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# For bringing smile to kids with cancer

ANANTA YUSUF

In 2014, private firm employee Fatimatul Botul was talking to a friend who works at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU). The doctor was sharing his experience of treating cancer afflicted children; describing how much pain they go through every day.

This prompted Fatema to visit BSMMU one day to see for herself if she could do something about it. What she saw tore her heart apart.

"I was heartbroken by the silent faces of parents and the cries of their ailing children," Fatema says.

She along with four of her friends Sumaiya Ali, Kaniz Nusaiba, Khadiza Rahman Liza and Nipu founded an organisation named "For a Bit of Smile" that year with the intention to help alleviate the sufferings of such children by providing financial support and humanitarian assistance.

"We felt those children needed love and affection, alongside treatment," Nusaiba says.

So, the team of five started visiting the hospital on weekly basis to spend time with children suffering from cancer.

"We bring along toys and play with the innocent patients. We also tell the parents to hold on to hopes."

Aged between 1 and 11, most cancer patients in the paediatrics haematology and oncology ward of the hospital come from poor families who are unaware of the fact that cancer in children is often curable if they are given proper treatment and hope.

Another volunteer of this group, Sumaiya Ali explains

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SCAN THIS QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO

**A child cancer patient in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. Inset, members of the For a Bit of Smile along with child cancer patients. The group provides patients with mental, emotional, and financial support.**

PHOTO: COLLECTED



## PM travels to Switzerland Jan 15

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will pay a week-long visit to Switzerland to attend the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting.

The meeting would be held on January 17-20 in Davos-Klosters under the theme "Responsive and Responsible Leadership".

Diplomatic sources said over 2,500 leaders from nearly 100 countries would be invited to take part in over 300 sessions of the meeting.

Ahead of the PM's visit, a meeting was held at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday which was attended by several high officials from different ministries.

As per the programme schedule, the PM would leave Dhaka on January 15 and return on 21.

Meanwhile, another

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## Schoolgirl 'gang-raped' by friend, his cohorts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A teenage schoolgirl was gang raped by her friend and his two other acquaintances in Kalabagan area of the town on Sunday.

The three accused, aged between 16 and 18, were arrested from the same area on Monday night and sent to jail custody, police said.

The victim, a tenth grade student at a school in a village nearby, came to visit her friend in Pabna town to celebrate the New Year's Day, said Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station, quoting family members of the victim.

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## 'CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS' IN SYRIA Rebels suspend negotiations

*Regime says fighting going on in areas not covered by truce; Turkey, Russia pound IS*

AGENCIES

A dozen Syrian rebel factions have suspended talks on new peace negotiations, accusing President Bashar al-Assad's regime of violating a four-day-old ceasefire with attacks near Damascus that continued yesterday.

The decision threatens the process sponsored by regime ally Russia and rebel backer Turkey, which began with a truce and is meant to lead to negotiations in the Kazakh capital Astana this month.

The ceasefire has brought quiet to large parts of the country but has been undermined by sporadic violence, particularly fighting in the Wadi Barada region north of Damascus.

The Syrian government says the region does not fall under the ceasefire agreement, given the presence of jihadist group Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, which it says is excluded from the deal. The rebels dispute this.

Government forces backed by fighters from Lebanon's Hezbollah group have continued to press a two-week-old offensive despite the ceasefire which began December 30.

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## ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS SC stays HC order against VAT on fees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed till January 29 a High Court verdict that declared imposition of 7.5 percent value added tax (VAT) on tuition fees of English medium schools illegal.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha passed the order following a petition filed by the National Board of Revenue, seeking a stay on the HC verdict.

The apex court also asked the NBR to file a leave-to-appeal petition with the court by January 29 against the HC judgment.

Following a writ petition, the HC on December 12 last year declared the imposition of VAT on tuition fees of English medium schools illegal and directed the authorities concerned to stop collecting

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## 'Most secure coin in the world'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The new-look 12-sided £1 coin will be "the most secure circulating coin in the world", the Royal Mint has claimed.

The Mint will strike a billion of the new coins, which are made from two types of metal, before its launch in March.

