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# Solar lamps brightened their lives

DIPANKAR ROY with ANDREW EAGLE

For children in the villages bordering the Sundarbans mangrove forest, shadows should be especially long. Not only are there tiger tales to consider but forest darkness must hold a mystical, almost magical quality for a child's imagination to fear and celebrate. That same darkness is nothing but a nuisance, however, when it comes to completing homework.

Mitali Barmon, a class-V student of West Khejuria village had the habit of visiting neighbouring houses in search of a solar lamp in order to study of an evening. Her father Monoronjan is a day labourer who can neither afford costly kerosene for lamp nor provide for education expenses, including stationery and books.

West Khejuria is situated across the Passur river from Mongla. Its Binapani Government Primary School is housed in a cyclone shelter; students from many struggling families living in surrounding villages study there.

According to teachers many face extreme financial hardship. Family income is often dependent on day labour and catching fish. Many families even try to complete their dinner around sunset due to their inability to purchase kerosene for lamps. While most of the children attend school regularly, like Mitali they can't easily study at night due to the lack of light.

Fortunately the situation is changing. A number of environment organisations including the Korea Green

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Schoolchildren of Binapani Govt Primary School in Mongla's West Khejuria village with their solar-powered lamps. They take the lamps to school, charge them with solar energy and carry them back home so that they can study at night. Inset, solar panels installed on the school's roof. The photos were taken last month.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY



## Next national polls to be 'very tough'

Hasina tells party men; asks them to get ready for the challenge

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The next parliamentary polls, to be held in 2019, would be very tough for the ruling Awami League, said AL President Sheikh Hasina and asked her party colleagues to start preparing for it from now on.

She also asked leaders and lawmakers to frequently visit their areas and stay in touch with party activists and voters, an AL source quoted her as saying at a joint meeting of the AL central working committee and advisory council held at the Gono Bhaban last night.

"You should better assume that the BNP will take part in the next polls. Take preparation for the next polls from now considering BNP's participation. Don't think that you will just contest the elections and win without any hurdles like in the previous polls," she was quoted by a

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## JANUARY 5 AL to observe V-day for democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League is observing "victory day for democracy" today marking the party's win in the national polls three years ago. However, the BNP is observing the day as "a black day when democracy was killed".

The 10th parliamentary election was held on January 5, 2014. Major political parties, including the BNP, had boycotted the election.

The AL will hold two rallies and bring out victory processions in the capital. Besides, similar programmes will be organised in all other districts and upazilas.

The party's Dhaka North unit will organise a rally at Russel Square at 2:30pm and bring out a procession from there. The Dhaka

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## China's first-ever red alert for fog

CNN ONLINE

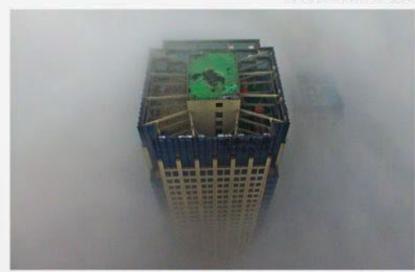
As if recent red alerts for smog weren't bad enough, China has now issued its first-ever red alert for fog to go along with them.

China's national observatory issued the fog alert Tuesday in a number of northern and eastern regions.

That followed some 24 cities issuing red alerts for air pollution. Red is the most serious level in the country's warning system.

Through yesterday, thick fog in parts of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region reduced visibility to less than 500 meters (about 547 yards), as well as in the provinces of Henan, Shandong, Anhui and Jiangsu, the National Meteorological Center said. In extreme cases, visibility may fall below 50 meters (55 meters) in those regions.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



## Firearms, ammo recovered from Moheshkhali

Rab detains two

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The Rapid Action Battalion in a drive recovered firearms, arms-making materials and ammunition in Cox's Bazar's Moheshkhali yesterday.

Two alleged criminals were also arrested during the raid in a forest in Pahartali village of Baro Moheshkhali union.

Twenty-one firearms, a locally-made pistol and 22 bullets were recovered in the drive that began around 9:30am and continued until 1:30pm. One drill machine, three arms-making pipes, 15 hacksaw blades and two pairs of pliers, among other things, were also recovered, Rab said.

The arrestees are Abdul Mabud, 40, and Abu Taher, 42, from Moheshkhali. Rab claimed that the two were firearm makers.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-7 surrounded the forest, recovered the firearms and arrested Mabud and Taher.

Other criminals, however, managed to flee, said Lt Ashequr Rahman, company commander of Rab, Cox's Bazar camp.

He claimed that Mabud, who is an expert in making firearms, was arrested at an illegal arms-manufacturing factory during a drive in 2006.

Mabud served four years in jail but got involved in making arms again after his release, the Rab official said.

Ashequr said filing of a case with Moheshkhali Police Station over

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## 3 key obstacles to fighting blaze

Messy urbanisation, vanishing water bodies, building owners' indifference to ensuring enough tools make firefighters' job harder

HELEMI ALAM

Unplanned urbanisation, fast depleting natural water reservoirs and owners' indifference to ensuring adequate fire-fighting equipment at their buildings and markets are the three key reasons why firefighters in the capital have a tough time during rescue operations.

