

Bombs hurled at garment factory: One injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A garment employee was injured when unidentified criminals hurled small bombs at a five-storey factory building at around 3:00pm. Employee Anwar Hossain, 20, was injured when a bomb exploded on the ground floor.

Witnesses said a gang of four criminals threw three bombs at a five-storey factory building at around 3:00pm. Employee Anwar Hossain, 20, was injured when a bomb exploded on the ground floor. The criminals ran away after hurling the bombs, a police official said, adding that two other bombs exploded after hitting the outside walls.

Rampura Police Station officer-in-charge Ali Ahmed Hashmi said the cause behind the attack could not be known immediately.

No case was filed in this connection, the police said.

Ctg port cancels contract with Ishaque Brothers

UNB, Chittagong

The government cancelled the controversial contract on container handling at Chittagong Port with Ishaque Brothers on Thursday night.

The port authority cancelled the contract after the order of the shipping ministry reached Chittagong Port in the evening, officials said.

The three-year contract was awarded at the fag end of the caretaker government in January this year.

Shipping adviser to the caretaker government MA Matin is now facing criminal charges for awarding the contract to Ishaque Brothers in violation of rules.

Ishaque Brothers declined to comment on the government action of cancelling the contract.

Charges framed against 3 former BNP lawmakers, 24 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court on Thursday framed charges against 27 people, including three former BNP lawmakers, in a case filed against them for holding a meeting at Puthia upazila in 1998 in violation of Section 144.

The former BNP lawmakers are Kabir Hossain, Nadim Mostafa and Azizur Rahman.

Other accused include BNP leaders Abu Sayeed Chand and Shahin Shawkat.

The third court of judicial magistrate M Asaf-ud Doula framed the charges under Sections 143, 188, 353 and 506 after a hearing.

On December 3 in 1998, Golam Kibria, the then officer-in-charge of Puthia thana, lodged the case.

According to the issue, the upazila administration issued Section 144 at Banerwar College to avert untoward incident as BNP and Awami League called a meeting at the same venue and same time.

Despite the ban, the BNP leaders held their meeting, according to the case statement.

40 teachers to attend UK school visiting programme

UNB, Dhaka

A forty-member team of Bangladeshi teachers will attend a week-long school visiting programme in the United Kingdom under the British Council International Inspiration project.

The team is scheduled to leave Dhaka for the UK today, the British Council officials said.

The teachers will attend the physical education activities in 20 UK partner schools for four-day and they will spend a day to develop a delivery plan for next two years to make the project a success.

The International Inspiration Project aims to transform the lives of 12 million children and young people of all abilities, in schools and communities across 20 developing countries worldwide, through the power of high quality and inclusive physical education, sport and play.



Chakbazar area in the port city of Chittagong goes under knee-deep water yesterday as heavy rain accompanied by lightning has been battering most parts of the city since Thursday midnight due to deep convection over the North Bay.

Consumers now victims of syndicated market system

Says Prof Muzaffer Ahmad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Consumers have become the victims of syndicated market system, as the government could not develop an alternative market, said noted economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad at a dialogue yesterday.

"We got stuck in production for export and market-oriented economy ignoring the needs of consumers and farmers," he added.

The citizens' dialogue on 'Genetic engineering and golden rice: Threats and prospects for Bangladesh' was organised jointly by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Shikkha Swastha Unnayan Karjakram (Shishuk) at the National Press Club in the city.

It was organised under the 'Save Our Rice Campaign' in collaboration with Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific and Year of Rice Action.

Stating that commercial agriculture production today controls the market and price, Prof Ahmad, who is also Bapa president, said, "As a consumer, I have no alternative to consuming the rice variety that I actually do not like."

Big agro companies have already come to play in the wake of a situation when the country requires more pro-

duction to feed its growing population, but its consequences are rarely analysed, he said.

"Production has increased, but many indigenous crop varieties have been lost. There is, also, no documentation of changes in the agro-ecology and there is no agriculture

planning in the country," said Prof Ahmad.

It is now important to prepare a balance sheet of what the country gained and lost in terms of agriculture, he said.

"If our gross national happiness is not satisfactory, then what is the benefit of high

yielding rice," he put a question, adding that the authorities should initiate restoration of indigenous crop varieties and ensure sovereignty of the farmers, consumers and ecology-friendly farming.

Bangladesh has both the problems of vitamin deficiency and food shortage that

requires more food production, said Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir.

But it does not mean that genetically modified food should be taken simply for granted, she added.

Khushi Kabir said there are many high yielding vegetables, but nobody knows the consequences they may cause.

"We need to understand the food technologies before we accept them," she added.

Dr Michael K Hansen, senior staff scientist of US-based Consumers Union, in a presentation said golden rice, a genetically engineered rice of high yielding variety, has serious vitamin A deficiency which could be life-threatening.

