

BNP man, 3 others arrested over snatching convicts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Lalmirhat*

Four individuals, including a local BNP leader, have been arrested over the snatching of two convicts from police custody following an attack on Patgram Police Station in Lalmirhat on Wednesday night.

The arrestees are Mahidul Islam, organising secretary of the ward unit BNP; Abdur Rashid of Sohagpur village; Habibur Rahman of Bauara; and Abul Kalam, 52, of Sohagpur.

A joint team of police and Rab arrested them in different areas of Patgram upazila yesterday, said Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Patgram Police Station.

"We have identified several attackers from the video footage."

He said they were trying to arrest the two convicts and other accused.

Meanwhile, BNP leaders, at a press conference at the Patgram upazila BNP office yesterday, denied the party's involvement in the incident.

Hasan Rajib Prodhan, member of BNP's central executive committee, claimed that the incident stemmed from a dispute between police and local stone quarry leaseholders. "Some of our activists went to the police station to help bring the situation under control..." he said.

He said the district BNP has formed a three-member investigation committee to look into the matter and vowed organisational action if any party member is found involved.

On Wednesday night, a mob attacked the police station and snatched two convicts from police custody.

4 held with yaba, crystal meth

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) arrested four youths along with 73 yaba tablets and 8 grammes of crystal meth in Kuakata of Patuakhali on Thursday night.

At a press briefing at Kuakata Press Club on the same night, Mohammad Hamimur Rashid, deputy director of the DNC in Patuakhali, said the seized drugs have an estimated market value of around Tk 3.3 lakh.

The arrestees – Russel Mallik, 32, Abdur Rahman, 30, Rakib, 29; and Mehedi Hasan, 25 – are residents of different areas under Mohipur Police Station. Among them, Rakib used to work as a room boy at a hotel in Kuakata.

The official said the four were caught red-handed while preparing to supply the drugs.

They were handed over to Mohipur Police Station, the official said.



Workers plant Aman seeds in the Lakutia area of Barishal Sadar under the supervision of the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation. A worker can earn around Tk 700 for an eight-hour workday, from 8:00am to 3:00pm. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

BARISHAL HOSPITAL Overcrowded medicine ward puts patients at risk

SUSHANTA GHOSH, *Barishal*

Patients and their families have alleged severe mismanagement, overcrowding, and poor healthcare services at the medicine ward of Barishal's Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH), which is currently operating out of a cramped five-storey building not originally designed to serve patients.

Harunur Rashid from Jurakathi village in Jhalakathi's Rajapur upazila brought a stroke patient to SBMCH on Monday. By Tuesday afternoon, he had yet to secure a bed for the critically ill patient, who was instead placed on the second floor of the makeshift medicine ward.

Another attendant, Abdur Razzaq from Mehendiganj, said he had been desperately searching for a bed for two days without success. "The elevators rarely work, and the number of patients is overwhelming. The bathrooms are filthy, and the entire ward feels like a garbage dump," he said.

Although the ward has a capacity of 300, it currently houses between 700 and 800 patients on a daily basis, several patients and hospital staff said.

The overcrowding has resulted in a serious decline in healthcare standards,

with many patients receiving little to no medical attention, they alleged.

On June 30, family members of several patients formed a human chain in front of the hospital, demanding the medicine ward be relocated to the hospital's main building. They claimed the ward's current location is unsafe and unfit to handle such a large volume of patients.



According to hospital sources, the ward currently accommodates patients suffering from dengue, kidney ailments, abdominal pain, and a variety of other conditions.

Initially set up in 2022 to treat Covid-19 patients temporarily, the five-storey building was later converted into the medicine ward. However, it

lacks the necessary infrastructure and environmental standards for patient care.

"The building was originally intended for administrative use, operation theatres, and storage," said a hospital official.

Hospital Director Brig Gen AKM Mashru Muni said while some improvements have been made, including adding new windows, the ward remains ill-suited for patient care.