Due to lack of proper urban planning, many city roads are just six to 10 feet wide. They are too narrow for the fire-fighting vehicles, said fire service officials.

For example, they said, most of the roads in Old Dhaka and some others at Kazipara, Shewrapara, Taltala, Kafrul, Tejgaon, Begunbari, Pirebargh and Sabujbagh are so narrow that the vehicles cannot even enter the areas.

Haphazard electric wires over the roads in old Dhaka also create obstacles to the movement of the vehicles. Again, there is no separate emergency way for the vehicles to reach the spot in case of fire.

"We also faced water crisis during the fire at the DCC market as there was no water reservoir or fire pumps near the building," Maj AKM Shakil Newaz, director (operations and maintenance) of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star.

A devastating fire broke out at the market in Gulshan-1 on Monday. Over 300 shops were gutted and a portion of the market collapsed in the incident.

For dousing the blaze, the firefighters had to collect water from a lake which was around 700 metres away, Shakil said, adding that the natural water reservoirs in the city were depleting fast.

It took around 40 minutes for the firefighters to set up six pumps and

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

**CHALLENGES FIREFIGHTERS FACE**

- Some roads just **6-10** feet wide
- Most buildings lack fire safety equipment
- Almost all natural water reservoirs in city filled up
- Lack of fire safety awareness among public

## GULSHAN ATTACK Hasnat Karim denied bail again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected another bail petition of Hasnat Karim, the lone arrestee in the Gulshan café attack case.

Upon the hearing on the petition, Metropolitan Magistrate Sattayabrato Shikder passed the order considering the gravity of the issue and that an investigation is still on into the terror attack.

Earlier, several courts rejected his bail showing different reasons.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



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**PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 5**  
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

**International Society For Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)**  
Founder-Acharya : His Divine Grace-A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada  
**Swamibag Ashram**

**SPECIAL NOTICE**  
Sri Sri Guru Gouranga Jayata

It is informed to all devotees, well-wishers, International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) disciples, grand disciples and donors that a special meeting of Bangladesh ISKCON executive committee presided by H.H. Jayapataka Swami Maharaj, a member of ISKCON GBC and one of the initiating spiritual masters of ISKCON, are requesting all to co-operate with Lilaraj Gour Das Brahmachari for the construction and the development project of ISKCON Prabartak Sri Krishna temple by giving donations like before so that the remaining tasks of the project can be finished properly.

Serving Lord Sri Krishna and Srila Prabhupada is the purpose of the ongoing project of ISKCON Prabartak Sri Krishna temple, which is the pride of Chittagong as well as the whole country. The earlier glorious activities, precise accounting, personal devotional activities, work skill, good management and other organizational tasks of Lilaraj Gour Das were highly appreciable. We bless him to continue those activities in the future too, and we also wish his exalted devotional, long life, and good health.

Best regards  
Yours Well-wishers

**HH Jayapataka Swami Guru Maharaj** (ISKCON Guru and GBC) *[Signature]* 15/12/16

**HH Bhakti Charu Swami Guru Maharaj** (ISKCON Guru and GBC) *[Signature]* 12/12/16

**HH Bhakti Purusottama Swami Maharaj** (ISKCON GBC) *[Signature]* 7/12/16

**HG Naru Gopal Das** (Representative, ISKCON GBC, Bangladesh) *[Signature]* 12/12/16

**HG Suddhasatva Govinda Das** (President, ISKCON National Executive Committee, Bangladesh) *[Signature]* 9/12/16

**HG Charu Chandra Das Brahmachari** (General Secretary, ISKCON National Executive Committee, Bangladesh) *[Signature]* 20/12/16

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Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

## 'No evidence' of genocide

Myanmar commission denies abuses in Rakhine state; Malaysia warns of growing danger of IS attacks

AGENCIES

A commission probing violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state yesterday denied security forces have carried out a genocidal campaign against the Rohingya, days after a video emerged showing police beating civilians from the Muslim minority.

Tens of thousands of Rohingya -- a group loathed by many among Myanmar's Buddhist majority -- have fled a military operation in the northwestern state, launched after deadly attacks on police posts in October.

Dozens have died in the crackdown, while escapees now in neighbouring Bangladesh have claimed they suffered rape, arson, murder and torture at the hands of police or soldiers.

Myanmar's government, led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, has said the allegations are invented and has resisted mounting international pressure to protect the minority.

A state-appointed commission set up to investigate the violence released its interim report yesterday, dismissing claims troops and police have embarked on a campaign to force the Rohingya out of the country.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

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**Fakir Akhtaruzzaman**, Managing Director of **FAKIR KNITWEARS LTD** receiving **NATIONAL EXPORT TROPHY 2013-2014** in Knit Sector from **The Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina**.

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OF THE KNIT MARKET

Congratulations & Heart-felt felicitations to our Beloved  
Business Leader **Fakir Akhtaruzzaman**  
All Employees of **FAKIR KNITWEARS LTD**