

## Thirty shops gutted in fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 30 shops and fishing warehouses were burnt down in a fire at Mohipur fish market in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila on Friday night.

However, no casualties were reported in the incident.

The fire originated from a short circuit at one of the warehouses around 8:30pm, said Ilyas Hossain, team leader of Kalapara Fire Service.

Locals said the fire spread quickly due to the presence of flammable plastic objects like freezer boxes and nets.

Two fire fighting units were deployed, dousing the fire within one and a half hours.

On information, Mohibbur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, visited the site at around 11:00am yesterday.

He gave two bundles of CI sheets, Tk 6,000 in cash and food for 10 days to each victim.

Meanwhile, a committee has been formed to determine the loss caused by the fire, said Kalapara UNO Rabiul Islam.

On March 2, eight shops were gutted following a fire at the same market.

## Five-year old found dead in Bagerhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Police yesterday found the lifeless body of a 5-year-old in Bagerhat's Mollahat upazila. The child's hands, feet, and face were bound with polythene and surgical tape, leading authorities to suspect he was strangled after being raped.

The child went missing on Friday afternoon while gathering mangoes at a neighbour's residence, prompting his father to file a general diary with Mollahat Police Station that night. Police initiated a search operation overnight and extended it into the morning, culminating in the discovery of the child's body hidden beneath betel nut leaves in a hole at Daud Sharif's betel leaf orchard yesterday noon.

The body of the child has been sent to Bagerhat District Hospital for autopsy, said Mollahat Police Station Officer-in-Charge SM Ashrafal Alam.

"A case is being filed in this connection. We will bring the culprits to book."

The child's maternal grandfather, Feroze Ahmed, claimed the murder stemmed from a past feud over a land dispute.

# Load shedding cripples life in Khulna city

Shrimp processing factories face losses



DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Tushar Kanti Das lives on the ground floor of a three-storey house on Sabuj Sangh Math Road of ward-6 in Khulna city. After a long day of work as a sales representative for a pharmaceutical company, he would have to suffer the woes of load shedding as soon as he returned home for the past week.

Along with his daughter Tuli Das and his wife, Tushar would be confined to these rooms, where the windows and doors would have to remain closed even amidst the terrible heat due to mosquitoes.

As soon as the evening would start, electricity would not be available at every one hour interval.

They suffered so much, that they even kept a record of how much load shedding has taken place in the last few days.

Electricity went out six times in this area of ward-6 on Tuesday. There was no electricity for around five hours - from 2:00pm to 3:15pm; 4:30pm to 5:15pm; again from 6:30pm to 7:30pm; 9:10pm to 9:42pm; 11:00pm to 11:40pm, and from 1:10am to 1:23am.

"I returned home around 11:00pm and still faced load shedding almost every day in last week. One of the days, I noticed my daughter was sweating and

exhausted. Then I had to take her to the roof to find some relief," said Tushar.

"I do not have any capacity to buy IPS or other power-saving tools. So I am trying to solve the problem by buying a charger," he added.

Most of the families living in Khulna city have been facing power shortage problems similar to Tushar's family.

According to West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited (WZPDCL), the electricity demand in Khulna city was 196MW on Tuesday April 3. In contrast, 160MW of electricity was supplied.

Seeking anonymity, one of the chief engineers said there is a shortage of 35-40MW of electricity for Khulna city over the last couple of days. As a result, load shedding is taking place in various areas consistently.

"Over time, the demand for electricity is increasing daily, as our consumption is rapidly increasing. However, supply is still low," he added.

WZPDCL is responsible for electricity distribution in 21 district towns, 37 municipalities, two city corporations and 21 upazilas in the southern part of the country. Other districts are also facing load shedding similar to Khulna.

According to the control room of WZPDCL, their total electricity demand was 680MW on Tuesday afternoon and

675MW on Wednesday.

However, the authority declined to provide load shedding data against the supply and demand ration.

Md Amirul Azad, senior Met officer at Khulna Met Office, said yesterday the temperature was 38 degrees Celsius in Khulna.

**EXPORT-ORIENTED FISHERIES SECTOR AT A LOSS**

S Humayun Kabir, director of Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA), said being a perishable product, prawns have to be stored at the right temperature. Besides, each step of shrimp processing requires electricity.

He said, "Electrical aerator [air carrier] has to be used at all times to maintain the oxygen level in the water of the shrimp enclosure. If there is load shedding, the production of shrimps decreases and sometimes even all the fish die."

"A factory requires 18 hours of uninterrupted electricity to freeze ice. Due to load shedding, generators have to be used to make ice. As a result, the price of ice has increased a lot," he added.

