



A section of the Bailey bridge on Bandarban-Rowangchhari road collapsed when a sand-laden truck was crossing it yesterday. The truck got stuck as well.

PHOTO:  
SANJOY KUMAR BARUA

## Dinajpur

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primarily constructed of stone however, the temple in Biral relies on brickwork.

Beside the temple the course of a long-since vanished river, the Paruganga, has also been discovered.

First identified in 2005, formal excavation of the site began two months ago. "Work is ongoing," says Abir Bin Keyser, a doctoral student and assistant director of the team. "Complete excavation will require another four months."

The excavation team consists of 45 members, with work funded by the cultural affairs ministry and the university grants commission in cooperation with the archaeology department.

The temple is one of more than 120 surveyed archaeological sites in Biral upazila, an indication of the importance of the area and the region to study of Bangladesh's distant past. "Such ancient structures are enormously valuable in improving our understanding of human development in this part of the world between the 9th and 14th centuries CE," says Prof. Syed Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan, the team's associate director.

## Accused

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She in the FIR said Ivan invited her to his purported birthday party at his Banani home on Tuesday night and raped her.

As she started screaming, Ivan drove her out of his house, but kept her bag, which contained three dresses, two pairs of jeans, a 'Kurta', three mobile phones and Tk 15,000, she said.

Rab had not found the bag, Mufti said.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Ivan on a four-day remand.

## Turkey detains 29 IS suspects planning attack

AFP, Istanbul

Anti-terror officers in Istanbul detained 29 suspected members of the Islamic State jihadist group who were allegedly preparing a "sensational attack" in Turkey, police said yesterday.

Twenty-two foreigners were among those detained in overnight raids, the Istanbul police headquarters said, without giving details of their nationalities.

Police seized several electronic devices and one gun during the operation.

The 29 detained, many of whom had fought in war zones, were part of an IS cell about to commit a "sensational attack" in Turkey, police said without giving further details.

Turkish police on Wednesday detained six suspected members of IS planning a bomb attack on an opposition protest march led by the Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu.

He is on the final stage of a 450-kilometre (280-mile) "justice march" from Ankara to Istanbul to protest over the legal system under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Turkish border had previously been a key transit point for IS recruits and supplies before Turkey tightened security and launched a military operation to clear the jihadists from its southern border last August.

Turkey suffered a series of terror attacks in 2016 and one in 2017 blamed on IS.

The last attack -- claimed by IS -- was during New Year's celebrations at the elite Istanbul nightclub Reina when a gunman killed 39 people.

## Govt to comply

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assessment within the timeframe set by Unesco. They would start the task once the officials of the ministry, now attending the session in Poland, return home.

About the withdrawal of Unesco's objection, he said the "positive outcome" came following "hectic consultations" between Unesco officials and the high-powered Bangladesh delegation.

Earlier, Nasrul told reporters at his Gulshan residence that the Bangladesh delegation at the conference pointed out various technological aspects of the power plant.

It also gave details of the plant's impact on environment and made the Unesco understand that environmental safety has been given the utmost priority in setting up the plant and that there would be no negative impact on the Sundarbans, said the minister.

Bangladesh answered different queries from Unesco officials at the conference and assured them that it would meet the Unesco's conditions in setting up the plant, he added.

Bangladesh Ambassador to France M Shahidul Islam, member of the delegation and Bangladesh's permanent representative to Unesco, told this newspaper that the decisions made at the conference are yet to be published on the Unesco website.

All the decisions made so far would be placed before the committee with necessary amendments and then the Unesco Secretariat would post those on the Unesco website, he said.

The session ends on July 12, and the details of the decisions are likely to be uploaded on the website either on that day or the day after.

Meanwhile, one of the participants in the conference provided The Daily Star with a copy of an amended draft detailing the decisions made at the 41st session of the committee.

However, The Daily Star could not independently verify the details of the document.

The Bangladesh government cannot proceed with any "large scale industrial or infrastructure developments" before completion of Strategic Environmental Assessment. It also needs to submit a progress report on "the state of conservation" of the Sundarbans by December next year. The committee would examine the progress in its 43rd session, says

the document.

Bangladesh has to assess all likely environmental impacts arising from air and water pollution and withdrawal of fresh water from the Sundarbans area for Rampal coal-fired power plant.

The committee also requested the Bangladesh government to assess all these impacts and put in place adequate technological measures to mitigate these impacts, according to the document.

Unesco also asked it to develop "National Oil Spill and Chemical Contingency Plan" and also implement a management system for shipping to minimise negative impacts on the mangrove forest. The government would have to make environmental impact assessment for any future dredging of the Passur river, the draft mentions.

Meanwhile, the National Committee to Protect Sundarbans yesterday vowed to continue its movement to save the world's largest mangrove forest.

