

8 burnt after explosion in Turag store

STAR REPORT

Eight men were injured in a fire following an explosion at a scrap metal store in Dhaka's Turag yesterday morning.

Nur Hossain, 55, Gazi Mazharul Islam, 40, Masum Mia, 38, Mizanur Rahman, 35, Al Amin, 35, Shafiqul Islam, 25, Shaheen, 25, and Alamgir, 23 were admitted to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Most of the victims sustained critical injuries, said hospital sources.

Around 11:30am, the scrap metal store caught fire in Kamarpara area. The fire later spread to an adjacent rickshaw garage, said Shafiqul Islam, a local who took the injured to the hospital.

Two fire engines rushed to the spot and doused the fire, said Dewan Azad, duty officer at the Fire Service and Civil Defence control room.

DEATH OF UK EXPATS IN SYLHET

Woman dies 11 days after father, brother

Police yet to confirm cause of death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Eleven days after the mysterious death of two members of a family, whose unconscious bodies were recovered from a flat in Sylhet's Osmaninagar upazila, Samira Islam, another member, died early yesterday.

"She suffered from multiple organ failures and two cardiac arrests earlier. Last night, she had another cardiac arrest, and the doctors could not save her," said Brig Gen Mahbubur Rahman Bhuiyan, director of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

The bodies were recovered on July 26, but police are yet to confirm what caused their deaths.

According to police, they are waiting for the deceased's viscera test and other chemical reports, which are being handled by CID Forensic Laboratory in Chattogram.

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The unconscious bodies of Rafiqul Islam (50), his wife Hosna Ara Begum (45), daughter Samira Islam (20), and sons Mahiqul Islam (16) and Sadiqul Islam (25) were recovered from a room of the flat.

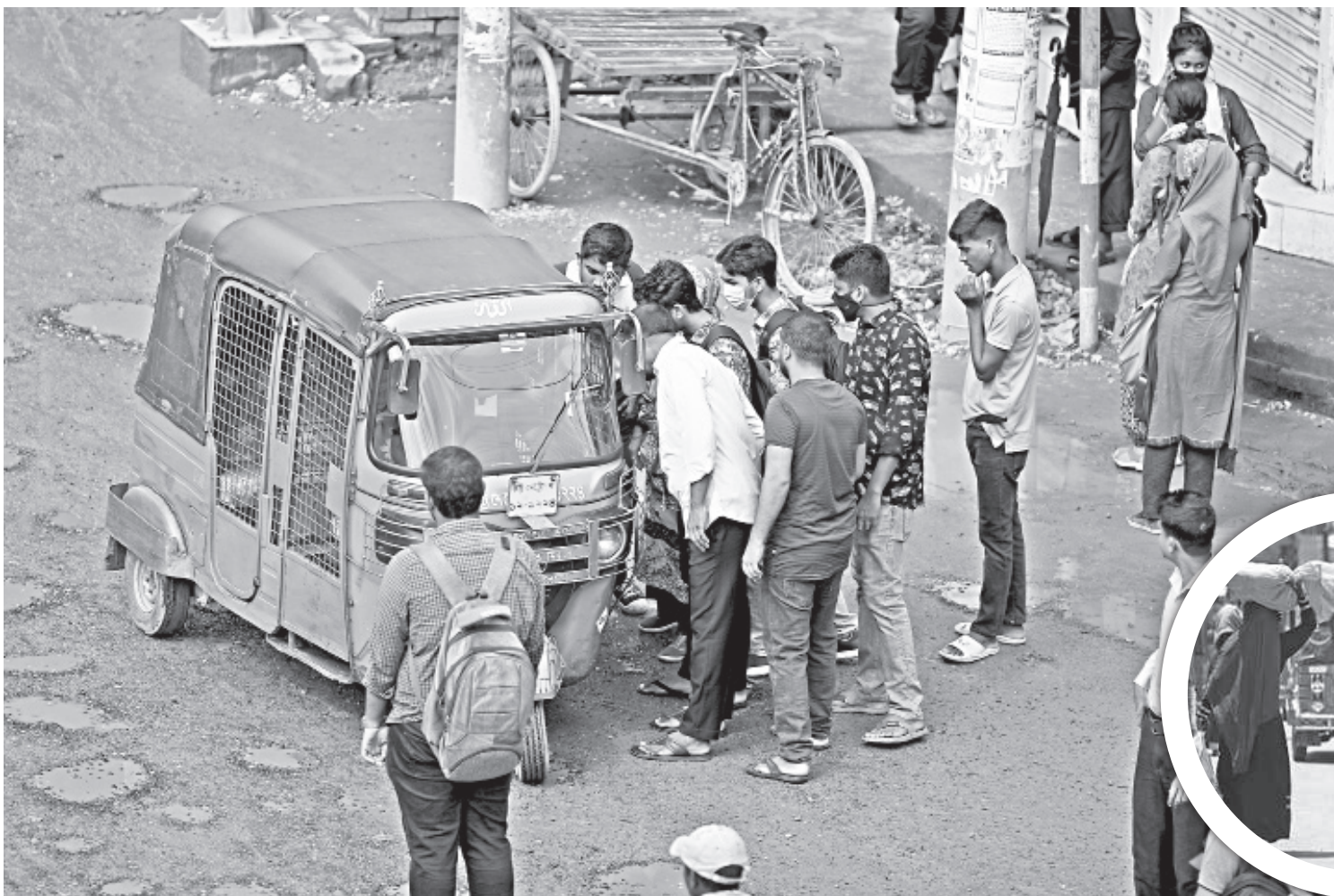
Rafiqul and his son Mahiqul were declared dead at Osmani hospital. The others were admitted to the ICU.

