

Early marriage

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cannot achieve the SDGs that are equitable and leave none behind," Argentina Matalvel Piccin, UNFPA representative in Bangladesh, told journalists at her office in the capital on the occasion when the report was released. The report focuses on 10-year-old girls and challenges the world's notion of taking measures for their education, health and social safety. Of 125 million 10-year-olds in the world today, 60 million are girls who are systematically disadvantaged at the global level as they move through adolescence into adulthood, according to the report. Nine out of 10 10-year-old girls live in developing countries, and one in five lives in a least developed country: one in five is in India, and one in eight in China. If all the 10-year-old girls who drop out of school or do not attend school in developing countries completed secondary education, they would trigger a \$21 billion annual dividend, according to the State of World Population Report. At present, there are 16 million girls between 10 and 19 years in Bangladesh.

"Today's ten-year-old girls will be 25 by 2030. How they fare will depend on the measures taken by the country and community," Piccin said. At that age, girls reach puberty and face much vulnerability -- sexual harassment, child marriage, child labour etc. These practices prevent girls from utilising their immense potentials and in turn have great impact on society as a whole, Piccin said. Explaining why more investment is needed for these girls, she said that if these girls have education and nutrition, they can become a great scientist, an astronaut, a great teacher etc. "If these rights are denied, a lot of opportunities are lost," Piccin said. Age-appropriate sexuality and reproductive education can empower girls and protect them from sexual violence and early marriage. The UNFPA will measure the progress of today's 10-year-old girls up to 2030, the end year to achieve the SDGs, said its representative in Bangladesh. On Bangladesh's status, Piccin said the government had to invest in girls who were lagging far behind boys. The initiative of making secondary education free for girls is praiseworthy, she said. Now only 300 schools and 50 madrasas came under sexuality and reproductive health education through Generation Breakthrough Project, she said insisting on its fast expansion. "We need to change the mindset of our boys about girls."

For that to happen, awareness has to be built among parents, teachers and the authorities, Piccin said.

Govt moves

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In November of 2010 when then Indian external affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee visited Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had proposed the formation of a South Asian taskforce to combat militancy. The AL declaration would also stress special action for trying militancy, killings, terrorism and anti-constitutional activities. It would propose taking steps to decentralise power and administration reforms. The 67-year-old party aims to turn Bangladesh into a middle income country by 2021 and equivalent to a developed country by 2041, the sources said. The declaration would also propose incorporating Liberation War history in the curriculum of educational institutions, especially madrasa, where it is now absent.

CHANGES TO AL CHARTER

According to the proposed amendments to the party constitution, the number of leaders in the party's most powerful body, the National Executive Committee, would be increased to 180 from 170 while AL's central working committee, the highest decision-making body, would have 81 post rather than 73. The National Executive Committee will have yearly meetings. The current constitution mentions two meetings a year.

In the ALCWC, creation of four more new presidium member posts, one joint secretary post, one organising secretary and two member posts have been proposed.

Formation of a 19-member "Local Government Representative Nomination Board" led by the party president has also been suggested since parties can now take part in local government elections.

A proposal has been made for a provision to expel a party member if he or she runs against the AL nominated candidate in any race or opposes the nominee's candidature.

ALERTS

Sources said General Secretary Ashraf would call on the party rank and file to be alert about evil forces, criminals, addicts, dishonest and controversial people infiltrating into the Awami League.

He would also remind them not to harm the party's image and avoid intra-party conflict.

Ashraf would also call on his colleagues to take up anti-militancy publicity programmes at the grassroots.

RU student found dead

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College Hospital (RMCH) forensic department, who performed Lipu's autopsy, said the cause of his death was internal haemorrhage in his head. He said there were fractures in his right part of the forehead, right part of head, and both ribs. "He might have been hit in the head and thrown down from somewhere high above," said the physician. RU Proctor Prof Mujibul Haque Azad said Rina Khatun, a staff of the hall, spotted the body of Lipu behind the dining room around 8:00am. Students of the hall said Lipu had been staying at room-253 in the north block of Latif Hall for the last five months. Lipu's roommate Monirul Islam, a second-year student of Botany department, said he last saw Lipu around 12:00 midnight. "Lipu asked me to study using a table lamp and then went to sleep." Monirul said he went to sleep an hour later. He woke up early in the morning and found the door open. "I thought that he[Lipu] went out for jogging."

