

## At least 4 killed, scores hurt in Ctg depot fire

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and more than 100 others, including police and firefighters, were injured in a fire and explosions at a private container depot in Sitakunda of Chattogram late last night.

As of filing this report at 2:45am, police and fire service personnel were trying to douse the flames and rescuing people and sending them to hospitals.

Several media outlets were putting the number of injured at nearly 300. The Daily Star, however, could not independently confirm the counts.

Civil surgeon of Chattogram, Mohammad Ilyas Chowdhury Hossain, urged all doctors and blood donors to be at the hospital immediately.

The fire broke out at BM Container Depot Ltd, a private inland container storage, in Shitalpur area by the

PHOTO ON PAGE 12



### HOW TO KILL RIVERS

Encroachment, dumping of waste and withdrawal of water

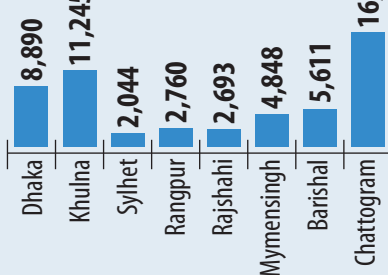
**1963-2000:**  
**115 rivers died**

**2000-2020:**  
**43 rivers died**

SOURCE: BANGLADESH DISASTER FORUM, NEWSPAPER REPORTS

### STRUCTURES ON RIVERS

SOURCE: NRCC



## Gas prices set to rise by 17-20pc BERC may announce today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to increase the gas prices by 17-20 percent at the consumer level, according to Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission sources.

BERC will announce the new rates of natural gas at a virtual press conference at 3:00pm today, said a BERC press release issued yesterday.

A BERC official, preferring not to be named, said the commission was going to increase the prices by 17-20 percent on average. They added the BERC had recently sent a proposal to the prime minister to that end.

Homes with single-burner stoves could be paying Tk 980-1,050 a month and those with double-burner stoves Tk 1,080 to Tk 1,100. They now pay Tk 925 and Tk 975.

In January, state-owned gas distribution companies asked the BERC for an average of 117 percent hike in prices. Apart from this, the state-owned Bangladesh Oil, Gas, and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) also placed a separate proposal asking to increase the bulk price of natural gas.

The BERC held a public hearing on the proposals from March 21 to 24.



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### SAVING RIVERS

## Ensure more power to river commission

Speakers urge govt at Star roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political commitment, proper enforcement of laws and empowerment of the conservation commission might be able to save the rivers, speakers told a roundtable discussion yesterday.

The rivers would not have been subjected to such mindless grabbing and encroachment had everyone recognised them as an integral part of development and wellbeing, said Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the parliamentary committee on environment ministry.

It should be recognised that a river is not just a waterbody, he told the discussion on Rivers and Our Future organised by The Daily Star at its office in the capital.

Muzibur Rahman Howlader, former chairman of National River Conservation Commission (NRCC), said the government agencies in charge of river conservation do very little to save the rivers.

"I visited 30 districts, prepared a list of grabbers in which the names

of powerful individuals appeared, and made many recommendations. All went unheard. Those in charge of conservation of rivers must be held accountable, if we really want to save the rivers," he said, adding that the top bureaucrats were reluctant to take action.

He then urged the government to increase institutional capacity and empower the NRCC.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said many voices were raised and many media outlets wrote a lot to save the rivers, but no significant change was made.

"I was ecstatic... when High Court issued the directive to demarcate the rivers, thinking it was an epoch-making directive for the conservation of rivers. In reality, we saw it appeared as a curse instead of a blessing as the demarcation pillar legitimised the grabbing," he said.

Asif Nazrul, professor of law at Dhaka University, said a significant legal development took place over the years: the river commission was

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LET'S TAKE CARE OF IT

## Atmospheric CO2 level hits new high

AFP, Washington

Concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in May were 50 percent higher than during the pre-industrial era, reaching levels not seen on Earth for about four million years, the main US climate agency said on Friday.

Global warming caused by humans, particularly through the production of electricity using fossil fuels, transport, the production of cement, or even deforestation, is responsible for the new high, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said.

May is usually the month with the highest carbon dioxide levels each year.

In May 2022, the threshold of 420 parts per million (ppm) – a unit of measurement used to quantify pollution in the atmosphere – was crossed.

In May 2021, the rate was 419 ppm, and in 2020, 417 ppm.

The measurements are taken at the Mauna Loa observatory in Hawaii, ideally located high on a volcano, which allows it to escape

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Ex-NRCC chairman  
Muzibur Rahman  
Howlader



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