

# Favourites set clear paths

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learning they will open the tournament against Saudi Arabia before facing Egypt and Uruguay.

Holders Germany will open their bid for a fifth title against dark horses Mexico, with Sweden, conquerors of Italy in last month's playoffs, and South Korea also in Group F.

Ever-present five-times champions Brazil, who will be playing in their 21st World Cup, have Switzerland, Costa Rica and Serbia for company in Group E while Argentina face an intriguing opening match against debutants Iceland in Group D.

The standout match in the opening group games will be European champions Portugal against 2010 world champions Spain, who will be anxious to make up for their flop in 2014.

Panama, the other nation preparing for a first World Cup adventure, were drawn in Group G with Belgium, England and Tunisia. England were drawn out by Argentina great Diego

Mardoona, famous for his 'Hand of God' goal against them.

France, winners in 1998, face Australia in their Group C opener, with Peru and Denmark making up a testing section.

Seven years after Russia won the vote to host the tournament for the first time, coaches and officials from all the qualifiers, assembled in the State Kremlin Palace to learn their fate in a quickfire draw attended by President Vladimir Putin.

"The most coveted trophy will be won by the team showing the most resilience," Putin said shortly before Russia manager Stanislav Cherchesov learned who his side would face.

"I wish success to all the teams and I call upon all loyal fans to come to Russia and enjoy the finals of 2018."

Germany, who qualified for the tournament with a 100 per cent record, will be the team to beat in Russia, although they face some lengthy trips with matches in Moscow, Sochi and Kazan.

"At such a draw everything is possi-

ble. Whatever the group, we have to advance. I was generally relaxed. There is no reason for us to be nervous," Germany coach Joachim Loew said.

Lionel Messi's Argentina, beaten by Germany in the last World Cup final and still awaiting their first title since 1986, will face Croatia and Nigeria as well as Iceland.

The top two teams from each of the eight groups go through to the last 16 knockout phase.

Sepp Blatter's successor Gianni Infantino presided over his first World Cup draw ceremony in Moscow on Friday and would have been relieved that it went off without any hitches.

The month-long tournament, taking place across 11 cities from Kaliningrad in the west to Ekaterinburg, 2,500km away in the east, and Sochi down on the Black Sea, and spanning four time zones begins on June 14.

It will involve 64 matches with the final taking place in Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium on July 15.

# Faraaz Hossain

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killed by terrorists during the July 1 terror attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka.

The whole world has seen the demonstration of bravery and selflessness of 20-year-old Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain. His sacrifice has been lauded all over the world.

In recognition of such acts of courage, PepsiCo Global decided to launch the annual Faraaz Hossain Courage Award from 2016 by setting up a fund of \$200,000. This will support a \$10,000 prize to be awarded annually for the next 20 years.

The purpose of the award is to recognise acts of exceptional courage by individuals setting examples of empathy for fellow human beings, to encourage the spirit of bravery among Bangladeshi youth, the very spirit that Faraaz inspires.

The jury of the Faraaz Hossain Courage Award 2017 is comprised of Brac founder and Chairperson Sir Fazle Hasan Abed KCMG, (jury chair), Bishwo Shahitto Kendro Chairman Abdullah Abu Sayeed, renowned Tagore exponent Rezwana Choudhury Bannya, Standard Chartered Bank CEO Naser Ezaz Bijoy, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka President Nihad Kabir, American International School, Dhaka teacher Sabahat Jahan, PepsiCo Bangladesh Country Manager Manish Muley and Faraaz's grandfather Latifur Rahman, also chairman of Transcom Group.

# One single

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completed it last week to narrowly beat his self-imposed deadline of having it ready in 100 days.

"South Australia is now leading the world in dispatchable renewable energy, delivered to homes and businesses 24/7," state Premier Jay Weatherill said yesterday at the launch to coincide with the first day of the summer season.

"This is history in the making." The 100 MW/129 MWh battery -- in the rural town of Jamestown north of Adelaide and connected to a wind farm operated by French energy firm Neoen -- supplied 70MW of stored energy Thursday, the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) said.

It is expected to help tackle power shortages, reduce intermittencies and address peak demands in summer, when most of the country experiences its highest energy usage.

Tesla said it was hopeful that the project would provide a model for future deployments around the world, adding in a statement yesterday that its fast completion "shows that a sustainable, effective energy solution is possible".