He heard the death news around 8:30am. Rubel Rana, a second-year student of history department and also Lipu's next-door neighbour, said Lipu met him on Wednesday evening. He said Lipu returned to the campus from his village home on Tuesday and was busy taking preparation for his upcoming exam. "Lipu was a fun-loving youth," Rubel said. Wishing not to be named, a student of the dormitory said he heard a "strange sound" outside his room around 3:00am. "I was frightened and did not open windows of my room to look outside." Motihar Police picked up four people for interrogation. Bashir Mollah, an uncle of Lipu, filed a murder case with the police station. Lipu's namaz-e-janaza was held on the campus after Asar prayers. His body was then sent to his village home. *A correspondent of RU contributed to the report.*

'I will accept ... if I win'

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Thursday attend the same annual campaign sent into a tailspin by a stream of allegations of sexual misconduct, he is likely to garner as many as 50 million votes. How his supporters react is now foremost in the minds of officials in the White House and beyond. It is unclear what impact Trump's stance will have on the election itself. "Calling an election rigged doesn't just undermine foundational democratic norms and principles, it also reduces voter engagement," said Adam Seth Levine, a professor of government at Cornell University. The campaign between Trump and Clinton has proven to be the caustic coda to decades of partisan rancor in Washington. Political tribalism has already caused gridlock in government and eroded democratic institutions from the Supreme Court to Congress. But despite isolated allegations of voter fraud, controversy over the tight 2000 vote and rampant gerrymandering, US elections have been regarded as free and fair.

Asked point-blank by a debate moderator on Wednesday whether he would accept the election result if he lost, the reality television star shattered that consensus. "I'll look at it at the time. What I've seen is so bad," he said, repeating unfounded allegations of vote rigging. Asked again by the moderator, Trump said "I'll tell you at the time. I'll keep you in suspense, OK?" His rival on the debate stage, and a phalanx of his fellow Republicans rushed to tell Trump it was not "OK". Clinton declared herself "appalled" by what she said was an attack on 240 years of US democracy. Trump's vice presidential running mate Mike Pence insisted "we'll accept the will of the American people. Reince Priebus, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, offered assurances. "Barring massive voter fraud, of course he is going to accept the results of the elections," he said. But Republican Senator Jeff Flake said Trump was "beyond the pale" and onetime presidential candidate Senator Lindsey Graham said if Trump loses, it will be "because he failed as a candidate". Trump and Clinton will later on

Thursday attend the same annual charity dinner in New York, an event where the candidates traditionally engage in a "friendly roast." But the animosity between them seems almost certain to get in the way. They would not even shake hands at Wednesday night's debate, and at one point Trump interrupted Clinton to call her "a nasty woman". Clinton, who is vying to become the first woman president of the United States, told reporters she was "both relieved and very grateful" that the debates were now behind her. Polls show her leading by more than six points and making gains even in states like Arizona, Texas and Georgia that have long been in the Republican column. President Barack Obama earlier in the week told Trump to "stop whining" about a rigged election and go try to get people to vote for him.

She's never lost

FROM PAGE 20
Besides her native Russian, Bella also speaks English, German, Spanish, French, Chinese and Arabic - that includes the six official United Nations languages with the addition of German. The most incredible part is that Bella is actually able to communicate in these languages, as her knowledge exceeds the vocabulary of simple 'small talk'. During the show she managed to answer questions based on a school curriculum in all these languages. Bella's mother, Yulia, says that she started teaching her daughter languages at the age of two. They started with English, but as soon as she noticed that Bella was interested in it, she began adding other languages. Bella practices English with her mother and is tutored by native speakers for other languages. Unsurprisingly, language specialists have been just as impressed as Bella's global audience. One linguist and language expert was quoted as saying: "Such cases are rare but have happened in the past. Language centres in the human brain get switched on at different stages of development." He believes that Bella will not lose her knowledge, but warns that at some point it can become 'frozen' if she does not continue to use and practice it. While she continues learning languages, cute Bella said she dreams of becoming a mermaid, like her favourite Disney character Ariel - who is perhaps one up on Bella for being able to speak to marine animals.

