



Failing to get any space inside a train, home-bound passengers perch precariously on its roof at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday as Eid holiday begins today.

## SUGAR WAREHOUSES REOPEN No action against hoarders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An anti-hoarding team in Khulna yesterday opened the warehouses of three businessmen it had sealed earlier on charges of hoarding sugar.

The businessmen at the heart of the controversy agreed to sell sugar at fair prices and the authorities assured that no legal action would be taken against them.

This decision was taken in a closed-door meeting at Khulna Circuit House on Friday. Khulna City Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Deputy Commissioner NM Ziaul Alam and the three businessmen were present at the meeting.

On Thursday, the anti-hoarding team headed by the mayor sealed the three warehouses of RK Traders, Shahjalal Baniya Bhandar and Bagdad Trading, which allegedly hoarded imported sugar. Some 9,000 bags of sugar were seized from the warehouses.

At Friday's meeting, the businessmen were assured that no legal action would be taken against them if they sell all sugar in the open market at a fair price of Tk 42/kg.

Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Shaharuzzaman Martuza, who was present at the meeting, said sugar prices eased after open-market sales started on Friday.

Meanwhile, leaders of different professional organisations have sharply reacted to the decision to spare the sugar hoarders from legal action, although they created an artificial crisis by hoarding imported sugar.

Khulna Small Traders Association demanded an investigation into hoarding of sugar imported from India by an organised syndicate.

Meanwhile, retailers sold sugar at between Tk 50 and 54 per kg yesterday. But the price was between Tk 60 and Tk 62 as of Friday.



The road between Shahbagh and Hotel Sonargaon in the city experiences phenomenal traffic congestion yesterday like the other days, though millions of people are streaming to their village homes to enjoy the Eid vacation with their near and dear ones.

PHOTO: STAR

## DEATH OF KHULNA BNP LEADER Wife blames police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Leaders of Khulna district and city BNP yesterday accused police of killing a leader of Ghatbhog union unit BNP under Rupsha upazila on Friday midnight.

Arabindo Mandal, 45, was beaten to death by police at 2:30am at Doba village under the same upazila, alleged Nilima, wife of the victim.

But police claimed that the BNP leader died of heart attack while he was running away to evade arrest, as he was wanted in connection with a case filed against him on June 1 last year with Rupsha Police Station under sections 4 and 5 of the Speedy Trial Act.

Family sources said that Arabindo was on bail in the case.

According to a press release issued by Khulna SP office yesterday, the BNP leader was declared dead at 3:20am by emergency medical officer of Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) Delwar Hossain when he was taken to the hospital for treatment.

On the other hand, Nilima said she had heard her husband screaming for help to save him from being beaten by police black and blue, adding: "I found him dead after going to the place where he was beaten."

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Shubhash Chandra Biswas of Rupsha Police Station said Arabindo was caught after a chase as he had tried to run away from his house at Doba village to evade arrest. He died of heart attack being panicked when he was caught by the police.

But the relatives of the slain BNP leader claimed that police raided his house with a motive despite knowing that he was on bail.

Asked, the OC said he was not aware that the BNP leader was on bail in the case.

Autopsy of Arabindo's dead body was done at 2:00pm today (Saturday) at the KMCH morgue 38 hours after his death.

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## LEASING OUT OF 3 OFFSHORE GAS BLOCKS Oil, gas protection body ready to talk with govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports would agree to sit with the government if any formal invitation comes to hold talks on the issue of leasing out three offshore gas blocks to foreign companies.

Replying to a question, engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, convener of the committee, said this while addressing a press conference at Mukti Bhaban in the city yesterday.

"On the one hand, the government has asked the two companies to complete the contract procedures immediately, on the other, it called on the leaders of the national committee through the parliamentary standing committee on power, energy and mineral resources ministry to discuss the issue. It is nothing but a ploy to trick the countrymen," he added.

He claimed that according to the contracts, Bangladesh

would actually get only 20 percent of the extracted gas. If the government wants to buy, the companies would sell it to the government; otherwise they would export the gas.