"This building was never meant for housing patients. Around half of the hospital's total patients are currently in this ward. It lacks natural light and airflow, making it an unhealthy environment," he said.

He said the issue will be placed before the hospital's academic council and governing committee to explore possible solutions.

According to the Divisional Health Office, 442 dengue patients were admitted across Barishal division in the last 24 hours, of whom 79 are currently being treated at SBMCH.

Hospital sources confirmed that at least 700 patients including all dengue patients are being treated in the medicine ward, further straining the already overwhelmed facility.

Biodiversity entangled in deadly

FROM PAGE 3

Dairy Farm, Bishmire Lake, and other surrounding low-lying wetlands.

Auritro Sattar, an environmental science student at JU and a wildlife photographer who has extensively researched the issue, shared alarming findings.

His surveys recorded 25 China Duari nets in the Gerua Sindhuria area between September and December 2023. By August 2024, the number had risen to 45.

"A significant number of snakes including Painted Keelbacks, Smooth-scaled Water Snakes, Checkered Keelbacks, and even Monocled Cobras – were found fatally trapped," said Auritro.

"The impact on migratory birds has been no less severe. In 2023, I documented the first-ever sighting of an Eastern Water Rail in Savar, but it never returned later.

Illegal fishing practices like these are driving migratory birds away from our wetlands," Auritro said.

Some locals, however, defended the use of these nets.

A fisherman from Sindhuria, speaking anonymously, said, "These nets can catch fish of all sizes

and are easy to use. My catch has increased significantly since I started using this."

Several JU staff members were also seen using these nets within campus lakes.

Contacted, Abdul Kashem, deputy registrar of JU's estate branch, acknowledged the issue.

"Some of the university lakes are leased for fish farming, and some leaseholders are using China Duari nets.

Since this poses a serious ecological threat, we plan to issue a notice instructing them to stop," he said.

Prof Amir Hossain Bhuiyan of Environmental Science Department at JU said, "Our aquatic habitats are deteriorating rapidly due to the widespread use of these nets.

Without immediate action, the biodiversity and ecological balance of the JU campus will be irreversibly damaged," he warned.

Can Bangladesh retain its foothold

FROM PAGE 1
MORE THAN JUST TRADE

Bangladesh, unlike Vietnam, has been negotiating under a multilateral framework, seeking lower duties on the basis of WTO's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principles. But the US appears to prefer bilateral deals that mix trade policy with broader strategic alignment.

"The tariff negotiations aren't solely about trade," Razzaque noted. "Geopolitical considerations are also part of the equation."

"The US import volume will decline if the tariff rate increases," Razzaque

added, cautioning that the consequences of inaction would be felt on both sides.

If the worst-case scenario materialises and the tariff hits 53 percent, Bangladeshi suppliers – many of whom send 40-80 percent of their production to the US – would find themselves in an unsustainable position. Margins are already razor-thin, and production costs are rising.

To survive, "garment suppliers must be more strategic in marketing and secure better prices from buyers," said Ehsan. "That's the only way to remain competitive in the current supply chain environment."

But pricing leverage is

difficult to obtain without certainty. Importers are wary of taking long term positions when the tariff regime is in flux.

US

retailers, who bear the brunt of tariffs, may also pass on higher costs to consumers – fueling inflation and dragging down demand.

To avoid this, Bangladesh

must

urgently

pivot

its

strategy.

That

includes

mobilising

US

based

lobby

groups,

engaging

retailers

and

sourcing

associations,

and

directly

appealing

to

decision-makers

in

Washington.

So far, offers

to

lift

import

duties

on

US

cotton,

LNG,

aircraft,

and

other

products

have

risen.

To clinch a deal.

"Bangladesh has the

capacity.

What it now

needs

is

a

breakthrough,"

said

Ehsan.

Without

that

breakthrough,

the

price

of

delay

could

be

steep.

Already,

the

apparel

sector

faces

over

SI

billion

in

annual

tariff

payments

at

the

current

16

percent

rate.

If

the

rate

climbs

to

53

percent,

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blow

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be

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worse

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not