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MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and  
SHAHEEN MOLLAH

It was close to 10:00pm on April 11. As usual, people were busy buying daily commodities from shops at the capital's Mohammadpur Geneva Camp.

This correspondent, posing as a buyer, was walking around there.

Within three to four minutes, a 25 year-old skinny youth appeared from an alley, and asked "Mama, how many [yaba] do you want?"

As this correspondent wanted to know the price of two big sized yaba, he demanded Tk 400 for them.

After a little bargaining, he lowered his demand to Tk 250, saying it was his last offer.

For obvious reasons, this correspondent refused the offer saying that "the price is still high".

The Daily Star has visited at least five spots in the capital over the last couple of weeks learning that the flow of yaba, a popular and highly addictive drug, has

gone up significantly recently.

Besides the Geneva Camp, the four other spots are the capital's Karwan Bazar railway tracks; near the FDC gate of south Begunbari; Gudaraghata of Mirpur-1; and near the Ceramic Gate in Pallabi section 12.

During the visits, this newspaper managed to talk to at least three community leaders, two drug peddlers, and two buyers, who confirmed the recent surge in supply.

Law enforcement agencies have attributed the surge and price drop to increased production of the drug in Myanmar under the patronisation of its junta government, a claim supported by reports published in international media.

Last month the UN said law enforcement across Southeast and East Asia netted nearly 172 tonnes of methamphetamine in 2021 -- about seven times more than a decade ago.

The surge in supply has sent street prices in Thailand and Malaysia crashing to all-time lows, according to international media reports.



Hundreds of motorcyclists waiting to pay the toll to travel across the Jamuna through the Bangabandhu bridge in Tangail. The long queue formed yesterday morning even after the authorities set up two toll collection booths only for the bikers.

PHOTO: STAR

## PM'S JAPAN VISIT Dhaka, Tokyo eye greater cooperation

PORIMOL PALMA



In a world polarized by the US-led West and China-Russia bloc, Dhaka and Tokyo want to elevate their relationship to a strategic level during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Japan scheduled for April 25-28.

Hasina will meet Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio, who will host a working dinner.

She will also call on the emperor of Japan, according to the foreign ministry.

Dhaka and Tokyo are expected to sign 10 memorandums of understanding (MoU) on defence cooperation, economic partnership agreement, cyber security, ICT, agriculture, human resource development, education, trade and investment.

Foreign ministry officials said the defence cooperation does not mean buying military equipment.

Initially, it will be mostly training and information exchange. Later, if needed, Bangladesh may buy defence equipment, including patrol boats or radars for maritime security.

The economic partnership agreement will be signed so that Bangladesh continues to have trade privileges after its graduation from LDC.

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## Temperature likely to dip in a day or two

Heatwave continues  
to sweep country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The temperature may drop across the country and rainfall may increase in a day or two, the Bangladesh Meteorological Department said yesterday.

Rain or thundershower, accompanied by temporary squally wind, is likely to occur at one or two places in Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions.

Weather will remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere across the country.

In its 24-hour forecast yesterday evening, the Met office said severe heatwave is sweeping over Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Pabna and Chuadanga districts. Mild to moderate heatwave is sweeping over Dhaka and Barishal divisions and it may continue in Khulna division, Panchagarh, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Moulvibazar, Rangamati and Bandarban districts and other parts of Rajshahi division, the Met office added.

Yesterday's highest temperature was 42.8 degrees Celsius in Chuadanga and Ishwardi of Pabna.

Rashed Chowdhury, adjunct professor

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Shopkeepers of Bangabazar are selling clothes under large umbrellas on the ground where the market stood before the devastating fire on April 4. However, only a fraction of the affected traders have been able to set up shops.

AL POLITICS

## Barishal sees overnight shift

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE with SUSHANTA GHOSH

The Awami League's decision to choose Abul Khair Abdullah over his nephew and incumbent mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah as the Barishal mayoral candidate has changed all the political equations in the city.

Sadiq is the son of Abul Hasnat Abdullah, a veteran politician who is the president of Barishal district Awami League, lawmaker from Barishal-1 and a member of AL's central working committee.

With Sadiq as the general secretary of Barishal city AL, the father and son were controlling the AL politics in the district, without giving their political rivals any space.

The two have already started losing their grip on local politics with Khair, the youngest brother of Hasnat, appearing on the scene.

Immediately after his nomination on Saturday, the speedboat terminal of Barishal, a city crisscrossed by rivers and canals, was captured by the anti-Sadiq faction within the party.

The faction is also looking to take the microbus and three-wheelers stand at Rupatali and the central bus terminal at Nathullabbad, and a tense situation is prevailing in the areas.

Sadiq earned a bad name for keeping these terminals under his control.

His rivals, who never dared speak against him or his father, brought out a procession welcoming the party decision and distributed sweetmeats on Saturday night.

There has been a festive mood among the followers of former Barishal mayor late Shawkat Hossain Hiron and

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