

## Four of a family killed in landslide

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Sylhet

Four people of a family, including a five-year-old, were killed in a landslide in Satjami village of Sylhet's Jaintiapur upazila early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Juber Ahmed, 35, his wife Sumi Begum, 30, their five-year-old son Safi Ahmed, and Sumi's sister Shamim Ara Begum, 48.

Five other members of the 10-member family were also injured. Their home was situated at the foot of a hillock that was illegally cut earlier.

After getting primary treatment at a local hospital, Juber's father, one of the injured, said, "It was raining heavily the night before. We were all asleep, when I suddenly hear a loud sound around 6:30am. I woke up to find myself on the ground and realised that our entire house had been crushed."

He said his younger son Juber, a shopkeeper at Bateswar Bazar, was the only breadwinner of the family.

Golam Dastagir, officer-in-charge of Jaintiapur Police Station, said, "We recovered the bodies with the help of fire service officials and locals. As the family did not want autopsies, we handed the bodies over for burial."

Al-Bashirul Islam, Jaintiapur's upazila nirbahi officer, said, "To help the family bear primary expenses, a compensation of Tk 20,000 was provided for each deceased and Tk 5,000 to the injured.

"The money was handed to the the family in presence of the additional district magistrate and officials of the District Relief and Rehabilitation Office."

He added that his office is now working with all union chairmen and members to try and relocate people living in areas vulnerable to landslides.



A home, destroyed by a landslide early yesterday, at the foot of a hillock in Satjami village of Sylhet's Jaintiapur upazila. The incident left four of a family dead.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Street fighting rages in Severodonetsk

Ukrainian troops suffer setbacks after retaking parts of flashpoint eastern city

### AGENCIES

Ukrainian and Russian troops fought street-by-street to win control of the industrial city of Severodonetsk yesterday in the pivotal battle of the Kremlin's eastern Ukraine offensive.

The Ukrainian defenders had over the weekend regained control over about half the city just as the Russians appeared on the verge of victory.

But their position had again become more perilous yesterday morning, Luhansk governor Serhiy Gaidai told state television.

"Our defenders managed to undertake a counter-attack for a certain time, they liberated almost half of the city. But now the situation has worsened a little for us again," Gaidai said.

"We're holding out but there are more of them and they are stronger," President Volodymyr Zelensky told journalists in Kyiv, adding that Severodonetsk and neighbouring Lysychansk were both "dead cities now".

Both sides say they have inflicted huge casualties in Severodonetsk.

The city has become the main target of

a Russian offensive in Ukraine's Donbas region - made up of Luhansk and Donetsk provinces - as the Kremlin's invasion of the country grinds on in a war of attrition that has seen whole cities laid waste by Russian artillery bombardments.

Russia says it is on a mission to "liberate" the Donbas after Ukraine pushed its troops back from the capital Kyiv and Ukraine's second biggest city Kharkiv in the war's

**"We're holding out but there are more of them and they are stronger," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky**

early stages.

In a boost for Kyiv, Britain said yesterday it would supply Ukraine with multiple-launch rocket systems that can strike targets up to 80 km away. The systems would give the Ukrainians the more precise, long-range firepower needed to reach Russian artillery units, a key component of Moscow's battle-plans.

The British move was coordinated with the United States, which last week pledged

to supply Kyiv with advanced rocket systems.

On Sunday, President Vladimir Putin said Russia would strike new targets if the West supplied longer-range missiles to Ukraine.

Britain's Ministry of Defence said yesterday that while heavy fighting continued in Severodonetsk, Russian forces were also pushing towards Sloviansk, which lies about 85 km (53 miles) to the west.

In Lysychansk, divided from Severodonetsk by a river, Russian forces fired on a bakery and several administrative and residential buildings, Governor Gaidai said yesterday. One civilian had been wounded, he said.

Some 60 km to the south, on the front line near Bakhmut, Ukrainian soldiers said the situation was difficult but they had no choice but to push back the Russians.

Inside Russia, the governor of the Kursk region said the village of Tyotkino near the border with Ukraine had come under fire from the Ukrainian side that targeted a bridge and some businesses yesterday morning.

