

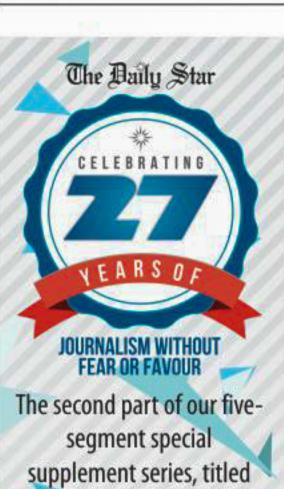
বিশ্ব বলেছিলো- পদ্মা সেতু 'সম্ভব না' আর ১৬ কোটি বাঙালি বলেছিলাম কেন না!

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is out today. The issue is a glimpse into our achievements and potential for a digital revolution. It features the changes that we are witnessing and the gaps that need to be addressed towards becoming a Digital Bangladesh.

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Stay tuned for **TOWARDS BUILDING** A MODERN ECONOMY

> which comes out on February 20.

A rare show of religions harmony

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

In a show of religious harmony, a madrasa teacher and a Hindu priest of a temple exchanged the Holy Quran and the Gita at a day long interfaith festival at Nasirnagar upazila of Brahmanbaria yesterday.

The festival follows an incident on October 30 when around 200 bigots attacked at least five temples and vandalised and looted around 100 Hindu homes in several localities, including Haripur village in the upazila, over a Facebook post. At yesterday's

programme, people of both SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

SHOOTING OF COP Three teens sent to jail

Two SSC examinees among the suspects STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A court in Chittagong yesterday sent three teenag-

ers, including two SSC examinees, to jail in connection with shooting an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police at a checkpoint on Friday. The SSC examinees --

Farid Rakib and Jubayer Hossen Prattoy (both 17) -were arrested Friday night in Chittagong city's Muradpur area. The other accused, Abdul Hakim, 18, was arrested on the spot.

"Two arrestees are SSC examinees; Rakib from Nasirabad Boys High School and Prattoy from city's Kazem Ali High School," Inspector (investigation) Wali Uddin Akbar SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 18 Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha AZAN 5-25 12-45 4-30 5-57 7-15 JAMAAT 6-00 1-15 4-45 6-01 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

TODAY'S FARMING

Up to 90pc mechanised

SOHEL PARVEZ

Two years have passed. Yet the scenes of the onrushing water submerging ripening paddy fields remain fresh in the mind of Matindra Sarker, a farmer in the northeastern district of Netrakona.

This year though, Matindra is relaxed. He does not need to wait for farm labourers to harvest the paddy anymore owing to his combine harvester. The shift towards automation is dramatically changing the farming scenario in the country.

During the flood, the 66-year old could not harvest paddy from two acres of land due to the dearth of workers even after he had paid Tk 10,000, forty-three percent higher than the usual rate, to harvest crop from each acre.

Helplessly, he saw his hard work wash away. This year though, he is no longer powerless. "This [the combine harvester] gives me a lot of strength. I

will be able to harvest my ripen paddy even if water comes," Matindra said over phone.

With the machine, paddy on each bigha (33 decimal) could be harvested in less than one and a half hours, whereas 7-8 hours would be required if the same amount of land is harvested by five people, he said. Matindra bought the combine harvester in May last year,

frustrated by the lack of farmhands. As more local workers move away from the agricultural industry, the wages of the remaining ones have risen. However, now Matindra has another option besides

manual labour. Even for tilling his land, he can avail tractors and power tillers from rental service providers. The same service is also available for threshing grain.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

She's a superhero

Dwarf by birth, divorced for dowry, but she stands tall with sheer determination

KM REZAUL HOQUE with ANDREW EAGLE

Jobeda isn't the only woman whose husband divorced her when her father couldn't pay the full dowry. Nor is the 32-year-old tailor from Majhipara in Gaibandha's Shaghata upazila alone in struggling to make ends meet. But thanks to dwarfism, a most-often genetic condition that can also

be caused by growth hormone deficiency, Jobeda is a mere 3.2 feet tall. Her stature destined her for a childhood that was particularly unpleasant.

"In the village and especially at school I suffered a lot," Jobeda says. "The neighbours' children and classmates often teased me about my height. They used to call me 'pigmy'."

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Jobeda, a merely 3.2 feet tall woman, works on a sewing machine at a tailoring shop in Gaibandha's Shaghata upazila. She had been abandoned by her husband for dowry. But against all odds, she has overcome poverty by learning to work. PHOTO: KM REZAUL HOQUE CRACKDOWN ON MALDIVES OPPOSITION

Cops foil rally, many injured, arrested

AP, Male

Dozens of pro-opposition supporters were injured and many were arrested after police in the Maldives broke up countrywide protests demanding the resignation of President Yameen Abdul Gayoom and the release of his political opponents from prison. Thousands of people took part in the protests in the archipelago nation

Friday despite the country being under a state of emergency.

Several people were hospitalised with injuries and many protesters were arrested, but hospital and police officials refused to provide numbers. The injured included about 10 reporters who were covering the protest.

Police said in a statement yesterday that the demonstrators had ignored warnings that the right to protest has been suspended under the state of emergency.

"In spite of the warning, certain political leaders encouraged this protest, encouraged citizens to face off against security services personnel," the statement said.

"We also note that the actions of some journalists mirrored that of some protesters," it said, apparently trying to explain how the reporters were injured.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Murder suspect caught by locals STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Locals caught a man suspected of shooting and killing his associate in the capital's Badda yesterday afternoon.

They handed Nurul Islam alias Nuree, also a suspect in the killing of a manpower broker last year, over to the police as he was fleeing the shooting scene, police and locals said.

Nuree was caught with a loaded revolver, moments after he shot his associate, Badsha, at a fish market around 1:00pm, Kazi Wazed Ali, officer-in-charge of Badda Police Station, told The Daily Star.

The victim died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 6:00pm, police said. Wazed said Badsha too

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DIRECT CARGO BAN UK may lift it today

RASHIDUL HASAN

The UK government is likely to announce the withdrawal of the ban on Dhaka-London direct air cargo today.

The announcement would be made this afternoon at a joint press conference by the UK High Commission in Dhaka and Bangladesh's civil aviation ministry, top officials from the ministry and the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab) told The Daily Star.

Civil Aviation Minister AKM Shahjahan Kamal and British High Commissioner in Bangladesh Alison Blake are scheduled to brief the media at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport's (HSIA) conference room around 3:00pm, said Caab's Public Relations Officer AKM Rezaul Karim.

A senior ministry official said Blake would hand over a letter from the UK Department for Transport on lifting the ban to the minister during their meeting today.

The official said the UK might also come up with some "observations" about the security at the airport. Those "observations" may include appointing a UK security expert at the HSIA on a long term basis, following the UK aviation security model for the airport, and ensuring at least four security assessment there by the UK every year.

Bangladesh earlier had rejected proposals from the UK Department for Transport for following the UK security model and the appointment of the expert at the airport. It also argued that the inspection happened twice, instead of four times, a year.

The country asked the UK to follow the security guidelines of the International SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

All for dowry

Indian woman, who posed as male and married twice, arrested for domestic abuse

MAIL ONLINE

An Indian woman has been arrested after allegedly masquerading as a man to marry two women and obtain a dowry.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4







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