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## ILLEGAL SAND EXTRACTION SC slams HC for entertaining UP chairman's plea

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in the full text of a verdict has directed the Chandpur deputy commissioner to realise the royalty from expelled local Awami League leader Md Selim Khan for illegally extracting sand from the Meghna in the district's 21 mouzas since 2016.

The apex court also castigated the High Court Division for allowing Selim, now chairman of Chandpur's Lakshmipur Union Parishad, to extract sand from the river for an indefinite period without fixing any tenure and royalty.

It observed that the HC played the role of the lessor and travelled beyond its jurisdiction declaring the mouzas in question as Balu Mahal (an area from where sand is extracted).

The SC expressed dissatisfaction with the government that it did not contest the HC rule on time.

"Before parting, it is necessary to note that since 2016 the writ petitioner respondent [Selim Khan] extracted sand from the mouzas in question without paying any royalty to the government in an arbitrary manner, which has already incurred a heavy financial loss to the government."

"Thus, the authority concerned, in particular the deputy commissioner, Chandpur, is directed to take necessary steps to realise the royalty for the alleged extraction of sand from the petitioner [Selim Khan], from

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Three journos  
beaten up by  
'AL leader,  
his sons'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Lalmonirhat

A local Awami League leader, his three sons and their men assaulted three journalists and broke a camera in Panchagram area of Lalmonirhat yesterday evening.

The reporters were collecting information about an alleged abduction by Sultan Mandal, son of local AL leader Azizar Mandal, in Sakorpar village around 6:30pm when they were attacked, said Ershadul Alam, officer-in-charge of Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station.

Villagers rescued Abdur Rob Suzon of Prothom Alo, Anisur Rahman Ladla of Jamuna TV, and Mahfuzul Islam Bakul of Ekhon TV, and admitted them to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital.

Ladla's injuries were the most serious with a fractured bone in his left arm and bruises to his head and many other parts of the body, Medical Officer Wahida told Daily Star.

Ladla said the attackers

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### BLASTS AT RUSSIA-HELD NUKE PLANT

## Kyiv, Moscow trade blame

UN chief warns of nuke disaster from shelling, calls  
for demilitarised zone around the plant

#### AGENCIES

Ukraine and Russia yesterday accused each other of risking nuclear disaster by shelling Europe's largest nuclear power plant, occupied by Russian forces in a region expected to become one of the next big front lines of the war.

Western countries have called for Moscow to withdraw its troops from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, and the United Nations called on Thursday for it to be declared a demilitarised zone. But there has been no sign so far of Russia agreeing to move its troops out of the facility they seized in March.

The plant dominates the south bank of a vast reservoir on the Dnipro river that cuts across southern Ukraine. Ukrainian forces controlling the towns and cities on the opposite bank have come under intense bombardment from the Russian-held side.

**Ukraine's Energoatom agency said the power station was struck five times, including near where radioactive materials are stored.**

to recapture Zaporizhzhia and neighbouring Kherson provinces, the largest part of the territory Russia seized after its February 24 invasion still in Russian hands. Moscow has installed regional officials who say they intend to stage votes to join Russia.

Ukraine's Energoatom agency, whose workers still operate the

plant under Russian occupation, said the power station was struck five times on Thursday, including near where radioactive materials are stored. Both sides blamed each other for the blasts.

Russia says Ukraine is recklessly firing at the plant. Kyiv says Russian troops struck it themselves, and are also using the plant as a shield to provide cover while they bombard nearby Ukrainian-held towns and cities.

The UN Security Council, where Russia wields a veto, met on Thursday to discuss the situation. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on both sides to stop all fighting near the plant, reports Reuters.

"The facility must not be used as part of any military operation. Instead, urgent agreement is needed at a technical level on a safe perimeter of demilitarisation to ensure the safety of the area," Guterres said in a statement.

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#### KAMAL'S INTERVIEW

FT publishes  
rejoinder  
from finance  
ministry

#### STAR REPORT

Financial Times on Thursday printed a rejoinder from Bangladesh Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in connection with an interview published by the London-based daily on August 9.

The newspaper carried the full text of the rejoinder sent by Gazi Towhidul Islam, public relations officer of the finance ministry.

The rejoinder, as run in the FT, said the ministry felt the report's headline "Bangladesh's finance minister warns on Belt and Road loans from China" did not properly reflect the minister's actual position.

It said that the FT report mentioned Sri Lanka, which defaulted on its sovereign debt in May and is in negotiations with the IMF.

The report also said BRI loans had "exacerbated a severe economic crisis" in that country but it did not

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EDN INSTITUTIONS  
Govt mulling  
2-day weekly  
holiday to  
save energy  
Says Dipu Moni

UNB, Dhaka

The government plans to introduce a two-day weekly holiday in educational institutions across the country soon to save energy, said Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday.

She said this while responding to a question at an event in the capital.

Dipu Moni also said the government has announced a two-day weekly holiday in all educational institutions from 2023.

"We are thinking about whether it will be implemented from now to save electricity," she said.

The decision will be announced soon, she added.



**FLOUT, RISK, REPEAT...** Pedestrians dodging buses and clambering across damaged central reservations as they cross a busy highway in the capital's Azampur area, even though a footbridge is mere yards away. Despite footbridges dotting many Dhaka roads at regular intervals, pedestrians continue to take the risk of jaywalking as vehicles speed by them.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Huge meteorite impacts reshaped the Earth

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



Huge meteorites that smashed into the Earth helped create the continents, scientists have claimed.

Our planet was bombarded with a volley of space objects in its first billion years, which helped decide the shape of its land, according to new research. Researchers have long suspected that such collisions helped shape the continents. But until now there has been little proof.

Now researchers have been able to examine ancient meteorites – and found their role in our planet's history.

"By examining tiny crystals of the mineral zircon in rocks from the Pilbara Craton in Western Australia, which represents Earth's best preserved remnant of ancient crust, we found evidence of these giant meteorite impacts," Tim Johnson, from Curtin University, said.

"Studying the composition of oxygen isotopes in these zircon crystals revealed a 'top down' process starting with the melting of rocks near the surface and progressing deeper, consistent with the geological effect of giant meteorite impacts."

"Our research provides the first solid evidence

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Rushdie  
stabbed  
in neck  
Attacker taken  
into custody

REUTERS, New York

S a m a n  
Rushdie, the  
Indian-born  
novelist who  
spent years  
in hiding  
under death  
thr eat s  
from Iran because of his  
writing, was stabbed in the  
neck onstage at a lecture in  
New York state yesterday  
and airlifted to a hospital,  
police said.

He was alive and "getting the care he needs," New York Governor Kathy Hochul said.

A man rushed to the stage at the Chautauqua Institution and attacked Rushdie, 75, as he was being introduced to give a talk on artistic freedom to an audience of hundreds, an eyewitness said. A New York State Police trooper present at the event took

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**Vegetable farmers displaying their wares on boats lined along the bank of a canal in Binoykati union of Jhalakathi. Farmers from nearby villages bring their produce to the floating market every Friday and Monday to sell to traders from nearby towns. The photo was taken yesterday.**

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## BCL, BNP men clash in Feni

**BNP says 20 of its activists hurt; police fire blanks; three held**

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League and BNP clashed in Feni town's Islampur Road area yesterday afternoon during a rally by the district unit of the opposition party.

BNP leaders claimed that at least 20 activists of the party were injured in the clash.

Police said they fired 18 blank shots to bring the situation under control. They also detained three people from the spot.

Feni District BNP Member Secretary Alal Uddin said the party was holding a rally in front of its office on Islampur Road around 3:00pm protesting the recent price hike of fuel and soaring prices of essentials.

All of a sudden, a group of activists of BCL, the pro-Awami League student body, hurled brick chunks at the rally. BNP men tried to put up resistance to the attack, he added.

However, Tolai Ahmad Topu, president of Feni District Chhatra League, said they brought out a procession against violence and terrorism in the town around 3:00pm. When the procession reached Islampur Road area, BNP men hurled brick chunks at them, triggering the clash.

According to witnesses, the two sides chased and counter-chased each other.

Feni Model Police Station OC Md Nizam Uddin said police rushed to the spot and fired blank shots to quell the violence.

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