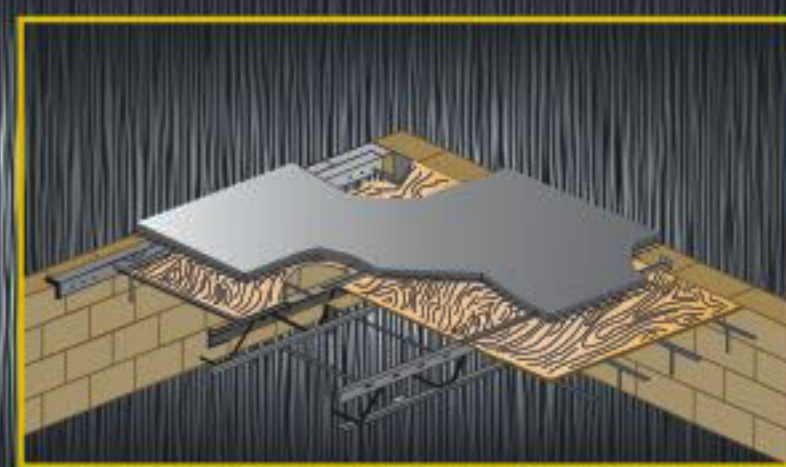


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NICU AT SHISHU HOSPITAL

8 beds available; needs lot more

JAMIL MAHMUD and RASHIDUL HASAN

In the dim light of a corridor on the first floor of Dhaka Shishu Hospital, the gloomy face of Mansura looked gloomier.

She was desperately looking for a bed at the hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for her one-week-old nephew suffering from severe jaundice and stomach problem, but to no avail.

Her frantic efforts began three days ago at Birdem Hospital where a bed was available at an expense she could not afford. Then she went to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) to find all the NICU beds there were occupied.

Meanwhile, doctors at Mitford Hospital, where the infant was born and being treated, released him, saying they lacked the medical support needed for the baby.

"Now I'm in a fix and don't know what to do," said a frustrated Mansura.

So she left the Shishu hospital with a faint promise from its authorities that they'd call her once a bed was available.

Considered one of the most important treatment facilities, the NICU at the hospital has only eight beds.

"And those presumably remain occupied all the time," said a female staff, wishing anonymity.

"But recommendation from higher officials may come to your aid,"

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



Parents of sick children in the eight-bed NICU of Dhaka Shishu Hospital wait outside the door as only one attendant per child is allowed inside the ward specialised for newborns. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Beijing pledges stronger ties

Sees stability in the region a key to mutual growth

REZAUL KARIM and WASIM BIN HABIB, from Beijing

China would give all-out support to Bangladesh to help achieve its dream of building a "Golden Bangladesh" eliminating poverty, as China feels it has an "obligation" to help its friends that are lagging behind.

"We've common dreams to improve the livelihood of our people. May be China has developed and now we've the obligation to help our friends who are a little bit behind China so that we can develop together and ensure better life for our people," said Hou Yanqi, deputy director general of the Department of Asian Affairs at the Chinese foreign ministry.

Talking to visiting journalists from Bangladesh and Nepal at the ministry in Beijing recently, she said China would continue to help Bangladesh build self-development capacity and have a faster growth in the region.

She said China wants to see a "peaceful, stable and prosperous" South Asia as it believes China cannot develop without this.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Key powers seek to narrow divisions over Syria war

'Agreed to disagree' with Russia, Iran over Assad's fate, says Kerry; US to deploy special forces in northern Syria

AFP, Vienna

Key backers of Syria's rival sides yesterday sought to narrow their divisions over a conflict that has claimed a quarter of a million lives and triggered an exodus of refugees to Europe.

Top diplomats from 17 countries, as well as the United Nations and the European Union, gathered in Vienna for the talks bringing together all the main outside players in the four-year-old crisis for the first time.

The Syrian regime and the opposition were not represented.

