

'I had to watch my shops burn to ashes'

Fire guts over 100 shops at Jahur Hawkers' Market

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN and MD SUMAN

More than 100 shops were gutted in a devastating fire that broke out at Jahur Hawkers' Market, one of the largest readymade garments market in port city, early yesterday.

No causality has been reported so far, according to fire service officials.

The blaze originated at Shah Jalalabad Market around 3am and spread to the adjacent Jahur market, they said. Reason behind the fire could not be ascertained immediately.

Jasim Uddin, assistant director of Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence, said on information, 15 firefighting units rushed to the spot brought the fire under control around 5:45am.

"The market was filled to the brim with fabrics as most of the shops have warehouses on the first floor. We are yet to determine the extent of the damage," he said.

Purna Chandra Mutsuddi, deputy assistant director of Chattogram fire service, said, "Most shops were locked as the market stays shut on Friday. That's why fire spread quickly as no one was there to douse the blaze."

The official also mentioned that the market had no firefighting equipment and the roads inside the market are too narrow for fire trucks to enter.

"After the fire at Banani FR Tower in the capital, we went to many markets, including this one, to make them aware of fire safety. That time, they did not pay heed to us," he added.

While visiting the spot, this newspaper saw that most shop owners were trying to salvage their belongings. The lucky ones were gathering their products in front of the shops while many others stared blankly at the charred remains.

Jahur market is located on the slope of a hill, next to New Market. Due to the fire, the upper part of the market, situated on the hill, remained shut.

Mohammad Selim, owner of Takim and Home Fabrics, told The Daily Star, "I got the news around 4am. I reached my store as fast as I could, but failed to save anything. I had to watch my shops and warehouse burn to ashes."

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Clockwise from top, Firefighters extinguish a blaze at Jahur Hawkers' Market in the port city yesterday morning after a fire broke out there around 3am. Over 100 shops were gutted in the fire, causing irrevocable loss to many shopkeepers, who tried to salvage as much as they could throughout the day. A fan with twisted blades and charred remains of this shop.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Coordination must to eliminate child labour: speakers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Coordination between government and NGOs is urgent to eliminate child labour, said speakers at a workshop in Barishal yesterday.

At least 17 lakh children are engaged in labour while 12 lakh of them are involved in hazardous jobs in the country, they said.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment, and divisional administration organised the programme titled "Prevention of Risky Child Labour and Implementation of Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy-2015" at Barishal Circuit House.

Addressing the event as chief guest, State Minister for Labour and Employment Monnujan Sufiansaid the government is working to abolish hazardous child labour by 2021 and all child labour by 2025.

Under government arrangement, 90,000 children has left risky labour and engaged in education and vocational training, said the state minister. To totally eliminate risky child labour the government and NGOs should work together, she added.

Barishal City Corporation Mayor Sernibat Sadik Abdullah stressed the need for updating the government base line survey conducted on child labour in 2013.

KM Ali Ajom, secretary to ministry, said the government has taken various projects of Tk 284 crore to reduce child labour.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, was present at the workshop as special guest. She said engaging children in risky labour is inhumane. "As children cannot take decisions on their own, guardians and the state have to come forward to prevent child labour," she added.

High officials from the ministry and local administration attended the programme, presided over by Divisional Commissioner Muhammad Yamin Chowdhury.

Language fest kicks off at NSU

CITY DESK

The inaugural session of Language League 2019 was organised at North South University (NSU) on Friday (October 18), said a press release.

Planning minister MA Mannan was present at chief guest at the event, presided over by NSU VC Atiqul Islam. Mustafiz Shafi, acting editor of Daily Samakal; Yan Hualong, minister counselor at Chinese embassy in Bangladesh; Benajir Ahmed, chairperson of NSU board of trustees, and MA Hashem, chairperson of Partex Group were present at special guests.

Minister MA Mannan said in his speech, "If mankind is to progress in an equal rhythm, we must nurture our culture in our own language. When our language was

attacked, it was then that one of our spirits awakened and ultimately showed us the light of freedom."

