

7 injured in Sweeper Colony fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two children were among seven people who suffered burn injuries in a fire at an illegal slum under the Mayor Hanif Flyover near the Sweeper Colony in Dhaka’s Wari early yesterday.

They were rushed to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery and the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital with up to 10 percent burns, said hospital sources.

At least 40 shanties were burnt after the fire broke out at the slum near Joy Kali Temple around 3:15am.

Seven fire engines doused the blaze around 6:45am, said Rakibul Hasan, duty officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence control room.

The cause of the fire could not be known.

Fire officials the slum should be demolished as it threatens the safety of the flyover.

HAJJ REGISTRATION Deadline extended till Mar 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended the deadline for hajj registration until March 30 citing requests from the pilgrims.

The religious affairs ministry issued a notice in this regard.

The hajj registration will automatically stop once 1.27 lakh people register, it added.

A total of 15,000 people will be able to go to hajj under government management while 112,198 could go under private management this year.

Pilgrims who will perform hajj under the government management will have to pay Tk 6.71 lakh each this year.

Those who will go under private hajj management will have to pay Tk 6.60 lakh each.



Firemen try to douse a fire that broke out at the nine-storey Sheltech Sierra Computer City on Elephant Road in the capital yesterday evening. Ten fire engines eventually put the fire out at 9:23pm. There were no casualties.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Female shooter kills 6 in Nashville school attack

REUTERS, Tennessee

A female shooter killed three children and three adults at a private Christian school in Nashville of the US’s Tennessee state yesterday before police shot her dead. The assailant appeared to be a teenage girl, police said.

Police began receiving calls at 10:13am of a shooter at The Covenant School, which teaches children up to 6th grade. Officers could hear gunfire coming from the school’s second floor, Don Aaron, a spokesperson for Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, told reporters.

The shooter had at least two semi-automatic rifles and a handgun, Aaron said. Two officers from a five-member team shot at her in what Aaron described as a lobby area and she was dead by 10:27am.

“We do not know who she is at this juncture,” Aaron said.

Three students were pronounced dead after arriving at Monroe Carell Jr Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt with gunshot wounds, John Howser, a hospital spokesperson, said in a statement. Three

adult staff members were killed by the shooter, police said.

Besides the deceased, no one else was shot, Aaron said.

Students’ parents were told to gather at a nearby church.

The Covenant School, founded in 2001, is a ministry of Covenant Presbyterian Church in the Green Hills neighbourhood of Nashville with about 200 students, according to the school’s website. The school serves preschool through 6th graders and held an active shooter training program in 2022, WTVF-TV reported.

Nashville Mayor John Cooper expressed sympathy for the victims and wrote on social media that his city “joined the dreaded, long list of communities to experience a school shooting.”

Deadly mass shootings have become commonplace in the United States, but a female attacker is highly unusual. Only four of the 191 mass shootings since 1966 catalogued by The Violence Project, a nonprofit research centre, were carried out by a female attacker.

JP will take part in next nat’l polls Says Raushan

BSS, Dhaka

Jatiya Party chief patron Raushan Ershad yesterday said her party would take part in the next general election.

Raushan, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, called upon the party leaders and activists to be united and prepare for the election.

Speaking at a discussion marking the Independence and National Day at a city community centre, she said polls are an integral part of democracy.

“There is no division in Jatiya Party as all its activities are being run in line with the instructions given by late party chairman HM Ershad.”

Raushan called for fixing the party’s district level leadership from now on as the party will launch

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Two killed as lightning strikes fishing boat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Two men were killed when lightning struck their fishing boat on the Gazaria river in Mehendiganj upazila of Barishal early yesterday.

in Sadar union under

The deceased were identified as Shaheed Biswas, 69 and his son-in-law Russel Bepari, 32.

Rafiq Dafadar, village police of Char Ekaria Union, said Shaheed and Russel went to the river to catch fish after performing Tarabi prayers on Sunday night.

A little after midnight, lightning struck their boat, leaving both dead on the spot, he said.

Police recovered the bodies in the morning and handed them over to their family members upon their request.

Elderly man dies after pickup hits him

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

An elderly pedestrian died yesterday after being hit by a pickup on Phulbari-Nageshwari road in Kurigram’s Phulbari upazila.

Kanu Chandra Sen, 66, from Dharmapur village of Kashipur union, was on his way to a local bazaar.

Witnesses said a speeding pickup, headed towards Nageshwari from Phulbari, hit the elderly man in Dharmapur.

Locals took the victim to a hospital where the doctor declared him dead.

Police seized the pickup but its driver fled the scene, said Phulbari Police Station OC Fazlur Rahman.

Man to die for killing wife in Satkhira

BSS, Satkhira

A Satkhira court yesterday sentenced a man to death for killing his wife in the district’s Tala upazila in 2009.

Satkhira Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal Judge MG Azam pronounced the verdict in the afternoon.

The convict Mostafa Biswas, of the upazila’s Chandkati village, beat and strangled his wife Shiuli Khatun to death for dowry on the night of August 17, 2009, according to case details.

The next day, Shiuli’s father Abdus Sabur filed a murder case with Tala Police Station accusing Mustafa and his father Amjed Biswas.

She had head injury, cause still unknown

FROM PAGE 1

“irreversible cardio-respiratory failure due to intra-cerebral haemorrhage” and the time of death is 10:00am.

Meanwhile on Thursday, she was sued under Digital Security Act with Rajpara Police Station in Rajshahi city.

‘BROUGHT UNCONSCIOUS’ TO RMCH

Sultana was admitted to the Naogaon hospital at 1:15pm on Wednesday, according to Dr Zahid Newaj, superintendent of the hospital, which means she was taken there within one hour and 25 minutes of her detention.

She was then showing symptoms like dizziness, nausea, physical weakness and vomiting. At 3:05pm, her condition started deteriorating when she developed breathing problems, the doctor said.

Doctors then referred her to RMCH or Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogura at 3:55pm, and she was taken out of the hospital for RMCH at 7:00pm.

During her admission to RMCH, Rab officials stated that she had suffered a head injury from a fall, said hospital officials.

According to RMCH Director Brig Gen FM Shamim Ahmed, Sultana was brought by Rab officials in an unconscious condition at 9:20pm on Wednesday.

“She was unconscious and was immediately rushed to the neurology ward. From there, she was transferred to the intensive care unit because her condition continued to deteriorate. We did a CT scan and found multiple intracranial bleeds in her head,” he said.

They also found an external bruise on her head and her health deteriorated too fast on Thursday, he said.

Sultana died in the ICU at 10:00am on Friday.

Though the RMCH director on Sunday said Sultana was brought to the hospital on Thursday, yesterday he told The Daily Star, “I stand corrected. I mistakenly said that. She was admitted on Wednesday.”

THE DSA CASE

A day before Sultana’s death, Enamul Haque, the local government director at the office of Rajshahi divisional commissioner, filed the case under DSA.

Sultana was the second accused in the case while the prime accused was Al Amin, 32, of Chandpur. The case document says she was picked up at

11:50am on Wednesday.

The two were made accused of hacking Enamul’s Facebook ID and using it to con people by luring them with jobs.

Enamul was present when a Rab-5 patrol team, led by Deputy Assistant Director Md Masud, detained Sultana.

Enamul in the case said he learnt from his assistant clerk named Md Jamal that the accused swindled some persons in front of his office in Rajshahi city on March 19.

He further stated that he went to Naogaon on an official tour on Wednesday.

On his way, he met the Rab-5 patrol team at the Naogaon Bus Stand and informed them that his Facebook ID was being used to swindle people.

Talking to this newspaper at his office yesterday, Enamul claimed he informed the Rab team that one Sheikh Arif of Barishal told him about Sultana’s bank account.

And Arif was asked from Enamul’s hacked ID to make a payment to that bank account for a government job.

The Rab team took Enamul with them and located Sultana at Muktir Mor in the town, read the case statement.

It also stated that Rab members interrogated her there and she admitted before Enamul, the officers and locals that she was involved in swindling people.

Rab also seized her smartphone in which evidence of transactions in her Sonali bank account was found, it added.

‘TAKEN TO UNKNOWN LOCATION’

Although the case stated that Sultana was interrogated by Rab members at Muktir Mor, her family members said she was picked up from the spot and taken to an unknown location.

“We heard about her arrest between 9:30am and 10:00am. Then we checked with the police and detectives and looked for her for several hours. We then found her at the Naogaon hospital,” said her maternal uncle Nazmul Haque Montu.

Montu said when he went to the Naogaon hospital to see her around noon, he found two female Rab members in uniform on both sides of her bed.

Rab men in plainclothes were surrounding her when she was unconscious and having breathing difficulty.

“She opened her eyes once but fainted soon after seeing the Rab

members,” he said yesterday.

Montu had asked the two female Rab officials why they were beside her bed. They told him to talk to their superiors. A Rab member in plainclothes showed him a photo saying he is a high official named Enamul and Sultana used his Facebook ID to con people.

“I left the hospital few moments later as I didn’t dare stay there alone.”

Montu said a sense of fear had been prevailing at Chalkdeb Jonokolyan Moholla in Naogaon town, where Sultana, a divorcee, lived with her only son in a rented house.

When a group of journalists visited the area on Monday, the house was found vacant. Even the house owner was unavailable.

None of the neighbours agreed to talk and Montu took the journalists to a distant location to speak with them.

He claimed to have received a call from a Rab official on Wednesday afternoon, and the caller asked him to visit her again at the Naogaon hospital.

He sent Aminul Islam, Sultana’s brother-in-law, to the hospital, hoping to join him after evening prayers.

As soon as Aminul reached there, Rab members left for RMCH with Sultana and Aminul. “They were trying to show that the treatment was going on in the presence of Sultana’s relatives,” Montu said.

He also claimed plainclothes Rab members have been guarding their area round-the-clock since her death.

