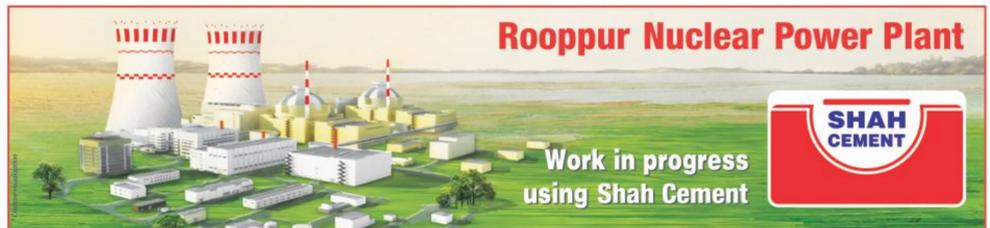




THE COLOSSUS RISES OUT OF THE MIGHTY PADMA

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Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant

Work in progress using Shah Cement

SHAH CEMENT

Held hostage by dams

Transport, trade cut due to dams on Ichhamati River in Manikganj; vested interests to blame

ZAHANGIR SHAH with ANDREW EAGLE

More often than not a free flowing river has as fast companions transport and trade. Where a watercourse is undisturbed, fish stocks thrive. Such was the condition of the 36-kilometre Ichhamati River in Manikganj, until last year's summer when two temporary dams were built at Bahadurpur Bazar in Harirampur upazila.

Ironically, the dams were to serve a good purpose: to facilitate dredging work that would enhance navigability. But when it came time to remove them influential locals who had taken the opportunity to farm fish and had further raised the dam walls, refused to let that happen. With the obstruction in place, local commerce and fishers continue to suffer.

"I used to make a living fishing in the river," says one of many local fishers, Rafiq Molla, 65, from Gopinathpur Kapalipara. "After the dams were constructed water flow ceased. Now there are no fish."

Several boatmen including Hayat Ali Mollah, from Ramkrishnapur village, report similar hardship. Providing river transport was their usual profession. The dams cut previously popular water transport routes and the income of the boatmen is significantly reduced.

Jhikka Bazar is one of the largest markets in Manikganj district. There too, the negative consequences of the dams are felt. "People from five unions in the remote shoal areas of Harirampur upazila used to be our customers," explains trader Golam Sorwar Khan Lodi. "Now river transport

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This dam was built for dredging on the Ichhamati river near Bahadurpur Bazar in Manikganj last year. Some influential locals started fish farming there after raising the dam walls further. Though the dredging was completed a long ago, they are preventing removal of the dam, causing sufferings to locals.

PHOTO: ZAHANGIR SHAH

4 killed in N'ganj wall collapse

Absence of safety measures blamed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Absence of safety measures at a demolition site led to the deaths of three sisters, all aged below 10, and an adult in Pagla of Narayanganj, yesterday.

The tragedy occurred when a portion of the building being pulled down collapsed on them.

Another adult received serious injuries in the incident.

Locals blamed the building-owner and contractor involved in the work for their utter negligence.

The deceased are Lamia, 9, Laboni, 4, and Lima, 2, daughters of truck helper Saiful Islam; and Alamgir Hossain, 22, of Shariatpur. The injured is Shah Alam, 35.

Locals said a large chunk of a wall of a tin-roofed one-storey building fell on the five around 10:30am at New Model Shanti Nibash residential area in Pagla under Fatullah Police Station.

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DU QUESTION LEAK Key suspect got money 15 days before test: CID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka University student deposited Tk 1.50 lakh into the bank account of Alip Kumar Biswas, a suspected member of a racket involved in leaking question papers, around 15 days before the university's "Gha" unit admission test, say CID officials.

Admission seekers allege the questions of the English part were leaked around eight hours before the test on Friday.

The DU authorities, however, refuted the allegation and published the results in just two days amid protests.

Citing the bank slip, the CID investigators said the student of DU's Shahidullah Hall is also a suspect and he deposited the amount with a branch of a private bank on Elephant Road.

Meanwhile, arrested BCL leader Abdullah Al Mamun admitted his link with leaking question papers of DU admission exams, say the statements of the case filed over the reported question paper leak.

About the transaction, a CID investigator told The Daily Star, "It seems unusual and we are suspecting that the money is

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Poor focus on nutrition hurts development

Says president of Nutrition International; lauds Bangladesh's progress in reducing under-five child mortality rate

PORIMOL PALMA

Nutrition is the foundation of human health, education and economic development, and yet it gets poor attention pulling back nations from achieving development goals, Nutrition International President Joel C Spicer has said.

