid due to the ban on rawhide export and fewer buyers. "So, there should have been adequate buyers and export facilities to ensure fair prices."

As rawhide prices dropped sharply, the government on Tuesday night decided to permit their export to ensure fair prices.

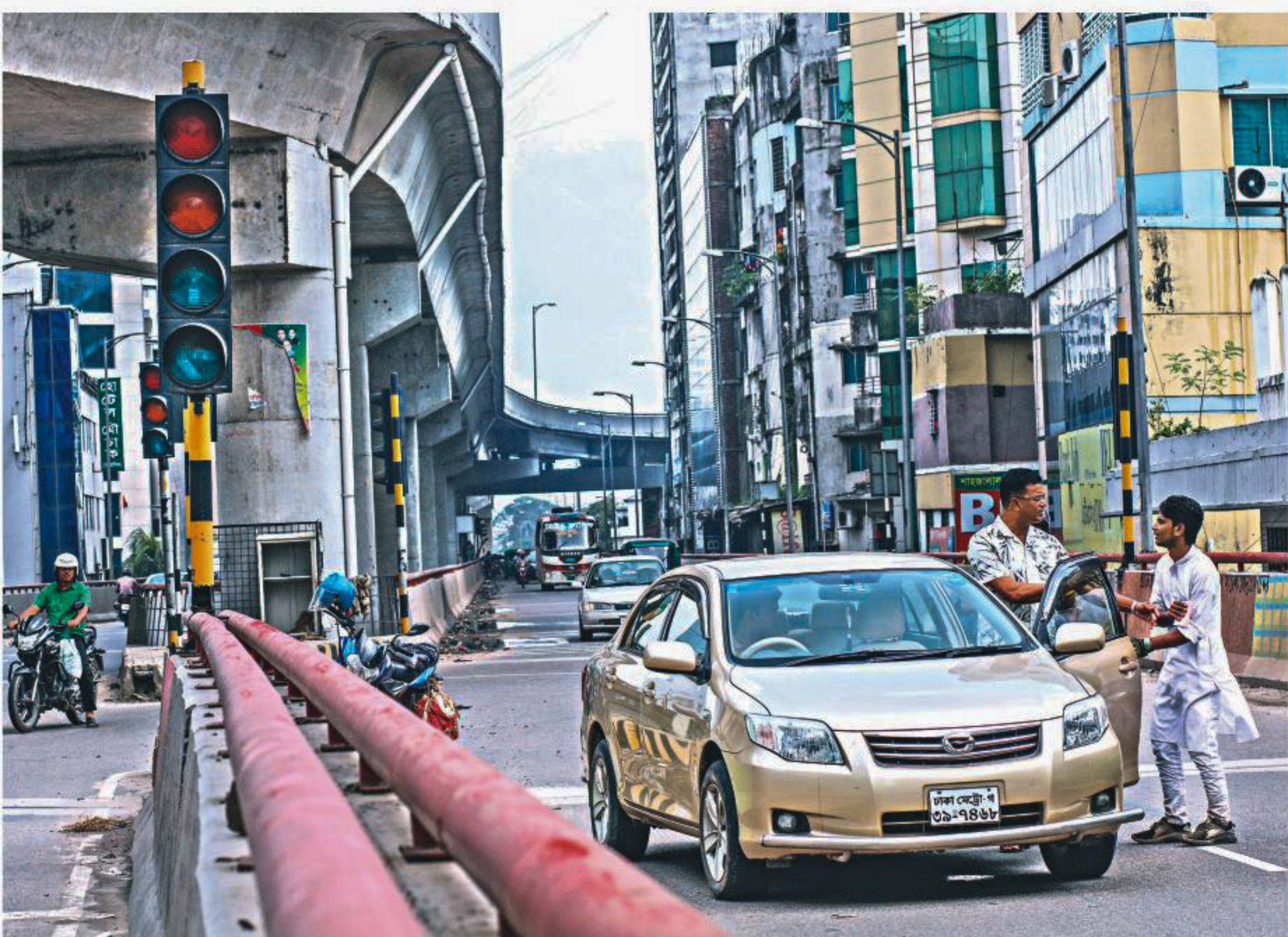


PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A passenger of a car confronts a motorcycle driver on the Mouchak-Moghbarz flyover, after a minor collision involving the two vehicles. Traffic signals on the flyover have been non-functional for a long time, and absence of traffic policemen on the intersection leaves it susceptible to accidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

DHAKA TODAY

SEMINAR
IELTS writing & reading
Organiser: Softtech Informatics
Venue: Bashati Horizon, Banani
Time: 4pm

TRAINING
Income Tax Management & Focusing on Budget
Venue: IPDP Training, Banani
Time: 6:30pm

SESSION
English practice
Organiser: U.S. Embassy
Venue: American Center, Baridhara
Time: 2pm

WORKSHOP
Mono Print
Organiser: Karkhana Art Space
Venue: KAS Handicraft, Argargaon
Time: 11am

THEATRE
Konjush
Organiser: Loko Natyadal
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Time: 7pm

SEMINAR
On ASP.NET programming language
Organiser: Rosetta Technologies
Venue: Karim Tower, Panthapath
Time: 3pm

EXHIBITION
Reverie
Venue: Drik Gallery
Time: 3pm



IVM necessary to fight dengue: Atiq

UNB, Dhaka

Underscoring the importance of public awareness against mosquito breeding, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday said Integrated Vector Management (IVM) is necessary for combatting dengue outbreak in the country.

"We have to launch IVM to control the spread of the disease... I'm hopeful about submitting a project within the next seven to eight days," said Atiqul.

IVM is a decision-making process for the optimal use of resources for disease-bearing vector control.

The mayor made the remark at a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony among nine government and private enterprises, including Bangladesh Scouts, E-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB), DSCC, DNCC, Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Health Services Division (HSD), Local Government Division (LGD), a2i and Disaster Management and Relief Ministry at Bangladesh Scouts Headquarters in the city's Kakrail.

"Our only will right now is to free the country from the dengue menace," said the DNCC mayor, adding, "We have to remain aware 365 days [a year] to check dengue... We have to conduct cleanup dives for 365 days as well."

The MoU is aimed at providing a framework for access

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The health benefits of Bitter Gourd

Bitter gourd, commonly known as *korolla* in Bangladesh, is a very common item in Bengali cuisine. *Korolla chingrir bhaji* and *korolla aloo jhol* are quite popular dishes. Despite the bitter taste, the vegetable is highly consumed due to its extensive health benefits. Besides being used in different delectable dishes, the consumption of bitter gourd juice is also very popular.

Bitter gourd is an excellent source of vitamins B1, B2, and B3, magnesium, folate, zinc, phosphorus, manganese, and has high dietary fibre. It is also great for purifying and increasing blood flow in the body. Antimicrobial and cancer prevention properties found in bitter gourd and its juice help treat and cure skin issues—acne, rashes, skin breakout, psoriasis, blood disorders, etc. Bitter gourd also aids in losing weight as it stimulates the liver to secrete bile acids that are essential for metabolising fat in the body. The vegetable also helps to reduce cholesterol. The presence of Vitamin C and other antiviral property helps to boost immunity, prevents bone formation, and heals wounds. Bitter gourd is also a great food source for people with diabetes. It has a specific insulin-like protein called polypeptide P that helps to lower blood sugar levels in diabetic patients.

Md Oliyer Rahaman, a bitter gourd farmer from Shahbazpur, Jashore, shares his experience of growing this vegetable. Initially, the land is irrigated and inorganic fertilisers such as TSP, DAP and potash are applied. The bitter gourd seedlings are then planted. Irrigation is carried out once a week after planting the seedlings. Pesticides are usually applied at 10-20 days' interval during the rainy season; they are not applied much in other seasons. Fertilisers such as TSP, potash, and urea are applied again once the bitter gourd



flowers grow to a certain extent. Harvesting is usually done at alternate days when the fruits are young and tender.

Md Oliyer Rahaman, along with many farmers of the area, provides vegetables for Shwapno under the Shuddho project. According to Oliyer, this initiative has helped him adopt the right agricultural practices for growing bitter gourd, in terms of learning about how much fertiliser or pesticide should be used. Farmers also have an opportunity to learn about the interval period between pesticide application and harvesting, known as the Pre-Harvest Interval (PHI).

Bitter gourds are a great source of nutrients. They are highly beneficial for our health and wellbeing. So, make sure you include this nutritious vegetable in your basket the next time you go grocery shopping!

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



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