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## BARAPUKURIA COAL MINE Production almost halted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

The coal production of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Limited has almost come to a halt as the workers continue to protest demanding their payment of eight months' arrears.

All the miners of BCMCL were staging demonstrations for the last four days in Dinajpur's Parbatipur upazila.

At least 400 of them skipped their work inside the mining compound demanding permission for returning home.

They were forced to stay inside the compound for the last eight months.

Meanwhile, some 700 more unemployed miners and their family members staged a demonstration outside the mining compound.

They demanded the authorities reinstate them in the work with payment of eight months' arrears.

According to sources, some 300 Chinese miners have been managing everything.

BCMCL is the only company that produces coal in Bangladesh under the oil, gas, and mineral resources exploration company Petrobangla.

The produced coal is supplied to the 525MW Barapukuria Coal-Fired Power Plant of the Bangladesh Power Development Board.

BCMCL officials said the coal production has almost halted as all the local miners were protesting for the last four days skipping their daily works.

The reserve of the existing coal production phase would end within a couple of weeks, said sources.

Seeking anonymity, an official said the machinery and equipment need to be shifted from one place to another

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Ignoring government directives and their own safety, people are climbing to a train roof to get to their homes ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr. The photo was taken at Gazipur's Sreepur Railway Station yesterday.

PHOTO: ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE

## 'Shown arrested' after family claims he was picked up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man who was picked up from his house in the capital's Mirpur by men claiming to be law enforcers on April 19 was "shown arrested" by Rab-8 in Barisal yesterday.

He was shown arrested a day after his family organised a press conference claiming he was picked up by law enforcers.

Jamil Hassan, commanding officer of Rab-8, said they neither heard of the press conference nor have they heard of the claims the family made.

A press release sent by Md Jahangir Alam, deputy assistant director of Rab-8, claimed Md Mohasin Gazi was found in a mahogany orchard, based on a "tip-off".

Mohasin and dozen other robbers were taking shelter there, Rab claimed.

"We learnt that a group of criminals were preparing to commit a robbery on April 30. A source informed that the group was positioned inside the mahogany orchard beside a village in Bandar Thana. They were carrying illegal and locally-made weapons," said the release.

Rab further claimed they conducted an operation there and arrested two, one of whom was Mohasin. They were arrested with two cleavers, one pistol, a one-shooter gun, one rifle and several bullets.

"Mohasin and his gang had long been extorting the people of Bhola's char areas for long. When businesses declined to pay up, they would be robbed. He used to obstruct fishermen from doing their job if they did not pay them. He would abduct fishermen in the deep sea and hold them hostage for ransom.

"He and his gang were also involved in different crimes like rape and sexual harassment," said Rab. It stated that

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Fishermen using fire to melt tar and fill the holes in their boat at Kazirhat of Bhola's Doulatkhan yesterday. They are preparing their vessel as the hilsa fishing ban has been lifted and they could go out to the sea and rivers to catch the national fish.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

### CLOSED STATE-OWNED JUTE MILLS

## Laid-off workers still not paid arrears

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN  
CHANDAN

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) could not pay arrears and benefits to all the laid-off government jute mill workers even after about two years.

The state-run organisation put the payments off mainly due to bureaucratic tangles. This has left thousands of workers and their families living in extreme hardship, said aggrieved workers.

The government on July 2, 2020 shut down 25 jute mills and laid off over 57,000 permanent and temporary workers citing heavy loss and high maintenance costs as reasons.

On Thursday, the Finance Division of the finance ministry has released Tk 92.37 crore to pay the arrears and benefits to the workers.

It came as a relief, but not for all as more than 13,000 workers will not be eligible to get their arrears from this fund.

Besides, as the fund was released on the day before the start of the weekend and the Eid holiday, the eligible workers will have to wait for several weeks to get hold of their hard-earned money.

The notice stated that this Tk 92.37 crore can be spent only for paying the due wages of 5,625 temporary workers, wages and benefits of 142 permanent workers against whom the mill authorities filed cases "by mistake" for staging protests, due wages of six weeks when the mills were closed due to workers' protests and due wages of 64 weeks for the workers of Aleem Jute Mills Limited.

That means around 8,500 jute mill workers who used to work on no-work-no-pay basis are yet to receive five years' arrears as recommended by the wage board in 2015.

Besides, workers who are fighting cases filed by BJMC against them for staging protests also have been excluded from the list of recipients. Their number could not be confirmed

by BJMC officials. However, according to worker leaders, the number is no less than 50.

The workers are also worried about facing bureaucratic tangles and harassment as the notice stated that they must have to produce a national ID card, ID card issued by the mill authority and bank details to get the due wages and benefits.

Workers' leader Md Imran, also a laid off worker of the Crescent Jute Mills, said, "Many workers already could not receive their due wages and benefits as there is slight difference in their names in the national ID card and the factory ID card. The mill authority asked them to get their names corrected in the national ID card which is a very long and complicated process."

According to workers' leaders, around 5,000 workers have so far been denied due wages and benefits due to spelling mistakes in the national ID card.

Due wages and benefits of each jute mill worker ranges

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## Brazil town builds Christ statue taller than Rio's

REUTERS, *Encantado*

Rio de Janeiro's famous Christ the Redeemer has a competitor.

The small town of Encantado in southern Brazil has built a taller Christ to attract tourism.

Christ the Protector is 43 meters (141 feet meters) high, compared to Rio's statue, which is 38 meters (125 feet), including in both cases their pedestals.

Built with concrete over a metal structure, it has already been erected on a hill above the town, but the venue will only open to the public sometime next year, said Robison Gonzatti, vice president of the association that sponsored the statue.

"It is the largest Christ in the world," he told Reuters.

The statue has an observation point for visitors who can look out through a large heart-shaped window.

The view will have to compete with the spectacular sight tourists have looking out over Guanabara Bay from the Christ standing atop Rio's Corcovado mountain.

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### HILSA BAN ENDS

## Fishermen lay their nets again

Many reluctant due to scarcity of fish

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the two-month ban on hilsa fishing ended, fishermen yesterday started laying their nets onto rivers again, said Barishal's Divisional Fisheries Office.


According to it, the success of the ban will be determined if the country is able to achieve the desired target of six lakh tons of Hilsa.

However, despite the ban's end, many fishermen are reluctant to go back to rivers this time due to scarcity of fish and the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr.

Kalu Majhi, a fisherman from Bhola's Dualatkhan upazila, said, "There are no

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