## SC chamber judge denies Haji Salim bail

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday denied bail to ruling Awami League lawmaker Haji Mohammad Salim in a corruption case in which the High Court upheld his conviction and 10 years' jail sentence.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim refused his bail plea as his court had no jurisdiction to grant bail to such a convict, Anti-Corruption Commission's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

The apex court judge, however, sent the bail petition to its full bench and also set August 1 for its hearing.

The chamber judge passed the order after hearing arguments from the lawyers concerned.

This order means that Haji Salim will have to be in jail until further order of this court, lawyer Khurshid said, adding that Haji Salim is now in the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

On May 23, Haji Salim submitted the leave to appeal petition to the Appellate Division through his lawyer challenging the HC verdict. In the petition, the lawmaker also sought bail in the case.

On February 10, the HC released the full text of SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

## JU student jailed for 7yrs in ICT case

He made derogatory remarks on Bangabandhu, PM

### COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday sentenced a Jahangirnagar University student to seven years' imprisonment in a case under the ICT Act for making derogatory remarks on Facebook about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Cyber Tribunal in Dhaka delivered the verdict in presence of the lone accused, Shamsul Alam Babu, at the courtroom, Shamim Al Mamun, bench assistant of the tribunal, told this newspaper.

Shamsul, a student of Government and Politics Department at JU, was also fined Tk 1,000 in default of which he will have to spend one more month in jail.

Following the verdict, Shamsul was sent to jail. According to the case documents, Shamsul on August 5, 2015, made derogatory comments about Bangabandhu and the PM on a Facebook post of another JU student Morshedur Rahman, sparking outrage among students of the university.

The following day, Yaqub Ali Mia, chief security officer at the JU, filed a case with Ashulia Police Station against Shamsul under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act.

## Their sense of duty prevailed

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For this sum of money, and from an unwavering sense of duty, this young man faced the roaring inferno at the BM container depot on Saturday night, without even knowing what lay inside the containers.

A viral live video of what was possibly Rana's last moments showed a team of firefighters tackling a towering inferno with hose pipes. Just then, a container exploded with a shattering noise. And the screen went black.

One of Rana's legs was blown off.

"We heard about the fire in the morning and learnt that some firefighters were missing. We contacted the fire station, who told us that Rana could not be traced... The owners [of the depot] will get away with their crimes, but we will be the ones left suffering," Yusuf said.

Meanwhile, every word spoken by Alauddin's wife Taslima Sultana was riddled with despair.

"His beautiful face has disappeared completely... [He is] unrecognisable. I fell in love with that face in 2011."

The couple had married seven years ago and have a five-year-old son.

"I don't know where I will live now -- with my in-laws in Noakhali? My parents' house? I want to live with my husband, wherever he is," she wailed.

She first heard Alauddin might be missing when she got a call from her cousin around 2:00am after he saw the news of the fire.

"Kumira fire station, where he was stationed,

told us he was missing. We searched Chattagram Medical College Hospital, the general hospital, went to the spot, and then back to CMCH. We finally found him there when the bodies arrived."

Nipon Chakma, a firefighter transferred to Sitakunda from Rangamati Fire Station, was burnt beyond recognition. His body could not even be identified initially without DNA matching.

His wife Shumona said, "My father-in-law told me in the morning that there was a fire in Sitakunda and asked me to call him [Nipon]. I kept trying but the call would not go through." Nipon had died hours earlier in an explosion alongside his brothers in arms.

Mithu Dewan, also from Rangamati, was stationed in Kumira and had rejoined work after a leave the very day the explosion took place. He too lost his life in the devastating fire.

Mithu and Nipon both were given guards of honour by their comrades yesterday.

The parents of Md Fariduzzaman are currently experiencing the most agonising wait of their lives as their son remains traceless even two days after he went to fight the blaze.

Farid was the elder son of van-puller Saiful Islam and Fulmati Begum, of Rangpur's Mithapukur Upazila.

He joined the force in Sitakunda station two years ago.

His uncle Tota Mia said the family was still

depending on the meagre income of Farid's father.

Farid's father, Saiful Islam, said, "I was preparing to quit my job [van pulling] because my son kept saying he is now working and can support us. Oh God, please return him to us!"

As soon as Saiful said this, his agony made him lose consciousness.

Farid had dreams of spending Eid-ul-Azha with his family and sacrificing their own animal -- an economic luxury for many.

