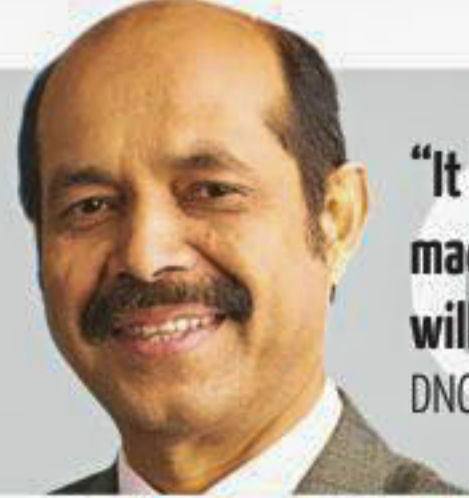


**"We will end up killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. If the goose dies, where will further rescheduling and fresh loans come from?"**  
 ECONOMIST ZAHID HUSSAIN OF WB ON RESCHEDULING OF BAD LOANS.



**"We will never allow NRC in Bengal. Modi is no one to decide who will stay and who will leave."**  
 WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE ON CITIZEN REGISTER DURING A RALLY. (PAGE 8)



**"It has been decided that a dope test would be made mandatory for every driver. This measure will encourage them to stay away from drugs."**  
 DNCC MAYOR ATIQUUL ISLAM ON ROAD SAFETY. (PAGE 3)

# Crazy pills spill via new routes

**Hundi traders step in after surrender of 102 yaba godfathers, dealers**

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT, back from Teknaf

A new strategy of yaba smuggling, involving fresh routes and hundi traders, has been at work since the surrender of 102 godfathers and dealers in Cox's Bazar in February.

The crazy pills from Myanmar are now making their way into Bangladesh through India.

The consignments first enter north-eastern Indian state of Mizoram through hilly roads and then travel through other states before reaching border points in Jashore, Chapainawabganj, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj and Patuakhali.

Previously, the pills came mainly through Teknaf and Kuakata from Myanmar.

As many as 22 hundi lords in Dubai, Singapore and India are overseeing the new smuggling strategy with their agents assigned in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar, The Daily Star has learnt from police and local sources in the districts.

Explaining how the strategy works, the sources said yaba dealers in Bangladesh first pay the agents through a mobile money transfer service provider and place orders.

The agents then transfer the money to Myanmar via Dubai, Singapore and India through hundi, an illegal means of fund transfer. On receiving the payment, the Myanmar traders sent the consignments through the border points.

Also, smugglers from the Myanmar side are now carrying yaba pills to seven border points in Teknaf and Ukhia. Of them, six are in Teknaf -

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- Hundi lords controlling yaba smuggling from Dubai, Singapore and India
- They have agents in Ctg, Cox's Bazar
- Yaba pills through new routes cost more
- New faces surface in the business

**"Yaba tablets recovered at different border points in Sylhet were produced in Myanmar. Those came to Bangladesh through the Indian route."**

**Lt Col Ahmed Yusuf Jamil of BGB Battalion-48**

# Press charge if AL leader works against narco drive

Minister Sadhan on law and order meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Charges should be pressed against any ruling party men who would lobby for not taking action against drug dealers, Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder told a views-exchange meeting yesterday.

The meeting on law and order, drug smuggling and human trafficking in border areas was held at the Border Guard Bangladesh headquarters in the capital's Palkhaha.

"If any Awami League leader or supporter lobby against the anti-narcotics drive, include their names in the charge sheet. Then they will stop doing such things," the minister said.

Presided over by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, the

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# Negotiations, not conflict

**PM says Rohingya crisis to be solved thru' talks with Myanmar**

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh would keep up its efforts to repatriate displaced Rohingyas through negotiations and not by engaging in conflict with Myanmar.

"Since they [Myanmar] are our next-door neighbours, we'll never engage in any conflict with them. Rather, we'll have to continue efforts so that they'll take back

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# Reforms needed to sustain growth

**Says World Bank, puts Bangladesh among 5 fastest growing economies, projects 7.3pc growth in FY2018-19**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs to come up with reforms at the earliest to sustain the growth momentum which has landed it among the five fastest growing economies in the world, the World Bank said yesterday.

The Washington-based multilateral lender tipped the Bangladesh economy to grow at 7.3 percent this fiscal year, which, however, is lower than the prediction of the government (8.13 percent) and the Asian Development Bank (8 percent).

As per the WB projection, only four countries other than Bangladesh will achieve more than 7 percent economic growth this year. They are India (7.5 percent), Bhutan (7.6 percent), Rwanda (7.8 percent) and Ethiopia (8.8 percent).

And yet, Bangladesh faces several short and long-term development challenges, the WB said in its Spring 2019 edition of the Bangladesh Development Update.

One of the immediate challenges is to address the issues of banking sector vulnerabilities, revenue shortfall and pressure on foreign exchange reserves, according to the report unveiled at the WB office in Dhaka yesterday.

"The banking sector is struggling with non-performing loans, and private sector credit growth has slowed down too," WB Country Director Robert J Saum said while unveiling the report with a special focus on regulatory predictability.

High non-performing loans (NPLs) compounded by an eroding capital base continue to pose financial stability risks, the WB said.

Directed lending, poor risk management and weak corporate governance -- stemming from lack of enforcement and regulatory independence -- lead to the rise in NPLs.

At the end of last year, the banking sector's total NPLs stood at Tk 93,911 crore, up

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# Fire ravages 128 shops in Khilgaon



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 128 shops were gutted in a fire that swept through Khilgaon City Corporation kitchen market in the capital early yesterday, just five days after the Gulshan-1 DNCC kitchen market fire burnt over 200 shops.

On information, 16 fire engines doused the flames around 5:35am, over two hours after it broke out, said Lima Khanam, duty officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters.

"Details about the losses and the origin

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# Ripped off by a syndicate

**How Biman passengers paid hefty prices for tickets in artificial crisis**

RASHIDUL HASAN

A syndicate in Biman had been blocking the sale of tickets online and channeling those to the black market with the help of some unscrupulous travel agents, a civil aviation ministry probe revealed.

This made online tickets elusive and passengers had to buy them from rogue travel agents at a premium.

The syndicate got Tk 25 lakh a day as its cut and it has been at it for several years, the investigation exposed.

"The ticket selling process of Biman is not transparent. A common allegation of passengers is that when they go to buy Biman tickets, they are told that tickets are not available. But we have found that in many cases the particular flight left the airport with many empty seats. This happened absolutely due to the corruption and irregularities in selling tickets," Mohibul Haque, secretary to the civil aviation ministry, told this paper.

Secretary Mohibul said, "The fact is the Biman syndicate sells tickets to some specific travel agents in exchange for commission. Finding no tickets, passengers were forced to buy tickets from those travel agents at high prices."

The investigation found that Ashraf Islam, director

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# Police, jute mill workers clash in Khulna

**16 injured**

STAR REPORT

The three-day countrywide work abstention of workers of different state-owned jute mills ended yesterday amid violence when police and workers clashed in Khulna, leaving 16 people injured.

Workers from major mills -- including Crescent, Platinum, Khalishpur, Daulatpur, Star, Eastern and Alim Jute Mills -- engaged in the protests to press home their nine-point demand which includes clearing their arrears, clearing gratuity and insurance payments of retired workers and regularising temporary workers.

They led processions in the city, held rallies and burned tyres.

Jute mill workers also blockaded roads and railways in different parts of the country during their demonstration.

Meanwhile, yesterday's clash broke out when the workers chased a policeman who was trying to take video footage and photographs of demonstrating workers who had blocked the rail line in Natun Rasta around 10:30am, said police and witnesses.

Being chased, the law enforcers took shelter in the nearby Pabla police box. Then, some workers attacked the police box

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An elderly jute mill worker -- amid fire and smoke -- raises her fist in the air in vehement protest. Top right, agitating workers set fire to a water tank near Khulna's Natun Rasta. Jute mill workers continued their protests to press home their nine-point demand for the third consecutive day, clashing with police at one point in an incident that left 16 injured.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY