



**B1** Drug sales grow at slowest pace in five years



**P11** Nahid in Tigers' Test squad



**P7** West decries Putin's landslide election win



**P4** Garbage dumping continues in Brahmaputra

## LNG PROCESSING Capacity to outpace demand

Says UK-based BMI Research; idle facilities rack up capacity charges

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh will end up with surplus LNG regasification capacity by the end of this decade, said the UK-based BMI Research – a development that will ultimately cost the exchequer in fees similar to capacity charges for power plants.

At present, there are two floating storage and regasification units (FSRUs) – which re-gasifies the imported liquefied natural gas and supplies to the national grid – with a combined annual capacity of 7.6 million tonnes (mtpa).

The government has planned four more LNG terminal projects: one onshore in Matarbari with the capacity to regasify 7.6 mtpa LNG, two FSRUs with the same capacity in Moheshkhali and Payra, and extending the capacity of one of the two existing FSRUs.

Based on the planned projects, an additional 21 mtpa of LNG regasification capacity will be added before the end of the decade, said BMI Research in its latest commentary

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Two women trying to collect whatever water is left in an almost dried-up reservoir at Kalairag of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila. Unplanned mining of sand and stone has had adverse effects on the water bodies in the area, giving it the look of a wasteland. While the well-to-do can help themselves during the dry seasons by installing tube wells, those from the low-income groups are left to suffer from a crisis of water. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

'It's impossible for BNP, allies to topple govt' PM says AL has public support



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said BNP and its allies want restoration of the caretaker government system not for an election but for pushing the country into darkness again.

"No one will be able to push the country into darkness again," she said.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, was addressing a discussion

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## 4 suspected robbers beaten to death

SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM, Narayanganj with SHARIFUL ISLAM

Villagers beat four people to death and severely injured another one in Narayanganj's Sonargaon upazila on Sunday night on suspicion that they were robbers.

After noticing a group of strangers in Baniabari area around 9:45pm, locals announced on loudspeakers of mosques that there were robbers in the area, police said.

Hundreds of people from at least seven villages then gathered with sticks, sharp weapons and spears and caught the five men and beat them up.

A team from Sonargaon Police Station reached the area around 12:05am and saw that the mob had left.

After searching the area, police found the body of a man and two severely injured others in a ditch. Of the two, one died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital hours later and the other was admitted to National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor).

After daybreak, police found the bodies of two other men in another ditch.

The man who died at the DMCH was identified as Zakir Hossain, 40, of Sukhertek area in Sonargaon. Zakir

was previously accused of robbery in at least three cases and he was arrested before, said Sheikh Billal Hossain, additional superintendent of police in Narayanganj.

The men whose bodies were found in the morning were Arahazar residents Abdur Rahim, 48, and Nabi Hossain, 35. They were also previously accused in robbery cases, Billal said.

**Hundreds of people from at least seven villages then gathered with sticks, sharp weapons and spears and caught the men and beat them up.**

The man admitted to Nitor is Mohammad Ali, 45, of Arahazar upazila. He is also accused of robbery in cases filed earlier.

The body found on the night of the incident has not been identified yet.

The men who were killed and wounded were stabbed and hit with sticks, police said.

Billal said police were investigating

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## HIJACKED MV ABDULLAH Somali forces, foreign navies prepare raid

Reports Reuters citing Somali cops; ship-owning firm opposes move

STAR REPORT

Somali police and international navies were preparing to raid Bangladesh-flagged commercial ship MV Abdullah that was hijacked by pirates last week, Reuters reported yesterday citing comments made by Somali police.

The ship, with 23 crew members on board, was hijacked off the coast of Somalia last week, the latest of more than 20 attacks since November by Somali pirates who had been dormant for nearly a decade.

On Saturday, the Indian navy rescued a cargo vessel, the Maltese-flagged MV Ruen, which had been seized in December, freeing its 17 crew members and arresting 35 pirates.

The police force from the semi-autonomous region of Somalia's Puntland, a base for many pirate gangs, said it was on high alert and prepared to participate in an operation against the pirates holding the Abdullah, reports Reuters.

"Puntland police forces are ready after they got reports that international navies are planning an attack," the police said in a statement.

India's navy, which has disrupted several other attempted hijackings, did not immediately respond to a

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## ABONTIKA'S DEATH JnU student, asst proctor remanded

Protests held in front of VC office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Cumilla court yesterday placed Jagannath University student Raihan Siddique Amman and suspended assistant proctor Din Islam on a two-day and one-day remand respectively in a case filed over the alleged instigation of law student Fairuz Sadaf Abontika's suicide.

Police had prayed for a five-day remand for Amman and a two-day remand for Din Islam.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Abu Bakar Siddique passed the remand order. He also ordered police to submit the investigation report within the next seven working days.

The two were produced before a Cumilla court around 10:45am.

In the case statement,

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## RAID OVER FIRE SAFETY 'Govt agencies extorting us'

Allege restaurant owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Restaurant owners yesterday alleged that the government agencies concerned were extorting them in the name of raids following the recent fire at a building on Bailey Road in Dhaka.

"Different agencies are extorting as much money as possible by intimidating the restaurant owners in the name of raids," said Imran Hasan, secretary general of the Bangladesh Restaurant Owners' Association, at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

The association organised the event protesting what it said was anarchy created by the government agencies in the restaurant sector since the Bailey Road fire incident.

Imran said what the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) is doing in the name of safety compliance drives is not acceptable in any way.

The Rajuk started conducting drives in commercial

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**What Rajuk is doing in the name of safety compliance drives is not acceptable.**

Imran Hasan Secretary General Bangladesh Restaurant Owners' Association

## A series win built on the right process

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh went into this white-ball home series against Sri Lanka with an agenda of improving their all-round performance, especially considering the sub-par campaign the Tigers endured in the ODI World Cup in 2023. In that regard, things went decently for Bangladesh in their 2-1 series triumph, confirmed after their four-wicket win in the final ODI in Chattogram yesterday, as the Tigers got a taste of how to play on flatter tracks where the bowlers were challenged to be crafty enough to get wickets and batters needed to score with more flourish.

The bowlers in particular, especially the pace unit which has improved vastly over the years, found the right atmosphere to have their mettle tested.

In the third ODI, where it was even-stevens for both teams condition-wise, the

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Rishad Hossain (L) and Mushfiqur Rahim (R) go for a high-five after guiding Bangladesh to a series-winning four-wicket victory against Sri Lanka in the third ODI at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Exim-Padma Bank merger to take at least 18 months

Two banks sign MoU

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The planned merger of Shariah-based Exim Bank and struggling Padma Bank is likely to take between 18 months to two-and-a-half years to complete, according to central bank officials.

Yesterday, the two banks signed the letter of intent to merge, which is the very first stage of the merger.

Now, the banks will have to submit a formal application to the Bangladesh Bank with a copy of the scheme of merger with documents, The Daily Star has learnt from central bank officials informed with the proceedings.

The documents include the secured and unsecured debts. In the case of secured debts, particulars of the securities and their value have to be provided. The value of the property, the assets and the liabilities of the two banks must be furnished too.

If the central bank is satisfied with the draft scheme, it will give the go-ahead to the merger, as per the existing guideline on merger and acquisition.

While there is a guideline for merger or amalgamation of banks and financial institutions from 2007, it needs to be updated for the current times. The updated guideline will be published soon, the BB officials said.

After examination of the draft scheme, the central bank will appoint auditors in those banks for the valuation of assets and liabilities, said BB Spokesman Md Mezbaut Haque yesterday.

There are some legal approval factors in the case of a

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