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# Mesmerising tunes to inspire them

*Student with challenges set up music school in remote Lalmonirhat village*

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

A physically challenged youth in the remote Haziganj Bhatitari village of Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat is using music to inspire children in his village.

Udoy Chandra Roy, 19, lacked function in his arms and legs since birth and is dependent on a wheelchair. His father passed away when he was just a toddler. His mother Usa Rani works in a garments factory in Dhaka.

He lives with his grandparents and goes to a local school for the especially abled.

In 2018, when Udoy was a student of class nine, he founded a social welfare organisation – Mayer Anchal Unnayan Sangstha -- at his grandparents' home. There, he runs a free school every Friday with over 20 students, who come to learn and practice folk music, particularly Bhawaiya, on various musical instruments.

Udoy said, "My mother sends me some money every month and I use my disability allowance to run the school. I also collect funds from relatives and donations from locals to operate the school and organisation to help the especially abled, orphans and the poor."

Folk music enthusiasts from nearby areas visit the



Udoy Chandra Roy, right, is singing a folk song with music teachers and students at his music school at Haziganj Bhatitari village in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

## Shahriar Alam cancels India trip

*Decides to go with PM to UAE*

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam has cancelled his visit to India as he will travel to the UAE with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today.

The foreign ministry in a statement yesterday said Shahriar was invited to join the Raisina Dialogue, organised by the Overseas Research Foundation (ORF) in collaboration with the India's external affairs ministry, as a speaker.

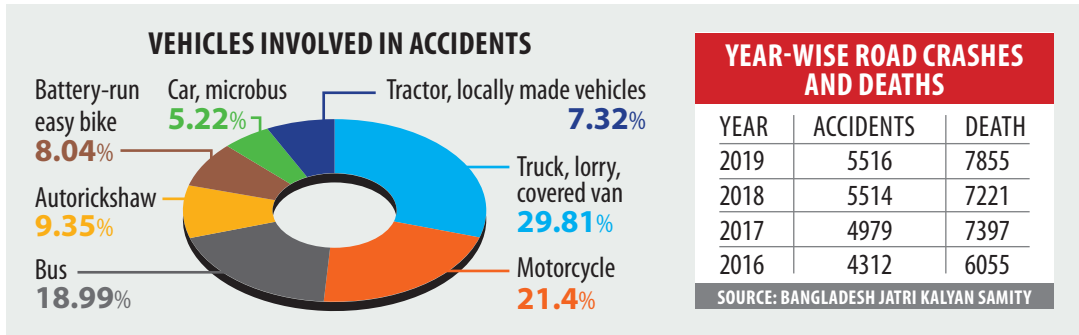
However, he will not be able to attend the event as it "coincides with his visit to the UAE to accompany the prime minister of Bangladesh. A regret letter in this regard has already been sent to the ORF, the statement said.

It said no bilateral engagement was scheduled during the visit of Shahriar and that the "inability of his participation had no other connection."

The Raisina Dialogue is scheduled to begin in New

# 21 died on roads every day

*Says Jatri Kalyan Samity report on road crashes last year*



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 7,855 people were killed and 13,330 others injured in 5,516 road crashes across the country last year, according to a platform working for passengers' welfare.

It means more than 21 people lost their lives on roads each day.

Although the number of such accidents remained almost the same from the previous year, the death toll increased by 8.07 percent, the platform -- Jatri Kalyan Samity -- said in its annual report released yesterday.

As many as 5,514 road crashes had claimed 7,221 lives and left 15,466 others injured in the country in 2018, said the Samity, which prepared the report based on data from newspapers and online news portals.

Samity's Secretary General Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury unveiled the report at a press

conference at Crime Reporters' Association of Bangladesh auditorium in the capital.

The number of road crashes last year mentioned in the report is, however, significantly higher than the one given by Nirapad Sarak Chai, a platform that pioneered road safety campaign in Bangladesh.

According to Nirapad Sarak Chai, at least 5,227 people were killed while 6,953 injured in 4,702 road accidents across the country in 2019.

Jatri Kalyan Samity's report blamed reckless driving, risky overtaking, fault in road design, unfit vehicles, unskilled drivers, passengers and pedestrians' unawareness, use of mobile phones or headphone while driving vehicles, drunk driving, occupied footpath and poor enforcement of law for the road crashes.