Last summer, extreme hot weather as well as storms saw blackouts hit some regions of Australia.

The AEMO switched on closed gas-fired power stations to provide extra power to Australia's east coast this season.

Although Australia is one of the world's largest producers of coal and gas, the South Australian blackout raised questions about its energy security.

Several ageing coal-fired power plants have been closed, while strong demand for gas exports and a rise in onshore gas drilling bans have fuelled concerns of a looming domestic energy shortage in the next few years.

# Nat'l judicial

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Hossain and general secretary (in charge) of Judicial Service Association Bikash Kumar Saha will speak.

Saifur said Justice Wahhab will exchange views with district judges and officials with equivalent rank, and deliver a speech at the SC tomorrow afternoon.

He also informed that the president will host a dinner for the judges at Bangabhaban tomorrow.

# Of a dynamic city

FROM PAGE 1  
"He has done so many splendid jobs for Dhaka city in just half of his five-year tenure," he said.

After assuming the office of the DNCC mayor on May 6, 2015, Annisul took various steps to turn the city greener, cleaner and free from pollution and traffic congestion.

His most appreciated works included removal of unauthorised billboards, and prevention of illegal car parking surrounding the bus stops in Gabortoli, Mohammadpur, Mohakhali and Kalyanpur areas, easing the traffic situation in those areas to a great extent.

His clearing of the Satrasta intersection in Tejgaon is also worth mentioning.

Before the drive, there was hardly anyone who thought an illegal truck stand, which occupied both sides of a road and caused terrible traffic jam in the area for decades, could ever be removed because of strong opposition from local influential transport leaders.

The city corporation, led by Annisul, later planted trees on the median strip as part of beautification and also built a modern public toilet beside the road.

Now, many city dwellers prefer using the street, considering it safe and less congested. It is not long ago when the entire area was frequented by drug peddlers and other criminals, and people tried to avoid the place after sunset.

Before becoming sick, Annisul was planning to introduce 5,000 new buses, to be run by five to six operators, as part of a DNCC project to improve the city's public transport system.

A feasibility study was carried out around three months ago. A relevant presentation was done at the Prime Minister's Office and a direction was given to execute the project later.

Annisul was also planning to construct several Uloops from Mohakhali to Gazipur's Joydevpur so that traffic could move smoothly. The city corporation was acquiring land for that purpose.

For the city dwellers, digging is a common nuisance and the same road is cut several times a year by different service providers. To stop the practice, Annisul tried his best to set up a combined duct system in Dhaka, like that in other smart cities.

The project is said to be at the final stage.

"He had a vision about Dhaka city," local government expert Prof Tofail Ahmed said, adding that unlike many politicians, Annisul used to consult relevant professionals, including urban researchers, architects and planners, to educate himself before undertaking any public service scheme.

"It is a trait rarely seen among our political leaderships." "He was always focused on his work instead of remaining busy pleasing political masters," he added.

Expressing deep shock at the early demise of the mayor, eminent urban expert Prof Nazrul Islam said Annisul came as a blessing to Dhaka city.

"He was a man from a different background as he was involved in business and media. But he showed success as a mayor," said Prof Nazrul, also the honorary chairman of Centre for Urban Studies.

Architect and Member Secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon Iqbal Habib, who worked closely with the mayor, said Annisul's death cast doubt on all his unfinished jobs.

Annisul seemed to be a tech-savvy person as he wanted to reach city dwellers through a mobile app, he said.

"He planned to develop an app through which citizens could lodge their complaints with the DNCC," he said, adding that the app, being developed by Bangladesh University, also aimed at ensuring accountability of the officials concerned.

"If any official fails to solve any problem in three days, the app would alert his higher officials. The mayor would step in if the higher officials too

fail to address the issue in seven days," said Iqbal, adding that he was not sure whether the project would ever be completed.

Annisul also had plans to protect the water bodies in the city and complete three projects similar to the Hatirjheel project.

Another laudable job of the mayor was his campaign for making the city greener, he said, adding that the mayor worked with several organisations to promote roof gardening.

Annisul took an initiative to plant five lakh trees within his tenure. He could plant around 70,000 trees at different places, said a DNCC official.

Again, he employed consultants to modernise 87 parks in the capital and approved designs of three parks -- two in Banani and one in Mohammadpur, said Iqbal.

Annisul also worked to construct roads, modernise footpaths and develop a storm drainage system in Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara areas.

Giving priority to pedestrians, he ensured that pavements, including many in the diplomatic enclave, were freed of illegal occupation.

He also had initiated a Tk 1,026 crore project to build more roads, footpaths and drains in others areas, including Mohammadpur, Mirpur, Pragati Sarani, Karwan Bazar and Rampura.

The first phase of the project is expected to end by April next year, said the DNCC official, adding, "The areas will change drastically once the project ends."

To improve the garbage management, Annisul set up many secondary transfer stations at different places of the city, said another city corporation official.

For example, around 10 garbage containers used to be placed on the busy Taltola Street in Mirpur. However, he managed to get a piece of land at the Parade Square area and set up a secondary transfer station there. That changed the appearance of the area near Taltola bus stop, said DNCC officials.

Prof Nazrul acknowledged the move and thanked Annisul for that.

Besides, the mayor worked hard to ensure a modern Nagar Bhaban for the DNCC, said his colleagues.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Arifa Monjoor, who lives in Gulshan, said Annisul became a household name because of his dynamism as a mayor. "I don't know whether any other mayor of Dhaka did so much for the city."

At the age of 65, he lost the battle for life in a London hospital on Thursday, after nearly three months' treatment there for neurological problems.

His family members said his body would reach the Dhaka airport around 11:40am today. From there, the body would be taken to Annisul's Gulshan home and then to the army stadium around 3:00pm so that people could see him for the last time.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held there after Asr prayers. He will be buried beside the graves of his mother and son at the Banani graveyard.

# Priest missing

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the Police Headquarters in Dhaka would brief journalists on the incident.

Biblo Bijoy Talukdar, superintendent of Natore police, said a joint team from Natore and Sylhet rescued Father Walter in Surma upazila yesterday afternoon.

Father Walter, 40, an assistant parish priest of Bornimariabad Catholic Church in Baraigram, went missing on Monday afternoon.

On Wednesday, his family members said unidentified criminals demanded Tk 3 lakh as ransom over phone for his release.

A general diary was filed with Baraigram police and law enforcers were trying to trace him.

The priest is a neighbour of slain Christian trader Sunil Gomez.

# For those who're

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and a lack of support.

The United Nations in 1992 proclaimed December 3 as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The day is celebrated across the world, aiming to promote their rights and well-being in all spheres of the society.

The day will be celebrated this year with the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all".

According to Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics 2016 report, nine out of every 1,000 people in the country have some form of disabilities with more males (9.8 percent) having disabilities than females (8.3 percent).

It also found that 6.8 percent of urban people have disabilities while in rural areas 10.8 percent have the conditions.

In secondary schools, over eight in every 1,000 students have disabilities.

People working for establishing their rights said although opportunities were being created, many of them were still deprived of due rights because of social stigma and a lack of awareness among parents.

With proper skills development training, persons with disabilities can get jobs and contribute to the economy.

Yousuf Sikder, human resource assistant manager of Shwapno, the superstore where Shimu works, said they are currently employing four persons with disabilities at its Gulshan outlet.

The superstore has plans to reserve a 10 percent quota for persons with disabilities by collaborating NGOs working on the issue, said its Executive Director Sabbir Nasir.

PFDA Programme Officer Nusrat Jahan said she hoped other employers would also create opportunities for people with disabilities.

She said many parents still preferred to hide their children's disabilities fearing stigma.

"We cannot leave them behind. Differently abled persons' rights should be ensured."

Mominur Rahman, director of the National Foundation for Development of the Disabled Persons, said alongside providing medical and technical supports the foundation finds jobs for people with disabilities.

# Miladunnabi

FROM PAGE 1  
programmes to observe the day.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued statements yesterday, greeting the countrymen and the Muslims across the world on this occasion.

A milad mahfil will be held at the Bangabhaban at 1:30pm today. It will be attended by government leaders, religious scholars and distinguished citizens.

Religious Affairs Minister Matior Rahman inaugurated a 15-day programme at the Islamic Foundation in Dhaka yesterday.

The programme includes delivery of religious sermons, seminars, exhibition of Islamic calligraphy and posters based on life of the Prophet (PBUH), book fair and Islamic cultural competition.

