



Fighting for a good cause

Freedom fighter uses part of his allowance to keep afloat school he founded in 1999, seeks govt help

ABM AMINUL ISLAM with ANDREW EAGLE

Freedom fighter Hafizur Rahman of Tangail's Dhanbari village was gearing up for his Secondary School Certificate exams when the Liberation War began. It might be the reason that, when liberation finally dawned, he dreamt to establish a high school for disadvantaged children. It took a long time to realise his dream. Now, on the eve of his retirement, the challenge is to keep the Shalgram High School he founded on a Jamuna river shoal in Sirajganj running.

On the morning of March 26, 1971, when Hafizur heard via radio news broadcast of the first attack of the conflict that had occurred the previous night, he resolved at once to join the liberation cause. The farmer's son was boarding in Dhaka at the time, preparing for his exams which were scheduled to take place in April. Events led him instead to return to his village home, where he organised with 11 other youths to join the war, which they did under sector-11 from June 1971 until victory was achieved.

Thereafter, Hafizur was able to continue his study, ultimately graduating in 1977 with a Bachelor of Commerce. "As a freedom fighter I was able to take a government job without difficulty," says Hafizur, adding, "But I thought more about the families living on the Jamuna river shoals. Their children were often deprived of the education I had enjoyed, because in many shoal areas there was no high school."

He tried on several occasions to start a high school but found little cooperation from solvent members of the local shoal communities. Eventually, with the support of the

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Freedom fighter Hafizur Rahman teaching class-VIII students in a classroom of Shalgram High School recently. The man, who founded the school for disadvantaged children on a Jamuna River shoal in Sirajganj in 1999, is now struggling to run the institution due to financial hardship. *Inset*, teachers and students gather in front of the school, which is yet to get the government's Monthly Pay Order (MPO) facilities.

PHOTO: ABM AMINUL ISLAM



Durga Puja begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community, begins today with enthusiasm and much religious fervour across the country.

Shashthi Puja marking the beginning of the five-day festival will start by 9:58am, Milon Chakraborty, a priest of Dhakeshwari National Temple, told The Daily Star yesterday.

As many as 30,077 mandaps (makeshift temples) including 231 in Dhaka city are set to celebrate the festival, said Tapas Kumar Pal, general secretary of Bangladesh Puja Uddjapan Parishad.

Leaders of the community this year have decided to curtail expenses of the puja to extend their support to Rohingyas fleeing recent persecution in Myanmar

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Japan PM calls snap election

Abe aims to take advantage of high voter approval for his hard line on N Korea

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday called a snap election, seeking a fresh term at the helm of the world's third-largest economy as tensions with nearby North Korea reach fever-pitch.

Abe hopes to capitalise on a weak and fractured opposition to sweep back into power, as polls show him regaining ground after a series of scandals.

"I will dissolve the House of Representatives on the 28th" of September, Abe told reporters, a precursor to a general election. The prime minister did not give a date for the vote but it is widely expected to be October 22.

Surveys suggest voters approve of nationalist Abe's hardline stance on North Korea, which fired two missiles over the country in the space of a month and has threatened to "sink" Japan.

"The election, which is the core of democracy, should not be influenced by the threats of North Korea," stressed Abe, 63.

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POWER TARIFF HIKE

BPDB proposal faces opposition

Consumer rights groups, industries, politicians raise objections on first day of seven-day public hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Consumer rights groups, industries and politicians yesterday opposed the government's move to hike bulk power tariff for distributors as it would eventually be passed on to end-consumers.

They raised their voice against the price hike proposal from Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) at a hearing organised by Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (Berc) in the capital.

The seven-day public hearing opened yesterday, with the first day's focus solely being on bulk rates – the prices distribution companies pay to the BPDB.

In February this year, the state agency submitted a proposal to increase bulk power tariff by 14.78 percent to Tk 5.59 a kilowatt-hour unit from the current rate of Tk 4.87.

The BPDB argued that it has to face a tariff deficit of Tk 0.72 per kWh unit because of the gap between the bulk supply tariff and the weighted average bulk tariff.

According to the BPDB, a hike in tariff was needed due to increased use of furnace oil and diesel in power generation, to buy power from the private sector, rise in energy prices, interest paid against government loans and supplying power to rural Palli Bidyut Samity at comparatively lower prices.

But the proposal faced strong opposition from different quarters.

Lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha, general secretary of Workers Party of Bangladesh, said: "I don't think that there is any scope for increasing power tariff at this moment, because we are not in a favourable condition due to recent floods and the influx of over 4 lakh Rohingyas from Myanmar."

He observed that the ministry should withdraw the proposal.

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Eight held over mobile phone forgery in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Several gangs in Chittagong have been changing the unique identifiers of mobile phones, which law enforcers often use for tracking suspects.

Counter Terrorism Unit of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) arrested eight men suspected of changing the IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) numbers of stolen phones in Fatickchari upazila and the city's Riazuddin Bazar on Sunday.

Officers seized 92 stolen mobile phones from their possession. Of the phones, IMEI numbers of 36 were already changed.

The arrestees are Nur Nabi, 40, Ali Hossen, 30, Tarek Hossen, 24, Ajit Chawkrabarty, 43, Saber Ahmed, 26, Mizanur Rahman, 21, Ariful Islam Shaon, 18, and Main Uddin Jihan, 18.

Shahidullah, deputy commissioner of CMP Detective Branch, said Nabi

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Giza Pyramid mystery solved



MAIL ONLINE

It has for centuries been one of the world's greatest enigmas: how a Bronze Age society with little in the way of technology created Egypt's Great Pyramid of Giza – the oldest and only survivor of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Now archaeologists have discovered fascinating proof that shows how the Egyptians transported 2½-ton blocks of limestone and granite from 500 miles away to build the tomb of Pharaoh Khufu in about 2,600 BC.

At 481ft tall, it is the biggest of all the pyramids and was, until the Middle Ages, the largest man-made structure on Earth. Now the discovery of an ancient papyrus, a ceremonial boat and an ingenious system of waterworks have shed light on the infrastructure created by the builders.

The detailed archaeological material shows that thousands of skilled workers transported 170,000 tons of limestone along the Nile in wooden boats held together by ropes, through a specially

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Secretary's car caught again on wrong side of road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The driver of the Rural Development and Co-Operatives Division secretary was sued for the second straight day yesterday for using the wrong side of the road.

Secretary Mafruha Sultana was in the car when it was caught near Bangla Motor in a drive in the afternoon, police said.

The driver, Babul Mollah, was fined and sued for committing the same offence on

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PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN	4-40	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30
JAMAAT	5-15	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION




PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

The celebration of Durga Puja, which begins today, is unimaginable without *Dhak* (drum) beats. Demand for *Dhakis* (traditional drummers) goes up during the festival every year. In this photo taken in Elasin area of Tangail's Nagarpur yesterday, two *Dhakis* are seen cycling along with their musical instruments to a puja mandap at a nearby village.

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