Besides, a total of 469 people died and 706 others were injured in 482 railway-related incidents last year. On waterways, at least 219 died, 282 were

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## Police detain 10 Bangladeshis in Greek city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Greek police have detained 10 undocumented Bangladeshis who were involved in a road crash on Friday following a high-speed police chase in the city of Thessaloniki.

The Bangladeshis are in hospital with minor injuries.

Syeda Farhana Noor Chowdhury, counsellor of labour welfare wing at the Bangladesh mission in Athens, yesterday said officials of the General Police Directorate of Thessaloniki told them about the Bangladeshis' detention and the accident.

"We have sought a written report from them to know further details in this regard," she told this newspaper over phone.

Farhana said the injuries were minimal and that the Bangladeshis were in good physical condition.

A vehicle, carrying migrants who had crossed into Greece from neighbouring Turkey, crashed into another following a high-speed chase across the north of Greece early Friday, AP reported, quoting local police.

The vehicle, with 12 people inside, failed to stop for a check on the main highway near the northern town of Kavala

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## Gold bar found in Mexico was Aztec treasure



AFP, Mexico City

A gold bar found in a Mexico City park in 1981 was part of the Aztec treasure looted by Hernan Cortes and the Spanish conquistadors 500 years ago, a new study says.

The 1.93-kilogram bar was found by a construction worker during excavations for a new building along the Alameda, a picturesque park in the heart of the Mexican capital.

For 39 years, its origins remained a mystery. But thanks to specialised X-rays, Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) says it has now confirmed where the bar came from: the Spaniards' hasty, though temporary, retreat during the so-called "Noche Triste," or "Sad Night."

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## First Akheri Munajat today

*Second phase of Biswa Ijtema to start on Jan 17*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

The first phase of Biswa Ijtema, the world's second largest Muslim congregation after Hajj, will end today through the Akheri Munajat [final prayer].

Maulana Zubair Hassan, the imam of Kakrail Mosque in the capital and leader of a faction of Tablighi Jamaat, will administer the Munajat seeking blessings and well-being for mankind.

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 12

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:36 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:40 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## No respite expected until Wednesday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no immediate respite from the bone-chilling cold as the ongoing gloomy weather may continue until next Wednesday, says the Met office.

"Temperature may fall slightly tomorrow [Sunday]. There will be no remarkable fluctuation or change of the weather until January 15. So, the severity of cold will be felt until the date," said Hafizur Rahman, meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

"However, the ray of sunlight will be seen for few moments tomorrow [Sunday]. The temperature will slightly increase during that time. But temperature may fall again after it disappears," he told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, a BMD weather bulletin yesterday said moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the country from midnight

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With no place to take a break in the cold, gloomy afternoon yesterday, a rickshaw puller, wrapping himself a blanket, takes a nap on the precarious bed he had made on his rickshaw. The photo was taken inside Dhaka University campus.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## TROOPS WITHDRAWAL US turns down Iraqi request

*Examines possible expansion of Nato's presence in Iraq*

REUTERS, Washington

Washington on Friday spurned an Iraqi request to prepare to pull out its troops, amid heightened US-Iranian tensions after the US killing of an Iranian commander in Baghdad, and said it was exploring a possible expansion of Nato's presence there.

Seeking to tighten pressure on its foe, the United States meanwhile imposed more sanctions on Iran, responding to an attack on US troops in Iraq launched by Tehran in retaliation for the death of General Qassem Soleimani.

Iraq could bear the brunt of any further violence between its neighbour Iran and the United States, its leaders caught in a bind as Washington and Tehran are also the Iraqi government's main allies and vie for influence there.

President Donald Trump said Iran had probably planned to attack the US embassy in Baghdad and was aiming to strike four US embassies when Soleimani was killed in a US drone strike.

"We will tell you probably it was going to be the embassy in Baghdad," Trump said in a clip of an interview with Fox News. "I can reveal that I believe it would have been four embassies."

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi made his request for preparations for a US troop withdrawal in a phone call with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday in line with a vote in Iraq's parliament last week, his office said.

Abdul Mahdi asked Pompeo to "send delegates to put

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