

Did you know? The Gardiner Dam in Saskatchewan is the largest embankment dam in Canada and one of the largest embankment dams in the world. The dam rises 64 metres (209 feet) in height, is almost 5 kms (3 miles) long and has a width of 1.5 kms (1 mile) at its base. The dam is Canada's largest embankment dam and one of the largest embankment dams in the world.

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Children exposed to toxic pesticides

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Ten-year-old Noor Mohammad was spraying pesticide and fungicide in the paddy field his father cultivates. He was also performing the dangerous act of blowing the spraying pipe from time to time to make it work smoother -- his body parts including his eyes totally unprotected against the killer toxins.

After an hour of such risky toil in the burning sun, he washed his hands with plain water and ate his lunch -- rice and boiled spinach.

Bangladesh Labour Law, 2006 strictly prohibits engaging children below 14 years in any work while children below 18 years in any hazardous work.

The legal bar, however, doesn't stop Noor of Nilphamari, and thousands of other children across the country from handling toxic pesticides to support their families.

"Inhaling or even touching insecticides or fungicides can have long-term effects on children as their skin, muscles and bones are tender," Abdul Majid, Jaldhaka upazila health and family planning officer said, adding, it might even hamper their growth.

These mixtures consist of superior toxins that kill fungus and insects even at the slight contact, and direct contact can be "extremely dangerous" for humans too, experts say.

Mostafizur Rahman, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Nilphamari, said even adults should wear special suits, gloves and glasses to protect their

body parts while spraying pesticides.

The agriculture department warns that people exposed to pesticides are highly vulnerable to a variety of diseases including asthma and liver infection from inhalation and coming in contact with these toxins.

Therefore only adults should spray them, as children are more vulnerable, department officials say.

However, poverty and lack of awareness are among other factors that make many a Noor Mohammad victim to such health hazards.

On the farm Noor was spraying insecticides, his parents and 5-year-old brother Shahbul were weeding.

"I asked my son [Noor] to spray pesticides, as I can't afford a labourer for the work," said Noor's sharecropper father Rafiqul Islam.

Farmers Shafiqur Rahman and Jonab Ali also have their sons Mizanur, 11, and Shobuj, 12, spray pesticides. They share the same concern as Noor's father -- their inability to afford to hire someone for the job.

Employing their sons in farming was their only option, they said, adding, it is important for the maintenance of their families -- more important than sending them to school.

"Many poor and ignorant parents want their children to work and help reduce their sufferings, and involve them in hazardous work on the farms," said Mizanur Rahman, a former chairman of Ramnagar union parishad in the area.

Shahin Jahangir Alam, an official of a local



Ten-year-old Noor Mohammad along with his younger brother is holding the used bottles of pesticide just after spraying in their paddy field. He will take the bottles home to keep edible oil and kerosene. The photo was taken at Nilphamari recently.

4 BCL men sued for threatening WDB engineer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Water Development Board (WDB) authorities Thursday night filed a case against the four Chhatra League leaders and activists who issued threats to the WDB executive engineer for not allowing them to drop tenders after the deadline.

Police arrested one of the BCL leaders that night in this connection.

Khalilur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB, Chapainawabganj, filed the case under the Speedy Trial Act with Chapainawabganj

6-month amnesty for overstayers in KSA

PORIMOL PALMA

Several thousand Bangladeshis overstaying their visas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) can return home without facing punishment after the kingdom announced a six-month amnesty for overstayers of certain categories.

The grace period starts today.

The Saudi interior ministry said the amnesty will cover those who arrived in the kingdom on Hajj, Umrah, visit or any other type of visas that had expired, or violated the country's Passport Department regulations, according to a report of Arab News, a Riyadh-based newspaper, published on September 22.

The declaration came on September 21, two days before the Kingdom's National Day, when

King Abdullah usually declares amnesty for a large number of prisoners -- Saudis and expatriates -- arrested for petty crimes.