RAB VERSION

Meanwhile, Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of the legal and media wing of Rab, told The Daily Star that they had arrested the woman based on specific complaints. “We have found proof of transaction of around Tk 20 lakh from the woman’s account,” he said.

“Soon after the arrest, she fell sick and we rushed her to the Naogaon hospital. Later, she was shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for better treatment. She was not even taken to the Rab camp after the arrest,” he said.

She was provided treatment at the hospital under family’s observation, the director claimed.

“Still, if any Rab members are found involved in any irregularities, we will take action following proper investigation,” he added.

Little room for trimming

FROM PAGE 1

the year in the global market from the record high seen in August last year.

Also, there will be no subsidy for the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation on fuel imports this fiscal year, said a finance ministry official asking not to be named.

Similarly, in the revised budget the subsidy for the agriculture sector has increased by about 62 percent to Tk 26,000 crore as the government looks to ramp up production by incentivising farmers.

Last fiscal year, Tk 12,000 crore has been provided as subsidy for the agriculture sector and Tk 9,500 crore the year before.

After the subsidy increase, the outstanding liabilities in the power and agriculture sectors will be Tk 70,000 crore.

Another Tk 1,000 crore has been extended as food subsidy to take the total to about Tk 7,000 crore.

Given the elevated inflation level, the

‘We’ll deliver justice’

FROM PAGE 1

initiative (suo motu) after Supreme Court lawyer Manoj Kumar Bhowmik placed a report run by The Daily Star on Sultana’s death.

The HC raised some questions about the death of Sultana, who died in the custody of Rapid Action Battalion on March 24.

A union-level land office employee in Naogaon, Sultana suffered brain haemorrhages after being detained by Rab on March 22.

The HC judges questioned why she was arrested, who arrested her, where she was taken to after the arrest, where and under whose presence she was interrogated, who interrogated her, whether she sustained any fresh injury after her arrest and whether any law was violated during her stay in custody.

“After getting complete information, we will start work to ensure justice,” Justice Farah Mahbub said.

The bench ordered AAG Abul Kamal to produce relevant papers containing the details of Rab personnel involved in arresting and interrogating Sultana, and her inquest and post-mortem reports before it this morning.

The AAG informed the court that no case was filed in this connection and the body was handed over to the family after an inquest and an autopsy.

Lawyer Manoj Kumar told the HC bench that a case was filed against Sultana under the Digital Security Act more than 31 hours after she was detained, and that she was not

produced before any court during this period which is illegal.

He prayed to the HC bench to pass necessary directives on this matter.

The court asked the lawyer to move a writ petition before this court in this regard and fixed today for its hearing and passing orders on the matter.

Meanwhile, different human rights organisations yesterday expressed grave concern over Sultana’s death and demanded a fair and neutral probe into the incident.

They also demanded appropriate legal action against those responsible for the death and ensuring their accountability.

In a statement, Ain O Salish Kendra said it is evident from the family’s allegation, doctor’s statement and media reports that the provisions of the constitution and related laws have been violated in detaining and interrogating Sultana in Rab custody.

Though this is not the first allegation against the law enforcers, allegations of torturing people and deaths in custody are raised very often, the rights body said.

Human Rights Forum Bangladesh in another statement said though the Rab claimed that Sultana died while receiving treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital after suffering a brain haemorrhage, her family members alleged that she died of torture in custody.

The allegations brought by the family have to be looked into and justice must be ensured, it said.

Sultana was detained before a case

on interest payments rose about 22 percent to Tk 40,792 crore in the first half of the fiscal year.

“This happened not just because of devaluation of taka against the US dollar but also because of higher expenditure on treasury bills,” said the finance ministry official.

The interest rate for government securities increased, according to the quarterly debt bulletin of the finance ministry.

Treasury bills and bonds are one of the major tools the government uses when it comes to borrowing. The interest on the securities has gone up recently owing to the liquidity shortage in the banking system. The sharp depreciation of the taka was one of the factors behind the liquidity shortage.

The revenue budget has been revised downwards by 1.16 percent to Tk 426,971 crore and the development budget by 7.51 percent to Tk 227,566 crore.

was filed against her; she was illegally interrogated and police were not informed about the actions which is an example of violation of the constitution, fundamental principle of human rights, Supreme Court directives, and existing laws, the statement added.

Police sue 265 BNP men in Netrakona

FROM PAGE 1

Rahman Farid and Durgapur municipality Jubo Dal convener Abu Siddique Rukku.

Johirul Alam Bhuiyan, convener of Durgapur upazila BNP, alleged that when the BNP men were on their way to the municipality memorial to place floral wreaths on Independence Day, police stopped them around 10:00am.

At one stage, police attacked the BNP men, resulting chases and counter chases, alleged Bhuiyan. Police fired shots in the air during the incident.

Abu Chan, Rukku, and Chhatra Dal activist Shishir were injured and they were admitted to Durgapur Upazila Health Complex.

Soon after the incident, police detained seven BNP men and six others early yesterday, said police.