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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

STAR WEEKEND



## NEW ERA FOR CREDIT CARDS

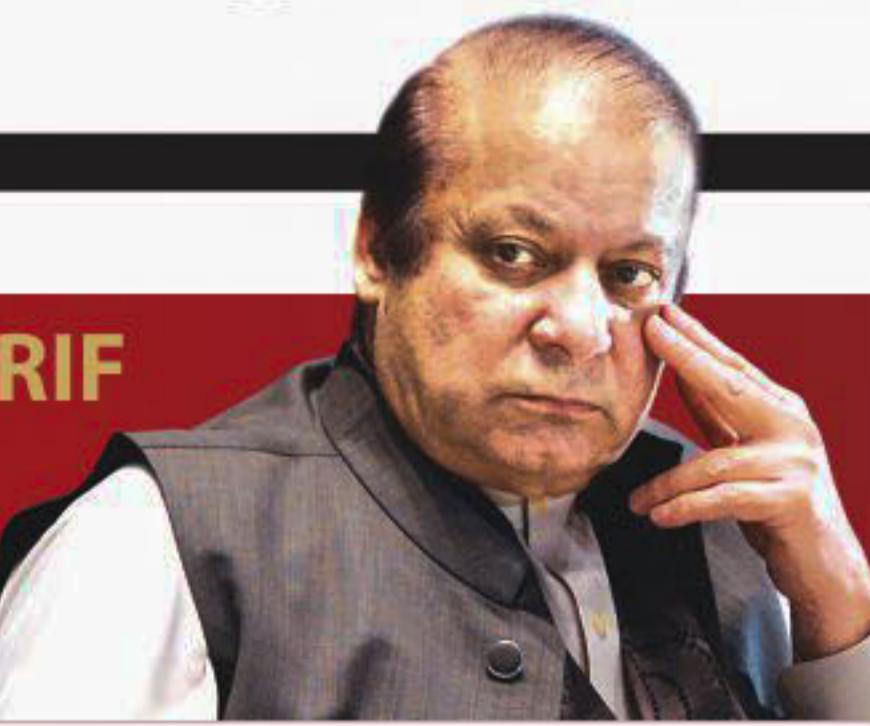
No more swiping as banks will introduce contactless cards

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## DEFIANT NAWAZ SHARIF

The ex-Pakistan PM takes a dig at military, vows return

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# Effective yet ignored

*Low-cost solutions to Dhaka's traffic congestion like U-loops, underpasses get least attention*

**"We find one kind of apathy among all governments to go for the low-cost and easily doable initiatives."**

PROF SHAMSUL HOQUE, A TRANSPORT CONSULTANT

MR ABUL KALAM AZAD

Traffic from Banasree, Badda, Rampura, and Hatirjheel used to converge on Pragati Sarani near Rampura TV station and it was a messy affair. Commuters previously feared the intersection but now a cheap U-loop has made a huge difference.

Traffic from Banasree area get on the loop to go towards either Badda, Tejgaon, Karwan Bazar, or Moghbazar with no hassle. The loop, built just for Tk 45 crore under the Hatirjheel development project, has been in service for two years.

Tasbir Iftekhar, a Dhaka University final year student, who has been living in the area for around four years, said, "Before the U-

loop was constructed, there was horrible congestion at the Banasree and Rampura intersection. I had to wait nearly 45 minutes on rickshaw just to cross the Banasree area.

"I had to go through such hassle every day, while going to university. The U-loop has saved me 45 minutes and now I can reach my university on time," he said.

Although the U-loop drastically improved traffic movement there, the government has shown little interest in installing such loops elsewhere.

Some similar low cost and effective initiatives were taken years ago but have been shelved since neither the authorities nor the contractors showed interest in funding or

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**Vehicles on the capital's first U-loop built near Rampura TV Station at a cost of only Tk 45 crore. Traffic from Banasree area can use the loop to get to Badda, Tejgaon, Karwan Bazar or Moghbazar, without wasting precious hours sitting in gridlocks. Experts have been pressing the government to undertake construction of more such cost-effective solutions to mitigate congestions at the city's other intersections.**

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# We'll be ready for France, says Dacic



Croatia are full of confidence after reaching the World Cup final for the first time, but to overcome the last hurdle against France on Sunday they will have to deal with a strong midfield which features the likes of Paul Pogba, N'Golo Kante and Blaise Matuidi.

PHOTO: REUTERS

AFP, Moscow

Ecstatic Croatia coach Zlatko Dacic is confident tiredness will not be an issue for his side when they face France in the World Cup final despite once again coming through extra time to beat England on Wednesday.

Croatia came from behind to win 2-1 in the semifinal clash in Moscow, with Mario Mandzukic claiming the winner in the 109th minute after Ivan Perisic had earlier cancelled out Kieran Trippier's free-kick opener.

Dacic's side were clearly exhausted, but they managed to fight on to the end of two hours of gripping football to take the country of just over four million people into the final for the first time.

However, the biggest concern looking ahead to Sunday's game is bound to be fatigue, with Croatia having also required extra time and penalties to come through ties against Denmark and hosts Russia in the past two weeks.

France will have had 24 hours longer to prepare for the game after edging out Belgium 1-0 in 90 minutes in Saint Petersburg on Tuesday.

"This is fantastic. Two players played with half a leg, but it didn't show. In extra-time nobody wanted to be substituted. This shows character and is what makes me proud.

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## It's not coming home

SYED ASHFAQUL HAQUE

Sorry, England! It's not the World Cup, but the footballers who are coming home.

England's 52-year wait for a World Cup was further extended by Croatia on Wednesday night in an exciting semifinal that seemed headed for penalty shootouts. But the Croatian

## FF quota to stay

Prime minister says in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said it is not possible to reform the freedom fighters' quota in public jobs due to a High Court verdict.

"There is a High Court verdict for keeping the freedom fighters' quota. How can we violate the High Court verdict? ... We cannot do this," she said in parliament.

"I had earlier spoken of cancelling the entire quota system. But there is a verdict of the High Court in this regard. If I violate the verdict, I'll face contempt of court. Nobody can do this," Hasina, the leader of the House, said in her valedictory speech in the budget session of the current parliament.

She, however, said the vacant posts under the quota will be filled up with candidates from the merit list. "This process has been followed for the last several years.

"I formed a committee headed by the cabinet secretary which is now looking into the matter. Then what is their [demonstrators] problem?



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Arrest admitted after daylong DMP denial  
Quota reformist picked up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following denial throughout the day, police yesterday evening admitted arresting a quota reform leader from the capital's Shantinagar.

Legal action was being taken against arrestee Suhel Islam, said DMP Deputy Commissioner (media) Masudur Rahman. He, however, did not mention the case in which the arrest was made.

Suhel, a third-year student of English department at Jagannath University, is a



Suhel Islam

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Tigresses qualify for WT20

STAR SPORT DESK

The Bangladesh women's cricket team qualified for the Women's World Twenty20 for the third time by outclassing their Scottish counterparts by 49 runs in the ICC World Twenty20 Qualifier semifinal in Amstelveen, Netherlands yesterday.

Middle-order batter Nigar Sultana set up the clinical win by scoring 31 in Bangladesh's score

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## Autism prevalence high in urban areas

Survey finds 17 per 10,000 babies in Bangladesh diagnosed with the disorder

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

At least 17 per 10,000 babies in the country have Autism Spectrum Disorder, and its prevalence is higher in urban areas than in rural parts, finds a survey.

The condition is more prevalent in boys than in girls of the age group of 16 to 30 months, finds the survey conducted in 30 districts.

The survey titled "Nationwide Survey on

Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Bangladesh 2017" covered 37,982 households having 38,440 children of this age group.

"It is the largest study on autism in Bangladesh. The findings will help us chalk out an elaborate programme on addressing the issue. We need to find out the causes [behind the prevalence] and come up with a detailed plan to address the causes," said

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