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Keep peace in the hills: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the hill tracts of the country.

"Make it sure peace prevails there [in hills]... we do want that. All must maintain a congenial atmosphere. This is not important who is Pahari [indigenous] and who is Bangalee," she said.

Hasina was addressing a cross-section of people in Bandarban through video conference after unveiling the results of SSC and equivalent exams at the Gono Bhaban.

The premier said all people have to be treated as human beings and everybody has basic rights to enjoy. "We have to fulfill those rights of people."

She said the government was building residential educational institutions in the hill districts to make education facilities available.

On Friday, five people were shot dead and eight others injured by bullets in an attack by some criminals at Betchhari of Rangamati's Naniarchar upazila.

They came under attack while returning from the funeral programme of slain Naniarchar upazila chairman Shaktiman Chakma.

Shaktiman, 55, also a leader of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (MN Larma), was shot dead by unidentified criminals in front of his office on Thursday.

The PM at the programme said the government attaches the highest importance to education as Bangladesh could only be established as a poverty- and hunger-free country when all its people would be educated.



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BANGABANDHU-1
Ground still
not ready to
serve clients

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

Although the Bangabandhu-1 is technically well positioned in Florida's Cape Canaveral for its launch into orbit, the two ground stations in Gazipur and Rangamati are not yet ready to offer services.

The two ground stations must have seamless fibre optic connectivity between them to enable the country's first geostationary communications satellite to offer services to its probable clients.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), the project's implementing body, had tasked the state-run BTCL with the job in December last year, but the latter was yet to make any move in this regard, said a senior project official.

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BLAST AT VOTER REGISTRATION CENTRE
**13 Afghans killed,
33 injured: official**

Taliban deny responsibility

AFP, Khost

A blast at a voter registration centre in Afghanistan's restive east yesterday killed at least 13 people and wounded 33, a health official said, capping a bloody week in the war-torn country.

The bomb had been placed in a tent being used to register voters on the grounds of a mosque, marking the latest attack on preparations for long-delayed legislative elections.

"A crowd of people who had come out of the mosque had gathered to register" when the blast took place, Khost provincial police chief Abdul Hanan Zadran told AFP.

Zadran said the casualty toll stood at "about 30".

But provincial deputy director of public health Gul Mohammad Mangal told AFP at least 13 people had been killed and 33 wounded in the explosion. Among the dead was a female election worker.

Mangal warned the toll could rise, with several of the wounded in a critical condition.

"Ambulances are still bringing more people," he added.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the Taliban said it was not involved in the explosion.

It was the latest attack on election preparations and comes almost a week after 25 people were killed in a double bombing in the Afghan capital Kabul.

Nine journalists including AFP chief photographer Shah Marai were among the dead. BBC reporter Ahmad Shah was killed in a separate attack in Khost province.

The latest assault on a voter registration centre is likely to deter more people from signing up for the long-delayed parliamentary and district

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Biman driver held with 7kg gold

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials yesterday seized seven kgs of gold when a Biman Bangladesh Airlines employee was trying to take it out of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport premises in a microbus.

Md Bilal, a Biman employee and driver of the vehicle, was detained, said Othello Chowdhury, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Customs House.

Acting on a tip-off, the officials intercepted the microbus around 2:00pm as it was about to cross the hangar gate of the airport and recovered 60 gold bars wrapped in scotch tape from inside the driver's door, he said.

The gold recovered weighed seven kgs and was worth Tk 3.5 crore, he added.

During primary interrogation, Bilal told the Customs officials that another Biman employee called Amjad had given him the gold bars to transport them out of the airport.

Amjad was supposed to collect the gold once it was transported outside the airport. He went into hiding following the seizure.

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Cambodia's 'last independent' newspaper sold



AFP, Phnom Penh

A newspaper hailed as Cambodia's last independent English daily has been sold to a Malaysian investor with apparent business links to premier Hun Sen, rattling a journalist community that has been battered by the strongman ahead of elections.

Bill Clough, the Australian publisher of the 26-year-old Phnom Penh Post, said in a statement Saturday that the paper had been purchased by a Malaysian investor identified solely as "Sivakumar G".

The announcement did not disclose the price of the sale or any information on the new owner's other ventures.

But a person close to the matter confirmed to

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KILLINGS IN HILLS
Justice elusive,
all along

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

The conflicts among different political groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts over establishing supremacy have left an estimated 600 people killed since signing of the CHT Peace Accord in 1997.

But no trial has taken place till date over those murders while the feuding groups keep pointing fingers at one another contributing to unrest in the hills and obstructing the peace process.

Queried why the families of the victims did not see the light of justice, police and lawyers maintain that those cases remained incomplete for lack of witnesses or non cooperation from plaintiffs.

According to different political organisations in the CHT, more than 600 people, including political leaders and public representatives, were killed as a result of political rivalry in the last 21 years in the three hill districts -- Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban.

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Probarona Chakma, 4, showing a photograph of her father Sujan Chakma's and herself taken when she was one year old. Sujan Chakma, general secretary of Jubo Samity of Mohalchhari Upazila unit, was one of the five people shot dead in a microbus while on the way to attend upazila chairman Shakti Maan Chakma's funeral. The photo was taken at Huloraam para village under Mohalchhari upazila in Khagrachhari.

