



Even after innumerable fire incidents in Old Dhaka, the chemical warehouses and shops are still in the same place. So, it's not a matter of if there will be another fire in the bustling area but when the next incident will occur. That is unless the authorities follow through with their decision to shift the structures to the new site quickly.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

When will Old Dhaka be rid of fires?

Infrastructure in Shyampur still not ready for shifting chemical warehouses

DIPAN NANDY

Three years ago, after the tragic fire incident at Churihatta in Old Dhaka's Chawkbazar, the industries ministry started building a cluster of chemical warehouses at the site of Ujala Match Factory in Shyampur, with an aim to relocate the warehouses in Old Dhaka.

Even after such a long period, construction is still ongoing. It will take another five to six months to finish all works, officials said.

On top of that, no one can say for sure when Old Dhaka's warehouses will be relocated once construction is completed.

Bangladesh Chemical and Perfumery Merchants Association complained that the industries ministry has not yet determined how many and which warehouses will be relocated, and how the transfer process will start after construction is finished.

Statements of ministry officials do not support their actual work; their work is going on at a snail's pace, it said.

There are over 1,500 chemical shops and warehouses in Old Dhaka. Meanwhile, the industries ministry has taken up a project to build 54 chemical warehouses

on 6.17 acres of land in Shyampur.

Discussions about moving chemical warehouses out of Old Dhaka have been going on for decades, but the process is yet to start. And so, lives are being lost in fires caused by these shops and warehouses, located in residential buildings.

Dhaka district administration would implement the relocation after the new warehouses are ready.

Till now, construction of the infrastructure has not been completed. At the rate they are working, this transfer process will take a long time. But we are hopeful of shifting the shops and warehouses soon.

NURUL MOSTAFA KHOKA

President of Bangladesh Chemical and Perfumery Merchants Association

According to sources in the industries ministry, Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) owns Ujala Match Factory. This factory was closed for a long time, and as a result, truck stands were built there illegally.

After the Churihatta fire, the ministry

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'Stay alert against communal instigators'

Says Hasan Mahmud

STAR REPORT

Everyone should always be vigilant so that none can destroy communal harmony in the country, said Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

The country was born under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and after the sacrifice of people from all faiths.

Although the nation came out of a communal state system after independence, some parties in Bangladesh still exercise politics capitalising on religion, said Hasan Mahmud, also joint general secretary of Awami League.

They chant "communal slogans" during elections, he said. "We [AL] are the party of all people - Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians."

The information minister was speaking as the chief guest at the

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PRAYER TIMING		AUGUST 20	
Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:25	12:45	4:45	6:38 8:00
JAMAAAT 5:00	1:15	5:00	6:41 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

They finally woke up

Safety barriers being installed four days after Uttara tragedy



Four days after a girder fell, killing five of a family at a BRT project site in Uttara, the authorities have installed safety barriers and cautionary sign boards along the 10-kilometre length of the project site, spanning from Uttara to Gazipur. The photos were taken at project sites in Gazipur and Tongi.

PHOTO: STAR

SHAHEEN MOLLA and MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Four days after the tragedy that killed five of a family in Uttara, the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) authority finally started setting up safety barriers along around 10 kilometres of the project area, from Uttara to Gazipur.

BRT workers were seen installing corrugated sheets on both sides of the road divider to demarcate danger zones, while construction work was halted at various points for safety.

Visiting the project area yesterday in Uttara and Gazipur, The Daily Star came across some cautionary sign-boards set up to warn people about safety, and workers were found busy readying the corrugated sheet for

installation.

The signboards were seen at Tongi, Cherag Ali and Milgate of Gazipur, while installation of the sheets was ongoing in Uttara and Bata shoe factory area in Tongi.

Mohammad Shahin, a security guard of the BRT project at Cherag Ali, told this newspaper that construction work has been halted for two days after the accident.

"We received metal support materials and corrugated sheets on Thursday. We were asked to ensure safety first before any construction work. In line with the instruction, the workers began to set up the sheets and signboards," he said.

In the area, few workers were seen working near the girders. Above the ground, nets have

been put up to prevent metal chips from falling on pedestrians. Beneath, vehicles were seen plying.

Md Suman, a construction worker on Gazipur's main road, said some light work is going on apart from installing the barriers.

"We have remained very cautious in our work since the accident. The high-ups have been continuing to monitor construction to ensure maximum safety," he said.

On Tuesday, DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam visited the site and asked officials to suspend the construction work, citing inadequate protective measures.

When a reporter on the spot asked why he was visiting the site only after the incident and what he had done to ensure safety at the

project sites, the mayor claimed he had conveyed his concern to the project implementation authorities on several occasions, but they did not pay heed. After his visit, the DNCC called for a meeting on safety on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA), which is implementing several projects, including Dhaka Elevated Expressway and Dhaka-Ashulia Expressway, has issued directives to improve safety at all project sites.

Quazi Muhammad Ferdous, chief engineer of BBA, issued written directives to all project chiefs on Tuesday.

"We have asked them [the project authorities] to follow international safety standards," Ferdous told The Daily Star.

8-year-old killed in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An eight-year-old madrasa student died yesterday evening after a covered van hit him in the capital's Jatrabari area.

The deceased was identified as Mahidul Islam Mahin, son of tailor Monir Hossain.

The covered van hit the child as he was crossing a road near Bhanga Press area around 11:00am, leaving him critically injured.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he breathed his last around 6:00pm, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, in charge of DMCH Police Outpost.

SI Rashedur Rahman of Jatrabari Police Station said they seized the covered van but its driver managed to flee the scene after the accident.

"The family took away the body from the hospital without police permission," he added.



While passing by Postogola area yesterday, this photojournalist came across a rather odd, five-storey tin structure, where labourers of nearby re-rolling mills live. Although it seems to be standing tall for now, it is still doubtful whether this structure even passes the basic fitness check.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

WILDLIFE POSSESSION

No legal action taken against lawmaker

3 capped langurs rescued from his bungalow

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Even though Forest Department found and rescued three capped langurs, endangered animals that cannot be caught and caged by law, from a lawmaker's bungalow in Savar, no legal action has been taken against him.

Jatiya Party lawmaker Kazi Firoz Rashid kept the endangered primates caged in his Kabirpur bungalow for around four years, violating the Wildlife Conservation Act-2012.

The punishment for this violation is at least one year's imprisonment and a hefty fine.

The department rescued the animals on July 2 but did not file any case against Firoz.

In the act, capped langurs fall under the schedule-01 category, which consists of animals declared endangered by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Trapping, catching and caging of any animal under schedule-01 is punishable by one year's jail if the perpetrator does it for the first time. In case of repetition, the imprisonment is for three years.

While the act allows people to rear deer, crocodiles and elephants, provided they have a licence to do so, rearing capped langurs is strictly prohibited.

Firoz Rashid, an elected lawmaker from Dhaka-6, told forest officials that the primates were gifted to him. He, however, did not disclose the name of the person who gifted them.

However, asked how he got the langurs, Firoz recently told The Daily Star that such animals are available for purchase in Dhaka. "If you pay the money, they [those involved in wildlife trafficking] will get you what you want... I sourced all [my animals] this way."

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DU SEXUAL HARASSMENT Committee suggests relieving teacher of duties

DU CORRESPONDENT

The academic committee of Dhaka University's music department has recommended removing Assistant Professor Anamul Haque from all academic activities after being accused of sexually harassing a female student.

The decision came in a meeting presided over by Prof Debproshad Dawn, the department's chairperson, on Wednesday, in presence of members of the committee.

The committee made the recommendation based on evidence provided by the victim,

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