

## 2 Rohingya 'robbers' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Cox's Bazar

Two Rohingya men, suspected to be robbers, were killed in a "gunfight" with Rab near Jadimura Hill in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar early Friday.

The dead are Abdul Hakim, 30, and Rashid Ullah, 35, said Abdullah Mohammad Sheikh Shadi, assistant director (media) of Rab-15.

Acting on a tip off, a team of Rab-15 conducted a drive in the area where a group of robbers were preparing to commit a robbery, he claimed.

Sensing their presence, the "robbers" opened fire, forcing the Rab personnel to retaliate. After the "gunfight", Rab officials found two bullet-hit bodies lying on the ground, the Rab official added.

Rab also claimed to have recovered 15 pistols, 28 rounds of bullets and huge numbers of machetes from the spot.

Two Rab men were injured in the "gunfight", the Rab official said.



A long row of rickshaws parked on the side of a road in Badda recently. With the countrywide shutdown in place to contain the spread of Covid-19, survival has become quite an uphill battle for most rickshaw-pullers. Keeping that in mind, law enforcers have allowed them to wait for passengers in the area this way by maintaining distance.

## Laying Covid-19

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She said after being disinfected, a body is put in an airtight bag and then into a coffin. "It is then taken to the graveyard. We are being utmost careful and sincere while performing our duties so that there is no chance of spreading the virus."

They also dig a four feet grave rather than 2.5 feet one. "The germs will get destroyed within a few days after burial," she said.

The chief social welfare officer said it's a joint effort. "Al Markazul brings the bodies and places those at the grave while our people dig the graves and take care of other procedures to complete the burial."

There are also three imams as well as members of Al Markazul who conduct janazas before the burial, he added.

Tanzin said the Khilgaon-Taltala graveyard has a burial capacity of 2,500.

"We will also visit the Rayerbazar graveyard (90,000 capacity) this week to take necessary measures in case we need to use it."

Initially four burials took place outside the Khilgaon-Taltala graveyard. Apart from that, all burials of Covid-19 positive persons in the capital were conducted at this graveyard, she said.

## Shouldn't make

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Health experts, however, raised questions about the certificates.

Prof Muzaherul said passengers with certificates stating negative test results may also be infected if the virus is in incubation period.

"Therefore, we should not repeat the mistake we made at the beginning and allow Bangladeshi expatriates to stay in home quarantine, as it caused a disaster for us," said the health expert.

"We must take lessons from the mistake," Prof Muzaherul warned.

## Khairun Nesa passes away

STAR REPORT

Begum Khairun Nesa, mother of Bangladesh Handball Federation treasurer Jahangir Hossain, passed away at a Dhaka hospital on Friday at 85.

She left behind three sons, two daughters and a host of well-wishers.

She was buried in Azimpur on Friday after a namaz-e-janaza held at Malibagh Jam-e-Mosque.

The handball federation and other organisations mourned the death of Khairun Nesa.

## 40 lawyers

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prepared for the virtual court hearing and then it will be distributed among the judges, lawyers and court staffers, said Saifur.

On April 26, Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain at a meeting with Supreme Court judges decided to amend Appellate Division and High Court Division rules to holding such hearing online and via video conference.

SC Spokesman Saifur Rahman said he is not aware of the development of amending the rules.

## Sugarcane is just not paying

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Like Abdul and Mahedi, around two lakh sugarcane growers have been waiting for months for their dues from 15 state-owned sugar mills in the country.

Although most mills completed this year's sugarcane crushing by January, they have not paid the farmers in full.

Mozaharul Haque Prodhon, president of Bangladesh Sugar Mill Farmers Federation, said the 15 sugar mills in total owe around Tk 250 crore to all the sugarcane growers in the country.

Before the shutdown began, his organisation sat with the chairman of Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industry Corporation (BSFIC) about payment of the farmers' dues.

At the meeting, the chairman of BSFIC said the dues would be paid upon sale of sugar, recounted Mozaharul, also the lawmaker of Panchagarh-1.

Managing directors of several mills, wishing anonymity, told the Daily Star that BSFIC instructed them to pay the farmers by selling sugar, as the mills have been incurring losses every year.

Till last year, the total accumulated loss of all state-run sugar mills had been Tk 7,000 crore, of which Tk 1,008 crore was for 2018-2019, said a source in BSFIC.

None of the mills ever made any profit since their inception, he added.