An official at the Bangladesh's Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment said the amnesty is good for some, but bad for many others overstaying their visas in the KSA, home to around 20 lakh Bangladeshis.

"It's good for those who went there on Hajj or Umrah visas but are working now. They can return home without facing punishment," he told The Daily Star yesterday preferring anonymity.

There are workers who overstay there to earn the money they had spent to go there, he said. They do it, as they cannot recover the money within the legalised period due to their

Special drive soon to recover parking space

TAWFIQUE ALI

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) is going to launch an eviction drive early next month to recover car parking spaces of buildings from illegal occupancy that forces car users to park their vehicles on the streets causing traffic bottleneck.

Rajuk, the city development authority, has reached an understanding with the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to ensure that car parking spaces of buildings are not used for other purposes such as renting out as shops and warehouses, said Sheikh Abdul Mannan, Rajuk director (development control).

Officials and experts concerned say at least one-third of the city street and

ninety percent of footpaths remain illegally occupied by parked cars, street vendors and construction materials.

In September last year, DMP handed over to Rajuk a list of 198 commercial buildings by the city streets asking to recover the parking spaces being used for other purposes.

The list included Bangladesh Bank, Sonali Bank, Dhaka Bank and Uttara Bank, and also a number of prominent shopping malls in Gulshan and Dhanmondi.

Rajuk carried the eviction drive at some of the buildings sparing the prominent ones in Motijheel and Gulshan areas.

Abdul Mannan, the Rajuk director, said they spared certain "important"

government buildings.

Owners of all the buildings on Mirpur Road and near Mirpur-1 intersection, where Rajuk conducted the drive, however, reoccupied the car parking spaces within a week after being evicted.

Rajuk's eviction drive in Gulshan and Dhanmondi during the caretaker government in 2007 saw the same result, and the owners reoccupied the parking lot within a month after the eviction.

Mannan said Rajuk could not knock down the illegal structures again due to the shortage of manpower and logistics.

However, if the city roads and the footpaths can be freed and commercial buildings' parking spaces recovered from



Profulla Ranjan Singh shows war crimes investigators the place where his father Natun Chandra Singh was killed by the Pakistani forces and collaborators during the Liberation War. The photo was taken at Raozan upazila in Chittagong yesterday. Story on page 1.

Student killed by pick-up van

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A private university student died yesterday after he was hit by a speeding pick-up van in the city's Mirpur.

The victim, Mustafizur Rahman, 25, was a first year student of mechatronics engineering department of World University of Bangladesh.

An Asad Gate-bound pick-up van hit Mustafizur when he was crossing the Mirpur road on his way to the university at Dhanmondi 5 around 10:00am, witnesses said. He was rushed to a nearby hospital where he died around 4:00pm.

Following the death, about 150 students of the university blocked the road around 4:15pm causing traffic

Jubo League man attacked in Natore

A CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A Jubo League leader was bullet hit at Nicha Bazar of the city yesterday afternoon.

Following the incident, police arrested four people from the area and recovered 2100 bullets.

The victim was identified as Palash Karmakar, 29, son of Ganendra Nath of Alaipur area and joint secretary of Poura Jubo League.

The arrestees were identified as Sharifur Rahman Sumon, 30, former joint secretary of the district Chhatra League unit; Feroj alias Sumon, 28; Milin, 27, of west Alaipur area, and Toshihul Islam, 25, of Bagha upazila of Rajshahi.

A group of supporters of municipal commissioner and Awami League leader Arifur Rahman Masum attacked Palash at Nicha Bazaar around 2:00pm, stabbed him and at one stage shot

3 of a family killed in fire

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A couple and their six-year-old son died in a fire at Rajapur upazila, Jhalakathi yesterday.