The doctors suspected that the family encountered some "unknown poison". The next day, police started probing the unnatural deaths, recording a case in this regard.

The non-resident Bangladeshi family used to live in Cardiff of Wales and hails from Katupur Boro Dirarai village in Osmaninagar.

They came to Bangladesh on July 12 and initially stayed at a hotel in Dhaka. Later on July 18, they shifted to a rented apartment in Tazpur area. Other relatives of Rafiqul were also staying with them.

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Commuters of Chattogram were miserable yesterday. People took any opportunity they could find to reach their destination, which included hanging on to packed human hauliers in precarious position or pushing through crowds to hire an auto-rickshaw.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

'Can't find a single bus'

Ctg commuters left stranded amid dearth of public transport due to fuel price hike

SIFAYET ULLAH, Chattogram

Mun Tanji was waiting for a human haulier at the port city's Chawkbazar intersection yesterday morning. Whenever one arrived after every 10 minutes, the college student rushed to board it, but to no avail amid the huge crowd.

Like her, around a hundred people were also waiting for public transport at the area.

Some five male passengers got on a vehicle, could not find any seat and started their journey by hanging on to the vehicle.

Meanwhile, Tanji was waiting for over an hour to go to Boropool area.

She said, "Usually a good number of human hauliers are parked here. I'm getting tired of waiting..."

This had been the scenario in most of the busy areas of the port city -- including Sholoshahar Gate-2, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Lalkhan Bazar, Tiger Pass, Wasa, Devanhat, Agrabad and GEC intersections -- yesterday.

In many areas, commuters were seen waiting for vehicles for a long time.

SM Asad, a private-job holder, told The Daily Star,

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Water is what they need

80 Bandarban villages in severe crisis

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, back from Bandarban

Around one lakh people living in 80 villages in Bandarban's Alikadam and Naikhongchhari upazilas are passing days in a severe water crisis.

The people of these areas used to collect water from the hilly streams locally known as "Jhiris". Many of these Jhiris have already dried up, while the others are on the verge of drying. Illegal stone quarrying and felling of trees are the main reasons for drying up the water streams, according to locals and environmentalists.

During a recent visit to the two upazilas, this correspondent saw residents having to go a few kilometres away for collecting water.

Some 30 families live in Naikhongchhari's Kamchum Para. All of them have to collect water from a waterbody two kilometres away.

"We don't have sufficient water for bathing, washing clothes or sanitation. Many of us have fallen sick for lack of pure drinking water," said Kamchum Mro, the village head of Kamchum Para.

