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A market run solely by women

Empowered by business, many have achieved solvency

ABM AMINUL ISLAM with ANDREW EAGLE

In East and West Amkhawa villages in Jamalpur's Dewanganj upazila, the face of retail commerce is changing. Thanks initially to a project run by non-government organisation Ganochetona, a new entrepreneurship trend has taken hold, a trend led by women.

As a growing number of village women have taken up the challenge of establishing their own small business in the local market, yet more are inspired to try.

Among the pioneers is Anowara Begum, now 33, from East Amkhawa. When in 2011 Ganochetona started offering five-day business planning and management training, and grants of up to Tk 15,000, Anowara was keen to be involved. She is married to Siddik Ali, a struggling carpenter, and with no familial farmland to rely upon, realising a decent household income was perennially just a dream.

In September of that year, Anowara, with Tk 13,000 in financial support from Ganochetona, nervously opened a tailor's shop. "It didn't happen smoothly," she recalls. "In the beginning there were the hazards of so-called social values and prejudices to overcome." Nonetheless she persisted.

Six years later Anowara is doing well. "From the business I achieved solvency for our four-member family," she says. "I built a house and leased a bigha of farmland. I've been able to meet the education expenses of our two children. Days pass happily now."

Majeda Begum, now 32, from West Amkhawa was

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Shefali Begum of Purbo Amkhawa at her grocery shop in the village market entirely run by women in Jamalpur's Dewanganj. She has opened other businesses with profits from her shop and has even employed her husband for Tk 10,000 a month. Rekha Begum, bottom left, and Anowara Begum, bottom right, at their shops in the market.

PHOTO: STAR

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PRESS FREEDOM Bangladesh slips two notches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has slipped two notches in the World Press Freedom Index 2017.

It has ranked 146th among 180 countries in terms of press freedom, according to a report released globally by Reporters Without Borders (RWB) yesterday.

"The Bangladeshi government does not take kindly to criticism of its Constitution or its state religion, Islam," the report mentioned.

"Journalists and bloggers who resist censorship or self-censorship on these subjects risk life imprisonment, the death penalty, or murder by Islamist militants, who often issue online calls for the deaths of outspoken secularist bloggers and writers."

There is real pluralism, but media self-censorship is growing as a result of the endemic violence against journalists and media outlets, and the systematic impunity enjoyed by those responsible, it noted.

The report pointed out that the government took a tougher line towards its critics and the media in general in 2016.

Indian firm gets export order for Rampal plant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's state-owned Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has secured the export order for setting up of the controversial 1,320MW power plant in Rampal.

The Rs 10,000 crore (\$1.5 billion) order, the largest for the company to date, took effect after the project developer issued the Notice To Proceed.

In a bid to assuage the concerns of environmentalists over the project near the ecologically-sensitive Sundarbans, the BHEL said in a statement on its website: "In order to meet stringent environmental norms, BHEL shall also install a state-of-the-art FGD plant and Dry bottom

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WATERLOGGING IN DHAKA

Mayor Khokon, Wasa at loggerheads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka South City Corporation and the Dhaka Wasa are pointing the finger at each other about the waterlogging problem in the capital.

The blame game started a day after DSCC Mayor Sayeed Khokon termed Dhaka Wasa (Water Supply and Sewerage Authority) a "failed organisation" when it comes to addressing the capital's waterlogging issue.

Describing the mayor's comment as his personal opinion, Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan yesterday said, "With due regard to him [the mayor], I don't agree with any of his comments; none of his comments is correct either."

"An elected mayor is a part of the government. My question is: why doesn't he then lodge this complaint with the government instead of making such comments in public?"

Taqsem said the mayor's comments do not correspond to Wasa's achievement index. Wasa supplies fresh water to 12 to 15 million people every day in the capital -- a

population equal to the one of Austria and Switzerland combined, he said.

The mayor should not have said that without adequate information, the Wasa MD added.

Speaking at a programme at Dhaka University on Sunday, Mayor Khokon said, "Wasa is not working properly to solve the waterlogging problem. Rather, they are busy with projects involving hundreds of crores of taka."

Though it was the duty of Wasa to address the problem, they were not paying attention to it, he added.

Taqsem argued that if Wasa was solely responsible for the storm drainage system, how could the north and south city corporations lay hundreds of kilometres of storm drainage line in the capital?

One of the main reasons behind waterlogging in the city this year was extensive road digging by the two city corporations for laying storm water drainage lines and sewerage pipes during the rainy season, he

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Madrasa boy beaten up for eating in class

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

A madrasa student was brutally tortured and then threatened by a teacher in Bheramara upazila of the district with more punishment if he did not keep the matter secret.

And all this took place on Saturday just because the victim, eight-year-old Al Amin Hossain Sabbir, ate a biscuit in class at Golapnagar Hamidia Islamia Madrasa.

His mother Laboni Khatun came to know about the matter only when she went to give food to her son on Monday.