The Institute of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), a think tank working with people with disabilities, will organise an essay competition at a city hotel today to showcase the talents of the visually impaired students.

Dhaka University will hold a discussion, milad and doa mahfil.

The Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and other satellite TV channels and radio stations have been airing special programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

Tight security arrangements have been made across the country to ensure peaceful celebration of the Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

# Ex-Trump

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"Yes, sir," the retired three star general and former military intelligence chief said when asked if he wanted to plead guilty.

"I accept your guilty plea," responded Judge Rudolph Contreras, adding: "There will be no trial and there will be probably no appeal."

Flynn was charged Thursday with one count of lying about his private discussions with Sergey Kislyak, the Russian ambassador, regarding US sanctions being imposed on Moscow by the government of then president Barack Obama.

"On or about January 24, 2017, defendant Michael T. Flynn did willfully and knowingly make materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and representations" over a government matter, federal prosecutors said in the two-page charge sheet.

At the time Flynn was a campaign advisor with no official US government role, but it was known that he would likely become Trump's White House national security advisor -- a post he was forced to resign in February, just weeks after the president took office, due to concerns over his contacts with Russia.

The charges allege that Flynn falsely denied to investigators that last December, just as the Obama administration was announcing new sanctions and the expulsion of 35 Russian diplomats over Moscow's interference in the 2016 election, Flynn privately asked Kislyak to refrain from escalating the situation by retaliating.

# Glimpses into the shady

FROM PAGE 1  
Unbeknownst to them, close by the team was about to begin an inspection of the centre.

Without warning, the inspection team entered the building and locked it from inside, forbidding anyone from leaving. The inspection revealed a very dismal and worrying picture of the health sector.

The first thing that struck the team was a sickening stench that hung thick in the air, posing a serious health hazard. The stink led Sarwoer Alam, the magistrate leading the team, to a lavatory. Disgusted, Rab members found the centre's lab just beside it.

The so-called pathologist, Uday Roy, from Barguna, couldn't muster an answer when by the magistrate peppered him with a rapid round of questions.

Finally, he admitted that he was just a technician without the necessary education or skills to carry out lab investigations.

The lab reports were apparently signed by one doctor but the signatures surprisingly varied.

In the hospital's drug store, officials of the DGDA found stacks of unregistered drugs, including imported tetanus vaccines, and date-expired intravenous pain medications. It also didn't have any pharmacist to oversee the sales of drugs.

While scrutinising records of lab tests and other documents like licences, Sarwoer said inaccurate lab tests were one of the main reasons for the poor state of the country's healthcare. Doctors and treatment methods were not wholly responsible.

Around the corner of the lab, Dewan Md Mehedi Hasan, medical officer of the DGHs, squeezed in to check the freezer and took out some date-expired reagents that were being used in pathological tests.

He then began looking for bins to dispose of them. "Where are they? Each hospital should have four bins of as many colours," he said.

A clear instruction from the authority to hospitals and clinics regarding waste disposal says that they should have four bins -- green, black, yellow and red -- to keep regular, infected, sharp, pathological and plastic waste separately.

As the inspection continued to lay bare the hospital's complete failure to maintain any standard, anxiety began to grow among the hospital staff. They now stopped offering explanations and defending their actions.

When being questioned, one of the hospital owners, who introduced himself only as Alam, received a phone with the caller asking him to leave.

He kept the phone in his pocket, locked his desk drawers and sneaked out of the office room, only to be stopped at the gate by the armed personnel of Rab.

The team then climbed up to the next two floors to see the condition of the operating theatre, wards and cabins.

Dust-covered surgical lighthoods, blood-stained clothes on the operating table, instruments wrapped in wet cloths being readied for use in another operation were blatant examples of negligence in healthcare safety.

At the end of the inspection, the magistrate fined the owners Tk 7 lakh and asked them to reform their system and comply with the rules set to continue the operation of the hospital.

However, he instructed the pathological lab to be shut down as the ambience inside was not conducive to conducting tests.

**BLOOD TRANSFUSION RISKING LIVES**

More concerning details came about during the raid on Makkha Madina General Hospital and Diagnostic Centre.

