

Suchita Zaman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suchita Zaman, the youngest daughter of National Professor Anisur-zaman, passed away yesterday morning. She was 53.

She breathed her last at 6:07am while undergoing treatment at United Hospital in Dhaka. She had been suffering from thymic cancer, said her family members.

She is survived by a son and a daughter.

Suchita was the wife of the late Tasneem Sumon Haider Chowdhury, who was the eldest son of martyred intellectual Mufazzal Haider Chowdhury.

She was brought to the country yesterday afternoon from the Samitivej Sukhumvit Hospital in Bangkok.

Her namaz-e-janaza was scheduled to be held at Azad Mosque in Gulshan after Juma prayers yesterday. She will be buried beside her husband at Banani graveyard in the capital.



Protesting the High Court's move to grant bail to Sohela Rana, the owner of Rana Plaza, which collapsed claiming at least 1,136 lives in April 2013, National Garment Workers Federation staged a demonstration in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday. They demanded that the HC dissolve the bail and grant maximum punishment instead.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Frustrated and full of rage

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bail. I strongly protest this decision. He should be given capital punishment," she added.

Stating that she still couldn't get over the trauma of the Rana Plaza collapse, a survivor of the incident, Rupali Akter, said, "I don't know how I came back alive. When I was rescued, the fear was still in my mind, whether I would be buried in the ground like this, or thrown away as a corpse. Ten years have passed, but that fear and terror still haunts me."

"Next April 24 will mark 10 years of that tragedy. Even today, we have not received justice," she added.

Speaking at the

programme, Seuty Sabur, a teacher of Brac University, said, "There is interdependence among the garment owners and workers. The owners must realise that their industry is built on labour, sweat and blood."

Claiming that there is a lack of artistic forms to depict the Rana Plaza collapse, eminent filmmaker Amitabh Reza Chowdhury said, "But we don't see the story of human life in any movie or drama. Few dramas were made [on Rana Plaza]. Why can't we? It will not be allowed to be made in any way. The people who control the three things of the movie -- production,

direction and distribution -- are all in the hands of the garment owners' relatives."

To mark the 10th anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy, Drik Gallery and Pathshala South Asian Media Institute jointly organised the photo exhibition where photographs of 20 photojournalists of the country are being displayed. The exhibition will remain open from 3:00pm to 7:00pm every day till April 15.

At least 1,136 people, mostly garment workers, were killed and over 2,500 others injured as the nine-storey building came crashing down in Savar on April 24, 2013.

Courier companies

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Suruj Khan, a trader of the area.

Nazrul Islam Chunnun, convener of Janaudyog Mymensingh, a citizens' forum, alleged that a section of unscrupulous traders is enjoying a huge financial benefit by grabbing the city's footpaths. Nobody was bothered about it although it has been continuing for years, he added.

Chunnun demanded a sustainable action to evict the occupiers to keep the walkways clear.

Humayun Kabir Masud, operation manager of AJR Parcel and Courier Service at Dhopakhol, said sometimes their goods are kept on the footpath during delivery as they have no available space for loading and unloading those.

Noor Mohammad Khan Manik, manager of Sundarban Courier

Service's Mymensingh branch at Boro Bazar, said sometimes, their covered vans are kept in front of their office.

Occupying footpaths is one of the major causes behind traffic congestion in the city, said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, traffic inspector in Mymensingh.

"City dwellers must be aware of this menace in a concerted way to help the administration and police to tackle it," said the traffic inspector.

Md Aminul Islam, assistant secretary of Mymensingh City Corporation, said they conduct eviction drives to clear the footpaths. However, the drives are yet to reach the expected goal.

"A coordinated drive involving the administration and law enforcers is a must to make footpaths usable for people," added the official.

Man attacked

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to Monir's office on Thursday with the bribe. As per plan, I went to the BSCIC office and gave Tk 50,000 to Monir. At that time, the ACC officials detained him [Monir] red handed around 1:00pm," Eskandar told The Daily Star.

"Around two hours later, I left the BSCIC office and was returning home in an auto-rickshaw. When my vehicle reached Paschim Kotapara area in the town, some 10 to 12 people riding on motorbikes stopped me and took me near the premises of a local primary

school," he continued.

"Then, they started hitting me with hammers. The attackers were asking me why I complained against Monir," claimed Eskandar.

"Later, some locals rescued and took me to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital," he added.

Meanwhile, the BSCIC official was sent to jail through a court, and a bribe case was filed against him, said ACC's assistant director Akhtaruzzaman. He stated that they will extend their cooperation to Eskandar if needed.

AL leaders behind

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party wants a neutral probe into the incident to unveil the truth. Justifying his remark involving the ruling party leaders with the market fire, Fakhrul said the government has started talking about constructing multi storied buildings at Bangabazar just a day after the incident.

A massive fire broke out at Bangabazar Shopping Complex in Dhaka on Tuesday morning and it spread to some other nearby

markets, burning several thousand shops, mainly ready-made garment and footwear stores, to ashes.

On Thursday, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said investigations were being carried out to unearth whether BNP was involved in the devastating fire incident at Bangabazar.

He also alleged that BNP was trying to politicise the fire incident instead of standing by the fire-affected people.

DSA protects people who want

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projects have been given indemnity through this act," he added.

Anu also observed that the ruling party claims itself to be a democratically elected government, whereas, in reality, no real election has been held since 2008.

He said the government formulated this act out of fear. "People have to speak out to oppose the unjust restrictions imposed by the government. We have to be loud when they want

us to be silent. We have to remain active when they want us to be inactive."

Prof Tanzimuddin Khan of international relations at Dhaka University said those who are in power boast of turning the country into a smart Bangladesh.

"We saw an example of this supposed smart Bangladesh through the death of Mushtaq Ahmed. In the name of making a smart Bangladesh, they are pulling Bangladesh back," he said.

"DSA is the continuation

4 present

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"At one stage, they brandished firearms and tried to take our money," Iqbal, Akkas' son, told The Daily Star.

"We started shouting, after which locals rushed to the spot. We, altogether, caught two of them [Tanvir and Shoyeb]. But the other two fled the scene. Then, we informed police," he said.

On information, police rushed to the spot and detained the duo. Few moments later, two other people -- Lelin and Kamrul -- went to the spot and tried to release Tanvir and Shoyeb. But police arrested them too, said locals.

"We have arrested four persons while trying to snatch cash. They were involved with different types of criminal activities too. We will share details in a press conference later," said Avijit Ray, sub-inspector of Narsingdi Sadar Police Station.

"We have recovered firearms and fake ID cards of police from them," he informed The Daily Star.

Of them, Lelin is accused in different criminal cases, said police sources.

Important Pirojpur road in dire

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Mizan of Binna village.

Another local, Nurul Islam, said, "We don't see any other damaged roads like this one in our upazila."

Raju Ahmed, who drives his motorcycle on rental basis, said he has to face serious trouble while driving on the dilapidated road. "Most of the passengers prefer to walk instead of operating any

vehicle."

"Due to the awful condition, road accidents occur regularly," said Sahabuddin Ahmed of Rajabari village.

"We avoid getting on passenger-carrying vehicles, fearing risk of accidents," said high-schooler Mohammad Ibrahim, adding that their sufferings increase during the rainy season.

Residents of several villages under the two upazilas and many students of different educational institutions use the road to go to their desired destinations every day, locals said.

Shafiqul Islam, a local, said there are many small factories that produce different consumer products in the region, and they have to face a lot of trouble while carrying the products through the damaged road.

Baldia Union Parishad Chairman Sayeedur Rahman said the rural road is commercially crucial, and its renovation will remove sufferings of thousands of people living in his union.

Contacted, Nesarabad LGED Upazila Engineer Sheikh Towfique Aziz said they will start their work soon after completing all official procedures.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites proposals from interested to apply 'Hiring Firm/Organization for conducting capacity development programme based on CRPD and UNPRPD induction training Guidelines'. The bidding documents can be downloaded from the ILO Dhaka website under **Procurement Notices** at

https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/WCMS_367536/lang-en/index.htm

The deadline for submission of proposal is **Wednesday, May 10, 2023, by 04:30 PM (BST time)**.



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Plagued by gas crisis

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A former official of Petrobangla said there are some areas under Titas where gas connections are over-saturated, which means where 100 connections are required, they have given 200 or more.

He said in some areas, the pipelines are inadequately small to supply the required amount of gas.

An official of Titas said as the authorities are not providing new gas connections for a long time, many syndicates have formed in and outside Dhaka to provide illegal connections, which ultimately leads to all consumers suffering due to such crises.

According to Titas' data, the total number of domestic consumers in

Dhaka is around 28.65 lakh. From January 2020 to December 2022, 1218.28 kilometres of illegal lines were cut.

Meanwhile, the country's gas demand is about 4,000 million cubic feet (mmcfd) per day, whereas it is getting 2,700 to 2,900 mmcfd, said an official of Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Ltd.

Officials attributed the dearth of supply to the reduced import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for a long time.

An official of Petrobangla said they are now conducting area-based rationing to balance the supply.

Energy expert Prof M Shamsul Alam said the crisis is man-made. "Although the country has a lot of

hydrocarbon potential, we have not emphasised on gas exploration."

"We had appointed international oil companies to explore our natural resources instead of increasing our local gas companies' ability to explore, which is costly," he said.

Alam, also vice president of Consumers' Association of Bangladesh, said, "Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission made a fund to explore gas resources with the help of consumers. However, the government has not been able to spend more than 30 percent of the fund till now."

"It is an example of the government's negligence in exploration. They love to import expensive LNG from the international

spot market. Now, there is a lack of foreign currency to import LNG, and the government is in trouble," he added.

Urban planning expert Adil Mohammad Khan said the policy on supplying gas has shifted.

The government is not giving new connections, as it is showing interest to supply liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) via cylinders, he noted.

Supplying gas in residential areas and preventing leakages would be more risk-free and profitable in Bangladesh than making people use cylinders, he said.

Although the government has stopped providing connections to residential areas, the number of illegal connections is increasing,

leading to a higher risk of accidents, he mentioned.

In March, Md Salim Miah, director (operations) of Titas, said the situation was a bit better compared to the crisis several months ago, and it will improve further when the LNG supply increases.

Salim said they have taken the initiative to replace old pipelines to make the supply smoother, as leakages will go down.

They have already completed a feasibility study and are working to prepare a development proposal. He, however, mentioned that it will take more time to start the work, as many procedures are required, he said.

When asked about illegal connections, he said they will take more steps to disconnect them.