According to BFFEA, there are 105 frozen food processing plants in Bangladesh. Out of this, 80 percent of shrimps are processed in various factories in Khulna.

## Son kills father in Kurigram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

A son stabbed his father to death in Phulbari upazila of Kurigram yesterday noon.

The deceased Akbar Ali, 59, was a former union parishad member.

The incident occurred at Char Jyotindra Narayan area of the upazila's Shimulbari union.

Sajedul Islam, 36, attacked his mother Sahera Banu, 55, with a knife after he did not find food in the kitchen. In the heat of the argument, Sajedul also attacked his father who was trying to save his mother, said Pranakrishna Debnath, officer-in-charge of Phulbari Police Station.

Critically injured, Akbar died on the way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. Sahera is currently being treated there.

Police arrested Sajedul from a maize field in the village a few hours after the incident.

## 15 new Covid-19 cases reported

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh reported 15 Covid-19 cases in 24 hours till yesterday morning. With the new numbers, the country's total Covid-19 caseload rose to 20,49,626, according to the DGHS.

The official death toll from the disease remained unchanged at 29,493 as no new fatalities were reported during this period. The daily case test positivity rate was 4.46 percent as 336 samples were tested, said the DGHS.

## Five killed in separate

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Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital while the deceased's body has been sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy, Yunus added.

In Natore, a microbus hit a battery-run van in West Sonapatil area of Naldanga upazila around 8:00am, leaving the van's passenger dead on the spot.

The deceased was identified as Ziaur Rahman, 46, a garment worker, who was returning home from Dhaka on Eid holiday.

He got off a train at

Madhnanagar Railway Station and boarded the battery-run van for his home in Haludaghar area of the upazila.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body, said Md. Monowaruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Naldanga Police Station.

Police later seized the microbus and arrested its driver and helper from Atrai upazila of Naogaon, the OC also said.

Filing of a case over the incident was underway, he added.

## 1 killed, another's

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Upazila Health Complex. From there, they were later taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital for better treatment.

Sheikh Mohammad Ali, officer-in-charge of Chakaria Police Station, said, "The doctors said Riyad died due to excessive blood loss after his right leg

was severed."

"Police are trying to nab the attackers. The attack took place over previous enmity and to establish supremacy in the area. Both sides are involved in criminal activities," he added.

The OC said there were several criminal cases against both the victims.

## Bangladesh urges

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disorder. We must step up efforts to ensure their overall well-being and societal inclusion," he said.

He highlighted the progress made in raising awareness on autism, especially in Southeast Asia. This region accounts for almost 15 percent of the global prevalence of developmental disabilities.

"Dhaka Declaration and subsequent developments in the WHO Regional

Committee for South east Asia helped accelerate efforts in the region to improve inclusion, participation and community-based care of the children with ASD," Ambassador Muhith said.

"Yet, a significant gap remains in ensuring universal access to healthcare, support and inclusive environments for the children with developmental disabilities," he added.

## Ramadan

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Another customer echoed the same.

**SHAHI HALWA**  
In Rangpur city, Moskot Shahi Halwa is one of the most popular iftar items available.

Moubon Hotel of Kachari area of Rangpur city has been making the halwa for quite some time now.

This bright red dessert, also known as Shahi Halwa, is made with different ingredients including flour, nuts and Rooh Afza.

One kilogramme of Moskot Shahi Halwa costs Tk 260.

Amirul Islam of Ashratpur village of Rangpur city said that he has been buying Moskot Shahi Halwa for the last two year as his family members often request him to bring it for iftar.

## Low-cost

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and Bangladesh Television need to be made. The Wage Earners Welfare Board can also conduct a mass campaign with help from concerned ministries to let people know about the initiative," he said.

Also, the Bangladesh missions abroad may play a role in informing the returning expatriates about the centre, he also said.

He suggested that the center's officials have transportation readily available to assist expatriates in travelling to and from the center smoothly, and also distribute leaflets to them at the airport.

## Increase allocation

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diseases, and respiratory diseases, are responsible for 70 percent of total deaths in Bangladesh.

A number of risk factors, including unhealthy food habits, excess sodium or salt intake, tobacco use, lack of physical labour, air pollution, etc. are behind the spike in the prevalence of NCDs.

They also said the budgetary allocation dedicated to combating NCDs is alarmingly low, comprising only 4.2 percent of the total health budget.

The speakers said despite the World Health Organisation's recommendation for countries to allocate at least 15% of their total budget for the health sector, Bangladesh allocated only 5% of its total budget for healthcare in the fiscal year 2023-24.