Officials of BSFIC said at least 14,07,139 tonnes of sugarcane worth Tk 495.56 crores have been procured from farmers at the start of the 2019-20 crushing season by all 15 mills.

At present, the mills have 64,000 tonnes of unsold sugar worth Tk 385 crore at the warehouses. Of the annual demand for Tk

1,008 crore tonnes sugar in the country, only 65,000 tonnes are produced by the mills. The rest are imported, said the officials.

Demand for refined imported sugar is much higher than the local variety, they added.

Meanwhile, because of slow payment by the mills, growers are losing interest in producing sugarcane.

"Sugarcane cultivation area dropped by almost 60 percent in the last ten years due to the slow payment system," said Wahid Karim, president of Natore district Sugarcane Growers Association.

Although Dinajpur and Thakurgaon sugar mills paid 95 percent of their dues to farmers, Natore and North Bengal sugar mills still owe Tk 74 crore to local sugarcane growers.

Abdul Karim, president of Sugarcane Growers Association of Natore Sugar Mill, said most growers in the district are suffering because of the delay in bill payment.

"We don't know how to force the authorities to pay our dues under the current condition," he said, adding that unlike previous years they cannot hold demonstrations amidst the shutdown demanding payment.

Sanat Kumar Saha, chairman of Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industry Corporation (BSFIC), told The Daily Star over the phone on April 27 that BSFIC has sought funds from the government to pay the farmers' bills.

"It is not possible [to pay the farmers] until BSFIC gets funds from the government," he said.

[Bulbul Ahmed and Azibor Rahman contributed to this report]

## 3 journos

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Speaking to The Daily Star, Johirul said, "Senior officers of the district police were angered by the publication of such a fabricated and baseless news with my comments. So, I filed the case against the three journalists under the Digital Security Act to protect my dignity."

Meanwhile, Mazharul Parvez Monti, general secretary of Narsingdi Press Club, yesterday condemned the arrest of the three journalists.

## US approves

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Abeytua in Madrid's Chueca district who got up a 7am to enjoy some time outside. "Yesterday, I was like a child on Christmas Eve."

In the city's Retiro park, many residents were out to running, sometimes in groups, as a policeman used a loudspeaker to urge them to keep out of deserted avenue and on the pavement.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez however said masks would be obligatory on public transport from Monday.

Spain, Germany, Austria and Scandinavian nations are all slowly easing lockdowns as the virus cases slow though they will keep in place social distancing measures, demand the use of masks or increase testing to try to track infections.

## Biman

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Earlier, the Biman board of directors in a meeting last week approved the proposal of seeking the loan, Sajjadul Hassan, chairman of the board told this correspondent.

Biman sources said it got the loan under the prime minister's recently announced stimulus package for the sectors affected by the coronavirus.

Biman will use the money to meet expenses of its permanent operation cost, including the salaries of its several thousand employees, Biman Managing Director and CEO M Mokabbir Hossain, earlier told this newspaper.

The airline incurred a loss of around Tk 450 crore in the last two months as it has been running with "no income" following the Covid-19 outbreak, M Mokabbir Hossain, said.

"Biman was forced to suspend its routes one after another since January and it incurred a liability of Tk 1,300 crore in the last three months," he said.

## Govt restricts entry of toxic ship

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Daily Star yesterday. "We have also informed the director general of the environment and explosion division regarding the matter. There is no way the ship is coming to Bangladesh," he added.

The ship started from Batam of Indonesia towards Chattogram on April 18 and was supposed to reach Bangladesh on May 7.

Following the report published by this newspaper, the Chattogram chapter of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) issued a protest statement.

Documents obtained by The Daily Star show the vessel contains around 1,500 tonnes of mercury-contaminated waste, 60 tonnes of sludge oil, 1,000 tonnes of slop oil, and 500 tonnes of oily water on board.

Samples of the sludge have

revealed mercury levels of 395mg/kg, according to lab results obtained by NGO Shipbreaking Platform.

The Hazardous Waste and Ship-breaking Waste Management Rules list mercury and mercury compounds as hazardous if their concentration exceeds 50 mg/kg.

Like other end-of-life ships, J Nat also has toxins such as Polychlorinated Biphenyls, asbestos and other different heavy metals within its structures.

If dumped in Bangladesh, the waste will pose a serious threat to the environment.

The NGO Shipbreaking Platform issued a briefing paper on J Nat titled "Export of toxic vessel in breach of international law" on April 19.

The paper states that the Indonesian authorities appear not to have informed Bangladesh about the presence of hazardous waste and

material in the vessel in violation of article VI of the Basel Convention.

Last year, following a writ petition, the High Court observed that all permissions purportedly given for import, beaching, breaking, cutting, or dismantling of vessels that are deficient in form and content, are illegal, without lawful authority and detrimental to public interest.

It was delivered on November 14, 2019, in response to a public interest litigation filed by Bangladesh Environment Lawyer Association (Bela) about the importing and scrapping of MT Producer, a toxic ship similar to J Nat.

The court said, "The circumstances of the import of the vessels into Bangladesh are, hereby, declared to constitute illegal traffic of a toxic ship into our territory."

## Health centre at each thana

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BANGABANDHU'S FOUR-DAY VISIT TO NORTH BENGAL

Bangabandhu will leave for North Bengal on a four-day visit on May 8, 1972. He will visit Bogura, Rajshahi, Pabna and Rangpur on the tour. Tofael Ahmed, political secretary of the prime minister, will accompany him.

GOVERNMENT PLANS HEALTH SYSTEM OVERHAUL

The government declares today that the healthcare system will be overhauled. Under this scheme, all the 14 health service departments including family planning, TB control and rural health will be brought under a single authority. The government

will also set up a health centre at each thana. At present there are 65 rural health centres in the country. These centres will be upgraded to thana health centres. There will be 20-25 beds in each health service centre.

BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINISTER CALLS ON INDIRA GANDHI

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad calls on Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on May 2, 1972. Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh and Chairman of the policy planning committee of the Indian external affairs ministry DP Dhar were also present at the meeting. They discuss various bilateral and international issues including recently

concluded Indo-Pak emissary level talks.

SEVERE SHORTAGE OF FISH IN CITY MARKETS

There has been an acute shortage of fish in the city markets for the last couple of days. Whatever fish are available, are priced very high. For example, the price of a half a kilogramme of hilsa is not less than Tk 4. Fish production in the country has fallen drastically this year. On top of that, the supply remains poor due to weak transportation system.

SOURCES: May 3 & 4, 1972 issues of Ittefaq, The Bangladesh Observer, Azad, Morning News, Dainik Bangla and Purbodesh.

## Two cops die from Covid-19

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Last month, POM assistant sub-inspector Abdul Khaleq, Dhaka North Traffic constable Asheq Mahmud; and Wari Division constable Jasim Uddin died with Covid-19.

A total of 741 members of police tested positive for the virus as of yesterday. Of them, 356 are from the DMP, according to police headquarters.

Most of the rest are from police departments in Narayanganj, Gazipur and Dhaka District, sources in the police headquarters said.

Only 57 members of police have recovered so far.

As more and more police personnel get infected, the Central Police Hospital now has about 450 patients against its 250 beds, Director Haider said.

"It will be almost impossible for us to treat members of the police force if the infection among them continues to rise," said another official of the facility.

DMP has been using at least seven hotels and several schools to keep its members in isolation and in quarantine after the barracks became overcrowded.

## 7 garment workers test positive

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Sushanta Sarker, additional superintendent of Gazipur industrial police, said the management reopened the factory on a limited scale to maintain social distancing. Therefore, all the workers were not allowed to join work.

Those who could not join work would receive 60 percent of their gross wages for April, he said.

Informed about this, the agitating workers withdrew the blockade around 11:00am, said police.

WORKERS ASKED TO CARRY ID CARDS

The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) yesterday asked factory workers to carry their factory identity cards if they needed to come to their workplaces in and around the capital.

Shibnath Roy, inspector general of DIFE, in a circular said the workers would have to show their identity cards to the authorities, if needed, on way to Dhaka.

The agitating workers started demonstrating in front of the factory around 9:00am and blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway around 10:00am.

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(02.01.1947-30.04.2020)

In everlasting memory of  
**Amanullah Chowdhury**

Vice Chairman & Founding Director- Rangs Group  
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**The Management and all Officials of  
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**IN MEMORIAM**

**Syed Tanweer Murshed**  
1938-1988

Loving father, devoted husband, always in our thoughts and prayers. May Allah grant him maghfirat and eternal peace.  
Ameen.

**Yasmeen, Maher and Madiha Murshed**

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