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DHAKA AIRPORT FIRE

## Unsafe storage, fire system failures to blame: Probe

Automatic fire detection, suppression systems recommended

ZYMA ISLAM and RASHIDUL HASAN

A probe into the October 18 fire at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's import cargo complex has found that unsafe storage practices and a lack of fire protection systems were responsible for the devastating blaze.

The report identified two possible

causes -- overheating of lithium-ion batteries stored without temperature control and an electrical short circuit. Arson, or sabotage, was ruled out because of a lack of evidence.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines, the ground handler of the import cargo complex, conducted the investigation and submitted the report to the civil aviation ministry on November 3.

The fire spread to the import cargo section after originating inside the structure known as the courier building, previously leased to and constructed by the International Air Express Association

- ➊ Lack of demolition tool prevented access to source of fire
- ➋ Piled up freight blocked access, worsening response
- ➌ Lease agreements do not clearly define safety responsibilities

Star shows smoke rising at 2:15pm from the west side of the tin-roofed shed, a section currently leased to DHL.

The fire appeared to start atop a storage rack. Within minutes, smoke thickened, and flames erupted at 2:19pm, followed by an electrical explosion that rapidly engulfed the room. By 2:21pm, the area was entirely ablaze.

Despite the spreading smoke, no sprinklers activated. The Airport Control Tower called the Airport Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) team at 2:19pm, but in breach of the Emergency Response Plan,

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Large patches of waste mixed with green vegetation spread across the outskirts of Dhaka's Aminbazar landfill, highlighting severe pollution and environmental degradation. Waste from the site continues to spill into surrounding areas as the capital's population grows each year, turning it into a megacity generating more solid waste than the system can manage. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## No end in sight to charter deadlock

BNP bins Jamaat's call for dialogue, says it'll respond only to CA's invite

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

With just a day remaining before the interim government's preferred timeframe for political parties to resolve their differences over the July charter, there are barely any signs that the deadlock is easing.

The BNP yesterday said it would join talks with other parties only if the invitation came from Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Rejecting Jamaat-e-Islami's call to engage in dialogue on the charter's implementation,

it questioned why another political party was issuing the invitation.

Meanwhile, nine parties -- the NCP, Amar Bangladesh Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad, and six from the Ganatantra Mancha alliance -- are in talks to find ways to break the deadlock. A Ganatantra Mancha leader said they were yet to hold discussions with the BNP and Jamaat.

In a separate development, a liaison committee of eight political parties, including Jamaat, which is carrying out a simultaneous

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Political killings, gang hits leave people of Ctg shaken

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A spate of killings linked to deadly gang violence and political clashes in Chattogram over the past year has left residents in the city and adjoining upazilas fearing for their safety, with many describing the situation as living in a state of "constant fear".

As many as 35 murders have been committed across the metropolitan area and its outskirts since the political

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