



Hilsa fish kept on a pickup at a wholesale fish market in the capital's Karwan Bazar before they were taken to storage yesterday. A good number of Hilsa are up for sale in the market but remain unsold as most city dwellers have not returned after Eid. **Top right, a man loading Hilsa onto that pickup, and another trader showing a 1.4kg fish for which he had asked Tk 1,500.** PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



## Moon

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"spring" tide. When that happens, it might lead to extra stress on the Earth's surface and strain the faults that lead to earthquakes, the new study - led by Satoshi Ide from the University of Tokyo and published in Nature Geoscience - suggests. Scientists have long held that might be true - but never been able to be sure.

The scientists worked that out by looking at the amount of stress that the tides can put on those geological faults, by using information gathered from recent big earthquakes.

They found that very large earthquakes - such as those in Sumatra in 2004, 2010 in Chile and in Japan in 2011 - tend to happen around the times that the tidal stress gets at its highest. The scientist discovered that nine of the 12 biggest quakes on record happened near or on full or new moons.

That discovery could help people forecast when such very big earthquakes are about to happen. But even though the correlation might exist, whatever the moon is up to there is a tiny chance of such an earthquake, so it might prove hard to predict on that basis.

## Rescue efforts

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"Our family members have been at the spot round the clock, hoping that there will be some news," said Alauddin, whose brother-in-law Jahirul Islam is among those missing.

Based on the family claims, the local administration initially prepared a list of 10 missing people.

Two of them were later identified from among the bodies.

They are Ismail Hossain, 43, of Shahjapur in Sirajganj, and Rajesh Babu, 25, of Amtali of Tongi - both workers of the factory.

Fire service officials said it might take a couple of months to clear all the debris and complete the search operation.

The army joined in the search operation on Monday, a day after firefighters started the search following a 36-hour effort to douse the flame.

Akteruzzaman, assistant deputy director of Gazipur fire service, said they would continue the search as long as there is a single claim of a missing person.

On Saturday, 24 bodies were recovered after the fire broke out at the factory around 6:00am, when the night shift ends and the morning shift begins.

At least 50 others were injured. Firefighters recovered four bodies on Sunday and another four on Monday.

Four victims are undergoing treat-

ment at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Factory authorities have alleged the fire was caused by a boiler blast. But boiler inspectors refuse to believe that a boiler explosion could have brought down the multi-storey building.

Fire service officials said the boilers at the factory were intact.

Meanwhile, Abdul Quader, father of dead factory worker Jewel, filed a case against the factory owner and seven others with Tongi Police Station on Monday.

### FAMILIES WORRY

Among those missing is Azim Uddin of Magura, an assistant operator of the factory.

His wife Parvin Akter said they looked for him at different hospitals and police stations with no luck. The family has been living in Gazipur for about five years.

He was supposed to be at the factory as his shift starts at 6:00 in the morning, she mentioned.

Tania, cousin of another missing person Murad Hossain, said he completed his Eid shopping the day before the incident. Everything he bought remains untouched at his house.

"We had plans to celebrate the Eid at the village home together. Instead, we waited in front of the factory on the Eid day for him," she said.

## 9-yr-old brutally tortured

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A nine-year-old house help was brutally tortured allegedly by her employers in Gazipur.

The child bearing deep injury marks on all over her body and head was having treatment at the Haimchar Health Complex in Chandpur.

Police yesterday evening arrested one of the accused - Omar Faruk - at Joydevpur. His wife Moni Begum was on the run.

Locals said the child started working in Faruk's house a year ago. She wanted to go home but her employers were unwilling let her go.

They beat her up several times, they claimed.

After hearing about it, one Mostafa took her home on Wednesday but seeing the condition of the child, locals admitted her to the health complex. They also handed Mostafa over to police.

Doctor Depen Dey at the health complex said the child had marks of burn injuries and lashes.

A case was filed with Haimchar Police Station under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

The child's mother said she has to raise five children on her own and Mostafa had assured her of Tk 500 a month for child working as domestic help.

## Wife, son cleared

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"It proves that the investigation officer did not probe the matter properly," the judge said in the verdict.

Of the convicts, Salauddin's counsel Fakhru Islam was handed down 10 years' imprisonment with a fine of Tk 10 lakh. He has to spend six more months in jail for failing to pay the fine.

Salauddin's manager Mahbul Ahsan, Fakhru's assistant Mehedi Hasan and the then office assistant of the tribunal Faruk Hossain and peon Nayon Ali were awarded seven years' imprisonment. They were also fined Tk 10,000 each in default of which they will have to suffer six more months in jail.

Of the convicts, Mehedi is on the run while the rest are in jail.

The court acquitted Salauddin's wife Farhat Quader Chowdhury and son Hummam Quader Chowdhury. Farhat was present at the court yesterday but Hummam was absent.

The whereabouts of Hummam has remained unknown since he was reportedly picked up by unidentified men from a court compound in the city on August 4.

Soon after the pronouncement of the verdict in the war crimes case by the International Crimes Tribunal-1 on October 1, 2013, Salauddin's wife and family members showed "a copy of the verdict" to newsmen, claiming it was leaked.

Later, the tribunal authorities said a portion of the draft verdict had

been leaked.

Detectives filed a case with Shahbagh Police Station on October 4 that year against Fakhru, Mehedi, Faruk, Nayon and several unnamed people under the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006.

On August 28, 2014, the detectives pressed charges against Farhat, Hummam and five others for their alleged involvement in the incident.

According to the charge sheet, Salauddin's wife and son "hatched conspiracy and instigated" the leak while Fakhru "facilitated" it. Mehedi, Mahbul, Faruk and Nayon were "directly involved" in the crime.

On November 22 last year, Salauddin walked the gallows at Dhaka Central Jail for committing crimes against humanity and genocide in 1971.

Following their arrest in October 2013, Faruk and Nayon gave statements before magistrates, confessing their involvement in the incident.

After the closing arguments on August 4 this year, the Cyber Tribunal fixed August 14 for delivering verdict. But the judge deferred the date twice, saying he could not prepare the judgment.

Public Prosecutor Mohammad Nazrul Islam, who represented the state in the case, said he was not satisfied with the verdict as two accused were acquitted.

"We will decide on filing appeal

with the High Court after getting a certified copy of the verdict," he told The Daily Star.

One of the convicts, Fakhru, told reporters that he would challenge the verdict before the HC.

### WHAT DID DETECTIVES SAY THEN?

At a press briefing on October 4, 2013, Monirul Islam, the then joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said Nayon had confessed his involvement in the leak.

Faruk had asked Nayon to get "some documents" relating to Salauddin's trial from the tribunal's computers and give those to Mehedi, said the DMP official, adding that Nayon handed Mehedi a soft copy of the 165-page document in phases, using a pen drive.

At one stage, Nayon refused to comply with their demand. But later, he did it as Mehedi and Faruk threatened to cause him trouble.

Though Nayon was employed as a cleaner, he used to work occasionally as a peon at the office of Justice ATM Fazle Kabir, the then chairman of ICT-1, The Daily Star learnt.

A cleaner's access to the tribunal's computers, some employees' overnight stay inside the court building and bringing electronic devices to the court rooms in defiance of the restrictions - all these had raised questions over the security of the tribunal.

Following the incident, the authorities beefed up security at the tribunal.

## Rawhide traders

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Jamalpur, said he sold the rawhide of the slaughtered cow, which brought him more than four maunds of meat, for Tk 1,600.

Mohammad Sattar, a seasoned leather trader in Sarishabari of Jamalpur, said he bought 1,500 pieces of salt-treated rawhide for Tk 1,100 to 1,200 per piece.

The price of rawhide was not that much but it is the outlay on salt and labour that has escalated the total cost, he added.

