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PADMA BRIDGE No graft

Muhith claims to be 100pc sure; says Grameen Bank doing fine without Yunus

UNB, Rome

Finance Minister AMA Muhith has said there would be no corruption in building the Padma bridge -- the largest ever infrastructure project of Bangladesh.

"I'm 100 percent certain there has been no corruption so far and there won't be any (corruption)...of course I'm making it sure to the people of Bangladesh," he said.

Muhith was talking to journalists at the headquarters of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome on Thursday.

Responding to a question, the minister said there are many alternative proposals.

"But I'm against them...those proposals are tied to procurement...it'll be done from the budget. The budget in the last four years has doubled."



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This handout photo shows people standing near a 20-foot hole in a frozen lake, reportedly the site of a meteorite crater, in the Chelyabinsk region, Russia yesterday. Inset, the wall of a local zinc factory, which was damaged by the shockwave from the meteorite impact.

PHOTO: AFP

Meteorite hits Russia

More than 500 hurt

REUTERS, Chelyabinsk

More than 500 people were injured when a meteorite shot across the sky and exploded over central Russia yesterday, sending fireballs crashing to Earth, shattering windows and damaging buildings.

People heading to work in Chelyabinsk heard what sounded like an explosion, saw a bright light and then felt a shockwave according to a Reuters correspondent in the industrial city 1,500 km east of Moscow.

A fireball blazed across the horizon, leaving a long white trail in its wake which could be seen as far as 200 km away in Yekaterinburg. Car alarms went off, windows shattered and mobile phone networks were interrupted.

"I was driving to work, it was quite dark, but it suddenly became as bright as if it was day," said Viktor Prokofiev, 36, a resident of Yekaterinburg in the Urals Mountains.

No fatalities were reported but President Vladimir Putin, who was due to host finance ministry officials from the Group of 20 nations in Moscow, and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev were informed.

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'Robber' killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

An alleged robber was killed during a "gunfight" between Rapid Action Battalion personnel and an armed gang in Maheshkhali of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

Two Rab personnel -- Md Asaduzzaman, assistant superintendent of police and constable Tajul Islam -- were also injured

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JUDICIARY CHOKING Over 27 lakh cases stuck

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

More than 27 lakh cases are pending with all the courts, including the Appellate Division and the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, causing tremendous sufferings to the litigants.

Although the number of judges and the rate of disposal of cases are increasing, the backlog is growing higher, as filing of cases is also mounting due to increase in population, says an SC high official. Legal experts believe appoint-

ment of competent, experienced and honest judges at the courts and establishment of an independent SC secretariat to monitor the lower courts' activities can help reduce the backlog.

Insiders say around 24.54 lakh cases are pending with all the lower courts across the country. The number of pending cases with the HC was about 2.98 lakh till December 31 although the court disposed of 56,375 cases in 2012.

As many as 16,647 cases were pending with the Appellate Division

till December 31, 2012. The apex court disposed of 6,036 cases last year.

Sources say the number of pending civil and criminal cases with the district courts across the country was around 8.64 lakh and around 4.32 lakh respectively last year.

Besides, about 8.38 lakh cases were pending with the magistrates' courts across the country in 2012.

Moreover, around 1.23 lakh cases related to torture of women and children and about 1.21 lakh cases

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PROPAGANDA VS TRUTH Net battle intensifies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Shahbagh movement is being largely coordinated and relayed to the rest of the world by people posting photographs and comments on the social networking sites like the Facebook and Twitter.

About 30 pages have been opened on Facebook alone. *Shahbaje Cyber Juddha* (Cyber war in Shahbagh) had 44,433 likes last night. Bangladeshis from different corners of the world are continually visiting the pages.

Updates will be available for the Facebook friends of all the people who

liked these pages. Thus the protest will reach even a greater number of people.

The protest itself was initiated by some online activists and bloggers. "During the first few days of the movement, while we were chanting slogans at Shahbagh, the Jamaat-Shibir supporters took over the social media sites and launched a propaganda campaign against us," said Abdullah Al Imran, an administrator of *Shahbaje Cyber Juddha*.

At that point, three student organisations Slogan 71, DU IT Society and Mango People realised the importance of

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

Dhaka Gladiators star Chris Gayle hoists one over long-off during his blistering 114 off 51 balls in their BPL T20 clash against Sylhet Royals at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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FASTER WAR TRIAL 14-party mass procession today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League-led 14-party combine will hold countrywide mass processions at 3:00pm today demanding immediate completion of war crimes trial.

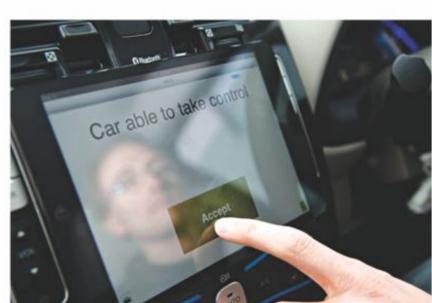
The programme is also aimed at mobilising mass people against BNP-Jamaat's killing, violence and other destructive activities to hinder the trial.

Top leaders of the 14-party alliance will take

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PRAYER TIMING		February 16
Fajr	Asr	Jamaat
5-25	4-30	6-00
12-45	5-57	1-15
4-30	7-15	4-45
5-57		6-01
7-15		7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Car driven by iPad

DAILYMAIL ONLINE

Having a car that can drive itself has long been the stuff of science fiction. But scientists have now created a robot car -- controlled by an iPad.

And the Oxford University team says the technology could be installed in mainstream cars within 15 years.

RobotCar, a specially adapted Nissan Leaf electric car, has small cameras and lasers built into its chassis.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

Online round a big hit

SHAHNOOR RABBANI

Students from across the country have been heavily playing the online game The Daily Star Spelling Bee contest at champs21.com for over a month now.

Champs21.com, the organisers, is preparing prizes for the top-10 schools from which the highest number of students register for the game.

So far, 4,155 students from 973 schools have registered and played the online game.



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BOGRA COURT VANDALISED 140 pro-BNP men sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A case was filed yesterday against 40 named and around 100 unnamed activists of the youth and volunteer wings of main opposition BNP in connection with Thursday's vandalism in a Bogra court.

Court Sub-Inspector Aatur Rahman filed the case with the court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Abdul Hamid over the vandalism and hindering government activities.

On Thursday, Jubo Dal and Swachhchasebak Dal

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The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited
ONLINE POLL

Do you think violence on the JU campus was an outburst of the students against the authorities?

Yes (79%)
No (17%)
No Comments (4%)
TOTAL VOTES: 250

TODAY'S POLL
Do you believe Finance Minister AMA Muhith that there would be no corruption in building the Padma Bridge?

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