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Dinajpur tea!

Pioneering farmer brings tea gardens to unlikely district

KONGKON KARMAKER with ANDREW EAGLE

Inspired by the well-established lowland tea plantation in neighbouring Panchagarh and in some parts of Thakurgaon district, Nazrul Islam from Jhaljhali village in Dinajpur's Birganj upazila has been trying his hand at cultivating tea.

In August last year, the 36-year-old planted 6,000 tea saplings on two acres, and six months later leaves were plucked for the first time making up the initial harvest of almost 50 kilograms. He had bought those saplings from a nursery in Panchagarh at Tk 4 each.

The volume of suitable leaves produced by the plants has been steadily increasing. At the beginning of this month Nazrul harvested nearly 500 kilograms of leaves, he says.

In total, he has collected nearly 1,000 kilograms of leaves from his tea garden.

Nazrul sells leaves to North Bengal Tea Factory in Panchagarh for Tk 25 per kilogram.

With encouraging results from his ground-breaking endeavour, the farmer is already thinking of expanding his tea plantation.

Even without expansion, he estimates that after two years, as the tea bushes will be more mature, he will earn Tk 25,000 per month, which he earned this year, by selling tea leaves.

Bangladesh's burgeoning tea industry dates back to the British colonial period when large scale tea plantation was introduced in Sylhet and Chittagong. Till 2000, all tea estates were in greater Sylhet and in the districts of Brahmanbaria, Chittagong and Rangamati.

However, considering the geographical proximity of Panchagarh's Tentulia to India's tea growing region of Darjeeling, some companies started small-scale tea plantation in the northwest tip in 2000, and eventually it expanded to neighbouring Thakurgaon district.

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Nazrul Islam at his tea garden in Jhaljhali village of Dinajpur's Birganj upazila. Inspired by lowland tea plantation in Panchagarh, the man has made the first tea garden on two acres of land in Dinajpur. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Zafar Iqbal, wife get death threat



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned writer and Prof of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and his wife received death threats from the same mobile number that issued threats to at least three others.

They are Jahangirnagar University's Prof Anu Muhammad, litterateur and journalist Moinul Ahsan Saber and writer Morshed Shafiuul Hasan.

Dr Iqbal's wife Yesmeen Huq, a professor of the Shahjalal university, received an SMS on her mobile phone at around 12:17am on Thursday.

The SMS reads, "Welcome to our new top list! Your breath may stop at anytime -ABT."

About two hours later, Dr Iqbal received an SMS on his cell phone from the same

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Race 'rigged' for Clinton

Claims Trump; plays victim on sex assault claims

AFP, Portsmouth

Donald Trump yesterday charged that "corrupt" media were seeking to rig November's election in favor of his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton -- who he suggested was "pumped up" on drugs at their last debate.

His White House campaign in chaos over snowballing accusations of sexual assault, Trump has cast himself as the victim of a "smear campaign," further escalating his attacks in a scorched-earth strategy heading into the final weeks of the race.

"Hillary is running for president in what looks like a rigged election," the 70-year-old told a fired-up rally in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. "The election is being rigged by corrupt media pushing completely false allegations and outright lies in an effort to elect her president."



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UNREST IN RAKHINE

Pak-linked Islamists blamed for attacks

REUTERS, Sittou

Myanmar's government said on Friday a group inspired by Islamist militants was behind attacks on police border posts in its ethnically riven north-west, as officials said they feared a new insurgency by members of the Rohingya Muslim minority.

The sudden escalation of violence in Rakhine state poses a serious challenge to the six-month-old government led by Aung San Suu Kyi, who was swept to power in an election last year but has faced criticism abroad for failing to tackle rights abuses against the Rohingya and other Muslims.

A statement from the office of Myanmar's President Htin Kyaw blamed the little-known "Aqa Mul Mujahidin" for recent attacks around Maungdaw Township, a mainly Muslim area near the frontier with Bangladesh.

"They persuade the young people using religious extremism, and they have financial support from outside," said the Burmese language statement.

"They are broadcasting their videos on the Internet like ISIS, Taliban and al-Qaeda. They now have 400 insurgents fighting in Maungdaw region."

The statement said interrogations with suspects captured after the attacks had revealed links with militants in Pakistan.

The ringleader was a 45-year-old who has lived in Bangladesh and spent six months training with the Pakistani Taliban, it said.

The statement added that the Aqa Mul Mujahidin - the name of which could not be found in any previous news reports online - was linked to the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), an armed group that has long been assumed defunct.

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Khadiza now responding

Doctors say she can move her right limbs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khadiza Begum Nargis, undergoing treatment at Square Hospitals in the capital, was shifted to High Dependency Unit (HDU) of the hospital yesterday as her condition is improving gradually, doctors said.

"She is able to respond when addressed and can also open her eyes slightly," Rejaus Sattar, a neurosurgeon of the Square Hospitals told The Daily Star.

The doctor also said she is able to move her right limbs although she cannot move her left ones yet.

"Within two or three months we will be able to say whether she will be able to move the left ones. We are hopeful about her

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The 'brobot' that sweats to keep itself cool



MAIL ONLINE

Humans and robots have one thing in common -- when they work hard, they overheat.