The United States, meanwhile, announced yesterday its first sustained deployment of ground troops to Syria to help the anti-jihadist fight.

Officials said an initial deployment of "fewer than 50" special forces would be sent to northern Syria -- parts of which are controlled by US-backed Syrian Kurdish forces fighting the IS.

The White House rejected accusations that President Barack Obama was backtracking on a promise not to put boots on the ground.

"Our strategy in Syria hasn't changed," spokesman Josh Earnest said. "These forces do not have a combat mission."

'AGREE TO DISAGREE'
Regime allies Russia -- which has waged a month of intense air strikes against Syrian rebels -- and Iran are resisting Western and Saudi pressure to force Assad from power.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 8

MOBIN'S RESIGNATION BNP brave officially, jittery unofficially

RASHIDUL HASAN and PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY

Despite the BNP's claim that Shamsher M Chowdhury's resignation would not hamper party activities, many of its leaders think the abrupt exit of the senior leader has put the already struggling party in further trouble.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a number of BNP leaders said the incident also brought to the fore the "undemocratic interference" and "incompetent leadership" of the party's senior vice chairman Tarique Rahman from abroad.

They speculated that a few more senior figures might quit the party if the leadership failed to run it in a more democratic manner.

"Mobin's resignation has sent a bad signal to the party's grass-root leaders and activists. Something drastic should be done immediately to revive their confidence, otherwise the entire party will be in deep trouble," said a standing committee member of the party, wishing anonymity.

However, BNP's acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir rejected all such claims. He said the "BNP is a large political party" and resignation of any individual would not impact its activities.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Second innings ends quickly



AFP, Islamabad

Former cricketer and Pakistani opposition leader Imran Khan is to divorce for a second time, ending his marriage to a TV journalist just 10 months after they wed.

Imran, 62, married 42-year-old Reham Khan, a former BBC weather host and a divorced mother of three, in January this year in a simple ceremony at his Islamabad home.

"We have decided to part ways and file for divorce," Reham Khan said in a brief statement on her Twitter account yesterday.

Imran tweeted that it was a "painful time" and that he has "the greatest respect for Reham's moral character & her passion to work for & help the underprivileged".

Naeem ul Haque, Imran's spokesman told AFP the decision to divorce was mutual.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

GULSHAN CRASH Police at last sue teenage SUV driver

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have at last filed a case against Fareez Rahman, whose irresponsible driving left four people injured in the capital's Gulshan on October 12.

Seventeen days after the incident, Sub-Inspector Ferdous Alam of Gulshan Police Station on Thursday night sued him for reckless driving, injuring people and damaging rickshaws, police said.

Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station, said they had gone to Fareez's house to arrest

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PRAYER TIMING

OCTOBER 31

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-50 12-45 4-00 5-32 7-15
JAMAAT 5-25 1-15 4-15 5-35 7-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Teachers and employees of non-MPO educational institutions on their hunger strike unto death in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. They demand their institutions be included in the MPO (Monthly Pay Order).

PHOTO: STAR

NON-MPO INSTITUTIONS

Teachers, staff seek PM's help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and employees of the non-MPO educational institutions yesterday started a hunger strike unto death in front of the Jatiya Press Club demanding Monthly Pay Order (MPO)-listing of their organisations.

"We will continue our hunger strike until the government makes an official announcement on MPO-listing of our institutions," Md Esharat Ali, president of Non-MPO Educational Institutions Teachers-Employees Federation, told The Daily Star.

Under the provisions of MPO, teachers and employees get cent percent of their basic salaries and other benefits from the government.

The federation has been staging demonstrations before the press club for the last four days. A few hundred teachers and employees began the hunger strike at 10:00am yesterday. Some were holding placards with the demand. A protester had "Honorable prime minister,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



MG!

"May be, Khaleda Zia [BNP chairperson] is confined by her son Tarique Rahman in London"

HEALTH MINISTER
MOHAMMAD NASIM
AT A DISCUSSION IN CAPITAL



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