



FIRE AT NEW RAJDHAHI SUPERMARKET

Traders see bleak days ahead

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Traders at New Rajdhahi Supermarket in the capital's Tikatuli area, whose shops were gutted in Wednesday's fire, are facing tough times as they will not be able to resume business anytime soon.

"The blaze caused significant damage... the wirings, walls and furniture -- all the goods were burnt to ashes," Hafizur Rahman, a traders' leader, told this newspaper yesterday.

At least 35 shops out of 75 on the first floor were completely gutted and some 15 to 16 were partially damaged, he informed. He said it will take at least a month to fix those.

The fire began at a mattress store on the first floor of the two-storey market around 5:15pm. Twenty-five fire engines were deployed to douse the fire, extinguished around 6:45pm, said Director General of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Brig Gen Sajjad Hossain.

After the Rajdhani Supermarket was established in 1995, this new one was set up on a land next to the old market. It houses around 170 stores, most of which sell furniture, clothes, jewellery, electronic products, crockeries and mobile accessories, among others, said Hafizur.

Visiting the area yesterday, it was seen that police have cordoned off the market; only the affected traders were allowed to get in. Many of them were seen lamenting while some tried to salvage whatever they could find amid charred remains.

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Burnt tables, charred scissors and toys -- all that remains of their hopes and dreams, shattered by Wednesday's blaze at New Rajdhahi Supermarket. The photos of traders trying to salvage their belongings were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ALLOWING KIDNEY DONORS BEYOND RELATIVES HC verdict on petition Dec 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court on December 5 will deliver its verdict on a writ petition filed seeking its directives so that voluntary donors beyond certain relatives can donate kidneys.

The HC bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Khandaker Dilurazzaman set the date after concluding the final hearing on the petition yesterday.

One Fatema Zohra filed the petition with the HC in 2017, challenging the constitutionality of sections 2 (ga), 3 and 6 of the Organ Transplantation Act 1999 [amended in 2018]. These sections mainly focused on the definition of the related persons.

Fatema donated a kidney to her ailing daughter Fahmida, but the kidney got damaged after a year. Then she managed a donor for her daughter, but the donor could not donate the kidney due to the bar in the law.

Later, Fatema submitted the petition to the HC, seeking necessary order on the issue.

On August 24, 2017, the HC issued a rule asking the government to explain why the abovementioned sections of the act should not be declared unconstitutional.

Barrister Rashna Imam argued for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Saifuddin Khaled represented the state and Advocate ZI Khan Panna appeared for Ain

O Salish Kendra (ASK) as an intervener in the case.

On November 7 this year, an expert committee submitted a report to the HC as per its August 28 order, saying that there is no need to allow voluntary donors beyond certain relatives as it may give rise to several problems, including organ trafficking.

It said the inclusion of a provision allowing voluntary kidney donors may give the rich an opportunity to exploit the poor by offering them benefits or subjecting them to physical and mental torture.

The seven-member committee headed by Md Rafiqul Islam, president of Bangladesh Renal Association and pro-vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, handed over the report to the Supreme Court registrar general's office on October 29 for placing it to the HC as per its earlier order.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, who voluntarily attended the hearing, told the HC on November 7 that the law needs to be amended so that any healthy person other than the relatives can donate organs.

He also said there must be a provision in the law so that the poor are not victimised and the donors are compensated appropriately.

Govt must revisit family planning policies

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said the government needs to revisit its population and family planning policies to achieve targets regarding the country's journey to become a middle-income country.

If not controlled and managed effectively, the burden of population might jeopardise the country's overall progress, they said.

The Daily Star and Options Consultancy Services Ltd jointly organised the roundtable on "Realising Population Goals: Translating Strategies to Actions" at The Daily Star Centre.

Controlling population is a big issue for Bangladesh because its landmass is limited, said Hossain Zillur Rahman, chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre.

He said the country has brought down the total fertility rate (TFR) to 2.3 from 6.3 since independence. However, at the current rate, the population growth will hit 200 million by 2031.

The government has to speed up implementation of its family planning policy to bring down the TFR to the target of 2, he said.

"Getting from 2.3 to 2 may become very difficult if we do not enervise our family planning programme," he added.

He pointed out some challenges such as inconsistencies in the family planning programme, high rate of child marriage, and gender-based violence to achieve the goal.

Prof Muhammad Mainul Islam, chairman of population sciences department of Dhaka



Speakers at the roundtable at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

University, said the country's existing population policy has not been updated since 2012.

Most of the targets in the policy were not achieved by 2015, which was the timeline, he said.

An institutional body headed by the prime minister is to implement the policy. However, its last meeting was held in September, 2010, he added.

Taslim Uddin Khan, chief of programme operations of Social Marketing Company, said the present family planning programme was

designed some 30 years back.

It should be updated to keep up with a changing economic situation, he said, stressing strong private-public partnership to implement the targets.

Senior Secretary Shamsul Alam, member of general economic division of the Planning Commission, said population management has turned to be a challenge for the government.

Prof Bellal Hossain of DU's population sciences department, said focusing on skills

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'We want discipline, not to impose fines'

DMP Commissioner on Road Transport Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police has no intentions of realising fines if there is discipline on the roads, Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Shafiqul Islam said yesterday.

"Traffic division realises Tk 6 to 7 crore monthly for violation of traffic rules (in Dhaka). It is a minimal amount and the government has no need of such amount of money," he said.

The commissioner was speaking at the inaugural of fortnightly traffic awareness programmes at Rajarbagh Police Lines in the capital.

"After taking charge, I told traffic officials that there is no need to set a [monthly] target of realising fines," the police chief said.

Highlighting suffering of victims of road accidents, the commissioner said, "Can you imagine a man dies on the road due to your or our fault, and leaves his little children in a life of uncertainty? There will be no breadwinner who can support the family."

"People will not tolerate for long that unfit drivers plying vehicles

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ABRAR FAHAD MURDER TRIAL

Two lawyers to be added as per family's wish, says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said two lawyers will be included in the prosecution team for conducting the Buet student Abrar Fahad murder case, as per his family's wish.

"The trial of Abrar Fahad murder will be held at the Speedy Trial Tribunal for finishing its proceedings at the earliest. I have earlier said the government will take necessary steps so that the trial of this case is held at the tribunal and we are going ahead as per the plan," he said.

The law minister said this while talking to reporters after a meeting at his Gulshan office with Abrar's father Md Barkatullah.

He said Abrar's family had proposed names of some lawyers for the prosecution team for

conducting the murder case, and among them, two lawyers will be included in the prosecution.

"They are satisfied with the current pace at which the case proceedings are running. All necessary steps will be taken so that the trial proceedings of the case are finished lawfully and without any error," Anisul Huq said.

Earlier on November 13, Minister Anisul told reporters at his secretariat office that his office has kept a prosecution team ready for moving the murder case quickly.

Abrar Fahad, a second-year student of electrical and electronic engineering department of Buet, died after he was brutally beaten allegedly by some Chhatra League men at Sher-e-Bangla hall of the university on early hours of October 7.

DHAKA TODAY

- LECTURE**
Parliament: History of its Evolution
Organiser: Reading Club
Venue: IML, University of Dhaka
Time: 3pm
Organiser: DNCC
Venue: Sonargaon Janapath, Uttara
Time: 9am
- DISCUSSION**
Maulana Bhasani and Politics of Our Time
Organiser: Ganasanghati Andolon
Venue: Jatiya Press Club
Time: 3pm
- INAUGURAL EVENT**
Car Free Street
Children can play on the street every Friday from 8am to 11am
- WORKSHOP**
On Street Photography
Organiser: Pixmama
Venue: Diponpur Book Cafe, Elephant Road
Time: 10am
- RALLY**
Protesting recent price hike of onions
Organiser: Jatiya Mukti Council
Venue: Jatiya Press Club
Time: 3:30pm

PHOTO OF THE DAY

PALASH KHAN



Rows of buses remain parked throughout the whole day at Mohakhali Bus Terminal as transport workers go on an unofficial strike. This photo was taken yesterday.

Proposed Broadcast Act to protect journo's jobs

Assures info minister

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said the proposed Broadcast Act will give legal protection to broadcast journalists and electronic media workers.

Addressing a seminar at Bengal Multimedia Studio in city's Tejgaon, he said the government is working to ensure job security of broadcast journalists and their other facilities.

Broadcast Media Center (BJC) and private television channel RIV jointly organised the seminar, marking World Television Day.

Hasan said along with the flourish of the industry, some problems have been created, including the fall in advertisement and its rates in electronic media. Now the industry needs combined efforts to sustain.

The minister said, "I'm working relentlessly for the betterment of journalists after taking charge of the ministry. But I need all-out support from all stakeholders. It's our responsibility to give protection to the journalists as they are the mirror of society."

Hasan said airing of Bangladesh

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PALLIATIVE CARE

Speakers demand its inclusion in medical, nursing curricula

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an increased need for special care for thousands of terminal patients, the government should integrate a palliative care (PC) course into the medical and nursing education curriculum, speakers at a discussion said on Wednesday night.

Highlighting the grim scenario of palliative care in the country and legal restrictions to get strong painkillers like morphine for patients, they also urged the government to ease the restrictions.

Ayat Education, a charitable organisation, arranged the conversation titled "Dignifying Life Thru Palliative Care" at a city hotel.

Palliative care is interdisciplinary specialised medical and nursing care for people with prolonged illness for non-communicable diseases like cancer, which focuses on providing relief from the symptoms, including pain, and physical and mental stress.

Evidence supports the efficacy of palliative care approach in improvement of a patient's quality of life.

At the 67th World Health Assembly in 2014, member states of World Health Organization (WHO) agreed to strengthen palliative care as a component of comprehensive care throughout the life course.

However, this patient-focused approach is still under-addressed globally, especially in low-and middle-income countries, according to a number of studies.

Government high-ups from the health sector, and healthcare professionals and experts from home and abroad spoke at Wednesday's event, highlighting different aspects and latest trends of palliative care.

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