The deceased are Nazrul Islam, 31, Nasrin Begum, 26, and their son Naim, 6. Nazrul had a bike rental business.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Prayer Timing		
September 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	6-00	6-05
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

Villagers clash, shops looted

Dhaka-Sylhet highway blocked

The Dhaka-Sylhet and Comilla-Sylhet highways were blocked for more than an hour as hundreds of villagers were locked in a clash over a trivial issue at the Biswa Road intersection here yesterday.

According to eyewitness and police sources, two youths of Kuttapara village in Sarail

UN holds crucial talks on food price

BBC ONLINE

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is holding an extraordinary meeting in Rome sparked by global fears about high food prices.

Yesterday's meeting will include Russian grain executives. Moscow banned exports after its harvest was hit by drought.

Flooding in Pakistan and China has added to pressure on the market.

Price rises have already sparked riots in Mozambique and are prompting fears of a massive price spike similar to that of 2007-8.

The FAO is not calling this a crisis summit, eager to steady nerves after the Russian grain export ban, says the BBC's international development correspondent David Loyn.

The UN agency has stressed that the current situation is very different to the food crisis two years ago. Prices are currently lower, production levels higher and stocks more abundant than during the 2007-8 period.

However, experts in Rome will try to find a way to restore stability and head off another price spike, which caused riots across the world two years ago.

OnlinePoll

Do you think the whistleblower protection bill, if passed, will help curb corruption?

Yes (35.7%)
 No (61.8%)
 No Comments (2.5%)

Total votes: 238
TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad that the government believes in full freedom of the press?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

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গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

পলিথিন শপিং ব্যাগ বর্জন করুনঃ দেশকে পরিবেশগত বিপর্যয় থেকে রক্ষা করুন!!

পলিথিন শপিং ব্যাগের ক্ষতিকারক বিষয়সমূহ বিবেচনা করে সরকার সকল প্রকার পলিথিন শপিং ব্যাগ উৎপাদন, আমদানি, বাজারজাতকরণ, বিক্রয়, বিক্রয়ের জন্য প্রদর্শন, মজুদ, বিতরণ, বাণিজ্যিক উদ্দেশ্যে পরিবহন ও ব্যবহার সম্পূর্ণ নিষিদ্ধ করেছে।

২। এতদসঙ্গেও, ইদানিং লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে যে, বাজারে কোনো কোনো স্থানে পলিথিন শপিং ব্যাগ বিভিন্ন রূপে ব্যবহৃত হচ্ছে। এটা স্পষ্টত সরকারি আদেশের লঙ্ঘন এবং দলনীয় অপরাধ।

২.১ পলিথিন শপিং ব্যাগ উৎপাদন, আমদানি, বাজারজাতকরণ করলে আইন লঙ্ঘনকারী অনধিক ১০ (দশ) বৎসর সশ্রম কারাদণ্ড বা অনধিক ১০ (দশ) লক্ষ টাকা অর্থদণ্ড বা উভয় দণ্ডে দণ্ডিত হবে;

২.২ পলিথিন শপিং ব্যাগ বিক্রয়, বিক্রয়ের জন্য প্রদর্শন, মজুদ, বিতরণ, বাণিজ্যিক উদ্দেশ্যে পরিবহন বা বাণিজ্যিক উদ্দেশ্যে ব্যবহার করলে আইন লঙ্ঘনকারী অনধিক ৬ (ছয়) মাস কারাদণ্ড বা অনধিক ১০ (দশ) হাজার টাকা অর্থদণ্ড বা উভয় দণ্ডে দণ্ডিত হবে;

৩। নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষিত সকল পলিথিন শপিং ব্যাগ উৎপাদন, আমদানি, বাজারজাতকরণ, মজুদ, বিক্রয়, বিক্রয়ের জন্য প্রদর্শন, বিতরণ, বাণিজ্যিক উদ্দেশ্যে পরিবহন ও ব্যবহার থেকে বিরত থাকার জন্য পুনরায় অনুরোধ জানানো হলো।

মনোয়ার ইসলাম, এনডিসি
মহাপরিচালক

জিডি-৪০৬৪