

## Swechchasebak Dal man stabbed to death in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A local Swechchasebak Dal activist was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants in Sariakandi upazila of Bogura on Wednesday night.

The deceased Zakaria Shayan, 28, a resident of Jorgachha village in the upazila, was a businessman at Jorgachha market and an active member of Sariakaandi upazila unit Swechchasebak Dal.

The incident occurred around 8:00pm in the Velabari Union Bazar area.

"Shayan had gone to the Togar Sawmill area in Jorgachha Purba Para when some unidentified individuals stabbed him. Informed, we rushed him to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead around 9:00pm. We are unaware of him having any prior disputes with anyone," said his uncle Lutfar Haidar Rumin.

Mustafizur Rahman Sumon, office secretary of Bogura District Swechchasebak Dal, confirmed that Shayan was an activist in Sariakandi upazila unit.

Lalan Hossain, assistant sub-inspector of Chilimpur Medical Outpost, said the victim sustained a stab wound below his chest and died on the way to the hospital.

AFM Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Sariakandi Police Station, said the body has been handed over to the family following an autopsy.

"The family of the deceased has yet to lodge a complaint with police, and no arrests have been made so far," he added.



Zakaria Shayan



PHOTO: STAR

## BL COLLEGE IN KHULNA

# Students suffer as dorms stay shut for 18 months

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Students of Government Brajalal College in Khulna have long been grappling with a severe accommodation crisis as all five dormitories for male students have remained closed for the past 18 months.

Also known as BL College, the institution, established in 1902, is one of the oldest centres of higher education in the greater Khulna region.

The shutdown followed political interference, vandalism, and prolonged delays in renovation, forcing many students to stay in unsafe or costly private lodgings.

Despite having more than 33,000 students across higher secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate programmes, the college can accommodate barely around 2 percent of them, with only 721 hostel seats available across eight dormitories – five for male students and three for female students.

While most of the halls were already in a shabby state, the situation worsened further since August 5, 2024, when all five male dormitories were shut down following vandalism and looting.

College authorities, however, repeatedly cited ongoing renovation as the reason for keeping the halls closed, but little progress has been

visible on the ground.

Visiting the campus recently, this correspondent observed that Shahid Titumir Hall has become severely dilapidated, with structural risks making it unfit for accommodation.

Kabi Nazrul and Subodh Chandra halls were also seen in dire condition. Doors and windows are broken, plaster is peeling off the walls and ceilings, and overgrown bushes have taken over the compound. Inside, rooms and



furniture lie vandalised, with debris scattered across the floors.

Only two male dormitories – Haji Mohsin and Dr Zoha halls – reportedly underwent minor repairs and fresh coats of paint recently, but they are still closed to students.

In contrast, the three female dormitories – Begum Khaleda Zia, Begum Monnujan, and Begum Fazilatunnesa halls – were seen functioning to some extent, accommodating a limited number

of students. Although no one stayed in these halls immediately after the August 5 political changeover in 2024, female students gradually began returning, prompting the college administration to reopen them partially.

With all male dormitories closed, students from Bagerhat, Satkhira, Jashore, Narail, Kushtia, and other districts across Khulna division have been hit the hardest. Many have taken shelter in crowded messes, rented shared rooms, or



makeshift accommodations, often without adequate security and amid poor living conditions and high costs.

Students say the sudden shift away from campus housing has disrupted academic routines, increased expenses, and heightened security concerns.

Sabbir Ahmed, a third-year student of the Mathematics department, said many students have been under immense pressure

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## Plastic waste clogs Jamal Khan canal

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

The Jamal Khan canal, a waterway running through Chattogram city and vital for drainage, has become clogged with a thick layer of plastic and polythene waste.

Residents and experts warn that if the debris is not removed immediately, it could trigger severe waterlogging in the coming monsoon.

The canal originates in the Kazir Dewri area and flows through Jamal Khan, Hem Sen Lane, Rahmatganj, and Dewan Bazar before merging with the Chaktai canal.

Abdul Malek, a local resident, alleged that the Chattogram City Corporation's conservancy workers do not clean the canal regularly, allowing plastic waste to pile up over the years.

Shatodal Barua, another local resident, however, blamed residents for indiscriminately dumping household trash in polythene bags directly into the canal.

Pranab Kanti Sharma, CCC's deputy chief conservancy officer, said, "We clean the canal regularly, but people start dumping plastic waste again the very next day."



The scale of the problem was highlighted in a 2022 study by the Civil Engineering Department of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET). Pial Barua and Al Amin, two students of the department, presented the study findings at the Chattogram Press Club on September 10, 2022.

The research, supervised by Prof Dr Swapan Kumar Palit, revealed that while the city generates around 249 tonnes of plastic and polythene waste, CCC workers collect only 109 tonnes, leaving 140 tonnes to end up in drains and canals.

Prof Swapan said the lack of dustbins and poor public awareness were major factors. He also lamented the lack of enforcement of the Mandatory Jute Packaging Act, 2010.

"Around 90% of grocery bags are still made of polythene," he said, calling for mobile courts to enforce the law.

New research offers a potential way to repurpose the waste. Shovon Halder, an assistant professor of the department, recently completed a study titled "Performance of pervious asphalt pavement using waste polyethylene modified binder", which found that mixing 4% melted polythene waste with bitumen during road construction can increase the longevity of road pavements by 30% during the monsoon.

"We should seriously consider reusing polythene waste in road construction to solve the two problems at once," Shovon said.

## Girl's death raises Halishahar blast toll to seven

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A girl has died after battling severe burn injuries for over a month following a devastating explosion at her home in Halishahar, bringing the death toll to seven and wiping out an entire family.

The deceased was Umme Ayman Snigdha, 10. She breathed her last around 2:00am yesterday at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

She was the daughter of motor parts trader Sakhawat Hossain, who was killed in the February 23 blast along with his wife, Nurjahan Begum, and son, Safayat Hossain. With Snigdha's death, all four members of the family have now perished.

The other victims included Sakhawat's brothers, Samir Ahmed, a Portuguese expatriate, and Shipon Hossain, as well as Samir's wife, Pakhi Akhter. Two children, Ayesha, 4, and Farhan Ahmed, 6, remain under treatment.

The explosion occurred on the third floor of a six-storey building in the port city.

"One by one, everyone is gone... It has been a month, yet we still don't know what caused the explosion," said Mohiuddin Jony, the victim's brother-in-law.

Despite multiple probes, the cause remains unknown. A report by Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited ruled out gas leakage but failed to identify the trigger.

## Devotees take part in Ashtami Snan ritual

SDILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Thousands of devotees from the Hindu community yesterday gathered on the sandy shoals within the Brahmaputra river in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila for the 'Ashtami Snan' – a ritual dip in the river.

Since the dawn, the pilgrims converged on shoal areas amid chants, prayers, and spiritual fervour.

The upazila administration arranged designated bathing sites to facilitate orderly participation in the ritual.

For Hindu community members, Ashtami Snan – often revered as Punya Snan – is a deeply spiritual act symbolising cleansing of sins and purification of the soul through immersion in the Brahmaputra's sacred waters on this auspicious day, to usher in divine blessings, inner peace, and spiritual renewal.

Pilgrims from across Bangladesh take part in the ritual, traditionally held during the Bangla month of

Chaitra or the first week of Baishakh.