Bandarban Civil Surgeon Nihari Ranjan Nandy said people are getting infected with different types of waterborne diseases due to scarcity of pure drinking water.

Five families of Naikhongchhari's Nyashupara used to live near a Jhiri. When that dried, they moved to near another one to have a sustainable source of water.

The second one is on the verge of drying as well, said Nyashu Mro, head of the Nyashupara.

All the nine families in Yaring Para depend on a single Jhiri, which flows very little amount of water.

"There is another Jhiri around two



Around one lakh people suffer everyday in Bandarban's Alikadam and Naikhongchhari upazilas as the water in the streams have dried up and turned into mudslides due to illegal stone quarrying and deforestation. Everyday residents have to walk a few kilometres away from their homes just to collect water, while many are getting infected with different types of waterborne diseases due to scarcity of safe water.

PHOTO: STAR

kilometres away on a hilltop. We have to go all the way up there when our nearby Jhiri is exhausted," said Diwai Mro, a resident of the village.

"We did not get any assistance from the government or local representatives in this regard," he said.

Naikhongchhari upazila Vice-Chairman Monglawai Marma said the water crisis cannot be solved until illegal stone quarrying and tree felling are stopped.

Contacted, Naikhongchhari UNO Salma Ferdous said 50 deep tube wells are currently

being installed in the upazila, while Alikadam UNO Mehruba Islam said they have been distributing water purifying tablets among the people.

"All the Jhiries will dry permanently if the government does not take immediate steps to stop stone quarrying and tree felling," said local environmental activist Sayeed Noushad.

Contacted, Bandarban's deputy commissioner Yasmin Parvin Tibriji said the district administration is conducting mobile court drives to stop stone quarrying and tree felling to put an end to the crisis.

Two killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Two people were killed and another injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Tangail, a civil engineer of the under-construction Bangabandhu Rail Bridge over the river Jamuna was killed as a truck hit his motorbike at the construction site.

Shah Abdul Moyeen (35) from Charsindur in Palash, Narsingdi was working at the project site at the time. Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station, said the accident occurred at Golchokkor on the east side of the bridge around 8:00am.

Moyeen was taken to Tangail General Hospital where he was declared dead, he said.

The truck, however, managed to flee.

In Cumilla, a woman was killed and her brother injured after a microbus they were travelling in caught fire in Chandina. The incident occurred on Dhaka-Chattogram highway at Kutumbapur filling station after a tyre of the hired vehicle burst.

The deceased -- Fatema Begum (27) -- was from Faridpur. She was traveling to Noakhli from Dhaka to visit her brother-in-law's house, said police.

Monirul Islam, in-charge of Eliotganj Highway Police Outpost, said, "After the blast, the microbus overturned and caught on fire."



Moyeen



Occupying the entire footpath, locals have set up makeshift shops beside Khulna's BIDD road, forcing pedestrians to walk on the busy street. This photo was taken near Chitrali Bazar.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Woman escapes fire, only to die of heart attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

The wounds you cannot see can be more critical than physical wounds, sometimes even life threatening.

Despite escaping a fire unscathed, a Manikganj woman died of heart attack yesterday.

Firefighters found Saleha Begum (70) outside her home in a nauseous condition when they responded to the blaze in the afternoon. She was immediately rushed to a local medical facility where the ongoing doctor declared her dead.

The fire broke out at the residence of Shahidul Islam in Harirampur upazila of Manikganj in the morning.



Fire service officials told this correspondent that the fire originated from the kitchen of Shahidul and immediately spread to seven nearby houses. On information, a unit of fire service went to the spot after an hour and doused the flames after trying for 55 minutes.

All the valuables in the said houses were reduced to ashes, according to locals.

Shahidul is the grandchild of the victim Saleha, on whose house the fire first started.

"All the houses that were burnt to ashes were mine and my cousins. Beside the valuables, at least 70 maunds of paddy and about 100 maunds of onion were destroyed in the fire."

"One of my goats was also burnt to death," he added.

The loss was too much for Saleha to take, said

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