



DEFYING PREDICTION

Laptop demand in Bangladesh grew by 60pc between Jan and Nov

PAGE B1

HOSTS HAVE EYES ON TITLE

SAFF U-15 Women's Championship begins in Dhaka today

PAGE 16

NORTH KOREA MISSILES

Mattis doubts they can strike US; Tillerson pushes for talks

PAGE 8

Homage paid, unity urged

Nation celebrates Victory Day with glowing tributes to martyrs, pledges to root out extremism

STAR REPORT

The nation celebrated the 47th Victory Day yesterday paying rich tributes to the Liberation War martyrs with a call for unity to build a country free from militancy, extremism and communalism.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid homage to the gallant martyrs who made supreme sacrifices to liberate the country from the Pakistani occupation force in 1971.

Dressed in red and green, colours of the national flag, people from all walks of life poured on to the streets to join different programmes to celebrate the day.

On this day in 1971, the Pakistan Army surrendered to the allied forces of Bangladesh and India in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan after nine months of war during which three million people were killed, two lakh women were raped and around 10 million people took refuge in India.

Rafiqul Amin of Dhaka's Dhamrai upazila said, "We want a peaceful country which would be free from militancy."

The 30-year-old along with his wife and two-year-old son visited the National Memorial in Savar to pay respect to the martyrs.

Abdul Nayeem, a garment worker from Savar, said, "We want peace in the country so that we can earn our living."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



A man painted his face with the colours of the national flag during a procession of Sammilito Sangskritik Jote at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital yesterday. The Jote brought out a procession to celebrate Victory Day.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Of a unique burial ground of 1971



EMRAN MAHFUZ

The burial ground of 49 martyred freedom fighters at Dalura of Sunamganj is unique in the country.

The last rites of Hindu and Muslim freedom fighters were done here.

Forty-three bodies of freedom fighters were buried here and six were cremated.

A sculpture was placed next to the burial ground. The memorial and burial ground is near the Bangladesh-India joint border haat. Locals have been looking after it.

The story of the freedom fighters' martyrdom has

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

For them, Facebook means money

About 3 lakh mostly-youth entrepreneurs active on the social network

BISHAKHA DEVNATH

Ezazur Rahman Chowdhury started his online business in 2013 selling perfumes and watches. The idea struck him during his post-graduation years in Birmingham, UK, when he was receiving requests from friends and relatives for products of global brands. These items were either not widely available in Bangladesh or could be bought at a lower price abroad.

His customer base was initially limited to a Facebook group that had been expanding ever since its launch with more people showing interest in purchasing products from him.

Returning home, Ezazur, opened a separate Facebook page, Click'n Shop, to display a wide range of products from baby diapers, toys, shoes and cosmetics to watches. Four years on, he now has more than 11,000 Facebook users following the page, two investors in the business and monthly

sales of Tk 8-10 lakh.

A new trend of entrepreneurship among young people like Ezazur is seen emerging with as many as 3 lakh micro entrepreneurs doing business using the social media platform.

Talking to at least a dozen of them, The Daily Star learnt that they source products from different places; some import in bulk with the help of a third party while some make boutique clothes and accessories by hiring skilled hands. The products are then stockpiled in their respective collection points, most of which are in a small corner of the traders' houses. The products are then conveniently delivered at consumers' doorsteps through agents like Pathao, PaperFly and Smart Courierbd.

There are however no statistics determining the social networking site's share of the country's Tk 1,500 crore e-commerce business at present. But the potential of Facebook business is huge and waiting

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

ROHINGYAS IN NO-MAN'S LAND Life laden with fear, worries

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, from Bandarban

Every dawn, Hamida's two-year-old girl wakes up and cries, hearing the sound of Myanmar army's heavy vehicles. She grabs her mother tightly out of fear. And the soldiers fire shots in the air, terrifying Rohingyas living in no-man's-land. This has been going on for the last three months at Tombru along Bangladesh-Myanmar border in Bandarban's Naikkhangchhari.

Due to the continuous patrolling by the Myanmar army along the border, the Rohingyas are haunted by fear that the army could attack them.

"I lost all my family members except the child in the violence [persecution of Rohingyas by the Myanmar army] at Laiya village of Maungdaw. When I see the same army, who killed my family members, just near my tent, I can't sleep anymore," a traumatised Hamida told The Daily Star at Tombru.

Rohingyas living there allege that the army is continuously planting landmines along the border and threatens any Rohingya they come across on the other side of the barbed-wire fence.

At least 6,000 Rohingyas have taken shelter in the no-man's-land since late August when the Myanmar army

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladeshis are unlike Akayed

Say worried expats, stay watchful

RABIYA AHMED from New York

Even though there have been no complaints or reports of an uptick of hate crimes against Bangladeshis in the US, the community is feeling jittery in the aftermath of the morning attack at Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City on December 11.

The Bangladesh embassy said it was not aware of any hate crime incidents against Bangladeshis.

Shamim Ahmad, press minister of the Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC stated that the Bangladeshi community "...feels embarrassed and ashamed of the incident," mentioning the embassy publicly condemned the incident in New York City and hoped the perpetrator would be brought to justice.

Meanwhile, there is a general feeling of horror and disgust among the Bangladeshis living in New York City.

Mosfique Chowdhury, a businessman living in NY for the last 25 years, is concerned.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

BCL men beat up four cops

SANJOY KUMAR BARUA, Bandarban

Activists of Bangladesh Chattra League (BCL), Bandarban unit beat up four plainclothes policemen following an argument over a trifling matter on Friday night.

The victims were identified as Hasan Al Mamun, 20, Nazmul Habib, 21, Hasan Md Shahariar, 20, and Sakawat Hossain, 20.

All were on-duty police constables.

One of the victims, Sakawat, said, "We just asked a reckless motorcyclist to drive slowly but 15-20 minutes later, at least 30-35 young men came and started beating us with sticks when we were on duty in Bandarban Rajar Math area on Friday around 8:00pm".

Sanjit Kumar Roy, superintendent of Bandarban police, said they arrested Ariful Haque and Saifuddin Munna in this connection.

A case was also filed in this regard and police were

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Sekandar Ali, a morgue attendant for 35 years, has planted and nurtured these trees near the morgue at Dhaka Medical College. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Noble effort in unlikely place

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Sekandar Ali, a morgue attendant, who worked on more than 80,000 bodies in his 35 years in the profession at Dhaka Medical College, also nurtured a rather wholesome hobby.

He spent a lot of time planting trees around the morgue, transforming the atmosphere from a dismal one to a garden of tranquility.

Sekandar, through his own effort, planted around 25 floral and fruit-bearing trees of different species in the premise in the last 16 years. Where there was once an overpowering stench, now people can breathe easy.

Morbid and foreboding, a morgue is not a happy place to visit. Most visitors come to take the physical remains of their dearly departed.

Sekandar, who had been destined to follow in the footsteps of his father, uncles and grandfather, undertook the grisly task of dissecting bodies at the morgue for autopsy since 1982.

He was always a shoo-in for the job as a successor to his forefathers, starting at only 17 out of a pressing need for a means of livelihood.

But Sekandar never let his profession get in the way of his passion. He was always pro-environment and likes to keep his surroundings neat and clean.

During his childhood, Sekandar used to live with his family in a house beside the morgue. He had observed the pall of gloom in and around the morgue for years.

Heart-broken relatives mill around the morgue for their relative's bodies for six to seven hours, but they could not even stand there due to foul odour, Sekandar observed, adding that though there is a separate waiting room, people anxiously wait near the morgue.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

CHANGE MAKER