"As far as we know, Unesco is seriously considering air and water pollution to be caused by the power plant as well as the dangers of coal transport and dredging," it said in a press release yesterday.

Transparency International Bangladesh has called upon the government to implement the Unesco's recommendations for protecting the biodiversity of the Sundarbans.

It is a temporary relief that the Sundarbans has not been included in the list of heritage in danger at the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee, the TIB said in a statement yesterday.

"But this actually increases the responsibility of the authorities of Rampal power plant project, the Bangladesh government and the government of neighbouring India for protecting the environment, ecology and biodiversity of the Sundarbans," said TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman.

As per the Unesco's recommendations, it is necessary to scale up the Bangladesh-India joint initiatives to protect the Sundarbans, added the TIB.

On Thursday, the foreign ministry issued a statement claiming that Unesco withdrew its objection to the setting up of the plant at its current site in Rampal.

## Police outpost

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As police tried to stop them, an altercation broke out. At one point, the Jubo League men ransacked the outpost and left.

The law enforcers, however, managed to arrest one of the activists, Shanto. Another one, Sajjad Hossain, was arrested in a drive later, said the SI.

Seven policemen, including Faruque, were hurt in the incident. They were given first aid at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Police filed three cases, including two under the Speedy Trial Act, against Shanto, Sajjad, Rony, Apu and 16 other Jubo League men with the Kotwali Police Station over the incidents, said Officer-in-Charge Kamrul Islam of the police station.

"We are raiding different places to arrest all the accused," he said, adding that the arrestees were being interrogated.

This correspondent could not reach any one of the top leaders of the city Jubo League for comments.

Moazzem Hossain Babul, secretary of Mymensingh AL, said they heard about the incident. "We don't support such criminal activities. If anyone is involved in the incident, he must be punished."

## Snake

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In Satkhira, 73 "cobras" were killed after they were found holed up in the earthen floors of two houses.

In Sadar upazila, the snakes were found in the house owned by rickshaw van puller Abdus Sattar Khandar, reports our local correspondent.

"Our mother was working in the kitchen yesterday evening when she spotted a cobra on the floor," said Sattar's brother Abdul Gaffar Khandar.

The snake was killed instantly, but another was spotted in the house around 8:30pm. A further hunt revealed that there was a hole on the bedroom floor.

A total of 54 snakes, mostly hatchlings, were hauled out of the burrow. They also found 50 eggs, which were destroyed.

Separately, 19 snakes were killed in Ashashuni upazila yesterday evening. The reptiles lived in holes on the earthen floor of a house.

## Doctors bent

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Talking about the funding of the treatment, Dr Sen said the total treatment costs till date, including of the surgeries, medicines, and hospital admission, would add up to nearly Tk 50 lakh in the last one and a half years. Bajandar was having malnutrition, anaemia, and jaundice when he was admitted to the hospital on January 30 last year. But now, his health has improved a lot although a nine-member medical board has been operating on him, said Dr Sen.

Bajandar is suffering from epidermodyplasia verruciformis (EV), a rare skin disorder commonly known as the "tree person" illness, which covers limbs with warts, making them look like tree branches. He is believed to be the fourth man in the world to have this condition.

The warts began to appear on Bajandar's limbs when he was 15. After he married in 2011, those grew so big that he could not even move the hands and legs. So he had to quit his profession as a rickshaw-van driver.

Bajandar's case made international headlines.

According to DermNet New Zealand, a charity run by expert dermatologists and other health specialists, till date no cure of the condition has been found.

'SEXUAL HARASSMENT' IN DINAJPUR

## Protesters now facing case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Four people, who led a protest in Dinajpur over the alleged sexual harassment of a female cricketer by her coach, are now facing a case over misbehaving with the district's deputy commissioner.

Aftabuzzaman-Al-Imran, assistant commissioner (secret) at the DC office, filed the case with Dinajpur Sadar police Station on Thursday night.

The accused are Abul Kalam Azad, convener of Dinajpur Nari Nirjaton Protirodh Sammilita Jote, its Member Secretary Nurul Matin Saikat and members Shahidul Islam and Marufa Begum.

According to the First Information Report (FIR), the accused along with 25/30 others under the banner of "Dinajpur Nari Nirjaton Protirodh Sammilita Jote" went to the DC office on July 5 to submit a memorandum to DC Mir Khairul Alam demanding the administration take action against Abu Samad Mithu.

Mithu is a cricket coach appointed by Bangladesh Cricket Board and also a member of Dinajpur District Sports Association (DSA). The DC is the president of the DSA.

While talking to Khairul, Azad allegedly thumped the office table and threatened that he would show the DC, read the FIR.

Talking to The Daily Star, Azad yesterday said the FIR contained lies.

"Many eminent locals had gathered at the DC office to submit the memorandum."

Azad is the convener of the Dinajpur Sector Commanders' Forum, a platform of Liberation War veterans.