Now, Japanese researchers have designed a robot that "sweats" in order to stay cool, allowing it to do push-ups for 11 minutes straight without burning out its motors.

Kengoro's skeletal structure is designed to let water seep through porous layers in its frame, which eventually evaporates to cool its 180 motors.

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FACEBOOK POST

Govt employee, imam arrested for demeaning PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An imam of a mosque and a government employee have been arrested in Chandpur and Rangamati for allegedly defaming Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Facebook.

Police picked up MMH Nurul Huda, 30, in Naburkandi Bazar area in

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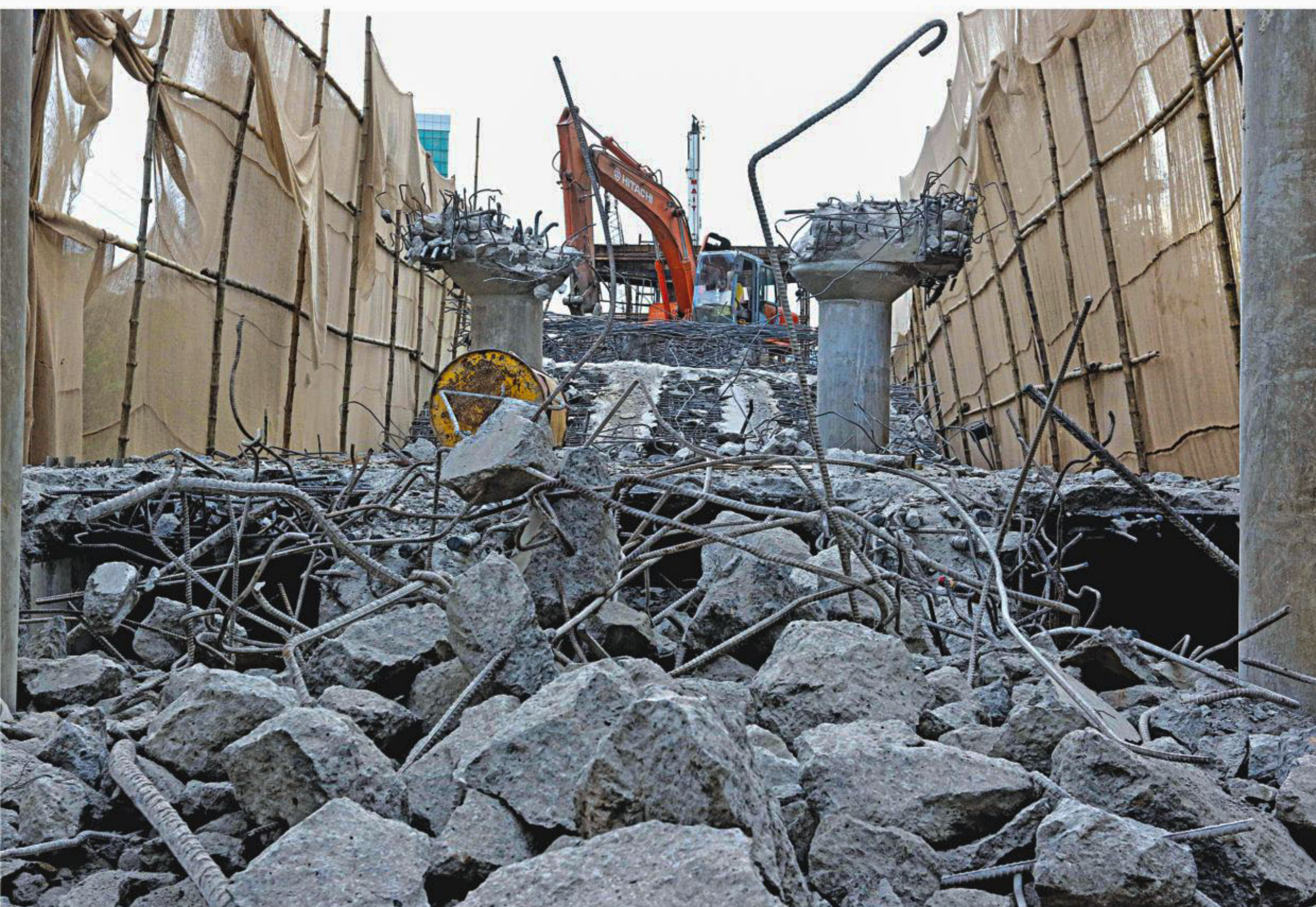
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PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 16

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-50 12-45 4-00 5-38 7-15
JAMAAT 5-25 1-15 4-15 5-41 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

HARD WORK DOWN THE DRAIN



Nearly a 50-metre carriageway of a ramp of Moghbazar-Mouchak Flyover in front of Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (FDC) being dismantled to extend the ramp by 450 metres towards the Sonargaon Hotel over the Karwan Bazar level crossing. It would cost Tk 85 crore to extend the ramp, which ironically is apprehended to worsen congestion on the already-crammed street, according to a traffic survey conducted in April this year.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