New Jamaat

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acting ameer for the last six years. The Jamaat vehemently opposed Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971 and its subsequent independence from Pakistan. Abdul Hannan Khan, coordinator of the investigation agency, said Maqbul's name was on the razakars' list in Feni although there were no specific allegations against him. Two online newspapers recently ran news of two specific allegations against Maqbul, he added. "We are now probing the allegations. If our primary investigation finds that the allegations are true, we will open a formal investigation," said Hannan. On Wednesday, the agency appointed a senior investigation officer for conducting the enquiry. Meanwhile, Jamaat in a press statement claimed Maqbul was not involved in any crimes against humanity during the Liberation War. The party was banned in independent Bangladesh until it was reborn in 1979 after a political changeover. Jamaat leaders, including its former chief Motiur Rahman Nizami, Mir Quasem Ali, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, and Abdul Quader Mollah were executed while Ghulam Azam was sentenced to 90 years in jail and Delawar Hossain Sayeede imprisoned until death for committing crimes against humanity.

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Israel foils Palestinian attack on hall

AFP, Jerusalem
Israeli security forces have arrested a Palestinian from the Gaza Strip suspected of planning "a multiple-casualty attack" on a function hall, authorities said yesterday. The Shin Bet domestic security agency said Mahmud Abu Taha had sought to cross into Israel in the guise of a businessman, acting under instructions from the Islamic Jihad in Gaza. "Abu Taha headed a terror cell directed by Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip which planned to carry out a multiple-casualty attack on a function hall in the south," Shin Bet said, without specifying the location of the hall. He had planned to link up with three other Gazans already in Israel and launch the attack on the hall where one of the men worked, it said in a statement.

SYRIA WAR

Clinton eyes 'negotiated' no-fly zone

AFP, Las Vegas
White House frontrunner Hillary Clinton stood behind her pledge to create a no-fly zone in Syria Wednesday, but said it would have to be negotiated rather than imposed. Acknowledging "legitimate concerns" about sparking a conflict with the Syrian regime or its Russian backer -- which has advanced weapons systems on the ground, Clinton said talks would be needed. "I think a no-fly zone could save lives and hasten the end of the conflict," Clinton said in the final presidential debate of 2016. "This would take a lot of negotiation and it would also take making it clear to the Syrians and Russians that our purpose is to provide safe zones on the ground." Moscow has shown little sign of voluntarily agreeing to ground its own planes or those of the Syrian regime, raising questions about how Clinton would achieve her goal. President Barack Obama and top generals have shied away from a policing role in Syria's skies, a move supporters say would stop indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Aleppo and other cities. Imposing a no-fly zone of the sort introduced in northern and southern Iraq after the first Gulf War would require neutralizing Syria's air defense systems. Russia has deployed the sophisticated S-300 ground-to-air defense system in the war-ravaged country, making that prospect much tougher. Clinton's rival Donald Trump said that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was "much tougher and much smarter than her and Obama." "Everyone thought he was going two years ago, three years ago. He aligned with Russia. He now also aligned with Iran, who we made very powerful," the Republican presidential nominee said. Echoing Moscow's position, he criticized Clinton and Obama for calling on Assad to step down. "If they ever did overthrow Assad, you may very well end up with worse than Assad," Trump said.

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AFGHANISTAN CONFLICT

UN warns of displacement crisis

AFP, Kabul
The UN yesterday warned anew of a deteriorating crisis of displacement in Afghanistan as the conflict escalates, imploring the government and international donors to step up support especially for a "lost generation" of children. More than 323,000 Afghans were internally displaced across the country in the first 10 months of this year, according to UN agencies, in a continuation of an upward trend over the last four years. "Warnings by humanitarian partners suggest that many more IDPs could be displaced by the end of the year, yet attention and resources allocated to their needs seem to be waning rather than increasing," UN special rapporteur Chaloka Beyani said in Kabul. "The displacement picture in Afghanistan is changing as the conflict evolves and intensifies. "Displacement is becoming more protracted for more people as the security situation has led many to return to their homes." Beyani called on the Afghan government and its international partners to step up emergency responses for those in "protracted displacement". Tens of thousands of Afghans have been uprooted from their homes as the Taliban have stepped up their insurgency across the nation -- from Kunduz in the north to Helmand in the south. Children, in particular, have paid a heavy price. "It is no exaggeration to speak of a lost generation of displaced Afghan children deprived of education since children constitute about 56 per cent of the displaced population," Beyani said. Aid groups have warned that yet more displacement is likely to take place as the conflict intensifies before the onset of winter, when fighting usually tapers off. Afghanistan has been beset by conflict and the crisis of displacement for decades. In September, the UN issued a flash appeal for \$150 million to meet urgent needs, including winter assistance packages, by the end of the year. "I urge the donor community to respond generously and rapidly to that call," Beyani said.

Mehedi rules

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On a pitch that looks like becoming a raging turner, the new ball has become a weapon for the spinners more than the pacers. Miraz, who opened the bowling along with Shaiful Islam and recognised the benefits of the turn and zip the new cherry provided. So, in the 82nd over Miraz returned with the second new ball and promptly removed the last recognised thorn by bowling Bairstow with an arm ball for 52. Bairstow had earlier benefited from a dropped chance by Sabbir Rahman at slip off Taijul Islam in the 49th over when he was just on 13. From 237 for seven Chris Woakes and Adil Rashid negotiated Miraz's threat till the end of the day. But it was the story of the man who will only turn 19 the day after this Test is scheduled to end. He became the seventh bowler from Bangladesh to capture a debut five-for after Naimur Rahman, Manjural Islam, Mahmudullah Riyad, Elias Sunny, Shohag Gazi and current teammate Taijul Islam. As there are still three wickets on offer, he may eclipse the best debut bowling figures of six for 74 set by Gazi against the West Indies in November 2012. He was calmness personified as he started operating on a probing line and length that demanded that the ball be played. Miraz drew first blood when, in the 10th over, he bowled the opposition's debutant Ben Duckett with a peach that pitched on leg stump from around the wicket and hit the left-hander's middle and off stump. In the next over, for once, Shakib Al Hasan benefited from the threats posed by a bowler bowling at the other end and not the other way around as England skipper Alastair Cook uncharacteristically threw his bat at a sweep only for the ball to ricochet off his gloves onto the stumps. Miraz returned in the next over to bowl an arm-ball that deceived Gary Ballance into going back and playing for the turn, but his rapid adjustment was not rapid enough to prevent the ball

hitting the pad a fraction of a second before it hit his bat. The umpire only saw bat hit ball, but behind the stumps Mushfiqur had eyes quick enough to see it differently and called for a review that overturned the decision. This bit of quick thinking may have bred over-confidence as Mushfiqur wasted the next three review chances in a day filled with reviews, seven in all. Ali then joined England's best batsman Joe Root with the score on 21 for three. Root showed why he is arguably the best batsman in the world. He was batting as if on another wicket against lesser bowlers, hitting two boundaries off Shakib's next over and repeating the dose on Miraz's fellow debutant Kamrul Islam Rabbi in the 17th over. England may have been in much deeper trouble in the over before, when Miraz nearly had Moeen Ali leg-before. The umpire turned down the appeal but replays showed it going on to hit leg and middle. Mushfiqur however did not review. Then followed a bizarre sequence of reviews -- three in the space of six balls -- all against Ali originally given out by umpire Kumar Dharmasena either side of lunch in the 27th and 29th overs with Shakib the disappointed bowler each time. The first one had Moeen sweeping and the ball hit the pad on or just outside off stump, with replays showing an inside edge. Two reviews in an over followed after lunch and this time the first one was missing leg and the next striking outside off stump. Miraz however did not need reviews as he removed Root for a 49-ball 40 in the 30th over, deceiving the batsman with a straighter ball that he edged into Mushfiqur's pad before it nestled in the hands of Bangladesh's third debutant to appear on the scorecard, Sabbir, at slip. Ben Stokes then walked out and hit a six over midwicket off Shakib, but Bangladesh all-rounder had the last laugh in the 41st over, bowling his counterpart with a sharply spinning delivery that beat the Englishman's defences.

