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SHAH CEMENT

Hope for the helpless

Guchhogram Phase 2 project brings hope to landless families in Kurigram

ABDUL WAHED with ANDREW EAGLE

Khalilur Rahman, 36, from Gaburjan village in Hatia union of Kurigram's Ulipur upazila used to have a home on nine decimals of his own land. Like so many others in Hatia however, three years ago Khalilur's seven-member family lost their property thanks to the disastrous ongoing erosion of the Brahmaputra River. These days the family lives in a ramshackle house perched on the roadside; but a new 'guchhogram' cluster village project offers hope. Work is underway to rehabilitate up to fifty homeless families.

Khalilur is now a day labourer, often travelling to other districts for months on end in pursuit of agricultural work. He believes the guchhogram development may encourage more opportunities locally. He hopes his family can live there. "If we can get a house allocation my family will have permanent shelter again," he says, "We will have a place to truly call home."

Homelessness, especially from climate and geography-related causes, is not a new problem in Bangladesh. Neither is the guchhogram concept. Moved by the need to rehabilitate the millions made homeless by the 1970 Bhola cyclone, the nation's founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman urged the land ministry to use vacant government 'khas' land to create new 'cluster villages' shortly after liberation. On 20 February 1972 he inaugurated the first guchhogram in Ramgoti of modern-day Lakshmipur district, in the belief

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Sand is being pumped to fill up land for the Guchhogram Phase-2 initiative in Gaburjan of Kurigram where landless people would get homes. Inset, Ulipur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shafiqul Islam, project director SM Abu Horayra, and Hatia Union Council Chairman Abu Hossain visiting the spot in April.

PHOTO: ABDUL WAHED

BANASREE DEATH

House owner, guard placed on remand

Autopsy finds injury marks on housemaid's body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors yesterday found marks of injuries on the head and throat of the housemaid who died mysteriously in the capital's Banasree area on Friday.

However, the doctors who conducted the autopsy at Dhaka Medical College (DMC) could not specify if it was a murder or suicide.

In another development, police showed house owner Moeen Uddin, his wife Shahnaz Begum and security guard of the house Tofazzal Hossain Tipu arrested in a murder case filed by Shahidul Islam, elder brother of the housemaid's husband, with Khilgaon police.

The police had earlier picked up Moeen and Tipu from House-14 on Road-4 in Block-G of Banasree on Friday and Shahnaz yesterday. Laily Begum, 26, used to work as a part-time maid and reportedly committed

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Man killed in 'gunfight' with police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

An alleged drug peddler was killed in a "shootout" between his cohorts and police in Nurpur village under Akhaura upazila early yesterday.

Police claim locals handed over 25-year-old Jalal Uddin Badu, son of Daru Mia of Bautola village under Mugra union, to them after beating him up around 9:00am on Friday.

However, Jalal's family and locals claimed that no such thing happened.

"After interrogation, we got information about his associates. When we took him to Nurpur village around 2:15am last night, his associates opened fire on us," said Mossarof Hossain Tarafder, officer-in-charge of Akhaura police.

"As the law enforcers retaliated, a gunfight ensued and Jalal got shot by his associates. Jalal was rushed to Akhaura Upazila Health Complex where duty doctors declared him dead," he added.

The OC also claimed that ASI Selim and constable Nayan Bikash Chakma received

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Strange aides for hajj medical team

Gunman, driver, security guard, cleaner among 171 go to Saudi Arabia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 163 of the 171-member "Hajj Assistant Delegation" the religious affairs ministry sent to Saudi Arabia to help a Bangladeshi medical team treat pilgrims have no background in medicine.

Most of the delegation members are office assistants, drivers, gunmen, policemen, security guards, cleaners, personal assistants, pump operators, typists, compositors, carpenters, store keepers and orderlies.

Of the eight having relevant backgrounds, three are medical technologists, two pharmacists, two senior staff nurses and a health assistant, according to a list available at the website of religious affairs ministry.

At least 45 are office assistants and 27 are drivers of the religious affairs ministry, the minister's office and other government offices.

There are 15 gunmen and policemen in the delegation as well.

About 40 government staffers and officials working at different offices in the constituency of the religious affairs minister are included in the delegation.