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## JS sits January 22 for 14th session

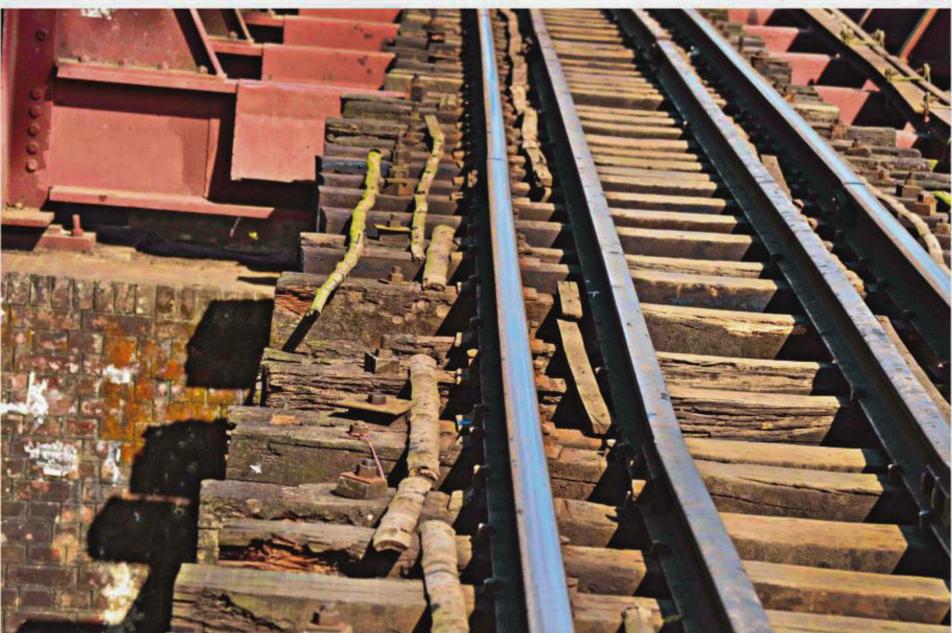
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 10th Jatiya Sangsad will go into its 14th session on January 22, says a parliament secretariat press release.

President Abdul Hamid

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**PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 4**  
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5-30 12-45 4-00 5-30 7-00  
JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-15 5-35 7-30  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



## Flirting with danger Bamboo used to fix sleepers on rail bridge in Moulvibazar

MINU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The Monu Railway Bridge in Kulaura upazila on Dhaka-Sylhet railway line has become risky for train movement as around 50 percent of its wooden sleepers have been damaged.

But instead of replacing those, the authorities concerned are using pieces of bamboo for holding together the worn-out wooden sleepers.

According to the railway authorities, there are 208 wooden sleepers on the bridge.

Nazmul Haque, a train driver from Kulaura, said when

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Pieces of bamboo are being used for holding together the worn-out wooden sleepers of Monu Bridge in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar on Dhaka-Sylhet railway line.



PHOTO: MINU DESHWARA

## 2,367 guerrillas recognised as freedom fighters

*SC upholds HC verdict in favour of their status*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court verdict that directed the government to recognise 2,367 guerrilla fighters, who participated in the Liberation War in 1971, as freedom fighters.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha dismissed a leave-to-appeal petition filed by the government challenging the HC verdict.

Responding to a writ petition, the HC in September last year passed the directive. It at the time asked the government to give guerrilla fighters proper dignity and status.

The guerrilla fighters should be given allowances with retrospective effect from the day the government introduced special allowances for freedom fighters, said petitioners' lawyer Subrata Chowdhury, referring to the HC order.

In the writ petition, it is said that a special guerrilla force was formed with leaders and activists of the National Awami Party (NAP), Communist Party and Chhatra Union after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared independence on March 26, 1971.

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## RAILWAYGATE SCANDAL ACC finds proof of irregularities against Mridha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has "found proof" that suspended general manager (east zone) of Bangladesh Railway Yusuf Ali Mridha had the scores of his preferred candidate's recruitment test increased.

The charges against Mridha in connection with irregularities in the recruitment were dropped earlier due to lack of evidence.

"We've got proof of smudged answer sheets of recruitment tests. The mark of his [Mridha] preferred candidate was increased," said an Anti-Corruption Commission's investigation officer wishing to be unnamed.

Mridha, who was caught with Tk 70 lakh inside the Palkhona Headquarters of the Border Guard Bangladesh in April 2012, did not form any committee to supervise the recruitment process. His chosen people under him conducted the written test of job seekers.

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