About 6-7 kilograms of salt are used for preserving one cowhide, said Akter Aziz, general secretary of Dinajpur Hide Traders Association.

And in recent times, salt prices rose sharply because of low production.

In the weeks leading up to Eid-ul-Azha, prices of salt stood at Tk 1,300 to Tk 1,400 per sack of 74 kilograms, which was Tk 700-750 last year, said Delwar Hossain, president of Bangladesh Hide and Skin Merchants Association.

But on the day of Eid, the price rose to Tk 2,000, he added.

Last year, the prices of salt-treated cowhides were Tk 50-55 per sft in the capital and Tk 40-45 for rest of the country, and rawhide merchants demanded that these prices continue this year as well.

Meanwhile, many of the tanners still have a huge quantity of unsold stock that they bought last year, said Tipu Sultan, former chairman of Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leathergoods & Footwear Exporters' Association.

"Still, I have 30 percent stock. So, this year my requirement will also be 30 percent less," said Sultan, also managing director of Bengal Leather Complex.

He denied any syndicate of tanners and wholesalers.

Rawhides can be smuggled out of the country if the prices are set 30 percent less than last year's, said rawhide merchants.

One rawhide merchant even told a local news channel that traders from

India have already arrived in Bangladesh and were offering Tk 100 per sft.

In India, the price of per sft rawhide was between Tk 60 and Tk 90, according to Alam of the Dhaka District Raw Hide Traders Association.

The Border Guard Bangladesh has been alerted to prevent smuggling of rawhides, said Zahid Hasan, a battalion commander of BGB in northern Bangladesh.

A red alert has been issued in bordering areas, including Doulatpur and Benapole, said Arifur Rahman, commanding officer of BGB-21 battalion.

"The BGB members have already started their patrol along the border," he added.

Shaheen Ahmed, chairman of Bangladesh Tanners Association, said they are yet to start purchasing rawhides. "We will start buying from next week and then it will continue for the next two months."

He said tanners are targeting to collect one crore pieces of rawhides. Of them, 55-60 lakh will be from cows and 30-35 lakh from goats and buffaloes.

Eid-ul-Azha collections account for half of the annual skin supply in Bangladesh.

This time, about 1.05 crore cows, goats and buffaloes might have been slaughtered across the country, said a senior official of the livestock department seeking anonymity.

The official said the number of animals slaughtered in the country this Eid was more than ever before, largely because of the increasing purchasing power of people, availability of animals and low prices of the animals on the last day before Eid.

Leather is the second biggest export earnings sector after garments.

In 2015-16, Bangladesh exported leather and leather goods worth \$1.16 billion, which was \$1.13 billion a year earlier, according to Export Promotion Bureau.

(Our Benapole correspondent also contributed to the report.)

## Germany

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Around a million migrants arrived in Germany last year, and concern about their presence has grown since the attacks, raising pressure on Chancellor Angela Merkel to cap arrivals at 200,000 refugees per year, as her Bavarian allies are demanding. She refuses to set such a limit.

More than 200 police were involved in the operation to arrest the three men, aged 17 to 26. ARD television said they were held after raids at refugee housing in towns north of Hamburg. German authorities searched the flats of the three suspects but did not reveal what they might have found.

De Maiziere noted that two of the Paris attackers last year had registered as refugees. "That suggests that IS was determined to send these kinds of people to blend in with refugees in order to cause uncertainty in Europe and Germany."

He added: "The French connection ... is what makes this case so special. We have to find out if these are individual links or if there is a larger network. It shows IS is not only targeting France or Germany or Italy or Belgium or Britain - but the entire West."

Federal prosecutors said one suspect, Mahir Al-H., joined Islamic State in September 2015. He received weapons and explosives training in Raqqa, the militant group's de facto capital in Syria.

In October, he and the two other suspects, Mohamed A. and Ibrahim M., signed up with an Islamic State official responsible for operations and attacks outside Islamic State territory and travelled to Europe, the prosecutors said.

Islamic State allegedly provide them with passports, more than \$1,000 in cash and cell phones with a special communications programme. The suspects travelled through Turkey and Greece before arriving in Germany in mid-November 2015, at the height of the migrant crisis.

## Robots to tape crime scenes

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system enabling judges and juries to have an almost firsthand experience of standing at the crime scene.

Contacted via email, Mehzeb told The Daily Star, "The system will hopefully be ready by the end of the year. The idea is to work with police departments in the UK, and the US ... I have had fantastic support so far from forensic science policymakers and prominent lawyers."

After Mehzeb published his thoughts on this in the Conversation, an independent non-profit media outlet in the UK on August 26, it went viral in the British media. Russian radio Sputnik published an interview as well.

Durham University has it posted on its website.

Mehzeb said, "My colleagues and I at Durham University are developing a robot system inspired by NASA's Curiosity Mars rover that could capture immersive footage of the crime scenes."

He said the virtual-reality robots would take 360° videos and photographs, which could be played on any computer or smart phone with an appropriate app.

With a basic adaptor headset, such as the Google cardboard, it could recreate a virtual reality experience at a low cost.

"It requires no rendering of 3D graphics, no powerful computers and captures the most accurate snapshot of the crime scene from every angle. Users can turn their heads, look up and down, zoom in and out," he said.

As well as helping judges and juries in the courtroom, the system could allow investigators to revisit crime scenes as they were at the time of the initial forensic examination, said Mehzeb, nominated twice in a row for the Durham University Excellence in Learning and Teaching Awards for the academic years 2014-15 and 2015-16.

"Information could be captured in three ways. A CSI [crime scene

investigator] could set a predefined path for the rover, recording high definition video images in 360° as it goes. Or it could be controlled via a Bluetooth remote or a smart phone or a tablet. Alternatively, the rover could use ultrasonic, motion and infrared sensors to navigate around a scene and take photos and video by itself," explained Mehzeb.

He anticipates that the entire setup would cost just £299 (just over Tk 31,000), and the cost would go down further in the future, due to affordable open-source robotics kits built around cheap computer systems such as Raspberry Pi and Arduino.

Another development could be the use of Google's Tango project, which can render 3D images of scenes and terrain in real-time, potentially replacing crime-scene sketching. This would create an immersive experience with tracked motion, highlighting the precise distance between objects and relative position of the evidence at the scene.

He acknowledged that new technology had emerged that could enable CSIs to capture and relay a much more immersive and representative picture of crime scenes, using 3D imaging, panoramic videography, robotics and virtual reality.

He said, "One issue with 3D recreations and computer-generated virtual reality simulations is that they require expensive headsets, and top specification computers to work. The first generation of VR systems such as the HTC Vive [£759 or under

Tk 79,000], PlayStation VR [£349.99 or over Tk 36,000] and Oculus Rift [£549 or over Tk 57,000] all come with hefty price tags and none of them work without an additional VR-ready computer or console."

Mehzeb Chowdhury is currently pursuing a research titled 'Crime Scene Science - An Examination of the Methods, Skills and Techniques Employed by Crime Scene Investigators and the Contribution of Scene Work to Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions.'

His doctoral research project employs data from 40 participating police

forces from England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to construct one of the largest repositories of financial and personnel information on crime scene units in the UK.

More than a dozen police forces in the US form part of the same study, which comprehensively investigates the methods, methodologies, skills and techniques utilised by scene examiners, the potential value added by CSI work to criminal investigations in these jurisdictions, and the future of crime scene science in the realms of automation, robotics and artificial intelligence.

Mehzeb did his MSc from Durham University in 2013. He got his postgraduate diploma in Law in 2010 from Northumbria University. He graduated from University of London in 2009. He is a member of the bar councils of England and Wales and Bangladesh.

