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A school of change

Village primary school transformed with murals, multimedia technology

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU with ANDREW EAGLE

Modern technology and bright murals make Khagrabari Government Primary School in Pabna's Faridpur upazila exceptional. Multimedia presentations, inspiring paintings of landmarks and historical figures, a computerised attendance system; these are hardly the usual features of a village school. Over the past few years the school's staff and management have gone the extra mile to create a safe and appealing learning environment. They want students to have every possible reason to excel.

"Lessons must be interesting, varied and enjoyable," says the school's head teacher Abu Based. "Otherwise the education experience is monotonous. We are trying to improve every aspect of the school environment to promote attentiveness.

"Most of the paintings around campus and in the classrooms have been done by our students," he continues. "We chose motifs like iconic figures and national sites and symbols so they can learn about them."

"Sometimes children prefer play to more formal activities like reading, especially our youngest students," says Eti Ara Khatun, a teacher from the infants' section. "We try to accommodate their interests. We have decorated the classroom to bring lessons to life. We rely on cartoons, a doll set, toys and a television to partner their learning."

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Children in a class at Khagrabari Government Primary School in Pabna's Faridpur upazila where a multimedia projector is used for imparting lessons.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

Mysterious deception

Gang posing as EC staffers takes away NID cards of about a thousand villagers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

It seems very strange indeed. Two unidentified men have taken away the national identity cards of about 1,000 people of a village in Naogaon's Badalgachhi upazila giving the assurance that they will be provided with smart NID cards.

Introducing themselves as officials of the local election office, the two visited Hajipur village between June 28 and June 30 and asked the villagers to cooperate with them. They also collected fingerprints and personal information from the villagers and took photos of them, said villagers.

The duo never returned to the village after June 30, leaving villagers in dismay.

"We still don't know who were behind this and why did they do so," said Mazedul Islam of Hajipur village.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

PAKISTAN POLLS Militant group backs Imran Khan's party

AFP, Islamabad

A US-designated terrorist group has announced its support for Imran Khan and his party in nationwide elections on July 25, the latest controversial outfit to back the former cricket star's bid to lead the country.

The al Qaeda-linked Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) announced their support for Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in a Facebook post Tuesday along with a photo of the group's leader posing with a PTI candidate.

"Maulana Fazal ur Rehman Khalil along with hundreds of his followers have joined PTI and announced their support for its candidates," wrote PTI hopeful Asad Umar.

Umar later edited the post saying Khalil and other clerics had only announced their support for PTI.

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Pillows for jail inmates after 230 years!

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

After 230 years of using blankets as a substitute for pillows, inmates are going to get cotton-pillows to sleep on for the first time in the history of jails in Bangladesh.

Since 1788, when a "criminal ward" was built in Dhaka on Nazimuddin Road, which was later turned into Dhaka Central Jail, prisoners would not be given pillows to rest their heads on. This practice was adopted by every jail in the country.

Instead, they would be given three blankets, a plate and a bowl to live in jail as per the prison provision services, Abdullah Al Mamun, assistant inspector general (admin) of prison directorate, told The Daily Star.

The prisoners would use one blanket as a bed spread, one to cover their body while sleeping, and the remaining one would be folded and used as a substitute for a pillow.

Previously, cotton pillows and mosquito nets were only allowed for prisoners who had division-facilities or were admitted to hospital for health reasons, said AIG Mamun, adding that pillows were not allowed for general prisoners.

However, that is set to change as inmates in all prisons will be given pillows from October onwards, according to prison authorities.

Syed Iftekhar Uddin, inspector general (IG) of prisons, told The Daily Star yesterday that they had taken the initiative to arrange pillows for each

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KHALEDA'S BAIL HC extends its order till July 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday extended till July 26 its earlier order that granted bail to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mustafizur Rahman passed the order following a prayer to that end moved by Khaleda's lawyer Advocate AJ Mohammad Ali.

The Special Judge's Court-5 of Dhaka on February 8 sentenced the BNP chief to five years' imprisonment in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Later on March 12, the HC granted four months' bail to Khaleda in the case.

Following an extension petition filed by Khaleda, the HC on May 12

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China's robots deliver snacks to your home

AFP, Beijing

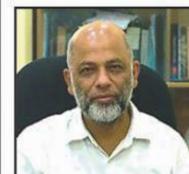
Along a quiet residential street on the outer edges of Beijing, a yellow and black cube about the size of a small washing machine trundles leisurely to

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Advertorial

Expert Advice on Durability of Concrete (Part IV)



Dr. Md. Tarek Uddin, P.Eng. Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Islamic University of Technology

Clinker is the main component of cement. To make one ton of clinker one ton of CO₂ is emitted to the atmosphere. Currently, the global consumption of cement is estimated at 4 trillion tons. Therefore, 4 trillion tons of CO₂ is emitted to the environment from the cement industries, i.e. about 10% of the global CO₂ emission comes from the cement industries. Reduction of the amount of cement production is necessary to reduce CO₂ emission from the cement industries and it can be done by utilizing alternative materials to cement and also by designing long-term durable structures.

For reduction of clinker production; possibility of replacement of cement by some materials such as granulated blast furnace slag, fly ash, etc. was well studied. It was found that these materials can be incorporated in cement not only to alleviate environmental problems but also to enhance properties of concrete. In the previous article (Part III), it was pointed out that it is indispensable to utilize these materials for making high performance concrete with high workability, high strength, and long-term durability. Slag is a widely used mineral admixture in cement. It is a by-product of steel industries which is produced in a blast furnace during production of iron from iron ore. The slag becomes granulated through rapid cooling in water. Later, it is dried and grounded into a fine powder to add with cement. Same as cement, the slag is rich with silicon oxide and calcium oxide. Therefore, it gives some strength with the addition of water. Also, it produces more strength by converting the calcium hydroxide that is produced from the reaction of clinker and water to calcium silicate hydrate.

For sustainability of construction materials, durability design of concrete structures is essential and it is more important for marine concrete structures. Seawater contains a lot of chloride (about 20,000 ppm). The chlorides enter into concrete and causes corrosion over the steel bars and finally durability becomes a concern. Based on research work, it was revealed that the slag cement improves durability of concrete in the marine environment by preventing chlorides to enter into concrete. Slag cement also has other benefits, such as producing low heat of hydration, improving micro-structure of concrete (less porosity and less permeability), and producing strength gradually for a long-period, etc. In our cement standard (BDS EN 197-1:2003), several types of purely slag based cement are specified, such as CEM Type II A-S, CEM Type II B-S and CEM Type III-A/B/C). It is important to select the type of cement based on the exposure condition.

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SUMMIT WITH PUTIN Trump bitterly criticises critics

POLITICO ONLINE

US President Donald Trump yesterday promised "big results" from his much-maligned bilateral meeting earlier this week with Russian President Vladimir Putin, accusing his critics of "Trump Derangement Syndrome" because they "hate" that he has a warm relationship with his Kremlin counterpart.

"Some people HATE the fact that I got along well with President Putin of Russia. They would rather go to war than see this. It's called Trump Derangement Syndrome!" Trump wrote on Twitter, echoing language Sen Rand Paul (R-Ky) used recently to label critics of the president.

Earlier yesterday, Trump also insisted that many from the



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