



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

A Weekly Publication of The Daily Star
the STAR
stories behind the news



GOOD NEWS FOR EARTH

Damaged ozone layer is "well on track" to be fixed by mid-century

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ETERNAL SHAH ABDUL KARIM

The bard is and will always be the lighthouse for folk singers and fans

PAGE 11

Train runs thru' crowd: 4 killed

5 others hurt; authorities silent on illegal fish market on rail track

JAMIL MAHMUD and RAFIUL ISLAM

Four people were killed in an illegal fish market set up on railway lines in Karwan Bazar yesterday as they jumped on to the path of an express train to avoid being run over by another train.

Five others were seriously injured in the accident.

Around 8:45am Karnaphuli Express heading for Chittagong and Jamuna Express heading for Kamalapur were crossing each other at the spot, a regular but illegal fish market, witnesses said.

Seeing Karnaphuli coming in and whistling, people who were in its way rushed to the adjacent rail line, said Gateman Abu Ahmed, of a nearby level crossing.

"They did not realise that Jamuna Express was coming from behind a blind curve there," he told The Daily Star.

Abdul Malek, 45, an official at the department of agriculture extension, Nur Mohammad, 40, a banana trader, and Monwara Begum, 40, a housewife, died. The identity of a dead woman could not be known.

Nur Mohammad died on the spot and the rest at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The five injured were: Syed Hossain, 40, Fazlu Khan, 45, his nephew Rakib Khan, 15, Salma Begum, 45, and Parul Akter, 40, said DMCH sources. Fazlu, a fruit vendor from Khilgaon, said Rakib and he were walking

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KARWAN BAZAR RAIL TRACK

Extortion syndicate runs illegal market

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and RAFIUL ISLAM

Yesterday's death of four people at Karwan Bazar rail crossing is more than just an accident. An illegal makeshift market run on and along the rail track by a syndicate is also to blame.

This syndicate of politicians, traders and railway staff are behind running several hundred shops from which it realises a handsome amount of money every day, traders said.

The syndicate even formed an organisation using the name of Bangladesh Railway (BR) and deployed 30-40 people to collect money from these shops. An illegal structure erected along the track has a signboard that reads: "Bangladesh Railway Community Police". The signboard claims the organisation is approved by the Government Railway Police (GRP).

The signboard mentions one "Commander Siraj" who, traders say, is the leader of the toll collectors.

Although the makeshift shops on and along the track has been running for months, if not years, the GRP and Tejgaon police have done nothing to stop the dangerous enterprise.

It is because some members of the GRP and Tejgaon police also share the toll collected from the shops, sources said, asking not to be named.

Contacted last night, BR Director General Tafazzal Hossain said, "We have no idea about it [the illegal shops and toll collection]. We will demolish the structures today [yesterday]."

Abdul Majid, officer-in-charge of Dhaka railway police, also claimed knowing nothing about the shops.

Pressed, he later said, "Some people may use the name of the railway to collect money."

On the track alone, some 70-100 temporary shops of fish, vegetables and fruits run from dawn till 11:00am every day and the syndicate collects

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PART-4
RESTRICTED YET
FREELY AVAILABLE



- Import restricted
- Import on with new name
- No control over use

Containers full of formalin being destroyed at the landfill of Demra on June 28. The chemical was seized during a drive in Old Dhaka earlier that day in the wake of its large-scale use for increasing the shelf life of fruits and other food items. PHOTO: FILE

OLD FORMALIN in new bottle

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA with MAHBUB MORSHED

Taking advantage of loopholes in the existing law, a section of traders is importing chemicals like paraformaldehyde that can be used as a substitute for formalin.

Though import of formalin, a highly toxic chemical solution, has dropped drastically in recent times, import of chemicals similar to formalin has spiked after restrictions were imposed on formalin import.

In March last year, the government amended the import policy 2012-15 and put restrictions on the import, use and storage of formalin to check its widespread use in food items.

But only formalin's name was mentioned in the amendment, leaving out the other harmful chemicals similar to it.

Cashing in on this, traders imported 10,397 tonnes of paraformaldehyde in fiscal 2012-13, according to the National Board of Revenue.

At least 7,833 tonnes of paraformaldehyde were

imported in 2011-12 while the amount was 7,268 tonnes in 2010-11, as shown in NBR data.