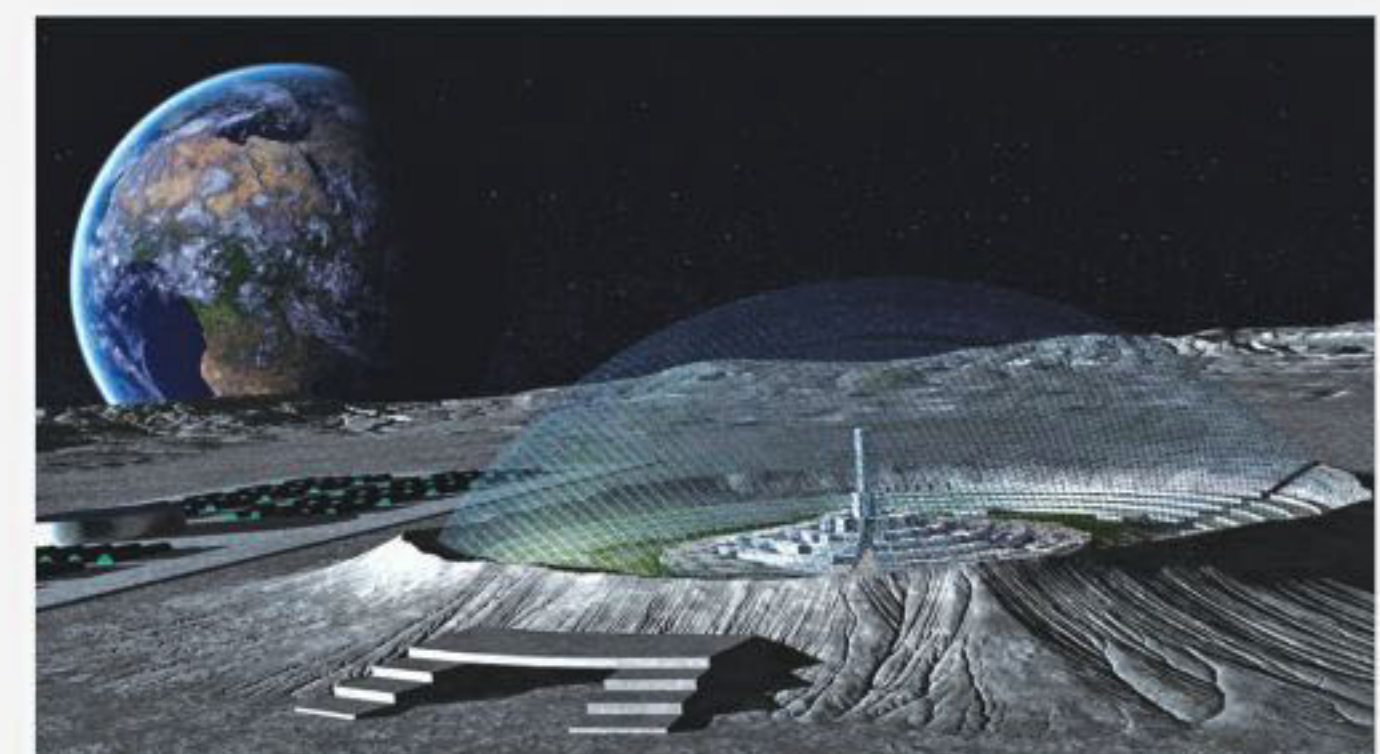
Al Amin told her that Ali Hossain, an assistant teacher of the institute, saw him eating biscuit and took him to an empty classroom where he beat up the boy with a wooden stick tying his hands from behind.

Al Amin was asked not to disclose the matter to his family.

"The teacher threatened my son with more punishment and expulsion from the madrasa if he leaked the matter," the mother said.

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China, Europe to build a base on the moon



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

China and Europe are looking to build a human outpost on the moon.

Representatives of the Chinese and European space agencies have discussed collaborating on a moonbase and other possible joint endeavours, according to spokespeople and media reports.

The work was first revealed by the secretary general for China's space agency, Tian Yulong, who told Chinese state media about the talks. A spokesperson for the European Space Agency, Pal Hvistendahl, confirmed the discussions.

"The Chinese have a very ambitious moon program already in place," Hvistendahl said. "Space has changed since the space race

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Type 001A, China's first domestically designed and built aircraft carrier, is seen during a launch ceremony at Dalian shipyard in Dalian, north-east China's Liaoning Province, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

TENSIONS IN KOREAN PENINSULA

US moves THAAD to South Korea site

China says deployment upsets regional security balance, launches first domestically built aircraft carrier

REUTERS, Seoul

The US military started moving parts of an anti-missile defence system to a deployment site in South Korea yesterday, triggering protests from villagers and criticism from China, amid tension over North Korea's weapons development.

The earlier-than-expected steps to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense

(THAAD) system was also denounced by the frontrunner in South Korea's presidential election on May 9.

South Korea's defence ministry said elements of THAAD were moved to the deployment site, on what had been a golf course, about 250 km south of the capital, Seoul.

"South Korea and the United States have been working to secure an early operational

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 27
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-20 12-45 4-45 6-29 8-00
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