

Tears of salt farmers

Large stock, illegal imports cause huge losses to producers

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, back from Cox's Bazar

Abdul Karim's eyes sparkle with joy when he stares at his salt flats shining white under the sun. But his joy soon begins to fade when he thinks of selling the fruit of his labour.

Spending around Tk 1.60 lakh on leased land, hiring labour, and other production-related activities, the farmer from Chawfaldandi village in Cox's Bazar Sadar is set for a total yield of 800 maunds of salt from his 1.6 acres by the end of the season.

But a maund of the daily essential is now being sold at Tk 150 in the market and if he sells at this price, he estimates a loss of Tk 40,000.

"We will not even recoup production costs this season because of the low price. And if the price fall continues for long, we will have to cut back," said Karim, his sun-baked face turning gloomy.

He said they had incurred a loss despite selling a maund of salt at Tk 200. "But the situation this time is worse as the price has gone down to Tk 150 per maund," he added.

Like Karim, around 30,000 salt farmers from Cox's Bazar and a few from Chattogram are incurring significant losses for the price drop.

Salt farmers and government officials alleged that a syndicate of unscrupulous businessmen and mill owners is manipulating the price of salt.

They said that despite a ban on the import of edible salt, some unscrupulous salt traders imported a large amount of edible salt in the name of sodium sulphate, known as industrial salt, from countries like China and India where

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Farmers working on salt flats in Chawfaldandi village of Cox's Bazar late last month. They have been incurring losses this season as unrefined salt is being sold at Tk 3.75 a kg, down from Tk 5 about a year ago. Millers and government officials blamed import of edible salt using false declaration for the low price.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

20 shots fired a day after the 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Criminals fired about 20 blank shots at a hill near the refugee camps in the district's Teknaf upazila yesterday, a day after seven suspected Rohingya robbers were killed in a "gunfight" with Rab there.

Locals suspected that members of a notorious robbery gang, led by Zokir Ahmed, fired the shots near Jadimura-Nayapara Rohingya refugee camps-26, 27 to make their existence known.

They said a group of armed Rohingya men gathered at the hill around noon. The criminals went to the "shootout" spot and fired shots.

The incident caused panic among the Rohingya refugees, who rushed to their rooms fearing attacks from criminals. Locals suspect that some refugees work as sources of the robbery gang.

Mostafa of refugee camp-27 said, "Suddenly we heard some gunshots. Being panicked, were tried

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5.4 lakh tonnes of coal stolen

CAB says after probing Barapukuria mining company

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 5.48 lakh tonnes of coal was misappropriated from the yard of state-run Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd (BCMCL) in the name of system loss in 13 years since 2005, said an investigation commission.

The loss was shown to have been occurred at various stages of production, handling and marketing, said the commission formed by the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB).

The six-member commission, led by eminent columnist Syed Abul Maksud, yesterday revealed these findings at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Other members of the commission are architect Mubasshar Hussain, Prof Badrul Imam, Prof MM Akash, Prof Susanta Kumar Das and Prof M Shamsul Alam.

Earlier, the BCMCL authorities claimed

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Virus death toll in Iran rises to 77

835 new cases reported in a single day in the country; UK sets out 'battle plan' to contain coronavirus

AGENCIES

Iran's health ministry announced yesterday that 11 more people had died from the new coronavirus in the past day, bringing the Islamic republic's overall death toll to 77.

In all, 2,336 people have been infected, including 835 new cases -- the biggest increase in a single day since the COVID-19 outbreak began in the country nearly two weeks ago.

"According to the latest figures, 835 new patients have been added" to the overall number of infections, Deputy Health Minister Alireza Raisi said in remarks aired live on state television.

"Unfortunately, we have 11 new deaths, and with this amount we have reached 2,336 new confirmed cases and a total of 77 dead."

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COVID-19 UPDATE	3,116 DEATHS	80,299 confirmed cases in mainland China	The virus spread to at least 76 countries
	90,914 confirmed cases		

Two killed in 'gunfights'

STAR REPORT

An activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir, who is also accused in the murder of a Chhatra League leader in Noakhali's Begumganj upazila, was killed in a "gunfight" with police early yesterday.

The dead was Nazrul Islam, 26. He was the second among 25 accused in the case filed for the murder of union level BCL leader Rakibul Hossain, said Harunur Rashid Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Begumganj Police Station.