The other deceased firefighters whose bodies were found are Shakil Tarafdar, Amran Hossain Majumder, and Moniruzzaman of Kumira fire station, and Ramjanul Islam and Salauddin Kader Chowdhury of Sitakunda fire station.

Amran Hossain, Mithu Dewan and Nipon Chakma were team leaders.

Along with Fariduzzaman, Shafiul Islam of Kumira and Robiul Islam of Sitakunda remain missing.

## Global tourist arrivals tripled in first quarter: UN

AFP, Madrid

International tourist arrivals tripled in the first quarter compared with the same period in 2021, with Europe leading the rebound as Covid restrictions were eased, the UN's tourism agency said yesterday.

## Ctg depot fire yet to be mopped up

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Another challenge was getting the water to the fire, which in many cases was burning inside stacked containers.

Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate Assistant Director (training) Md Monir Hossain told journalists in the morning that the operation was taking time as containers on fire were gradually being pulled out from the piles with forklifts, moved to a side, and opened up before the fire inside them could be extinguished.

Spraying water on stacked-up containers the whole day was useless, he added.

Four units were engaged in spraying water on unaffected containers to ensure that the fire does not spread, Hossain

informed.

### REVISED DEATH TOLL

On Sunday evening, Chattogram Civil Surgeon Ilias Chowdhury confirmed the death toll was 49. However, after half an hour, Chattogram Deputy Commissioner Momimur Rahman in a press briefing told the media that the number was 45.

However, the DC office's information booth around 3:30pm yesterday confirmed that 41 people died from the fire.

Afruzul Haque Tutul, Chattogram district's additional superintendent of police, told The Daily Star, "We have received 41 bodies so far."

"Identity of 22 deceased were confirmed and the bodies were handed over to families completing all legal procedures, while 19 were still unidentified as

embargo on packaged rice. Those who can afford the packaged rice will buy it," Khanum said, while directing the conglomerates not to hoard rice beyond the approved limit.

In the last cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed authorities concerned to take action against companies involved in unauthorised rice trading and hoarding.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection (DNCRP) will be conducting drives at the mills and warehouses of millers and big business

of 2:30pm [yesterday]," the police official said.

The district administration, police, and other government agencies have no accurate list of how many people were missing. Shahnewaz Khaled, superintendent of police at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), told this newspaper, "We have collected DNA samples from 32 people.

"We will cross-match the DNA samples after profiling those and hand over the unidentified bodies later," he said.

**CONTAMINATED WATER** Water used to douse the fire is getting mixed with chemicals at the depot and then making its way into the adjacent open area near Kashem Jute Mill.

Members of Bangladesh Army were seen blocking drains and canals so that

the water does not go into the Bay of Bengal.

Mohammed Robin, member of Sonaichhari Union Parishad, told The Daily Star, "We had trouble breathing yesterday [Sunday]. But we can breathe normally now as the air quality is improving."

"The pungent odour in the air is gone. The situation in our area is slowly returning to normal," said Nur Mohammad, a local.

Professor Ahsan Habib from the chemistry department of University of Dhaka said if the hydrogen peroxide is exposed to open water and its concentration is high, it will have an impact on aquatic life.

(Dwaipayan Barua, Mohammad Suman and Sifayet Ullah contributed to this report)

## JS body gets

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the parliament secretariat, the standing committee has not yet sat for a meeting.

Various journalist organisations and owners' associations, Transparency International Bangladesh have seriously opposed various sections of the proposed law.

The Editors' Council (Sampadak Parishad) has said the space for independent media will shrink further if the proposed bill is passed by parliament.

In a statement on April 19, the Editors' Council said, "The newspaper industry is going through trying times, still reeling from the effects of the pandemic. Many daily newspapers at home and abroad have either started curtailing their print editions, or stopped their print circulation altogether."

Upon analysis of the proposed law, the council observed that 37 of its 54 provisions are not journalist-friendly.

It said the proposed law would bring the media industry and mass media employees under further control of the bureaucracy in the name of protection.

Under the proposed law, the wages and benefits of journalists, employees, press workers and artists of broadcast, online, and print media outlets would be fixed.

Once the new law is passed, jobs of media employees will no longer be regulated under the labour law.

If any individual or organisation violates its provisions, they will be fined or face imprisonment.