



## PHOTO OF THE DAY

RAJIB RAIHAN



Devotees observe Charak Puja, a festival celebrating Hindu god Shiva, on Chaitra Sangkranti (last day of the Bangla year, April 13) in a village under Banskhali Upazila of Chattogram. As part of the ritual, a man is suspended from a Charak tree and revolves around the tree mid-air seven times. A village fair is also held annually surrounding the festival.

## Two killed, one injured in Ctg cylinder blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two workers were killed and another was injured severely in a cylinder blast at an oxygen-filling shop in Nasirabad area in Chattogram city yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Mohammad Jaber, 30, and Prabir Kumar Das, 60, said Assistant Sub-inspector Alauddin Talukdar at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) police outpost.

Injured Nur Osman, 28, was undergoing treatment at CMCH burn unit, he said, adding that the accident took place at Siraj Anu Oxygen Limited under Khulshi Police Station around 7:30am.

An employee of the shop, preferring anonymity, told this correspondent that the accident spot that a fire broke out as a cylinder blasted when it was being filled up, leaving Jaber dead on the spot and two others injured critically.

He also said they extinguished the fire instantly and rushed the three victims to the hospital.

## Govt official gets life imprisonment for rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Rangpur court yesterday sentenced an assistant agriculture officer posted in Kishoreganj upazila of Nilphamari district to life imprisonment for raping a teenage girl 14 years ago.

Judge Md Rokonuzzaman of Women and Children Repression Prevention Court-2 delivered the verdict, said Jahangir Hossain Public Prosecutor of the court.

The court also fined him Tk 1 lakh and ordered the prosecution to pay the amount to the victim.

The convict Jakirul Islam Milon, 38, was present in the courtroom during the verdict.

According to the prosecution, on July 4, 2005, Milon, then neighbour of the 13-year-old girl in Badarganj upazila, called her at his home to take care of his ailing mother.

Around 1:30pm, as the girl arrived, Milon tied her hands and legs and raped her.

Later, the girl informed her parents about the incident.

On July 13 that year, the victim's father filed a case with Badarganj Police Station accusing Milon of rape, after an arbitration initiated by locals to settle the matter, failed.

Charges were pressed against Milon on September 6, 2005.

## Police officer dies under train in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A police officer was killed as a train ran him over on Murli level crossing in Sadar upazila of Jashore yesterday.

The deceased is Selim Hossain, 55. He was posted as officer-in-charge of Armed Police Battalion at Jashore Police Lines, said Tariqul Islam, sub-inspector of Government Railway Police camp in Jashore.

Selim was standing near the level crossing when he fell onto the rail track as a Khulna-bound "Sagardari" train was passing through the spot, said the SI.

The body was sent to Jashore Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

## A hub for booklovers

## Batighar opens in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Imagine a place filled with rows and rows of books for readers to browse through while exploring different sections of knowledge.

With replicas of Keane Bridge and Ali Amjad's Clock Tower, the oldest clock tower located on the bank of Surma, this place -- Batighar -- also offers readers a trip down the rich history of Sylhet.

The bookshelves are painted green, depicting the district's serene tea gardens.

After successful ventures in Chattogram and Dhaka, the book superstore started its journey in Sylhet city's East Zindabazar on April 5.

Though Batighar has not been inaugurated officially, every day booklovers continue to flock to the store. Like the other two, this store is designed by painter Shahinur Rahman.

Abhijit Paul, an education officer, said while visiting the store yesterday, "We were eagerly waiting for the store to open. Batighar will quench our thirst for good books."

Sumankumar Das, a folklore researcher and writer, said, "Batighar has become a creative hub for writers and readers."

Batighar's proprietor Dipankar Das said, "Batighar is not only a bookstore, but also a publication house. It's a place for writers and readers to connect. Our vision is to open bookstores in every major city of the country."

## Jute mills workers withdraw 96hr strike

Another round of talks between BJMC and labour leaders scheduled for May 8

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Jute mill workers have withdrawn their strike, protests and blockade, following a five-hour meeting with government officials held in Dhaka on Monday night around 11:30pm.

"The government representatives have assured workers that they will pay them 10 weeks' arrears on April 25 and include all workers in the National Wage Commission attendance sheets by May 18," said Sarder Motahar Uddin, central president of Bangladesh Jute Workers' League.

"We will discuss other remaining demands and reach a consensus," he added.

"We requested workers to go back to their respective mills," he also said.

CBA-Non CBA Oikya Parishad leaders will have another round of talks with Bangladesh Jute Mill Corporation (BJMC) -- scheduled for May 8, Sohorab Hossain, convener of Bangladesh State-Owned Jute Mill CBA-Non CBA Oikya Parishad and general secretary of Crescent Jute Mill's CBA (Collective Bargaining Agents), said.

A press release issued by the Ministry of Labour and Employment on Monday night -- signed by BJMC chairman and leaders of different labour organisations -- confirmed setting of workers' wages by May 17 and

issuing of wage slips by May 18; clearing all arrears by April 25; and one-week's wages marking the occasion of Shab-e-Barat.

On Monday, workers of state-owned jute mills in different districts started their 96-hour strike from 8am to press home their nine-point demand that include payment of outstanding wages and implementation of the wage commission.

Demonstrators blockaded roads and railways, and staged protests at several points in Khulna, Jashore and Chattogram, threatening to wage tougher movements if their demands were not met by April 18.

From April 2 to 4, jute mill workers observed a 72-hour strike by blocking roads and rail routes to press home their demands.

The workers' demands are: paying the gratuities of retired workers, providing arrears of life insurance policies for deceased workers, reinstating workers terminated or suspended during past movements, payment of arrears and other financial benefits to current workers, implementation of the National Wage Scale-2015, appointing workers and making their jobs permanent as per the law, allocating funds for buying jute during jute season, undertaking a BMRE (balancing, modernisation, rehabilitation and expansion) scheme to increase the productivity of factories and removal of corrupt factory officials.

## Withdraw show-cause on Ar Raji

46 univ teachers urge CU STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-six public university teachers yesterday demanded withdrawal of show-cause notice issued by Chittagong University (CU) against Assistant Prof Khandokar Ali Ar Raji of Mass Communication and Journalism department.

In a statement, they said university authorities had no legal right to issue a show-cause notice over a Facebook post even if it is considered "defamatory", as every person holds the right to express their opinion on the current education system.

They claimed that university authorities had

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## Rohingyas, locals get skill training in crafts

UNHCR, Ayesha Abed Foundation scale up project in Cox's bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations' refugee agency has teamed up with Ayesha Abed Foundation -- the humanitarian wing of Brac -- to provide income opportunities by developing skills of Rohingya and Bangladeshi women in craft production in Cox's Bazar.

The project that formally began in February is now being scaled up. At the recently-opened training facility in Ukhia, local Bangladeshi women are taught silk screen printing, block printing and tailoring, according to a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) statement.

Eighteen sub-centres are being opened in other areas of Cox's Bazar as well as camps where refugee women will produce different designs of hand embroidery.

By the end of the first year, the goal is to train 500 women, half of whom should be refugees.

"The ambition, if the project is successful, could expand to train hundreds more. The women receive a small stipend during the six-month training period. UNHCR is funding the programme, but we hope the project will break even in the future," said UNHCR spokesperson Elizabeth Trossell in a press briefing at the Palais des Nations in Geneva yesterday.

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Though not officially inaugurated, book superstore Batighar is already drawing the attention of bookworms in Sylhet.

PHOTO: DWIWA CHOWDHURY

## RMG workers of 3 factories demonstrate in Savar

## Demand arrears, reopening of factory

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Demanding arrears and reopening of the factory, workers of three RMG factories in Savar demonstrated yesterday.

In Savar's Bazar Bus Stand area, hundreds of workers of Azim Group blocked Dhaka-Aricha highway for an hour over last month's arrears. They blocked the highway's Dhaka-bound lane around 1:00pm, causing severe traffic congestion.

Workers withdrew their agitation following assurance from police, said AFM Sayeed, officer-in-charge of Savar Model Police Station.

Many workers alleged that they were demonstrating peacefully in front of the factory when police tried to disperse them by using water cannon. So they blocked the highway to realise their demand.

This correspondent could not get in touch with the factory authorities, despite repeated attempts.

## Foodpanda now in Cox's Bazar

CITY DESK

Online food ordering and delivery service foodpanda is now operational in Cox's Bazar. The service was launched on April 10.

All the away from Dariyanagar Sea View Park in Marine drive to the Cox's Bazar Airport area, people will now be able to order and enjoy the food they love from over 70 restaurants with foodpanda, according to a press release.

One can choose food items from different varieties of restaurants with a minimum order value of Tk 50, with no additional delivery charge. As a special offer to celebrate the launch, there will be a 20 percent flat discount on all restaurants on the platform.

Since its creation, the service has grown to more than 30,000 partner restaurants across 10 Asian and Central European countries.



Demanding arrears, RMG workers block a side of Dhaka-Aricha highway in Savar's Bazar Bus Stand area yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

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