Police detain BNP leader Noman, '12 others'

He is released hours later

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday afternoon detained BNP Vice-Chairman Abdullah Al Noman and "12 other" party leaders and activists near home of Hasan Uddin Sarkar, BNP mayor candidate in Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) polls.

However, the law enforcers

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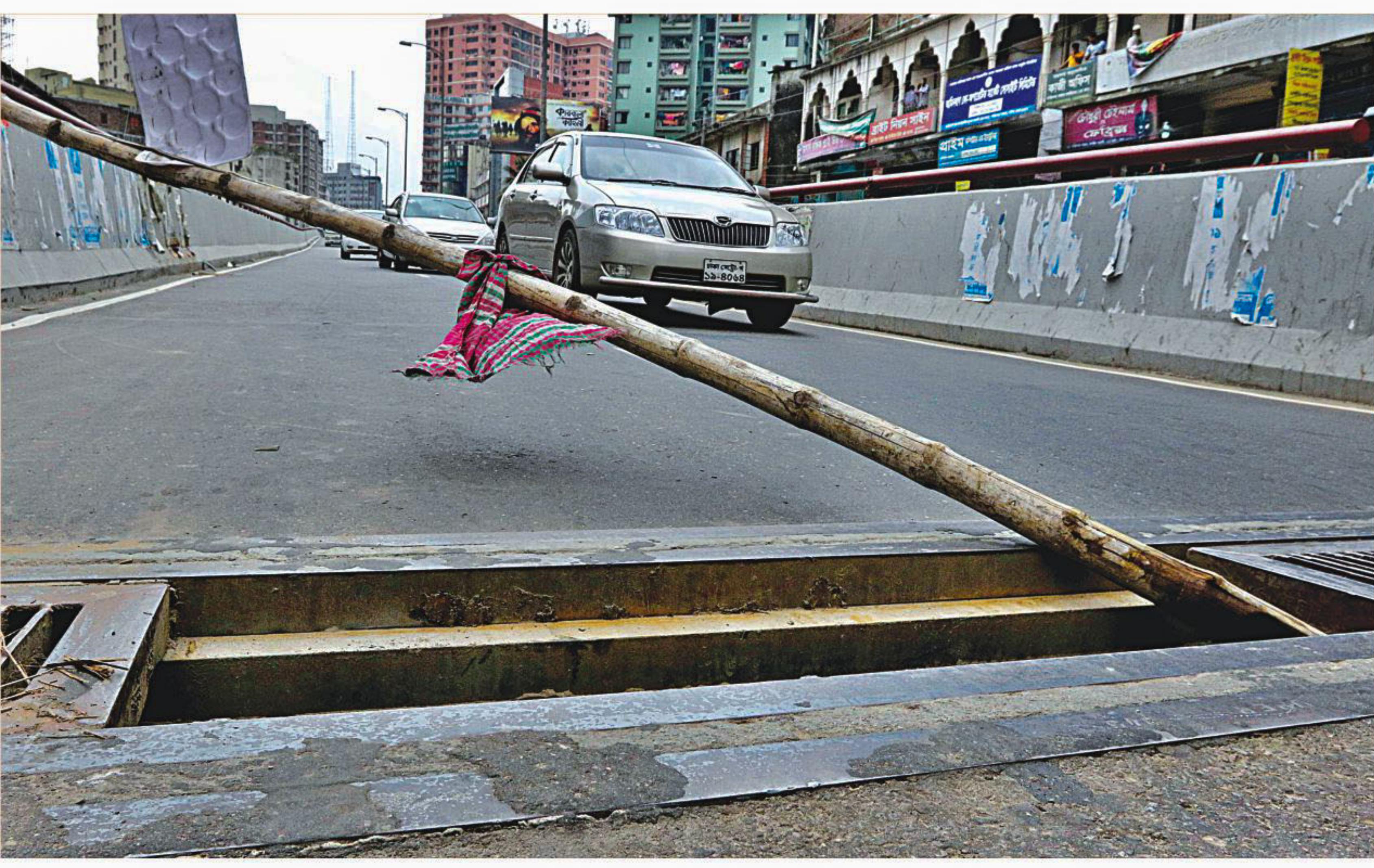
PRAYER TIMING MAY 7

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-15 12-45 5-00 6-34 8-00

JAMAT 4-50 1-15 5-15 6-38 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Last night, miscreants removed a six feet long metal casing, which covered the expansion joints of the Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover at Shantinagar Bazar, leaving behind a hole three-foot long. A bamboo pole placed inside the gap is the only warning of the grave risk for oncoming traffic. The photo was taken recently.

Mro life on the Sangu bank



DR REZA KHAN

The lady of the house carried the first batch of drinking water from the nearby dying Sangu River with her two-month-old daughter in tow. She was being followed by her first daughter-in-law, who was five to six months pregnant at the time. She also carried a lot of water pots.

They dumped the load on a bamboo machan built for the purpose. The machan was located inside the bamboo hut which was also set on a large bamboo platform matted with bamboo lattice.

This is how the days begin in Sangu Valley, an area yet untouched by the modernities of man.

Mro ladies do most of the domestic chores especially getting all the drinking and cooking water from the river. Every morning, they have to negotiate a very steep slope. The ladies carry a load of 20-25 kgs of water pots, usually with a kid riding piggy back.

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