Improvised, new look

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Carc Director and a professor of the university's Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) Department, Prof AKM Abdul Malek Azad led a group of researchers over the past one year, developing the prototype three-wheeler, electrically-assisted human haulier, cargo haulier and ambulance incorporated with PV (photovoltaics) panel and torque sensor pedal. The vehicles are designed in a way that their pullers would paddle with less effort while torque sensor and solar-powered motors would help gain speed momentum. Wheels and bodies are built in a way to withstand the speed and negotiate with rough patches of roads. Prof Azad's core research and development team is comprised of project and research engineers Ataur Rahman, Jaber Al Rashid and Sheri Jahan Chowdhury. Even before the state-run company IDCOL started financing the project from a one million dollar World Bank fund in mid-2015, Carc received a small seed money from the Special Interest Group on Humanitarian Technology (SIGHT) of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), USA to build the prototype solar-assisted electric rickshaw van for the on-grid and off-grid rural community of Bangladesh. In its last steering committee meeting, held at New Jersey, USA, the SIGHT team showed interest to visit Carc research facilities at Brac University and take necessary steps to replicate the improvised three-wheelers in Uganda and East Africa. Prof Azad was present there. IDCOL's Manager for Renewable Energy Mahfuzur Rahman told The Daily Star that they are upbeat about the outcome. "The prototypes developed by Brac University look promising," he said. Soon, IDCOL is going to arrange a workshop on some solar-based technologies, including the vehicles developed by Brac-Beevatech, to scale up and moot on ways to go for mass production. Prof Azad told The Daily Star that they have field-tested the vehicles at Genda, Savar and then carried out their necessary re-modifications following performance evaluation and on the basis of feedbacks from rickshaw pullers, passengers, patients, shopkeepers and people of other professions. He said they have developed three modes of transports for separate purposes -- human hauliers can be used as a convenient mode of transport for providing comfortable experience in the daily movements of rickshaw passengers; ambulance vans with necessary medical equipment for transporting patients from houses to hospitals; and cargo hauliers for carrying goods such as rice bags, medicines, vegetables to different retailing shops in large quantities. The findings of the field test has showed that the total distance coverage by the help of solar panels and torque sensor pedal technology is around 80-90km a day, three times more than the total distance coverage by the conventional electric rickshaw.

The vehicle can be driven at a speed between 35 and 45 KM/hr. A solar panel set on the roof would help charge the battery bank whenever the vehicle moves or remains stationary. One of the most attractive features of the developed vehicle is the application of the innovative torque sensor pedal technology that can reduce the human pedaling effort significantly compared to that of manually driven tri-wheeler. A total of 72 percent of the available battery storage energy can be saved by the contribution of solar panels and the torque sensor pedal technology. Thus, the use of torque sensor pedal increases the battery lifetime due to less use of the battery compared to that of the battery lifetime of typical electric rickshaws, Prof Azad explained. The developed human haulier can carry six to eight people at a time whereas the typical electric rickshaw can carry only two to three. Hence, the use of this type of technologically advanced electric tri-wheeler can undeniably increase the income of pullers, causing socio-economic benefits to both on-grid and off-grid rural community, he hoped. Based on the field test experience, Prof Azad said, all the three types of vehicles were modified using smaller wheels and thicker axle with a total of eight batteries (each 12V, 50Ah) as well as two 500W brushless DC motors to improve the total mileage coverage and mechanical stability of the vehicle, and 400W solar panel for charging the batteries using the solar energy for reducing the impact of overloading the national grid. To address the safety issues, the modified ambulance vans are also equipped with rear wheel braking system, reverse gear switch, mirror, triple drum brake, shock absorbers, siren, light and shock absorbers both at front wheel and rear wheel, and all the three wheel's base width is widened for better stability during turning in rough surfaces, he added.

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a revolver, two sharp weapons and four bullets from the spot, said Rab sources. Earlier on September 16, another accused Rakibul Islam, a member of Alukdia Union Parishad in Chuadanga Sadar upazila, was killed in a gunfight with Rab in Gobindapur village of Damurhuda upazila. Fifteen-year-old Sajib of Dashami village in the upazila was abducted on July 29. The following day, the abductors demanded Tk 20 lakh as ransom from his family members. The captors later killed the boy and dumped his body in a septic tank of a house rented by Rakibul in the upazila's C&B area, said Maj Munir. The Rab recovered the victim's body on August 30. A murder case was filed with Damurhuda Police Station on September 1, accusing six people. Police said two of the accused were behind bars.