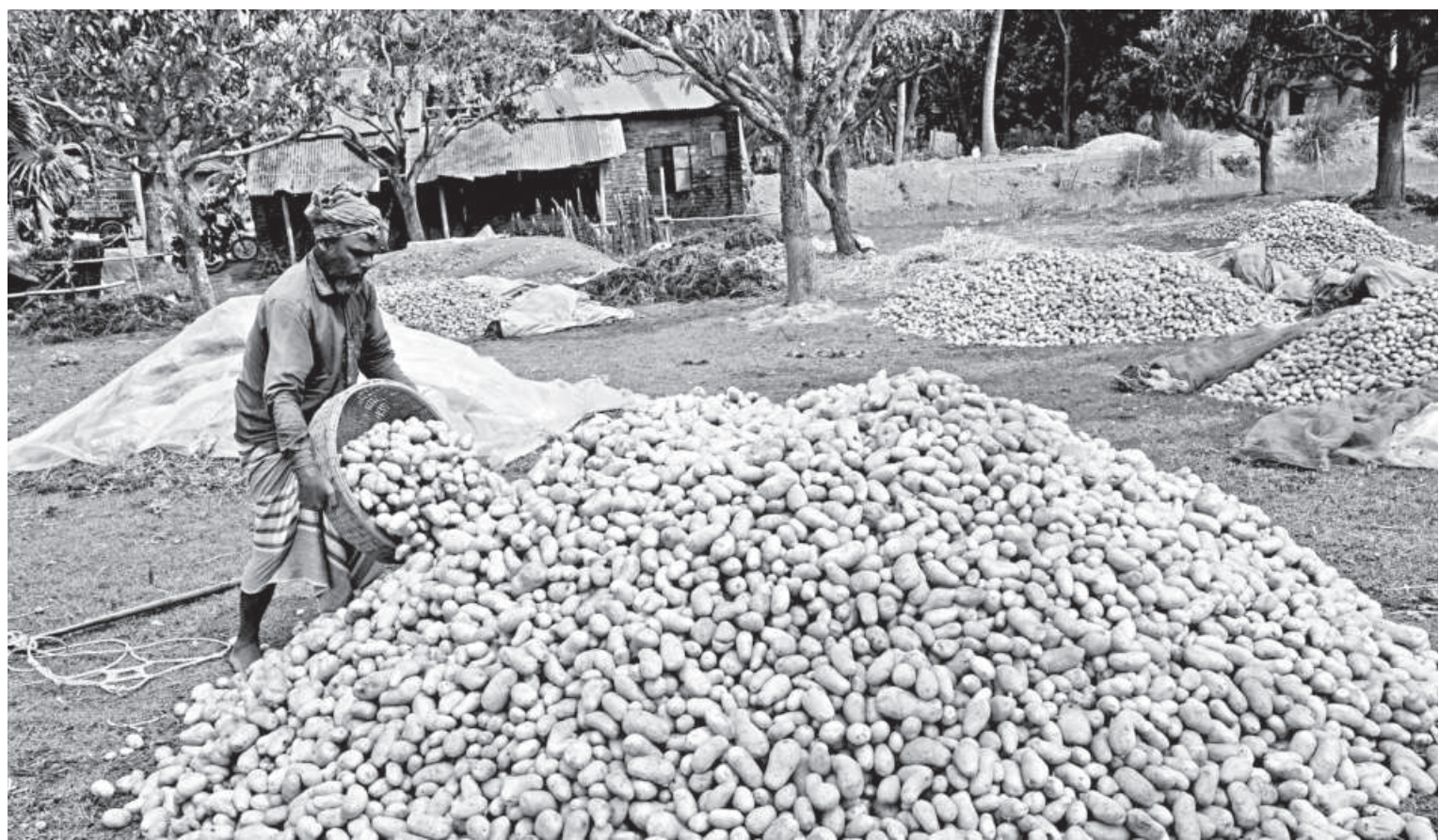
"The Ashtami Snan is believed to wash away sins and bring in a deep sense of inner peace," said Ramesh Chandra Das, 70, from Rangpur.

Nagendra Nath Barman, 75, a pilgrim from Chilmari, said, "On this day, the waters of the Ganges and of the Brahmaputra merge to form a holy confluence that brings purification and peace."

"Devotees come to offer prayers and perform Pind Daan for their ancestors on this sacred occasion," said Kanai Chakrabarty, a priest.

Sachindra Nath Barman, president of Chilmari upazila Puja Uddapan Parishad, said around three lakh devotees annually participate in the three-century-old festival.

Chilmari UNO Mahmudul Hasan said law enforcers were deployed to ensure safety and smooth management, and fire service personnel remained on standby, while more than 200 volunteers assisted in crowd management.



Farmers have been harvesting potatoes in large quantities in Mahakundu village of Mohanpur upazila in Rajshahi since the day after Eid-ul-Fitr. Farmers said potatoes were being piled under trees or stored in cold storage as they intended to sell them once prices rise. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

## Hatirjheel OC, ASI 3,500 homes, crops on 4,043

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A video circulating on social media on Friday, the day before Eid-ul-Fitr, shows a group of traders forcing the Nobin Fashion outlet to shut, alleging that its low-priced panjabis were hurting their business and likening the sale to "relief distribution".

Nobin authorities alleged that police present at the scene did not intervene and instead

appeared to side with the traders.

The incident triggered widespread criticism online, with many users backing the brand's pricing and calling for action against those involved.

A Dhaka court yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over the police's role, summoned the Hatirjheel OC, and ordered that the showroom be reopened within 24 hours.

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in the village are now living under the open sky.

Nitesh Chandra Barman of Dholahat village said he cultivated onion seed on one bigha, spending about Tk 2 lakh, but the hailstorm caused severe damage to the plants, leaving him with no way to recover the production cost or repay the loans and dues for fertilisers.

Md Alamgir Kabir,

additional deputy director (crop) of the Department of Agricultural Extension in Thakurgaon, said crops on about 4,043 hectares, including maize on around 2,000 hectares and potato on 257 hectares, were damaged in the recent spell of nor'westers, hailstorms, and heavy rain.

A list of affected farmers is being prepared, and necessary steps will be taken following

instructions from higher authorities, he added.

Ishrat Farzana, deputy commissioner of Thakurgaon, said a list of the affected households is being prepared, after which an allocation will be sought from the Directorate of Relief and Disaster Management.

"Once the allocation is received, assistance will be provided to the affected people," she added.

