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'As if a part of my son has returned'

Firefighter's baby born 12 days
after his death in Tongi blaze



STAR REPORT

Twelve days after firefighter Nurul Huda sacrificed his life while battling the devastating chemical fire in Gazipur's Tongi, a new life entered his home -- a baby boy who will never see his father.

The child was born around 10:30am yesterday at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, bringing both tears and solace to a family still mourning the loss of their beloved one.

"My son gave his life serving the nation, and today Allah has blessed us with his son -- as if a part of my son has returned. It's a moment filled with both joy and sorrow," Nurul's father Abul Mansur told The Daily Star.

He sought prayers for the baby.

"Nurul had been kind and helpful since his childhood. He was always the first to help others, and now, while trying to help others, he gave his own life," said Nurul's cousin Mostafa Kamal.

Nurul Huda, a member of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, was among those who rushed into the flames at a chemical warehouse in Tongi on September 22, risking everything to save others.

He suffered severe burns while trying to extinguish the fire. Despite days of treatment and prayers at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, he lost his battle for life on September 24.

Two other firefighters and a shop employee also succumbed to the injuries they sustained in the fire.

Born on July 21, 1987, in Gafargaon upazila of Mymensingh, Nurul Huda joined the force in 2007 with a dream to serve his country and protect lives.

In his 17 years of service, he lived true to that vow -- even to his last breath, fire service officials said.

Nurul Huda left behind a grieving wife, a 10-year-old daughter, a 3-year-old son, and now a newborn baby -- a child who will grow up hearing stories of his father's courage and dedication.



Wading through chest-deep water in a rain-fed wetland in Abhaynagar, Jashore, Shariful Molla gathers bundles of water lilies -- a monsoon bloom that becomes a source of livelihood for many low-income families. For three to four months each year, he collects, cleans, and sells the lilies, earning Tk 10 per bundle.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

**ENFORCED
DISAPPEARANCES**
Investigation
reports on
major cases
by this week

Says Tajul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ICT Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam yesterday said investigation reports of several major enforced disappearance cases committed during the Awami League's tenure will be submitted this week.

Tajul made the remarks while talking to reporters after the ICT-2 took cognisance of charges against AL leader and former Kushtia lawmaker Mahbubul Alam Hanif and three others in a crimes against humanity case.

The tribunal ordered the authorities concerned to arrest the four accused, who are on the run, and produce them before it on October 14.

"Many cases are now in their final stages,"

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With 782 new dengue cases reported yesterday, the total number of cases this year has surpassed 50,000, marking an alarming trend, according to official data.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said at least three dengue patients died yesterday, raising the total death toll to 215 and confirmed cases to 50,689.

Currently, 2,473 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at hospitals across the country, of whom 1,622 are from outside Dhaka.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, said dengue comes in waves, and when mosquito density is high alongside rising cases, it becomes very difficult to stop.

"Our forecasting model shows that cases will peak in October, start to decline in November, but continue significantly until January. Stopping it completely now is almost impossible," he said.

He stressed that while city corporations must intensify source reduction, breeding site

management, hotspot control, and other measures, community involvement is equally crucial.

"Without active participation in eliminating breeding grounds, controlling this outbreak will be extremely difficult," Bashar added.

GM Saifur Rahman, an entomologist at National University, also urged intensified mosquito

control drives in hotspots, including targeted breeding site eradication, adult mosquito elimination, and sustained nationwide action. He further called for community mobilisation through awareness campaigns.

In a press statement on October 6, the DGHS urged all patients with fever to undergo dengue testing

immediately at the nearest hospital and to seek prompt medical attention if diagnosed.

Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan, director (hospital) at DGHS, told The Daily Star that delayed hospitalisation has been a major factor behind the recent rise in fatalities.