Cognitive development and immune system of humans largely depend on the nutritional value of the food intake of the mother and children in their early years.

Malnutrition, which is also related to overweight, not only adversely affects the child's learning capacity, but also raises risks of diseases like cancer, diabetes, respiratory and heart diseases, ultimately increasing health cost and lowering productivity.

"So, we call it double burden. What is less well understood is the connection between the two," Spicer said in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star at the office of Nutrition International (NI) in the capital.

He had come to Dhaka to launch a new initiative -- Right Start Initiative -- today and advocate for coordinated actions to promote nutrition.



Joel C Spicer

While there is a bigger problem of underweight population, Bangladesh and many countries of the world are now facing a new problem of people suffering from overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases.

Thirty-six percent of children under five years in the country are stunted, while 14 percent are wasted, according to Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS)-2014.

Stunting is low height-for-age, while wasting is low weight-for-height.

Apart from this, obesity among boys rose to 3 percent in 2016 from only 0.03 percent in 1975. Among girls, the rate went up to 2.3 percent from almost zero four decades ago, according to a study published by UK's prestigious medical journal, Lancet.

According to BDHS-2014, the rate of overweight women in their childbearing age has risen from 17 percent in 2004 to 39 percent in 2014. Around 19 percent women still remain underweight.

Joel Spicer said Bangladesh had done quite well

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Einstein's theory of happy living surfaces



AFP, Jerusalem

A note that Albert Einstein gave to a courier in Tokyo, briefly describing his theory on happy living, has surfaced after 95 years and is up for auction in Jerusalem.

The year was 1922, and the German-born physicist, most famous for his theory of relativity, was on a lecture tour in Japan.

He had recently been informed that he was to receive the Nobel Prize for physics, and his fame outside of scientific circles was growing.

A Japanese courier arrived at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo to deliver Einstein a message. The courier either refused to accept a tip, in line with local practice, or Einstein had no small change available.

Either way, Einstein didn't want the messenger to leave empty-handed, so he wrote him two notes

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Eight suffer burns in gas explosion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight people including seven of a family suffered burns in a fire believed to have originated from accumulated gas in the capital's Demra area early yesterday.

All eight victims were admitted to hospital as they had burns in the respiratory tracts too, said Dr Partha Sankar Paul, resident surgeon of the Burn Unit at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

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SIBL Foundation Hospital & Diagnostic Center

PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 24
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-50 12-45 4-00 5-36 7-15
JAMAT 5-25 1-15 4-15 5-39 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Sohel Taj's bag 'broken', 'searched' at Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sohel Taj yesterday alleged that his suitcase was broken into at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital.

The former state minister for home and also son of the country's first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmad was on his way to the United States.

"Somebody at Dhaka Airport broke the lock on my suitcase and searched it without my permission. The suitcase contained some books on my father. I travelled back from Bangladesh to USA on the 22nd October 2017 and found my suitcase open. My name is clearly marked on the name tag," Sohel, a former Awami League lawmaker, wrote on his verified Facebook page.

But airport officials have strongly denied the allegation.

Director of the airport Iqbalur Rahim said he had

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Rickshaws ply Narayanganj's Demra-Sanarpur Road that went under ankle-deep water following incessant rain. Though the rains stopped on Sunday, the foul-smelling water was yet to recede yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Catalan leaders call for mass civil disobedience

AFP, Barcelona

Catalan separatists yesterday threatened "mass civil disobedience" against the Spanish government if it fulfils its vow to depose the region's secessionist leader to stifle his drive for independence.

Firefighters, teachers and students weighed into the dispute, warning of strikes and protests, at the start of a crucial week in Spain's deepest political crisis in decades.

Madrid has said it will suspend the powers of the semi-autonomous region, where separatist leaders held a banned independence referendum on October 1.

Catalonia's separatist parties announced they would hold a full session Thursday to decide their response.

That could be an opportunity for the region to follow through on threats to declare unilateral independence from Spain, a prospect that has raised fears of unrest.

The Senate is set to suspend the territory's limited self-rule in a meeting expected Friday.

Spain's Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria said Catalan President Carles Puigdemont will be out of a job as soon as this weekend.

"He will no longer be able to sign anything, he will no longer be able to take decisions, he will no longer receive a salary," Saenz de Santamaria told radio Onda Cero.

INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE
The far-left Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP), which backs Puigdemont's coalition, said Madrid's post-referendum clampdown was the "biggest assault" against the Catalan people since the dictatorship of Francisco Franco.

Franco -- who ruled from 1939 until 1975 -- suppressed Catalonia's autonomy, language and culture.

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