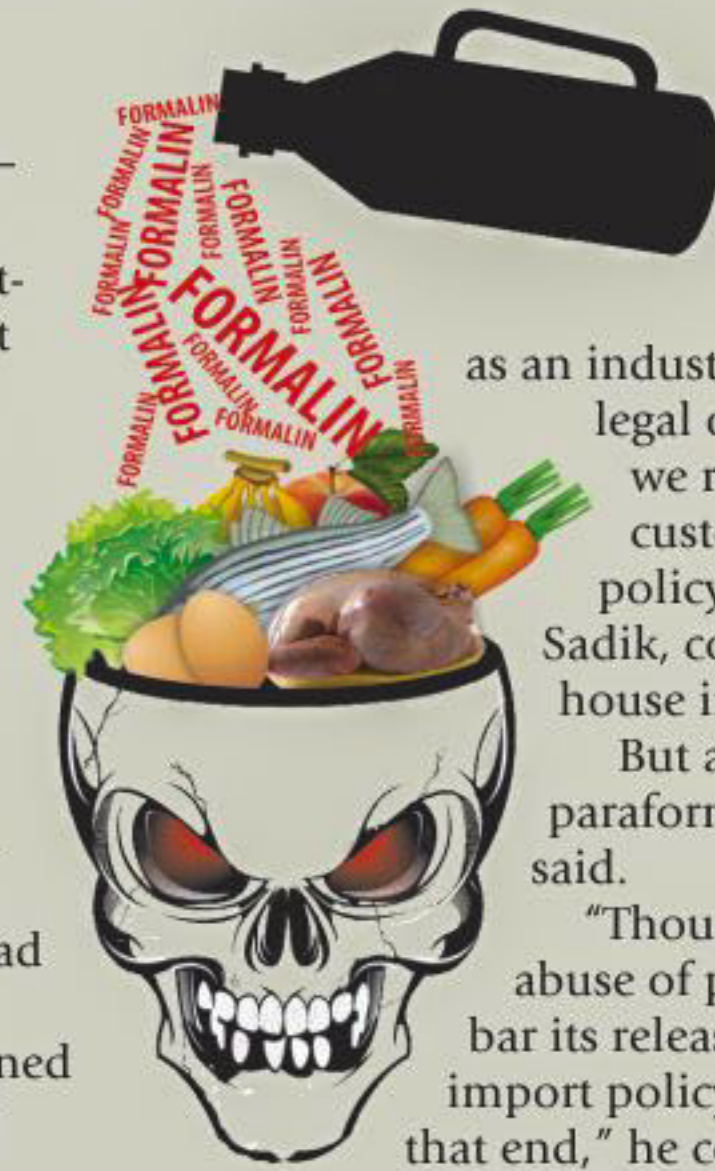
"Paraformaldehyde is used as an industrial raw material. There is no legal obstacle to import of this. So, we release this material from the customs in line with the import policy," said Mohammad Masud Sadik, commissioner of customs house in Chittagong by phone.

But a section of traders turn this paraformaldehyde into formalin, he said.

"Though we are well aware of the abuse of paraformaldehyde, we cannot bar its release from the customs, as the import policy does not say anything to that end," he continued.

"We check a lot of documents regarding import of formalin as the government has imposed restrictions on import of this chemical in the amended import policy."

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HOPE very much there

Our foods have become unsafe mainly for six reasons -- growers' general unawareness about the consequence of the use of chemicals, uncontrolled pesticide business, middlemen's mindless greed for money, sellers' trick to increase fresh look and shelf life, shortage of proper storage and preservation facilities and government's lack of political will to ensure SAFE FOOD for us all.

Slowly but surely, the entire population is consuming harmful chemicals along with their food

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

OECD REPORT Bangladesh gets stolen money back

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh is among the 15 countries that received money siphoned out of the country, as the international community stepped up its efforts to freeze and return assets stolen from developing countries, according to a new report.

The United States returned \$2.90 million to Bangladesh sometime between 2010 and 2012, said the joint report of the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The report, which was released yesterday, though did not give any specifics.

Earlier, a United Nations Development Programme report ranked Bangladesh as the top exporter of illicit capital among all the least developed countries between 1990 and 2008, when \$34.8 billion was leaked out of the country.

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US-BANGLA AIRLINES
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DANGER ZONE: This is the site where four people were killed yesterday. Traders regularly sell goods right on the rail lines, endangering their and their customers' lives.