A country may accept such crops, but it must have appropriate bio-safety law in line with Codex Alimentarius (guideline on food safety) Commission of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Shishuk Executive Director Sakiul Millat Morshed said he has learned that Bangladesh is preparing a draft policy on genetically engineered food, but it has not been made public.

"Such a policy must be very comprehensive and flawless," he added.



Dr Michael K Hansen, senior staff scientist of US-based Consumers Union, speaks at a citizens' dialogue titled 'Genetic engineering and golden rice: Threats and prospects for Bangladesh' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Prof Muzaffer Ahmad.

Call to cut newborn deaths to achieve MDG-4

BSS, Dhaka

Effective reduction of newborn deaths within four weeks of their birth still remain a major challenge for Bangladesh to attain Millennium Development Goal-4 on child survival, an international conference was told yesterday.

"We have successfully cut deaths of children under five years of age, but we could not achieve remarkable success in reducing deaths of babies within four weeks of their birth," Pro-Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof Mohammad Shahidullah told the news agency on the sidelines of the conference in the city.

Bangladesh Society for Paediatric Infectious Disease (BSPID) organised the conference, second of its kind, at Bangladesh International Conference Centre to find effective mechanisms to save hundreds of children dying before they observe their fifth birthday.

BSPID President Prof Manzoor Hussain chaired the inaugural function of the conference where State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Mozibur Rahman

Fakir spoke as the chief guest.

More than 10 million children die every year due to infectious diseases across the globe, cited BSPID Secretary General and noted microbiologist Dr Samir K Saha, adding 90 percent of such deaths take place in developing countries like Bangladesh mainly due to infections.

Samir said the delayed uptake of vaccines has taken a big toll on the lives of thousands of children of poorer nations and asked the developed world to ensure supply of shots within a couple of years to the poor countries after new vaccines are developed.

Prof Shahidullah said infection has become the leading cause of child deaths in Bangladesh, where more than 3.5 million born each year and 120,000 neonates die within four weeks of their birth.

He said pneumonia proved to be the number one cause of child deaths, followed by neonatal sepsis, diarrhoea, typhoid, jaundice and dengue. Half of the neonates, he said, also die due to low-birth weight, birth asphyxia, birth injuries and congenital anomalies.

Two boys killed in lightning as rain hits Ctg life

BSS, Chittagong

Two boys were killed and one injured in lightning with normal life becoming hampered yesterday as moderate intermittent rain to downpour accompanied with strong thunderbolts had been continuing since Thursday midnight.

The scale of thunderbolts seemed to be unprecedented in recent years even after the end of the rainy season that frightened the city dwellers, who were forced to wake up by the recurrent thunderbolts.

There were also reports of damages to household electronic goods of some residences in the city when lightning struck houses midnight and in the early morning.

Police said Ibrahim, 12, of Sowabill area in Fatikchhari upazila in the district and Nur Mohammad, 18, of Shikolbaha under Kamaphuli thana were killed, while Hanif, 17, of Sowabill was injured in the lightning strike in the morning and noon.

Electronic household goods worth about Tk 1.5 lakh of journalist Mostafa Kamal Pasha were damaged following an electric short circuit at his residence in Nasirabad area as a powerful thunderbolt struck its roof.

Patung Met office measured 116mm rainfall during the past 24 hours from 4:00pm on Thursday. Officials said the unusual rainfall at the influ-

ence of the depression brew over the Bay of Bengal and active monsoon in the country.

It also forecast light to moderate and moderate to heavy rainfall during the next 24 hours at different parts of the country.

The torrential showers on the eve of the winter affected the life as well as business activities in the port city of Chittagong and different parts of the district.

Fire stations, Chittagong metropolitan and district police control room sources, however, confirmed that there were no reports of hill sliding or mud collapse due to downpour that often causes human casualties and injuries in the port city and on its outskirts during the rainy season each year.

Officials of Chittagong Port Authority said overall operational activities of the country's prime seaport remained uninterrupted, but unloading of bulk cargoes from vessels and their delivery from sheds were hampered partially during the heavy shower.

Incessant showers mounted the suffering of commuters, particularly the pedestrians and low-income group people, as movement of private and public vehicles were relatively thin that provided a chance for rickshaw pullers and drivers of CNG-run auto-rickshaws to claim excess fares from them.

Dalit leaders urge govt to ensure human rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM) yesterday urged the government to ensure their human rights as committed in the election manifesto of the grand alliance.

They made the demand at their second general council at YWCA auditorium in the city.

The leaders also called upon their community people to work unitedly to ensure their basic rights including accommodation, education, healthcare services and employment.

They also called for inclusion of the representatives of Dalit community in National Human Rights Commission and enactment of an anti-racial law in parliament.

Representatives from 60 district units of BDERM took part in the council, and elected a national executive committee for one year.

Mukul Sikdar and B Soloman were elected president and general secretary of the 15-member national committee of BDERM at the end of the council.

Other executive members

are Babul Robi Das, Guru Charan Das, Moni Rani Das, Sajal Dibedi, Uttam Kumar Vakta, Master Kanailal Rabi Das, Sunil Mridha, Bibhuto Roy, Suraj Kumar Sarkar, Sanu Rani Das, Banani Biswas, Devid Raju and Rekha Rani Basfor.

Stolen car recovered in Khulna

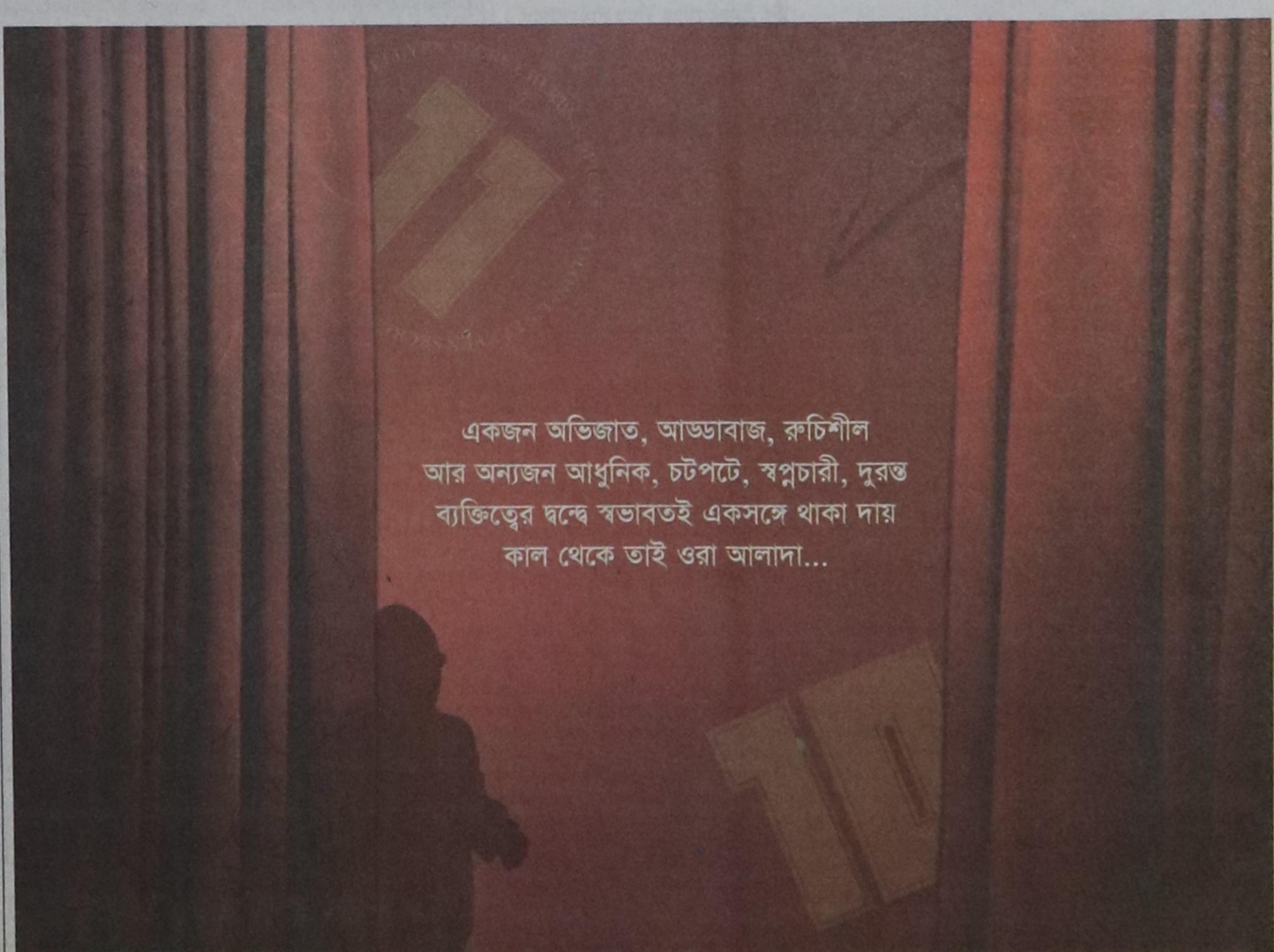
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police recovered a stolen private car from Moilapota Road under Khulna Sadar Police Station at about 11:00pm on Thursday.

Driver Jahangir Hossain and seized five bottles of Phensidyl from inside the car.

Three persons who were in the car managed to escape after the patrol police challenged them. They are members of an organised gang of carlifters, the police said.

Driver Jahangir is being interrogated in this connection.



একজন অভিজাত, আড্ডাবাজ, রুচিশীল
আর অন্যজন আধুনিক, চটপটে, স্বপ্নচারী, দুরন্ত
ব্যক্তিত্বের দ্বন্দ্বে স্বভাবতই একসঙ্গে থাকা দায়
কাল থেকে তাই ওরা আলাদা...