"In reality, the government would not be able to set up pipelines from deep sea to the mainland to buy the gas and the foreign companies would not be bound to pay for piping. So, it is clear that 100 percent of the extracted gas would be exported or trafficked," he claimed.

Shahidullah announced a fresh agitation programme demanding cancellation of the leases for exploration of gas at the offshore blocks.

The committee members and supporters would demonstrate in front of the Petrobangla office at Karwan Bazar by wearing black badges on September 24.

The committee would also announce tougher action programmes, including hartal and blockade, at the national convention of the committee scheduled to be held on

October 16.

It would also hold conferences at different divisional cities from October 3 to 13 as part of its preparations to make the convention successful.

Asked what they would do if any party extends its support during the movement, he said, "We neither would accept support from any party known as anti-liberation and communal, nor reject it."

He claimed that the government is spreading propaganda about the activities of the national committee taking the opportunity of the people's lack of specific knowledge about the proceedings of the deals.

However, the parliamentary standing committee on September 16 said the national committee had misinformed and confused the countrymen with its misleading claims.

Justice Ghulam Rabbani, CPB leader Mujahidul Islam Selim and Workers' Party leader Bimal Biswas were present at the programme.

## Four robbers arrested at Araihaazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Police arrested four robbers from Araihaazar upazila in Narayanganj in two separate incidents on charges of robberies on Friday night.

Police said a gang of 10 to 12 robbers came to Gopaldi Bazar at Araihaazar by a trawler and took preparation for a robbery.

Acting on a tip-off, the law enforcers managed to arrest two robbers -- Rup Miah, 27, and Billal, 24, while others managed to flee.

In another incident, police arrested Monir, 25, and Anwar, 24, while they were preparing for robbery.

Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Araihaazar Police Station, said they arrested some of the members of an organised robbers' group.

Eid  
Mubarak

May our lives be filled with happiness on this day and beyond...

**Bay**

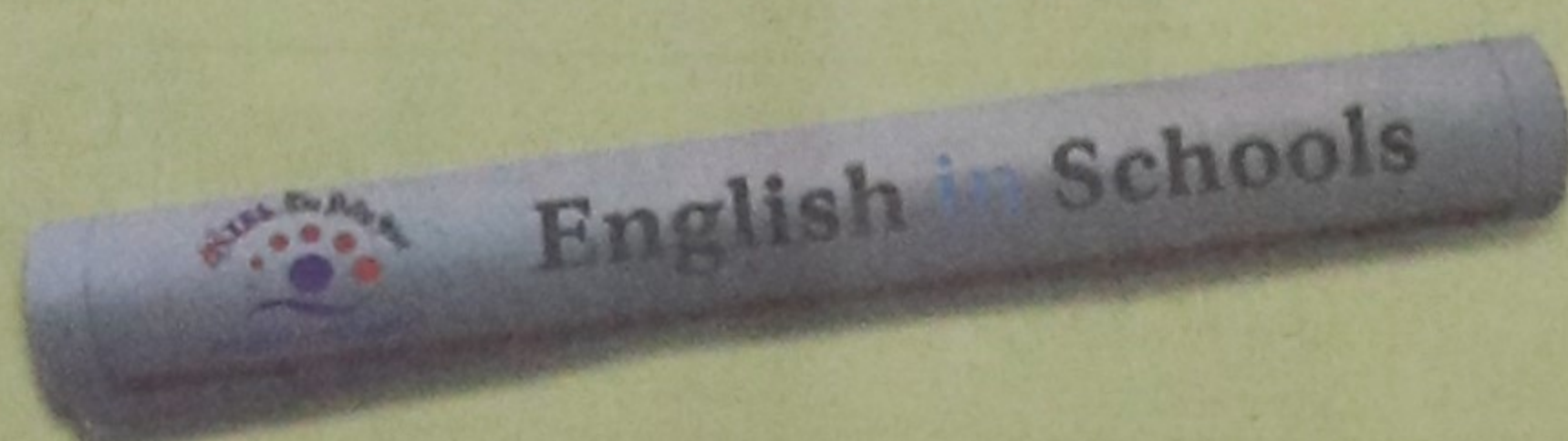
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