Rakibul, 20, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Monday, a day after Shibir men allegedly carried out an attack on BCL men at Amanullahpur Bazar area, which left 10 other activists injured, reports our Noakhali

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Bangladeshi researchers discover new frog



ABIDA RAHMAN CHOWDHURY

"It is named after one of the most prominent wildlife scientists and conservationists in the country, it mimics the sound of crickets and it is tiny," this is how the team of researchers who determined the presence of a new species of frog describe the amphibian.

The frog is so tiny that it can sit comfortably on your thumb.

Raorchestes rezakhani was the discovery of two young researchers -- Hasan Al Razi Chayan and

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Eviction Drive Lawmaker's power plant structures torn down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) yesterday knocked down three single-storey buildings and the walls and storage tanks of a power plant belonging to a ruling party lawmaker, all of which had encroached on the Buriganga.

The power plant, in Charwashpur near Basila bridge, is owned by Aslamul Haque, lawmaker of Dhaka-14 (Mirpur), and parts of it had encroached on the river, said BIWTA Joint Director AKM Arif Uddin, who led the drive.

The drive that started at 9:00am and continued until 5:00pm also knocked down 10 walls and 10 other structures of the power plant that had been constructed illegally on the river.

Even five years ago the entire area was in the river

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Soviet-Bangladesh friendship is based on principle



Bangabandhu and then Soviet prime minister Alexei Kosygin after Bangabandhu arrived at Leningrad.

MARCH 4, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

DHAKA-MOSCOW JOINT DECLARATION

The joint declaration signed in Moscow upon conclusion of talks between Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Soviet Leaders says, "Both governments have agreed to hold regular consultations between the two governments at various levels on all important matters involving the interests of both the states."

It also says that irrespective of different social systems, the development of friendly relations and cooperation between the countries in all fields is possible in the interest of the two countries.

On the economic side, the document expresses satisfaction over the steps already taken. It notes the agreement on Soviet financial



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Judge stand released after order to send ex-MP, wife to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hours after sending a former Awami League lawmaker and his wife to jail, a Pirojpur district and sessions judge was stand-released yesterday over corruption allegations and attached to the law ministry.

Law ministry and Supreme Court (SC) sources said the ministry passed the order following the approval of the SC.

The ministry had earlier received graft allegations against Judge Abdul Mannan, and departmental proceedings were going on against him.

The ministry sources, however, did not give any details about the allegations.

Contacted, Law Minister Anisul Huq declined to comment and said, "I want to remain impartial".

Earlier in the day, the court of Judge Mannan ordered the authorities concerned to send former AL MP AKMA Awal and his wife Laila Parvin to jail, rejecting their bail prayers in three corruption cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) last year.

The ex-MP of the Pirojpur-1 constituency, also president of the district AL, is accused in three cases filed for leasing khas (government) land using fake documents.

His wife is accused in one case.

Judge Mannan passed the order when Awal and his wife appeared before it with bail prayers, our Pirojpur correspondent reports, quoting ACC lawyer Mansur Uddin Hawladar.

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UN body to move before Indian SC over CAA

HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE

The UN human rights chief intends to file an application in the Indian Supreme Court in connection with the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), prompting New Delhi to say yesterday that no foreign party has locus standi on issues related to the country's sovereignty.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said India's permanent mission in Geneva was informed on

Monday evening by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, about the plans to file an intervention application.

"The CAA is an internal matter of India and concerns the sovereign right of the Indian Parliament to make laws. We strongly believe that no foreign party has any locus standi on issues pertaining to India's sovereignty," Kumar said.

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 4
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

ব্যাংকার-এসএমই নারী উদ্যোক্তা সমাবেশ ও পণ্য প্রদর্শনী মেলা-২০২০

তারিখ : ০৫ মার্চ - ০৮ মার্চ, ২০২০ (বৃহস্পতি, শুক্র, শনি ও রবিবার)

সময় : সকাল ১০:০০টা হতে রাত ৮:০০টা পর্যন্ত

স্থান : বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ব্যাংক ম্যানেজমেন্ট (বিআইবিএম), মিরপুর-২, ঢাকা

উদ্বোধন করবেন গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় শিল্পমন্ত্রী
জনাব নূরুল মজিদ মাহমুদ হুমায়ুন এম.পি.

সকলে আমন্ত্রিত

আয়োজনে : বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক