



### B1 Businesses to be hit by power tariff hike



### P9 When our victim-blaming culture shrouds predators



### P5 Mosquito menace beyond control in Khulna



### P11 The fallacy of local dominance in BPL

## BAILEY ROAD BLAZE Manager of building, 3 others placed on remand FBCCI demands punishment of those responsible

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
A Dhaka court yesterday granted police two days to interrogate on remand four people arrested over Thursday night's deadly fire at the Green Cozy Cottage shopping mall on Bailey Road in Dhaka that claimed 46 lives. They are — Anwarul Haque and Shafiqur Rahman Rimon, owners of "Chumuk" fast food shop, where the fire originated; Munshi Hamimul Alam Bipul, the building's



Students of BuEt demonstrate on campus as two of their classmates died in Thursday night's devastating fire at a building on Bailey Road. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Fire exits horrifying at many city eateries

STAR REPORT  
A prominent feature of Banani Road-II, Kamal Ataturk Avenue, Satmasjid Road, Khilagon Taltola, and Mirpur-II is that tall buildings there house restaurants, cafes and commercial kitchens, just like the buildings on Bailey Road. These "restaurant buildings" make these places the buzzing hotspots they are. As the Bailey Road fire has shown, a blatant disregard for safety is just as prominent as the buildings themselves. The Daily Star visited 37 of these "restaurant buildings" that housed over 100 restaurants and found 22 buildings with safety lapses that could potentially lead to casualties in case of a fire. This paper's correspondents looked at whether there was any fire exits, whether the stairwell was protected by a fire-rated door, and whether the stairway was being used as storage. "Since these buildings are mixed-use buildings, they must have a separate fire exit," said Prof Adil Muhammed Khan, head of the Institute of Planning and Development. "Our current laws do not mention restaurants as a category of occupancy. This is a loophole. We recommend that the next amendment to the building construction rules plug this," he said. **DHANMONDI** On Satmasjid Road, The Daily Star correspondents visited 21 "restaurant buildings" and found safety issues at eight. An 11-storey building on one end of the road with at least eight restaurants was found to be storing LPG cylinders on both the main stairwells and the emergency exit. Large 45 kg gas cylinders were seen at the unmarked emergency exit on three floors and two large cylinders at the main stairwell on the sixth floor. The staircases were being used to store large boxes, thereby obstructing egress during an emergency. An eight-storey "restaurant building" next to this building had no emergency exits, and neither did a six-storey building housing a jam-packed burger joint. A seven-storey and six-storey building had no emergency exit. At a popular 14-storey restaurant hub, the emergency stairway on the 8th and 10th floors was blocked by large boxes. PHOTOS ON PAGE 2 SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## MAJOR FIRE INCIDENTS No verdict to date

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI  
At least 71 people were killed in a tragic fire at Wahed Mansion in Chawkbazar's Churihatta area in Old Dhaka on February 20, 2019. The fire broke out after a gas cylinder of a private car exploded and spread to a nearby transmitter. A day later, Mohammad Asif, a resident of the area, filed a case with Chawkbazar Police Station to seek justice for the victims. Three years after the investigation, the investigating officer of the case, also the police inspector Abdul Kayum submitted a charge sheet accusing eight including the owner of Wahed Mansion, Hasan Sultan, and his brother Hossain Sultan Sohel on February 14, 2022. A year later, on January 31, 2023, the court formally framed charges against the accused. Again, after a nine-month gap, on October 17 last year, the court recorded the testimony of Asif, the complainant of the case. The next hearing of the case is fixed for March 21. A total of 167 people were made witnesses in the case. Asked about the delay, the state lawyer Mazharul Haque said the case was with another court when the charge was framed. It was later transferred to the Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court 8 of Dhaka. SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

GD filed after Nimtoli tragedy in 2010, which left 124 dead. No police probe was conducted.

Churihatta fire in 2019 left 71 dead. The court only started recording witness statements.

Tazreen Fashions fire in 2012 killed 112. Trial is yet to be complete.

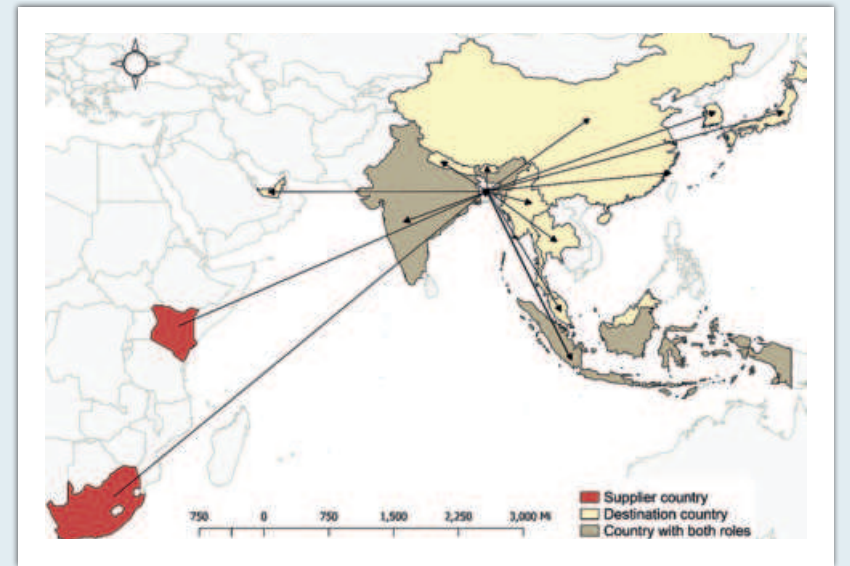
FR Tower fire in 2019 killed 25. Trial is yet to begin.

Moghbar explosion in 2021 killed 7. Probe has not finished.

Hashem Foods fire in 2021 killed 54 people. Trial is yet to begin.

## WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING Bangladesh remains a transit hotspot

PINAKI ROY  
Patagonian Mara, a somewhat rabbit-like animal, is found in open and semi-open habitats in Argentina, including in large parts of Patagonia. This herbivorous mammal, which also looks like deer, is never known to be found in this part of the subcontinent. But in March 2021, border guard members recovered seven of these near-threatened animals from some abandoned sacks in Tushkhali border area in Kolaroa upazila of Satkhira. The following year, a large number of wild animals, including Hoolock gibbons, porcupines, fishing cats, leopard cats and Kalij pheasants were rescued from Lohagara upazila, Chattogram. Latest in January last year, two bear cubs were rescued from Chokoria, Cox's Bazar. Earlier, law enforcers rescued nine zebras from a cow-shed near Sharsha border in Jashore in 2018, and two lion cubs and a leopard in 2017, also from Jashore. This means, many exotic and endangered species continue to be smuggled into Bangladesh from Africa and South America, as the SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Trade of live felids (mammals of cat families) linked to Bangladesh, which exports those to 10 countries in Asia and Africa and imports them from two countries, South Africa and Kenya. Credit: N. Uddin et al.

### THREATENED SPECIES IN BANGLADESH

- SUNDARBANS**  
Mammals 5.07%, birds 0.88%, amphibians 2.04%, reptiles 1.8%
- COASTAL AREAS**  
Mammals 1.45%, birds 1.77%, reptiles 5.39%
- CHT HILL TRACTS**  
Mammals 18.12%, birds 1.77%, reptiles 11.38%, amphibians 10.21%
- FORESTED AREAS OF NORTHEAST**  
Mammals 9.42%, birds 1.77%, amphibians 4.08%, reptiles 4.19%
- HAOR BASIN AND RIVERINE HABITAT**  
Mammals 2.9%, birds 1.77%, reptiles 1.8%

### WILDLIFE RESCUE & RECOVERY (2012-2024)

- Total rescue — **45,446**
- Mammals — **1,230**
- Birds — **33,874**
- Reptiles — **10,128**
- Amphibians — **205**
- Trophies (ivory, tiger skins & bones, peacock feather, etc.) — **1405**
- Cases filed — **139**
- Accused — **208**

SOURCE: INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) REDLIST 2015

SOURCE: WILDLIFE CRIME CONTROL UNIT

## INDOMITABLE MARCH



On March 3, 1971, women in Dhaka marched in solidarity with the nationwide strike.

## Withdraw forces, transfer power

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN  
At a meeting organised at Paltan Maidan, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman urged the authorities to withdraw forces from the city and hand over power to the elected representatives of the people. He also called for launching a no-tax campaign. Bangabandhu, in an apparent reference to West Pakistan leaders, said: "If you do not want to frame one constitution let us frame our own constitution and you frame your own. Then let us see if we can live together as brothers." He appealed for communal peace and added the Biharis and non-Muslims "are our sacred trust". SEE PAGE 7 COL 6



A large boat is being loaded with "chhon" or "shon," a type of tall grass found in the Sundarbans. To encourage new growth for deer grazing, authorities pay traders to remove mature grass from the mangrove forest. The grass is mostly used by villagers in Khulna and Bagerhat for various purposes, including building roofs of huts, fences in and around croplands, and as fuel for mud stoves. The photo was taken recently from the Kochikhali canal in the Sarankhola range of the Sundarbans. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN