

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

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# 42pc girls drop out before SSC

Says govt report

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

A whopping 42 percent of girls who take admission in grade-VI drop out before completing the secondary level, according to a draft report prepared by the government.

Girl's dropout rate is higher than that of boys, whose 33.43 percent discontinued school last year, says the report.

However, the overall dropout at secondary level has gradually been declining since 2008 when the rate was a staggering 61.38 percent. The rate came down to 37.81 percent last year from 38.3 percent the previous year.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (Banbeis) prepared the draft report styled "Bangladesh Education Statistics-2017" and organised a dissemination workshop for its stakeholders at its office yesterday.

"Poverty is a major reason behind the dropout of girls. Just 10 years ago, we used to see little girls being compelled to work as domestic helps to survive. But the situation has changed," said Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid while speaking at the programme.

He added guardians are now very conscious and the government has also been providing necessary support.

"Free textbooks and stipend programmes from primary to higher education -- this is how we are extending our support. Around 2.3 crore students now get the stipends," the minister added.

Md Fashiullah, director of Banbeis, held both early marriage and poverty accountable for girl's dropout.

The draft report says dropout rate at higher secondary level (Class 11-12) was 19.89 percent last year.

The Banbeis collected data online from all 41,461 post-primary education institutions across the country from

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A covered van drives against the traffic on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Tripurdi area of Narayanganj's Sonargaon upazila yesterday, a day after 10 people were killed and 30 others injured in a road crash in the area. Such nonchalant attitude of drivers towards safety is putting people's lives at risk on highways across the country.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# BNP leaders meet Dr Kamal, talk about Khaleda case

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain will give legal advice to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's lawyers in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case over which she was sentenced to five years in jail earlier this month, said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

A delegation of the BNP, led by Fakhru, yesterday met Dr Kamal at his chamber in Motijheel where they discussed the case.

"They [BNP] gave me the copy of the judgment. I will

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**PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 28**

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30

JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# PM must not seek votes using public money

**BNP writes to EC**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The BNP has sent a letter to the Election Commission, saying that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina must not carry out any election campaign on behalf of her party with public money.

BNP Assistant Office secretary Monir Hossain handed over the letter to the commission, party Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir told The Daily Star yesterday.

The EC, however, said it was yet to receive the letter.

The letter, signed by the BNP secretary general, was addressed to Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda.

It "elaborately described when and how the PM sought votes for her party Awami League during her recent tours inside and outside the country", Fakhru said.

"The prime minister cannot do election campaign before the announcement of polls schedule. It's a violation [of the electoral rules] and the Election Commission should take action [over the matter]," he said.

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# German village votes to keep Nazi symbol

**AFP, Berlin**

A German village has decided to keep a contentious Nazi-era church bell that bears a swastika and the words "All for the Fatherland - Adolf Hitler", arguing it serves as a reminder of the country's dark past.

The parish council of Herxheim voted 10-3 on Monday that the bronze bell from 1934 should remain as "an impetus for reconciliation and a memorial against violence and injustice".

The council rejected an offer by the regional Protestant Church to pay for taking down the 240 kilogramme (530 pound) bell and replacing it.

A memorial pointing to the bell's history will now be fixed on the heritage-listed church, the Jakobskirche.

The village of just 700 people has repeatedly caught national attention for the controversial

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# LAST YEAR'S DEVASTATING FLOODS Govt study blames it on climate change

**REJAUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY**

Last year's prolonged floods were a "classic example of climate change", a government study claimed.

During the monsoon, floods are common but the floods in 2017 were distinct with its area covered and intensity, said the study conducted by Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) last year.

According to the study, 54 districts were affected and 10,544km of roads and 23,158 metres culverts and bridges were damaged, which would cost over Tk 8,459 crore to repair.

The government has taken a Tk 2,785 crore project to repair and rebuild some of the damaged infrastructure, 3,764km of roads and 4,000 metres of culverts and bridges in upazila and union levels.

Yesterday, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved the project for rehabilitation of rural road infrastructure affected by the floods. The project involves 338 upazilas and is scheduled to complete by 2020.

However, Planning Minister AHM

Mustafa Kamal after the Ecne meeting said the project was taken up to improve the roads before the next rainy season.

The repair project excludes damaged roads and structures under the Roads and Highway Department (RHD). The RHD had sought Tk 1,855.58 crore to repair roads and structures under its jurisdiction, according to media reports.

The study, conducted towards the end of last year, said the duration of the floods was not long compared to the floods of 1998 and 2004 "but the depth of the flood and coverage was significant".

The study said the riverine floods affected new areas and smaller rivers -- Mahananda, Tangon, Punarbhaba, Atrai, Korotoa -- which seldom over flowed, burst their banks last year.

Some new districts, like Panchagarh, Dinajpur, and Thakurgaon were affected. These districts have no significant history of flooding, the study said.

During the floods of 1998, 33 districts, mostly central-north and north-eastern, were affected. In 2004, 27 districts were

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# Saudi reshuffles top military posts Promotes woman at labour ministry

**REUTERS, Riyadh**

Saudi Arabia has replaced some of its top military officers in a series of personnel changes that elevate a younger generation, bring a woman into a senior government job and tighten Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's grip on power.

In a reshuffle announced late on Monday, the military chief of staff, air defence and land forces heads and senior defence and interior ministry officials were removed. Tamadur bint Youssef al-Ramah became deputy labour minister, a rare high-level job for a woman in the deeply conservative kingdom.

The crown prince, who at 32 is also defence minister and heir apparent, has promised reforms to wean Saudi Arabia off oil exports, create jobs and open up Saudis' cloistered lifestyles. Since rising to prominence three years ago, he has also removed a number of apparent rivals to the throne.

His cousin Mohammed bin Nayef was ousted as crown prince and interior minister in a palace coup last June, after which Prince Mohammed restructured the ministry to establish tighter control over intelligence and counter-terrorism.

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# 1 killed in clash over waz mahfil in Sylhet

**50 more injured, 45 homes torched**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet**

A madrasa student was killed and around 50 people were injured during clash between two groups at a waz mahfil (religious programme) in Ambari of Jaintiapur upazila in Sylhet on Monday night.

Around 45 houses in Ambari, Jhingabari, and Kathalbari villages were also torched, officials said.

Joynal Abedin, Jaintiapur upazila chairman quoting locals, said followers of Atrash Pir organised the programme and a group, opposed to the idea of pirs, attacked the waz mahfil around 11:00pm Monday night.

Mujammil Hossain, 28, a final-year Dawra student of Haripur Madrasa was killed.

Some students of the madrasa later torched the houses in the area.

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Arson-damaged houses in Ambari village of Sylhet's Jaintiapur upazila. Around 45 houses were torched by criminals in three villages of the upazila early on Monday after a clash had broken out between two groups of locals over organising a waz mehfil in Ambari, some 30 kilometres off Sylhet city. PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Fresh violence mars first day of Syria truce

**400,000 civilians still trapped in besieged enclave**

**AGENCIES**

A humanitarian "pause" announced by Russia in Syria's deadly bombardment of Eastern Ghouta struggled to take hold yesterday, with fresh violence erupting and no sign of aid deliveries or residents leaving the besieged enclave.

Nine days after Russian-backed regime forces intensified their campaign against the rebel-held enclave, the deal offered some respite to civilians who had been covering in their basements.

But the first day of a five-hour daily "pause" announced

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