Looking for expired medicines and reagents in the freezer inside the pathological lab at the centre, Mehedi, the DG Health official, found a blood bag that was not supposed to be in the same freezer. Moreover, the bag didn't bear any collection and expiry dates. Also, it was not a clinical freezer and so it didn't have any mechanism for reading temperatures.

How did the hospital maintain the temperature at which the drugs and reagents should be stored? They could at least keep a thermometer inside the freezer to check the temperature from time to time, Mehedi said.

Searching for the hospital owner, Rab found an escape route at the back of the hospital with the door wide open. He had fled.

Going through hospital records, the team found that the storing and cross matching of blood were done without permission from the authorities, a criminal act that can lead to transmission of diseases such as HIV, hepatitis and malaria.

"The safe blood transfusion rules 2008 are probably the toughest and most recent of all in the health sector. Still, these clinics dare to not follow it," Mehedi said.

**FALSE PROMISES TO PATIENTS**  
Seeing law enforcers, the father of a patient ran to them pleading for help.

Ali Sharif, 36, said his teenage son

Hasan, who broke his leg in a road accident, was refused further treatment as he had failed to give any more money. He had already paid around Tk 40,000 in three days.

Speaking to Hasan's mother, Shirin Akhter, 30, another unethical facet of the hospital emerged.

Shirin claimed that she took her son to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR), a public hospital popularly known as Pangu Hospital. There, she met two men who turned out to be brokers.

The men brought them to Makkha Madina hospital instead, promising to help the boy get admitted hassle free Shirin said.

Other patients surrounded the team to make similar complaints.

**WHO CONDUCTED THE OPERATIONS**  
Things got worse for the hospital when the inspection team could not find any trace of the operation notes.

In wards and beds in the hospital, patients were lying with their hands and legs bandaged and so it was quite difficult for the hospital staff to deny having operated on them.

"How can I be sure that the operation was not conducted by a quack?" Mehedi asked the nurse in charge. Further grilling revealed that she was a paramedic and not a nurse.

After the inspection ended, Sarwoer announced that the premises would be sealed and so the place should be evacuated soon. He then referred the patients still requiring treatment to NITOR.

The next hospital on the radar was Al-Markajul Islami Hospital that had an X-ray machine but didn't have mandatory approval from Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission.

When sorting out the piles of papers, out came a notice issued three days ago by the health directorate clearly saying all activities of the organisation should remain suspended for not complying with government rules.

With the verdict already passed, there was nothing else to see here. The magistrate ordered all the patients to be immediately released. The hospital that occupies six floors of the seven-storey building will remain shut until licences are renewed.

Jenith Diagnostic Centre was next.

After sundown, finding similar violations in the hospital, Sarwoer faced the owner of Jenith centre, shockingly a retired doctor himself.

"It is for the utter callousness of those involved in the health sector that patients feel forced to go abroad for treatment," he said.

Good infrastructure, standard machinery, quality medicines and reagents mean nothing if skilled people don't use them properly and efficiently.

"No compensation, no punishment is enough if we take into account the impact of wrong diagnosis on a patient," Sarwoer said.

The team also inspected Sandhi Diagnostic Centre, Bangladesh Trauma Specialised Hospital and New Medicom Medical Services. All were non-compliant, similarly putting public health at risk.

As night fell, the team sealed New Medicom, whose owners refused to show up and pay the fines. To everyone involved, it was clear that this was just the tip of the iceberg and more such drives would be needed.

# Authorities

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being influenced by others."

Asked, Ramendro Nath Mandal, headmaster of the school, said the school had no scope of "driving him [Shanto] out right now" as he was sitting for the SSC examination in months.

Santosh expressed satisfaction at the school decision.

Shanto could not be reached for comments.

Meanwhile, the BCL committee in the school was dissolved after the assault on the teacher.

BCL, the pro-AL student body, has recently asked all its organisational units to set up committees at secondary schools in their respective areas.

The decision, made at an emergency meeting of the BCL central executive body, came amid incidents of violence and intra-organisation conflicts among student groups at different universities and colleges.

Educationists said they were sceptical about the BCL move.

"We need to think whether it is logical to impose student politics on secondary-level students who are burdened with studies and examinations," said child education expert Rasheda K Choudhury.

There are school parliaments to help flourish leadership qualities in school students, she said.

"I don't understand why the issue of student politics is being dragged here. I don't think there is any necessity for this," noted Rasheda, former primary education adviser to a caretaker government.