The government's health budgetary support is one of the lowest in the WHO South East Asia region, they said.

Professor Dr. Sohel Reza Choudhury, Head of the Department of Epidemiology and Research, National Heart Foundation,

## We're turning

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Not only Bangladesh-Myanmar border is unprotected, but also Bangladesh-India border is witnessing blood shed with the killing of country's innocent people on regular basis, he said.

"Sheikh Hasina and her subservient government have kept their mouth shut

said, "The prevalence of non-communicable diseases can be controlled to a great extent by reducing the risk of hypertension alone. It is crucial to ensure the necessary allocation in the upcoming budget to implement the decision of including anti-hypertensive medicines in the drug list of community clinics along with reducing the amount of salt intake among the public."

Muhammad Ruhul Quddus, Bangladesh Country Lead of GHAI, said, "Research shows that investing Tk 1 for hypertension screening and medicines can yield an overall benefit worth Tk 18. Therefore, sustainable funding for this sector must be ensured in addition to increasing the budget allocation to safeguard public health."

Dr Laila Akhter, Director of Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA), was also present at the webinar as one of the discussants.

The keynote presentation was delivered by PROGGA's Coordinator Sadia Galiba Prova and the webinar was chaired by its Executive Director ABM Zubair.

over the border killings. BSF is killing Bangladesh people along the border frequently without any valid reason. About 15 people were killed in last three months."

"Even on March 26, the day of Independence, two people named- Al Amin and Liton- were killed in Naogaon and Lalmonirhat border," he added.

## They embezzled

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addresses of the NID were correct, only its number was changed. Joynal would only switch the photograph's appearance by adding a beard or moustache," he added.

Harun said Joynal would repeatedly apply for loans from banks, presenting identical land, apartments, and office spaces. He disclosed that Joynal had acquired loans from certain banks while simultaneously awaiting approval for loans from others.

Regarding the fake office, the DB chief said Joynal took an office named ER International at DOHS. He would apply for the loans from different banks by showing this office, he said.

"So far, Joynal has taken loans worth Tk 30 crore from different banks, but has not repaid those. Using the funds, he constructed a seven-story residence in the Bhatara region, along with 8-9 apartments in locations such as Uttara and Ashkona, as well as a house in Madaripur," said Harun.

Regarding Pallab, Harun said, "Pallab had unrestricted access to the server, allowing him to create NIDs at his discretion and provide them to Joynal. For each NID, Pallab would receive a payment of Tk 2-3 lakh from Joynal."

"We will try to learn how many NIDs Pallab created using the server. Besides, we will investigate whether Joynal took such a loan from any other bank. If anyone else from the Election Commission is involved, we will also bring them under the law," the DB chief added.

## Hope to free the crew

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from negotiations, there is also significant pressure on the hijackers. ... We hope the hijacked ship and its crew can be rescued soon," he said.

He said the crew were doing fine. They are being provided with meals, and are allowed to stay in their cabin, he added.

In reply to a query about

the family members' hope for the crew's return before Eid-ul-Fitr, the minister said those who work on ships do not get leave before or after Eid. They get on board a ship for a certain period, be it six months or a year. If the ship had not been hijacked, the crew would not have left the ship before Eid and reunited with their families, he said.

## Brazil's foreign

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delegation, which will meet the leaders of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

Tomorrow, he will also visit the pharmaceutical factories of Square and Beximco in Gazipur, and deliver a lecture at the Foreign Service Academy on Brazil's priority areas as the current chair at G20.

Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Brazil has increased to \$2.72 billion in 2023 from \$1.52 billion in 2021. Of this, Bangladesh's exports to Brazil are worth \$200 million.

Bangladesh imports soybean and soybean oil, cotton and sugar from Brazil, while exports mainly readymade garments to it.

"Bangladesh has lots of potentials for increasing exports including pharmaceutical products and jute," a foreign ministry official said.

Brazil, a leading beef producer, wants to export beef to Bangladesh at affordable prices of around Tk 500 per kg, he also said, adding that Bangladesh is

yet to decide in this regard. Brazil is also offering Bangladesh high quality cattle for milk and beef production. Bangladesh can emulate Brazil's good agricultural practices as well, the official said.

Brazil can also provide Bangladesh with training and field preparation for football as well as sports medicine, he added.

## Handing over

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The Caab chief added they are determined to start operation of Terminal-3 by October this year.

Contacted, AKM Maksudul Islam, project director of Terminal-3, refused to comment.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina partially inaugurated the Terminal-3 on October 7 last year.

The Tk 21,300 crore project commenced on December 28, 2019.

The government contributed Tk 5,000 crore, while the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) provided the remaining funding.