

**FURNACE BLAST**  
Another victim dies, toll now 4  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another injured worker of the furnace blast of Hasan Steel Mills died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on Sunday night raising the death toll to four.  
The explosion at the steel mill in Kadamtali left Billal Hossain dead on the spot and injured 15 others on Wednesday. Three more of the critically injured workers, who were admitted to different city hospitals, died as of yesterday.  
Of them, Ohidur Rahman died at the intensive care unit of the DMCH Burn Unit after fighting for life for five days.  
"The victim had suffered 40 percent burns but his injury was very deep. He was suffering from breathing problem," said Dr Samanta Lal Sen,  
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## Witness the weakness

About 60pc cases suffer as witnesses unwilling to testify for intimidation, hassle; govt talks of a protection act

EMRAN HOSSAIN and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

Zafrun Nahar had spent five years trying to have her son's killers punished. But no witness showed up to testify at the trial for fear of reprisals.  
Frustrated that all her hard work brought nothing, she now sees no point in trying. "I have waited enough...seen enough. But no more do I wait for justice," says a battle-weary Zafrun, 61.  
Her elder son Himel, 25, was shot dead on Salimullah Road in the capital's Mohammadpur area in February 1997.  
In the murder trial, 34 dates had been set for testimony of the prosecution witnesses. But no-one dared to appear in the court in the face of intimidation by the accused and their associates.  
The case proceedings have been stayed by the High Court since January 14, 2002.



Murder witness Rahim believed to have been killed

Fed up that the trial was going nowhere, Zafrun did not move to have the HC order vacated in last eight years.  
Meantime, the accused have secured bail and three of the six eyewitnesses left the country failing to withstand intimidation.  
The defendants began bullying the witnesses even before the case went to the court.  
"They gathered in front of my house every night, shouting abuse," said a witness to Himel murder.  
One afternoon, another witness was picked up from his office and coerced into giving a statement saying he did not see anything.  
"I don't blame them [witnesses]. Even I would fear for my life while returning  
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## No conviction in 90pc cases

HR commission chief blames cops over criminal offence probes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police fail to get convictions in a mind-boggling 90 percent cases, the Human Rights Commission chief revealed yesterday.  
HRC Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman also said police exercise excess power, abuse laws and make indiscriminate arrests but they ultimately fail to prove charges they bring against the arrestees.  
Mizanur said this at a discussion that followed the launching ceremony of the book "101 Question and Answers About the Police". Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST), Nagorik Uddoyog and Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative arranged the programme at Cirdap auditorium in the capital.  
Apparently the police arrest whoever they like and they care little about legal provisions, he said, adding that if someone is asked about the power of police, the person may ask in return "What power police do not have?"  
He claimed that police fail to get convictions in the over 90 percent cases just because they accuse people indiscriminately  
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## Khaleda off to Saudi Arabia for Umrah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia left for Saudi Arabia yesterday to perform Umrah on Saudi King's invitation.  
Khaleda, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, took off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on a regular flight of Saudi Airlines around 4:15pm.  
While addressing a gathering of BNP leaders at the airport, Khaleda termed the incumbent government worse than autocrats and alleged that the present rulers do not want advancement of  
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Hassan Mahmood

## Hassan Mahmood new IGP

Mukhlesur Rahman made Rab DG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday made Hassan Mahmood Khandker, director general (DG) of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), the new inspector  
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## Textile mill, tannery fined for pollution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined a textile mill and a tannery Tk 40.60 lakh in the port city's Kalurghat industrial area for polluting the river Karnaphuli.  
A DoE team led by Munir Chowdhury, director of monitoring and enforcement, fined Base Textile Mills Ltd Tk 32 lakh for not setting up an effluent treatment plant (ETP) ignoring repeated notices  
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## DB firing kills elderly man

Villagers, cops give conflicting statements about incident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Detective Branch (DB) of police shot dead an elderly person at a village in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj early yesterday.  
Police and villagers gave two different explanations for the killing of Nurul Islam, 60.  
Villagers said a team of plainclothes DB police from the district headquarters led by Sub Inspector (SI) Belayet Hossain arrested Zebu Miah, an alleged drug peddler, from his Alinagar village home around 12:30am.  
Policemen and Zebu's family members were locked in an  
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## Shibir leader held for 'subversive' activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion has arrested a central leader of Islami Chhatra Shibir at Paramedical Road in Rajshahi city in connection with a case filed for his "direct involvement" in carrying out subversive activities.  
M Golam Mortuza, social welfare and cultural affairs secretary of the Jamaat-e-Islami backed student  
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## Deal inked with Delhi on 2 power plants

Joint initiatives in Ctg, Khulna eye 1,320MW electricity from coal; the 2 nat'l companies may venture into power deals in both countries

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Two national companies of Bangladesh and India yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up two coal-fired power plants of 1,320 megawatts each in Chittagong and Khulna under a joint venture.  
The MoU also seeks the two companies' cooperation with each other in development of renewable energy.  
This cooperation deal would allow Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) of India to go for joint ventures in other power projects in both the countries in the future. Such projects could encompass joint ventures in hydropower or renewable energy  
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ঐতিহ্যের পথ বেয়ে  
ব্র্যাক ব্যাংক এলো এলিফ্যান্ট রোড-এ

মুঘল আমল ও ব্রিটিশ শাসনের প্রথমদিকে যে পথ ধরে আসা-যাওয়া করতো রাজকীয় হাতির দল, সেই ঐতিহ্যবাহী পথ ধরে আপনার সমৃদ্ধি ও সম্ভাবনায় পাশে দাঁড়াতে এবার এলিফ্যান্ট রোডে এলো ব্র্যাক ব্যাংক।

প্রাচীন ঢাকার জীবনধারায় যে এলাকার গুরুত্ব ছিলো অসীম, আধুনিক ব্যবসায়িক বিকাশে সেই ধারা অব্যাহত রাখতেই আমরা এলাম আপনার কাছাকাছি।

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