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The road to self-reliance

Mymensingh handicraft maker uses talent of women with disabilities

AMINUL ISLAM with ANDREW EAGLE

From Panjabis and three-piece sets to bedspreads and bags, Ankur Handicrafts in Mymensingh town offers a wide range of handmade items. With product prices ranging from Tk 120 to Tk 4,000, Ankur is buzzing in the lead-up to Eid. But it's not so much the quality products that make Ankur stand out: the business employs many physically-challenged women and girls.

Ankur has trained over one hundred women with disabilities over the past decade, says supervisor Chumki Biswas. "They can also work from home and are able to maintain their families as well from the income they earn."

Products from the main store in town, as well as from branches in Nehalia Kanda and Char Kalibari in sadar upazila, and from a third branch in Muktagacha upazila, are purchased by many stores across Mymensingh town and also exported to India, Japan, the United States and Europe. "Foreign buyers often visit us here too," says Chumki, "to place orders."

"I earn a good income working for Ankur," says 23-year-old Afroza Begum from the town's Natun Bazar area, who has been with Ankur for ten years. "It's my ticket to a decent life."

Another young woman with a disability, Munni Akhter, 18, from the town's Ghunti area, has worked for Ankur for the past four years. "I learn handicraft skills and earn

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Physically challenged women sewing bedspreads and tablecloths at the main branch of Ankur Handicrafts in Mymensingh town. Ankur has trained over a hundred women with disabilities over the past decade.



PHOTO: STAR

Hasina urges people to re-elect AL

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon people to give their verdict in favour of

Awami League in the upcoming elections to maintain the pace of development.

"Bangladesh is now moving forward like a rising sun and it will continue its march forward. Still, I know, there're so many conspiracies and evil designs against the country...there're anti-liberation forces and their collaborators... they'll continue hatching conspiracies," she said.

Hasina, also the AL president, was addressing a programme organised by the party on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of its central office in the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue.

The ruling party yesterday also observed its 68th founding anniversary.

The PM said the government wanted to turn the country into a developed one.

"This will be done by Awami League. Only Awami League can make it happen and change the fate of people."

During the AL rule, Hasina said, the country received recognition from across



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Close Al Jazeera TV, Turkish base

Arab states send Qatar a list of 13 demands to end feud, ask the country to reduce ties with Iran

REUTERS, Dubai

Four Arab states boycotting Qatar over alleged support for terrorism have sent Doha a list of 13 demands including closing Al Jazeera television and reducing ties to their regional adversary Iran, an official of one of the four countries said.

The demands aimed at ending the worst Gulf Arab crisis in years appear designed to quash a two decade-old foreign policy in which Qatar has punched well above its weight, striding the stage as a peace broker, often in conflicts in Muslim lands.

Doha's independent-minded approach, including a dovish line on Iran and support for Islamist groups, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, has incensed some of its neighbours who see political Islamism as a threat to their dynastic rule.

The list, compiled by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt and Bahrain, which cut economic, diplomatic and travel ties to Doha on June 5, also demands the closing of a Turkish military base in Qatar, the official told Reuters.

Turkey's Defence Minister Fikri Isik rejected the demand, saying any call for the base to be shut would represent interference in Ankara's relations with Doha. He suggested instead that Turkey might bolster its presence.

"Strengthening the Turkish base would be a positive step in terms of the Gulf's security," he said. "Re-evaluating the base agreement with Qatar is not on our agenda."

Qatar must also announce it is severing ties with terrorist, ideological and sectarian organisations including the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic

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London fire began in faulty fridge

Say investigators

REUTERS, London

A fire that killed at least 79 people at a London tower block started in a Hotpoint fridge freezer, and the outside cladding engulfed by the blaze has since been shown to fail all safety tests, London police said yesterday.

Detective Superintendent Fiona McCormack said that in view of the heavy death toll, police were considering manslaughter charges over the disaster.

She said the Hotpoint model, FF175BP, involved was not subject to recall and the manufacturer was doing further tests.

"We now have expert evidence that the fire was not started deliberately," McCormack told reporters in London.

Britain ordered an immediate technical examination

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'Trump village' in India



AFP, Marora

A rural Indian settlement with little electricity or running water renamed itself "Trump Village" yesterday in an unusual gesture to the American president ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Washington.

A huge billboard declaring "Welcome to Trump Village" in Hindi and English, accompanied with a beaming portrait of the US president, was unveiled in the tiny hamlet officially known as Marora, in the largely agriculture northern state of Haryana.

Large posters of Trump adorned with marigold flowers were placed throughout the village of mainly mud-brick houses for a renaming ceremony, which was presided over by village heads and an Indian charity.

But despite the bold lettering greeting visitors at the arched village gateway, the name change is not official or sanctioned by the government.

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SEHRI, IFTAR TIMINGS

Ramadan June Sehri Iftar			
28	24	6-53	
29	25	3-39	6-53
30	26	3-40	6-53

PRAYER TIMING JUNE 24

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN	3-45	12-45	5-00	6-53	8-15
JAMAAT	3-55	1-15	5-15	7-03	8-45

SIBL Foundation Hospital & Diagnostic Center

PRAYER TIMING JUNE 24

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 3-45 12-45 5-00 6-53 8-15

JAMAAT 3-55 1-15 5-15 7-03 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



People walk on a makeshift bamboo bridge to cross a pit created on Rangamati-Khagrachhari road at Montola Para after a deadly landslide struck Rangamati on June 13. Inset, an elderly woman is carried by two youths from Baghaichhari to a Rangamati hospital as the road communications between the two places remain snapped. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANVIL CHAKMA

Still unfit for traffic

Rangamati people suffer as vital link road yet to be fixed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The Khagrachhari-Rangamati link road, which was damaged by landslides over a week ago, is still unfit for traffic as its repair work started yesterday, causing immense sufferings to commuters.

Landslide-hit Rangamati-Chittagong link road opened for light vehicles on Wednesday.

Officials of the roads and highways department in Rangamati said landslides damaged around two kilometres of the Khagrachhari-Rangamati link road.

Landslides claimed around 120 lives in Rangamati.

This correspondent yesterday morning found that people travelling between Khagrachhari and Rangamati had to cross the two-km damaged road on foot.

Apu Talukder, 35, who works for "Akti Bari, Akti

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Jamuna Bank Remembers Its Sponsor Director on his 42nd Birthday



Anindya Majumder (Bappu)
 24 June 1975 – 16 January 2007

On his 42nd Birth Anniversary, we honour and cherish the memory of **Anindya Majumder (Bappu)**, a loving son, a doting brother, a devoted friend, and a dedicated professional.

He had been a founding director of **Jamuna Bank Ltd.** and a director at **New Generation Construction Co. Ltd.**

We miss him dearly everyday,
Family, Friends and Colleagues