



100 YEARS AFTER

A film focuses on century-old Sakhawat Memorial School and Rokeya's dream

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MOBILE BANKING

Analysts say it will bring more unbanked people to mainstream

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FATHER OF THE EU?

European Union picks Churchill footage to celebrate Nobel win

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Padma funding only upon full, fair probe

Main financier WB issues statement; Muhith terms it totally unjust

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank has once again given the government a clear message that the global lender will not finance the Padma bridge project unless a full and fair investigation is carried out into the corruption allegations in the project.

"The World Bank will proceed with support for the Padma Bridge only if the Anti-corruption Commission launches a full and fair investigation based on evidence of corruption under the project," Ellen Goldstein, WB country director for Bangladesh, said in a statement yesterday, two days after the WB external panel left Dhaka.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith and Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Ghulam Rahman expressed surprise at the WB statement.

The WB external panel left the capital on December 5 following a stalemate in talks with the ACC over the inclusion of ex-communications minister Syed Abul Hossain

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Oops YES!

Tigers clinch one-day series 3-2, but take winning shot twice

BISHWAJIT ROY And SAKEB SUBHAN

The Tigers had two previous shots at a series victory barely thought possible, and squandered both those chances. At the third time of asking, when they had as much to lose as they had to gain, the excitement reached such a fever pitch that in a comic incident they almost threw it away.

Nasir Hossain, with one more needed to win and rank tail-ender Elias Sunny at the other end for company, cut the fifth ball of the 44th over from Andre Russell over the infield and celebrated thinking a memorable victory complete.

Sunny was even more excited as his teammates rushed in unbridled joy from the

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GANGNAM TIGERS STYLE: Bangladesh cricket team members dance and party as they embark on a victory lap after defeating West Indies in the fifth and final ODI to win the series 3-2 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur last night.

PHOTO:
FIROZ AHMED

ACC working independently

Claims PM, alleges Khaleda playing dubious game over war trial

BSS, Dhaka

Reiterating her government's firm stance against corruption, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday claimed that the government was not interfering in the activities of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and would not do so in the future.

"The country would not have witnessed such

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Tail-up Jamaat bids to steer BNP

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RASHED SHUMON

The Jamaat-e-Islami, encouraged by the December 4 hartal, spurs the whole opposition to launch a tougher anti-government movement.

The party made the hartal a "success" with the BNP and other small partners of the 18-party alliance supporting it, Jamaat leaders said. It has now been convincing those parties to pressure the main opposition BNP to prepare for street agitations demanding release of Jamaat's top leaders facing war crimes trial.

This strategy of Jamaat worked ahead of the

hartal, sources in the parties, including Islamic Party, National Peoples Party, Khelafat Majlis and Bangladesh Labour Party, said. Their spontaneous support to the hartal had compelled the BNP to extend its moral backing.

BNP's "go slow" policy had annoyed the alliance's other partners who wanted immediate action to force the government to fulfil their demands, including the restoration of the caretaker government system, some members of the alliance told The Daily Star.

And Jamaat took advantage of this situation. It

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6AM-2PM ROAD BLOCKADE TODAY Security on alert

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aiming at detaching the capital from rest of the country, the BNP-led opposition alliance is observing eight-hour countrywide road blockade today from 6:00am to 2:00pm to press home their demands, especially restoration of the caretaker government.

Opposition leaders yesterday once again urged people not to bring their vehicles on roads during the blockade. They also threatened the government of tougher steps if it created any obstacle.

Leaders of ruling Awami League on the other hand vowed to resist the opposition's programme. This has brewed up fears of chaos and confrontation in the capital and elsewhere.

The ruling party leaders suspect Jamaat-e-Islami, the party whose top leaders are facing trial on charges of crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971, may take the blockade as an opportunity to create anarchy.

Against such backdrop,

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Romisa Begum cries out in pain as she receives free treatment from a temporary camp of Population Services and Training Centre, a non-government organisation, at a primary school in Ashulia yesterday. She suffered injuries to her right leg after jumping from the fifth floor of Tazreen Fashions to escape the deadly fire on November 24. The worker was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital soon after the blaze and released after three days. But she was yet to get better.

PHOTO:
RASHED SHUMON

Confusion over Tazreen toll

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Labour rights activists yesterday claimed the number of casualties in the Tazreen fire is much higher than the official count.

The government put the number of dead at 111 and that of missing at 53.

But Moshrefa Mishu, president of Garments Sramik Oikya Forum (GSOF), a labour rights organisation, insisted that over 200 workers died in the blaze.

Dozens have remained missing since the incident two weeks ago, Mishu said at a press conference.

At a separate press meet, three researchers and rights activists put the number of missing workers at 59.

Saydia Gulruk, a researcher from the University of North Carolina, said the journalists and fire-fighters who rushed to the fire site on the night of November 24 think the authorities were evasive about the total number of casualties.

The activists also came down heavily on the government and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and

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26 judges get death threat

SMS message terms them enemy of Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-six judges of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate's Court have received threats through SMS for "not granting bails to leaders and activists of Islam".

The anonymous message was in Bangla written in English fonts and sent from mobile phone number 01981611914 between 3:00pm and 7:00pm yesterday.

"You are the enemies of Islam. You are keeping the leaders and activists of Islam in detention instead of granting them bail. We have beaten up policemen; now

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Net gets submarine backup

Internet cost to go competitive; outsourcing business to rise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cost of Internet service in the country is set to become competitive as NovoCom commercially launched data and voice connectivity with International Terrestrial Cable (ITC), which will serve as a backup to the submarine cable.

NovoCom, a private company, launched its operations taking a connection from an Indian terrestrial cable.

NovoCom officials, at a press briefing yesterday, said it has established a 10 Gigabits per second (Gbps or STM 64) connection with India and it would increase the capacity by eight folds before

June, 2013.

NovoCom is the third company to obtain physical connection with Indian communication companies. Fibre@Home and 1 Asia Alliance Communication Ltd obtained their connections last month.

Investments worth millions of dollars, for business outsourcing, call centres and various IT services, were stuck due to absence of the second international connectivity, sources said.

"A backup of the lone submarine cable is very urgent for the country's call centres," said Syed Moinul Haq, managing director of NovoCom.

The MD said the ITC companies would also create bandwidth price competition in Bangladesh.

Chief technical officer of the company Tanveer Ehsanur Rahman said they got reasonable results while testing the connection and they were comparable to the submarine cable.

NovoCom officials said their facilities were able to provide voice, data and video services simultaneously.

The government in February issued six ITC licences.

The new ITC companies would be connected to the rest of the world

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Sorry, US

Says Gangnam singer Psy over anti-American protest

AFP, Seoul

South Korean megastar singer Psy, famed for his runaway hit "Gangnam Style", apologised yesterday for anti-American performances a decade ago, ahead of a planned show before US President

