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SHAH CEMENT

The mosque of harmony

Old common prayer site binds two villages of Bangladesh, India

S DILIP ROY

The Partition in 1947 could not keep them apart. Inhabitants of two bordering villages in Bangladesh and India have co-existed in peace for decades now.

They have long-standing ties and a common site of prayer where they regularly gather to observe religious traditions and festivals.

It is an old mosque which is the root of such example-setting harmony between the people of the two countries, said locals.

The two-century-old mosque is located in Banshjani village under Bhurungamari upazila of Kurigram district, near the zero line of the northern Bangladesh-India border.

The mosque's north side faces Jhakuatari village in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal in India.

People of both the villages offer their prayers at the semi-pucca mosque, which is built on around 15 decimals of land.

"Muslims of both villages come together in the mosque to offer prayers every day. After prayers, they exchange greetings. It is not possible to understand that they are citizens of different countries," said Nazrul Miah, 62, a resident of Banshjani and muazzin of the mosque.

Another Banshjani villager Jahangir Alam, 32, said, "People from different districts of both Bangladesh and India come to visit our mosque to see our unique bond."

The mosque is particularly vibrant on Fridays as a large number of people from both villages come there to offer Juma prayers, said Abu Bakkar Siddique, 45, another villager.

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An Indian citizen distributing Tabarak after prayers at Simanta Jam-e-Masjid beside sub-pillar 9 at Banshjani border of Kurigram's Bhurungamari upazila. The mosque hosts Muslims from either side of the border and is known for communal harmony in the locality. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Police hold anti-rape rallies across the country

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday held countrywide rallies against rape and all sorts of violence against women in a bid to create public awareness.

The rallies started simultaneously at all the 6,912 police beats across the country at 10:00am, according to a press release sent by Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general of Police Headquarters, yesterday.

Civil society representatives, women and children rights activists, esteemed locals, school and college students took part in the programmes.

The participants called on all sections of society to create mass awareness to prevent any kind of violence against women and children, including rape, and to stand by abused women and children, added the release.

The programmes of every police beat were broadcast on Facebook Live.

The gang-rape and SEE PAGE 5 COL 6



RIVALS STORM SWING STATES

Biden focuses on pandemic in Michigan

Trump stumps in Florida, Georgia

MACON, United States

President Donald Trump fought Friday to recover from sinking election polls by campaigning with a hardline pitch to America's right wing, claiming at rallies in Florida and Georgia that his Democratic opponent Joe Biden would deliver communism and a "flood" of criminal immigrants.

While Trump put on a brave face, the fact that he was fighting at all for the two southern states he won four years ago illustrated how much ground he has to make up against Biden in the 15 days left until the election.

With his polls sliding and US Covid-19 infections spiking, Trump is focusing entirely on his core Republican base, in hopes that highly energized supporters will turn out in huge numbers.

In Ocala, Florida, the coronavirus was an afterthought.

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Greetings from Cuba, Chile

October 18, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

CASTRO, ALLENDE GREET BANGABANDHU President Allende of Chile and President Fidel Castro of Cuba expressed their good wishes to the people and the government of Bangladesh and high esteem for Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This was stated by Ali Aksad, general secretary of Bangladesh Peace Council, who had arrived in Dhaka from Santiago after attending the World Peace Council Presidential Committee meeting.

President Allende expressed hope for growing friendship between Chile and Bangladesh. Fidel Castro, commenting on the emergence of Bangladesh, said, "More and more progressive republics are emerging in the world map and Bangladesh is the latest example."

He also stressed on Cuba-Bangladesh friendship and expressed hope that Bangladesh would play her role in maintaining world peace.

BANGLADESH VOTED TO UNESCO AGENDA

The general conference of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) votes today to include the admission of Bangladesh on its agenda. This virtually assures that Bangladesh will become the 130th member of the organisation when a membership vote will be taken tomorrow. China casts a negative ballot in today's agenda vote.

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ISPs suspend shutdown for a week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Internet service providers and cable operators postponed their decision to shut down their services across the country for three hours every day from today, for a week.

The Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) and The Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (COAB) took the decision after an emergency meeting with the Post and Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar at 6:00pm yesterday to resolve the issue.

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for ICT, and Md Afzal Hossain, posts and telecommunications division secretary, were also present at the meeting held on a digital platform.

"As the minister assured us that the issue will be resolved soon, we postponed our decision for one week," ISPAB President

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Telescopes capture black hole devouring star



AFP, Paris

Astronomers have captured the moment a supermassive black hole shredded a star the size of our sun, releasing images that show the devastating process in unprecedented details.

Using telescopes from the European Southern Observatory (ESO), they were able to monitor light flaring from the process -- known as a tidal disruption event -- from a black hole just over 215 million light years from Earth.

They observed the star being physically torn apart as it was sucked into the black hole's giant maw.

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Housewife gang-raped in Patuakhali

2 held; 6 others held in 3 districts on rape-related charges

STAR REPORT

A housewife was gang-raped, allegedly by three people, in a remote char area under Rangabali upazila of Patuakhali on Friday night.

Being informed by locals, police arrested two alleged rapists -- Sakib (27) and Habib (25) -- from their houses yesterday morning, said Belal Hossain, sub-inspector of Char Montaj Police Probe Centre.

Besides, a total of six persons were arrested in Jamalpur, Habiganj, and Madaripur districts on rape-related charges between Friday evening and early yesterday.

In Patuakhali's gang-rape incident, quoting the 30-year-old woman, SI Belal said three youths -- Sakib, Arif and Habib -- entered the woman's house

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CASE AGAINST NIXON Section 144 imposed in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The local administration yesterday imposed a one-day ban on holding any public gathering in Faridpur's Sadarpur upazila town.

The ban, from 9:00am yesterday to 9:00am today, was imposed as supporters of independent lawmaker Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, popularly known as Nixon Chowdhury, and Kazi Zafarullah, former lawmaker and also Awami League presidium member, called programmes on the same spot.

According to sources

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PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 18

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-45	12-45	4-15	5-45	7-15
JAMAT 5-20	1-15	4-30	5-50	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A Sampan boat race underway near Avaymitra Ghat in the port city. The event was organised by Chattogram Metropolitan Awami League to demand the end of river pollution and grabbing at the Karnaphuli river and marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

'THE COVID ELECTION' Ardern scores landslide win in New Zealand

AFP, Wellington

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern won a landslide victory in New Zealand's general election yesterday, leveraging success battling Covid-19 into an unprecedented majority she said gave her a mandate for progressive reform.

Ardern's centre-left Labour Party took 64 seats in the 120-member parliament with 49 percent of the vote, after the youthful and charismatic leader steered the nation through the upheaval wrought by the global pandemic.

"Thank you to the many people who gave us their vote, who trusted us to continue leading New Zealand's recovery," the 40-year-old told cheering supporters.

Ardern had dubbed the vote "the Covid election" and campaigned on her government's success in eliminating community transmission of the virus, which has caused just 25 deaths in a population of five million.

The pandemic is one of a string of emergencies that tested Ardern's leadership during a torrid first term, after she rode to an unexpected victory in 2017 polls on the back of a wave of support dubbed "Jacinda-mania".

She displayed both empathy and decisive action on gun control after a white supremacist gunman killed 51 Muslim worshippers in the Christchurch mosques attack last year.

Ardern again found herself comforting a shocked nation

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