According to DGHS data, seven of the nine patients who died recently passed away on the very day of hospitalisation, while one of the remaining two died the following day. "Primarily, the delay in reaching hospitals caused the dengue infection to become complicated, leaving little opportunity for effective treatment. Late admissions or delayed consultation with doctors make treating complicated cases extremely difficult," read a DGHS statement.

The health authority also said all hospitals are stocked with sufficient dengue testing kits, saline, and medicines. However, it emphasised that reducing fatalities will require rapid detection, treatment in line with clinical guidelines, and simultaneous mosquito control measures.



**Khwaja
Habibullah
Askari no more**

CITY DESK

Khwaja Habibullah Askari, founding secretary and a former member of the Board of Trustees of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Foundation Bangladesh passed away yesterday, said a press release.

Khwaja Habibullah Askari was the youngest son of Nawab Hasan Askari.

As a representative of the Rangoonwala Foundation UK, he played an instrumental role in the establishment of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Foundation Bangladesh in 2006 and served as its honorary secretary from 2007-08 to 2010-11.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held today at Paribagh Jame Mosque after the Zohr prayers, followed by burial at Salimullah Graveyard in Begum Bazar, Dhaka.

**MBBS entry
test likely
on Dec 12**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The MBBS entrance examinations for the 2025-26 session is likely to be held on December 12.

"The date is almost final, but it should not be called final until an official notice is issued," Mollika Khatun, joint secretary (medical education) of the Medical Education and Family Welfare Division, told The Daily Star yesterday.

She said the issue of the medical admission test came up at a meeting convened by the health ministry's division to

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PLOT SCAM
3 more testify
against Hasina,
family in 3 cases

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Three more prosecution witnesses yesterday testified in three graft cases filed against 23 people, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana, and niece British MP Tulip Siddiq.

They are Gautam Kumar Sikdar, Shoriful Islam, and Riad Mahmud.

Judge Md Rabiu Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 in Dhaka recorded their statements, said ACC Public Prosecutor Khan Md Moinul Hasan Lipon.

He said that witnesses testified in the graft case filed against 17 people, including Hasina, Rehana, and Tulip; in another graft case filed against 18 people, including Hasina, Azmina Siddiq, and Tulip; and in a third graft case filed against 18 people, including Hasina, Radwan Mujib Siddiq, and Tulip.



Makeshift shops have occupied the footpath in front of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital on Mirpur Road in Dhaka, leaving little space for patients and their attendants to reach the entrance. The stalls also obscure nearby warning signs meant to alert drivers to slow down near the hospital. Although the vendors cater to visitors, the food sold is often unhygienic and unsuitable for patients. The photo was taken recently.

**'Draft Labour Act
undemocratic'
Labour leaders tell event**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Industrial Bangladesh Council (IBC) has protested what it termed an attempt by the government to finalise amendments to the Labour Act without considering workers' key proposals.

At a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday, former IBC general secretary Salauddin Swapan read out a statement saying the government's draft is "undemocratic and contrary to ILO Convention 87".

He said recent Tripartite Consultative Council discussions were concluded abruptly without allowing labour representatives to speak on the minimum membership needed to form unions.

Under the proposed formula, factories with 51 to 60 workers would need 80-100 percent support to form a union, those with 60 to 70 workers over 72 percent, 70 to 100 workers over 50 percent, and 100 to 150 workers over 30 percent. "This will make forming unions even more difficult than before," the IBC said.

It proposed instead that 10 workers be enough to form a union in factories with 20-50 workers, 20 members for 51-200 workers, and gradually up to 300 for factories with over 3,000 workers.

Other demands include six months' maternity leave, reducing the resignation notice period from 60 to 30 days, and one month's wages per year of service for those resigning after a year.

The IBC will submit a memorandum to the labour adviser on October 12 and warned of a wider movement if the law is finalised without addressing their concerns.

**PRAYER
TIMING**
OCTOBER 7

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-45 12-45 4-15 5-53 7-30
JAMAAT 5-20 1-15 4-30 5-56 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION