



A ferry filled to the brim with motorbikes and passengers heading towards Majhikandi of Shariatpur from Shimulia ghat in Munshiganj yesterday morning. During the last few days, the number of bikes on ferries was so high that other types of vehicles couldn't get across. To address this issue, authorities had to dedicate the vessels of ghat-1 to only ferry bikes.

PHOTO: SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Lightning kills 2 in Dinaajpur

UNB, Dinaajpur

Two people were killed and another was injured as lightning struck yesterday at different places in Khansama upazila of Dinaajpur.

The deceased are Shah Alam (45) from Bher Bheri union and Mazeda Begum (40) of Subarnakhuli. Sheikh Kamal Md Hossain, in-charge of Khansama Police Station, said Shah Alam died after being struck by lightning at his yard around 9:30am. Meanwhile, Mazeda died as she was struck by lightning while working in the yard of her house.

Talha Bin Jashim, senior station officer of Dinaajpur fire service, said, "Fire fighters have cleared uprooted trees from roads in Khansama and Birganj upazilas since morning to facilitate transport movement. The trees fell down when a nor'wester swept over the area from 3:00am to 7:00am on Saturday."

PRAYER
TIMING

MAY 1

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-04	12-45	4-45	6-31	8-00
JAMAAAT 4-14	1-15	5-00	6-41	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IF TAR TIMING

RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IF TAR
29	01		6:31
30	02	3:58	6:31

Growing up behind bars

172 children living with incarcerated mothers in jails across port city

The children will be separated from their mothers once they turn six, at which point they are handed over to family members or sent to the social welfare ministry in the absence of any such relative.

PRISONS	NO OF CHILDREN
Ctg Central Jail	63
Cox's Bazar	64
Khagrachhari, Bandarban	3
Cumilla	16
Brahmanbaria, Chandpur	13
Noakhali, Feni	13

SOURCE: CHATTOGRAM CENTRAL JAIL

To grow up healthy, children require a lot of elements. In jail, they don't get the care and love like the children outside do. If they are not properly nursed and instilled with a positive attitude, they risk growing up with criminal attitudes, as is prevalent in their environment.

Prof Dr AF Imam Ali
Sociologist

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Their lives are not like those of other children's.

There's no playground to play tag, no schooling, no sharing or caring, nor the love of their beloved families.

Their days are spent around notorious criminals and convicted prisoners. Inside the four walls of the jail, abusive words are as normal as saying hello.

There's a good possibility that the children are not even aware that there's a world beyond their repressive spaces.

Tragically, they don't have a crime of their own but are only victims of circumstance.

The only reason they are in jail is because their mothers were convicted in one crime or another.

According to Chattogram Deputy Inspector General (DIG), prison office, a total of 172 children are growing up in jail with their mothers under the district's nine prisons.

Jail authorities say that in spite of their limitations, they're trying to provide as much as they can for the children growing up under their supervision.

According to the officials said the children are being given primary education, healthy meals and other amenities so that they feel as close to home

as possible.

In 2014, they even sent a proposal to set up a day-care centre for the inmates' children.

But as is the case with most bureaucratic projects, the proposal is still stuck in limbo.

According to Chattogram Central Jail data, there are 63 children living in its prison.

Apart from them, there are 64 in Cox's Bazar, two in Khagrachhari, one in Bandarban, 16 in Cumilla, 10 in Brahmanbaria, three in Chandpur, 10 in Noakhali and three in Feni jail, said deputy inspector general (DIG) (prisons) of Chattogram office.

Jailer Dewan Md Tarikul Islam of Chattogram Central Jail told The Daily Star, "Our 63 children live with mothers convicted in murder, drug, smuggling or other cases."

"We have a room inside the jail where they can be given primary education under the supervision of Shishu Academy," the official said.

"Apart from that, children are given toys, pens, papers and more to meet the demand of their ages," the jailer told The Daily Star.

The jail authorities aren't unaware of their limitations either.

"Due to a crisis of space, we can't build

a day-care centre for them. The room we have is open till 6:00pm, after which the children return to their respective mothers."

"The children are growing up in a hostile environment, which no doubt affects their psyche. We're trying our best, but there's so much we can do," he further said.

Prison sources said the children are given meals as per diet charts based on their ages.

According to the guidelines, the children will be separated from their mothers once they turn six, at which point they are handed over to family members or sent to the social welfare ministry in the absence of any such relative.

According to data Chattogram-range prison office received in February, 851 women are now in jail. Apart from that, six are waiting for their execution. A total of 297 women are behind bars over drug peddling cases.

Talking to The Daily Star, sociologist Prof AF Imam Ali said, "To grow up healthy, children require a lot of elements. In jail, they don't get the care and love like the children outside do. If they are not properly nursed and instilled with a positive attitude, they risk growing up with criminal attitudes, as is prevalent in their environment."

Three killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed in road accidents in Gopalganj, Dinaajpur and Sirajganj yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Gopalganj, an army personnel was killed on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Majra area of Kashiani upazila when a Dhaka-bound private car collided head-on with his motorbike around 7:30am.

The deceased, Imran Hossain (20), was a soldier in the fourth Battalion Engineer of 10th Infantry Division at Postagola in Dhaka.

Hamid Uddin Ahamed, officer-in-charge of Bhanga Highway Police Station, said Imran was taken to Kashiani Upazila Hospital where doctors declared him dead. Police seized the car but its driver fled the spot.

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Illegal, yet in operation

Demolished a year ago, two brick kilns back in business



S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Even though they were demolished by the authorities concerned more than a year ago, two illegal brick kilns have started operating again in Lalmonirhat.

A mobile court of the Department of Environment knocked down SUN Bricks and SIR Bricks at Purbo Saptana in Lalmonirhat municipality area on February 9, 2021.

The brick kiln owners were also fined Tk 7 lakh each, said Mez Babul Alam, deputy director of DoE in Rangpur.

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Elephant trapped in bog rescued



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elephant calf that got stuck in a bog has been rescued by the joint efforts of locals and forest officials, around 12 hours after the incident.

The animal got trapped at a spot adjacent to Kodala Tea Estate in Chattogram's Rangunia upazila early yesterday.

Sayed Hossen, a local, told The Daily Star that hundreds of locals dragged the calf onto dry land using rope. Even locals whose crops are damaged quite often by elephants came forward to help.

Shafiqul Islam, divisional forest officer of Chattogram (south), said they were able to rescue the calf around 1:10pm yesterday with the help of others. The elephant later moved to a nearby forest, he said.

Tree felling rampant in Lathitila forest

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Miscreants, allegedly under the patronage of forest department and local influentials, have been logging trees in the protected Lathitila forest in Moulvibazar's Juri upazila.

Locals alleged that some people from Dumabari area have been trafficking wood under the protection of local influential Helal Mia from Lathichhara.

Selim Mia, a local of Lathitila forest, said the loggers employ an innovative technique to conceal their crimes: they cut the trees at different ranges and then fill the area with land to hide any evidence of their misdeeds.

This correspondent managed to talk to one of the loggers, who admitted to doing this to destroy the evidence. He, however, said this is also effective for cultivating new trees and helps the forest department adjust its data.



Asked how many trees were there at the forest and how many of them were being logged, Lathitila forest beat officer Md Salaudhin said he did not have exact statistics. "I'm not aware of this issue. But if we come to know of it, we will take steps and file cases."

He also said his department had recovered several trees that were cut down last year.

Contacted, local UP member Abdur Razzak said, "I admit that rampant wood trafficking is going on in the hilly areas. But we are yet to identify any group behind it."

He said he's unaware of any recent instance of mass tree-felling.

Asked, OC Sanjoy Debnath of Juri Police Station said they always respond to alerts from forest department to arrest illegal loggers.

Juri range officer Md Alauddin said

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A little girl tries out a pair of sunglasses at a roadside stall on KB Hemayet Uddin Road in Barishal city yesterday. With Eid just around the corner, even the footpath stores have garnered quite the crowd.

PHOTO: TITU DAS