The minister thanked the university authorities for organising the festival.

Special guest Mustafiz Shafi said, "We want a generation that embodies human values and gathers technological knowledge. They will be the society and country forward."

Among others, deans of different schools, directors of various departments, department heads, senior officials, teachers and over a thousand students from different schools, colleges and universities of the country competing in Bangla, English and Chinese language were also present during the programme.

Two arrested with yaba, phensidyl in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rab arrested two men with over 2,000 yaba pills and 51 bottles of phensidyl from Sylhet's Chandnighat area yesterday.

The arrestees are Md Rafique Ahmed, 60, and Mohammad Rasel, 32. They are from Chandnighat Jhalopara area of city.

On information, a team led by Major Shawkatul Monayem conducted the drive around 1am and arrested the duo, said Md Moniruzzaman, additional police superintendent and media officer of RAB-9.

Rab recovered 2197 pieces yaba, 51 bottles of phensidyl, three sharp weapons, and Tk 1,32,760 which they made by selling drugs, the RAB official said. The arrestees and recovered materials have been handed over to Dakshin Surma Police Station, he said.

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A CNG-run auto-rickshaw skidded off a road as it was hit by a truck in Jhenidah yesterday. Inset, a mangled three-wheeler after it was struck by a truck in Barishal.

PHOTO: STAR

13 lives lost on roads in a day

STAR REPORT

Thirteen people were killed and 42 injured in road accidents across the country yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Dhaka, a bicyclist was killed after a bus crashed into his bicycle in Moghbazar area.

The deceased -- Bhola Nath, 45, from Keraniganj -- worked at a workshop in Moghbazar, said his nephew Rajani Kanta Saha.

Bhola Nath used to cycle to his workplace regularly, he added.

The accident happened in front of Grand Plaza around 10am, said Kazi Mainul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station.

The OC said they arrested the driver and seized the bus of Gazipur Paribahan.

In Dhamrai, at least 25 people were injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a truck on Dautia bridge of Dhaka-Aricha highway around 4pm, said police.

The accident also caused traffic congestion on the both sides of the highway as the vehicles could not be moved until 5:30pm.

In Jhenidah, three women were

killed and eight people injured as a bus hit a three-wheeler from behind at Laudia bus stand in Sadar upazila, said Dilip Kumar Sarkar, station officer at Jhenidah Fire Service and Civil Defence Station.

Poly Khatun, 40, from Bishoykhali village died on the spot. The other women, whose identities could not be known immediately, succumbed to their injuries at Faridpur Medical College Hospital, he said.

The accident occurred around 11am while the three-wheeler was going to Kaliganj, said the fire service officer.

The injured was undergoing treatment at the hospital. Police seized the truck while the driver and his helper managed to flee. The bodies were sent to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

In Jhalakati, a woman and her son were killed and four people injured after a three-wheeler and a cement-laden truck collided head-on in the town's Sagardi Alia Madrasa area on Saturday.

The dead were identified as Delowara Begum, 60, and her son Shipon, 35, from Sri Ramkathi village

in Nalchity upazila of the district.

The injured -- Swapon, Morsheda, Rabiul and Anis -- were admitted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal.

Najmul Alom, sub-inspector of SBMCH police camp, said the three-wheeler was going to Rupatali from Nathullabad bus terminal in Barishal.

Due the collision, the three-wheeler was badly damaged. The bodies were sent to SBMCH morgue for autopsy. Police seized the truck and detained its driver and his helper.

In Faridpur, a man was killed instantly and two persons were injured when a truck and an easy bike collided head-on on Bishwa Road intersection of Dhaka-Khulna highway in Bhanga upazila around 7am.

The deceased -- identified as Kuddus Fakir, 48, from Charaldia village in the upazila -- was the battery-run auto-rickshaw driver, said police.

Bhanga highway police said the accident took place around 7am. The injured were taken to Bhanga Upazila Health Complex.

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