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# Of an educator extraordinaire

SK MEHEDI HASSAN, back from Khulna

In an ordinary alley in Khulna city there is an ordinary house with an ordinary corrugated iron sheet roof. From the outside, there is little to indicate that what goes on inside is extraordinary.

The two-room house in South Khalishpur of Khulna is Anandalok Shishu Niketon, a non-registered preschool dedicated to underprivileged children of a near slum.

The free preschool is the dream of its headmistress Arifa Khatun, a middle class woman who took up the initiative to educate underprivileged children after she graduated. She has given voluntary service to the preschool for a decade.

"Give me an educated mother, I shall promise you a birth of civilised, educated nation," said Arifa, using an adage of Napoleon Bonaparte she has taken to heart.

Arifa started Anandalok in 2004 with 20 students in a borrowed classroom.

Currently around 45 students are enrolled and four additional teachers -- Lipi Das, Kalpona Rahman, Liza Sharmin and Sandha Rane -- have been recruited on a monthly honorarium of just Tk 300 to Tk 500.

The children progress through four grades -- Komol, Mrittika, Ankur and Kishalaya -- from the age of three or four. The first grade, Komol, is a six-month course teaching basic vocabulary using pictures rather than books. By the age of six or seven, students have completed Kishalaya.

The classes are held for two hours each morning and students are provided with books, notebooks and pencils.

"The didimonis [teachers] cuddle me and give me clothes," said Chandni, a student of Ankur grade. Her father is a mason and her mother a domestic help.

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Arifa Khatun busy teaching kids at Anandalok Shishu Niketon, a preschool for underprivileged children, at South Khalishpur in Khulna.

PHOTO: COURTESY

## PM goes to Belarus today

UNB, London

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave for Belarus today on a three-day official visit, wrapping up her four-day stay in the UK.

A Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight, carrying the premier and her entourage, will take off from Heathrow Airport, London in the afternoon.

During her stay in Minsk, she will have a meeting with Belarus President Alexander Grigoryevich Lukashenko at his official residence tomorrow.

Hasina will also hold bilateral talks with Belarus Prime Minister Mikhail V Myasnikovich at the House of Government.

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PRAYER TIMING		July 8
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

## War hero killed at Nizami's order

Witness testifies at war crimes trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that a group of Razakars on Nizami's instructions had killed a freedom fighter at the end of September 1971 in Pabna.

Rathindra Nath Kundu was giving his deposition as the 12th prosecution witness against war crimes accused Motiur Rahman Nizami.

Kundu also said Nizami's nephew had led the Razakars while looting and setting fire to the house of another freedom fighter Anil after getting orders from the accused.

The witness, a physician of Dhaka Central Jail, had learnt about the incidents from Anil, also his brother-in-law. Anil took training in India and participated in the liberation war under sector seven.

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## Water wells dry up

Green expert warns of global threat to food supply

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Wells are drying up and underwater tables falling so fast in the Middle East and parts of India, China and the US that food supplies are seriously threatened, one of the world's leading resource analysts has warned.

In a major new essay, Lester Brown, head of the Earth Policy Institute in Washington, claims that 18 countries, together containing half the world's people, are now overpumping their underground water tables to the point -- known as "peak water" -- where they are not replenishing and where harvests are getting smaller each year.

The situation is most serious in the Middle East. According to Brown, "Among the countries whose water supply has peaked and begun to decline are Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. By 2016 Saudi Arabia projects it will be importing some 15m tonnes of wheat, rice, corn and

barley to feed its population of 30 million people. It is the first country to publicly project how aquifer depletion will shrink its grain harvest.

"The world is seeing the collision between population growth and water supply at the regional level. For the first time in history, grain production is dropping in a geographic region with nothing in sight to arrest the decline. Because of the failure of governments in the region to mesh population and water policies, each day now brings 10,000 more people to feed and less irrigation water with which to feed them."

Brown warns that Syria's grain production peaked in 2002 and since then has dropped 30%; Iraq has dropped its grain production 33% since 2004; and production in Iran dropped 10% between 2007 and 2012 as its irrigation wells started to go dry.

"Iran is already in deep trouble. It is

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## AL conspiring to loot assets of Grameen

B Chy tells after meeting with Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League government is hatching a "conspiracy" to "loot" the assets of Grameen Bank worth Tk 8,000 crore by splitting the bank into 19 pieces.

Bikolpodhara Bangladesh President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury made the observation at a joint press conference after exchanging views with the GB founder Dr Muhammad Yunus at the city's Yunus Centre yesterday.

"Your (government) time is over. Give up the plan of splitting Grameen Bank," he said.

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## US 'not aligned' with any party in Egypt

Says Obama; Putin warns of civil war amid political impasse

AGENCIES

US President Barack Obama condemned the ongoing violence in Egypt, and said the United States was not working with any particular party or group as Egypt reels from a military takeover.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that the standoff between supporters and foes of deposed Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi threatened to degenerate into a civil war.

The statements came in the wake of Morsi's ouster and confusion over the choice of liberal politician Mohamed ElBaradei as interim prime minister.

Obama, who spoke with members of his National Security Council via conference call about the situation in Egypt, "condemned the ongoing violence across Egypt and expressed concern over the continued political polarization," according to a White House statement on late Saturday.

He "reiterated that the United States is not aligned with, and does not support, any particular Egyptian political party or group," according to the statement.

"The United States categorically rejects the false claims propagated by

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



## Copper cage effort to quit smoking

WWW.ODDITYCENTRAL.COM

The things people will put themselves through to give up smoking. Case in point Ibrahim Yücel, a 42-year-old smoker from Kütahya of Turkey who recently decided to wear a locked metal cage over his head to fight

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## Western states 'in bed with' US

Whistleblower Snowden says NSA has secret spying deals with its allies

AFP, Berlin

Fugitive intelligence leaker Edward Snowden said the US National Security Agency operates broad secret spying partnerships with other Western governments now complaining about its programmes, in an interview published yesterday.

Snowden said in comments made before his exposure of US espionage practices came to light last month and printed in German news weekly Der Spiegel that NSA spies are "in bed together with the Germans and most other Western states".

In remarks published in German, Snowden said an NSA department known as the Foreign Affairs Directorate coordinated work with foreign secret services.

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The Daily Star

**Integral Energy Limited ONLINE POLL**

Do you agree with BGMEA president that international politics played a key role in the US decision to suspend trade preferences for Bangladesh?

Yes (65%)  
No (35%)

TOTAL VOTES: 259

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you agree with senior BNP leader Tariqul Islam that the victory in the Gazipur polls shows people's no-confidence in the government?

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