Two gunmen and a "privileges staff" of the

Religious Affairs Minister Motiur Rahman are in the delegation along with one staffer each from the LGRD and railways ministers.

The religious affairs and health ministries were supposed to prepare the list of delegation members but an official of the health ministry said the list was prepared ignoring the health ministry's suggestions.

Abdul Jalil, secretary of religious affairs ministry, told The Daily Star that they had to prepare the list as per the recommendations of different important offices and persons, including ministers and secretaries.

He said those sent in the Hajj Assistant Delegation would do three kinds of work, including serving sick pilgrims and helping them at the airports in Jeddah and Madina.

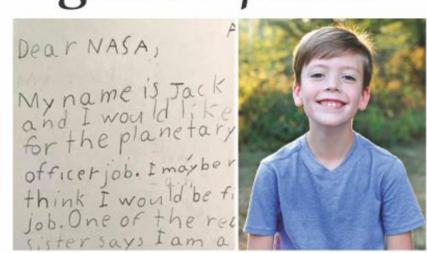
Asked how gunmen, drivers and office assistance could be of any use, Jalil said it was not necessary that all members of the team serve the sick.

About selecting around 40 people from the religious affairs minister's constituency, he said the minister has the authority to pick the people.

A top hajj official at the Bangladesh Hajj Mission

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Boy, 9, applies for Nasa post, gets response



CNN ONLINE

A fourth-grader's cover letter grabbed Nasa's attention in the search for the next real-life guardian of the planet.

This week, the space agency began looking for its new planetary protection officer, someone capable of guarding the planet from "microbial contamination from other planets."

Jack Davis, a self-proclaimed "Guardian of the Galaxy" from New Jersey, piqued Nasa's interest.

"I may be nine but I think I would be a fit for the job," Jack said in the handwritten letter.

He went on to list his interstellar work experience.

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Islami Bank clarification, our reply

Islami Bank Bangladesh has sent a clarification of a news titled "Islami Bank: Profit falls as bad debts rise," published in The Daily Star on Friday.

The bank says its profit for the first six months of the year has not decreased. Its operating profit in June increased about Tk 220 crore from a year earlier. However, due to default of some rescheduled and restructured loans of 2016, the bank's provisioning requirement for the Jan-Jun period of 2017 increased comparatively. This has affected profit after tax and provisioning and earnings per share have slightly decreased. Appropriate measures have been taken to overcome the situation.

Islami Bank disputed its aggressive lending, as stated in the report. Since it is a Shariah-compliant bank, it cannot invest in different

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Two women on a rickshaw get hit on their faces as the rickshaw puller tries to hurriedly cross the Jurain Level Crossing in Old Dhaka yesterday when the gate was closing.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

US to join climate talks despite Paris treaty exit

Sizzling summer gives Europe's south taste of the future

AFP, Washington

The United States announced Friday it would still take part in international climate change negotiations in order to protect its interests, despite its planned withdrawal from the Paris accord on global warming.

Two months after President Donald Trump announced the United States would abandon the 2015 global pact, his administration confirmed it had informed the

United Nations of its "intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement" -- a process that will take at least until 2020.

The news came as swaths of southern Europe yesterday sweltered in a heatwave that has claimed several lives, cost billions in crop damage and is, scientists warned, a foretaste of worse to follow in coming decades.

Scientists meanwhile warned that deaths due to extreme weather in Europe could

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SIBL Foundation Hospital & Diagnostic Center

PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 6

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-20 12-45 5-00 6-47 8-15

JAMAAT 4-55 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

ভূমিসহ অফিস ফ্লোর বিক্রয়

ঢাকা শহরের প্রাণকেন্দ্র কারওয়ান বাজারে অবস্থিত ১৮ তলা বিশিষ্ট "ইডিবি ট্রেড সেন্টার" নামীয় ভবনের ১২ এবং ১৩ তলার প্রতিটি ৮,৮০০ বর্গফুট সম্পূর্ণ ফ্লোর স্পেস, ০.৬৪ কাঠা ভূমি এবং ২টি করে কার পার্কিং-সহ দু'টি ফ্লোর স্পেস, সার্বস্বত্বিক দু'টি লিফট সম্বলিত বিক্রয় করা হবে।

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