Kaniz Rahman, president of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad's Dinajpur chapter, said they were staging protests demanding the DC take action against the coach for "making an advance on the 15-year-old girl" at Dinajpur Sports Village on June 1.

"Without taking heed of the demand, the DC filed the case against those who are behind the agitation."

She said accused Marufa is the secretary of her unit.

"The DC is pushing things towards confrontation," said Rezaur Rahman Rezu, vice president of Udichi Shilpi Gosthi's central unit, who was present at the DC office on July 5.

DC Khairul said he already suspended Mithu from the sports association. A committee has also been formed to probe the allegation against the coach, he added.

The 30-year-old reportedly harassed the girl after she injured her left leg during a practice session.

Her father filed a complaint with the DC on June 14, urging him to take action against the accused.

"It's unfortunate that the DC is not solving the problem. He is rather treating us as criminals," he lamented.

## US warplanes fly over disputed South China Sea

AFP, Beijing

US warplanes have flown over the disputed South China Sea, the US Air Force said yesterday, a move aimed at asserting freedom of navigation rights in the hotly-contested area.

The flights come as both US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend the G-20 meeting in Hamburg.

A US B1-B bomber and two F-15 fighters with the Japan Air Self-Defense Force departed Guam's Andersen Air Force Base and flew over the neighbouring East China Sea late on Thursday, the US Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs office said.

This is "the first time US Pacific Command-directed B-1B Lancers have conducted combined training with JASDF fighters at night," the statement read.

When the bilateral operations con-

cluded, "the B-1Bs proceeded to the South China Sea before returning to Andersen Air Force Base," the statement read.

It was not immediately clear when or if a second US B1-B bomber joined for the South China Sea leg of the operation.

The mission "demonstrates how the US will continue to exercise the rights of freedom of navigation anywhere international law allows," the US statement read.

"Flying and training at night with our allies in a safe, effective manner is an important capability shared between the US and Japan," said Major Ryan Simpson, Pacific Air Forces chief of bomber operations.

The joint military flight demonstrates US-Japanese "solidarity ... to defend against provocative and destabilizing actions in the Pacific theater," the statement added.

## JU finally offers class-I

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administrative officer in the education branch of the registrar office.

"We have changed our decision under special reconsideration. But it'll not be applicable for all," said JU Vice Chancellor Prof Farzana Islam.

Mohammad Rabiul Karim, an assistant commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, was killed by terrorists during the July 1 hostage-taking at the Holey Artisan Bakery last year. He left behind his wife, a daughter and a son.

After his death, the JU authorities had assured the family that they will offer Salma a class-I job last year. On July 1 this year, they decided to offer her a job and issued a press release in this regard.

But Salma was offered the position of a master roll employee, where she was supposed to get Tk 525 daily as salary for three months.

Asked why they offered her [Salma]

## Three girls

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raped in Sonargaon and Araihaazar upazilas.

Two cases were filed yesterday in connection with the incidents.

SM Obaidul Haque, inspector (investigation) of Sonargaon Police Station, said police arrested Abdullah Mia, 25, son of Mohammad Ali in Sonargaon upazila, on the charge of raping a class-IX student.

Quoting from the statement of the case filed by the victim's mother, Obaidul said the accused took the girl to an abandoned house and raped her on June 20.

The other case was filed with Araihaazar Police Station by the victim's father.

Citing from the case statement, Safiul Azam, inspector (investigation) of the station, said Nayeem, 28, son of Karim in the upazila, took the victim, a student of class-VIII, to a house and raped her on July 4.

Police are trying to arrest Nayeem, he added.

the position, the VC said, "If any candidate who passes from National University and does not have any experience, we recruit them following this process."

On October 1 last year, the JU authorities had issued an advertisement for some posts including an administrative officer in the registrar office, where they sought at least second-class in graduate and postgraduate levels.

Salma, who has a postgraduate degree from National University, met all required conditions and applied for the position. She also gave an interview on February 16 this year. But she was not called by the authorities afterwards.

Contacted, Salma said, "Though I was hurt about the matter, I thank the university authorities, Bangladesh Police and other well-wishers."

## World's first

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The Highland or East African cooking banana, which is chopped and steamed, is a staple food of many East African nations but it has low levels of micronutrients particularly provitamin A and iron.

The consequences of vitamin A deficiency are severe in Uganda.

An estimated 650,000-700,000 children die as a result each year and a further several hundred thousand go blind.

"There is very good evidence that vitamin A deficiency leads to an impaired immune system and can even have an impact on brain development," Professor Dale said.

The bananas were harvested from the QUT field trial in Innisfail, north Queensland and transported to the US for the world-first human trial.

It will last for six weeks with conclusive results known by the end of the year.

It's hoped the newly developed banana - backed with close to \$10 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation - will save the lives of thousands of Ugandan children.