



THE KANCHPUR-MEGHNA-GUMTI BRIDGES ARE BEING BUILT WITH HIGHLY DUCTILE GRADE 420 BSRM ULTIMA BARS



PROUD CONSTRUCTION PARTNER OF PADMA BRIDGE



GABKHAN CHANNEL

# Narrowed by illegal dock

M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL

A part of the century-old Gabkhan Channel has been grabbed and turned into a temporary dock in Jhalakathi Sadar for loading and off-loading construction materials of a nearby highway.

As a result, the 18km canal, the country's only man-made naval route, has become narrow at the point, disrupting vessel movement.

Known as the Suez Canal of Bangladesh, the Gabkhan Channel connects Jhalakathi and Pirojpur, two southern districts. Every day, several dozen goods-laden vessels, including international ones, operate on it.

The dock was set up nearly three months ago on the western side of the canal near Gabkhan Bridge for its proximity to the under construction highway linking Barisal and Khulna. The work is expected to end within December next year.

While describing how the grabbing was done, a local shopkeeper, wishing not to be named, said an enclosure was first made of bamboo slates, covering a wide area. Next, it was filled with sand by Kohinoor Enterprise, the contractor building the road.

Contacted, Md Nayem, one of the owners of the firm, denied grabbing the canal.

"The land was under the control of some locals. We arranged to use the space for the time being; we even pay rent to them," he said but refused to give details about the "locals". "We will remove the sand once the construction ends."

The partial landfill has resulted in the canal losing its navigability, hampering river traffic on the Bangladesh-India, Chittagong-Mongla and Dhaka-Khulna routes, SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Vessels docked in Gabkhan Channel in Jhalakathi Sadar recently. The illegal dock was set up around three months ago for loading and off-loading construction materials for a nearby under construction highway.

PHOTO: STAR

## Three of a family die in Panchagarh road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A man and his two children were killed when his motorcycle collided head on with a coach on Panchagarh-Dhaka highway last night.

Md Akhtaruzzaman, 35, took his wife Tania Akhter, 25, their daughter Afsana Ibnath Adia, 6, and 14-month-old son Abdullah to Thakurgaon from Panchagarh on the motorbike. They had gone there to have a doctor look at Abdullah who was sick, said Officer-in-Charge of Boda Police Station AKM Nurul Islam.

On their way home in Panchagarh, the bike collided with the coach at Dhanipara around 8:30pm. Akhtaruzzaman died on the spot and Tania and the two children were seriously injured.

The children died of their injuries while being taken to Panchagarh Sadar SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

# Trump 'capitalising' on 'fear and anger'

Ahead of key US midterm polls, Obama returns to the fray slaying Republican 'politics of division'

AGENCIES

Barack Obama on Friday assailed US Republicans for failing to keep President Donald Trump in check, in a forceful return to the political fray aimed at firing up Democratic voters ahead of key midterm elections.

Since leaving office, the 44th US president has pointedly avoided direct criticism of his successor, making a calculated effort not to utter Trump's name.

But on Friday the gloves came off. "What happened to the Republican Party?" asked Obama, accusing Trump of "capitalising" on "fear and anger."

In a nod to the turbulence of the past week -- which saw allegations of a secret "resistance" working inside the White House -- the 57-year-old Obama poured scorn on the idea that "everything will turn out okay" because some of Trump's staff are secretly ignoring the boss's orders.



"That's not how our democracy is supposed to work," Obama thundered, in reference to the revelations by investigative journalist Bob Woodward whose new book describes Trump's aides battling to rein in an angry, uninformed president.

Obama's remarks to an auditorium of college students in Illinois -- the state he represented before he won the White House -- marked the opening salvo in a series of campaign stops aimed at boosting fellow Democrats in November's midterm elections, when voters will elect much of Congress and 36 state governorships.

Both parties are urging their core supporters to get to the polls for the Nov 6 midterm elections, when Democrats need to pick up 23 seats in the House of Representatives and two seats in the Senate to gain majorities in Congress and slam the brakes on Trump's agenda.

Obama, who had frustrated some Democrats by SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

## 'AIDING TERROR GROUP' 5 'Bangladeshis' charged in India

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India's top counter-terror body National Investigation Agency (NIA) has pressed charges against five alleged Bangladeshis on charges of aiding terror outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT).

The charge sheet was filed with the NIA court in Mumbai on Friday against Mohammed Habibur Rahman Habib alias Raj Jesub Mandal, Ripon Hossain alias Rubel, Hannan Anwar Khan alias Hannan Baburli Gazi, Md Hassanali alias Md Amirali and Azarali Subhanalla Islam alias Raja Jesub Mandal, said a statement posted on the NIA website.

The charge sheet against the "Bangladeshi nationals" has been filed under sections 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 471 (using as genuine a forged document) of the Indian Penal Code, relevant sections of strict Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967 and section 14 of the Foreigners Act of 1946.

All the five alleged Bangladeshis were arrested by the Anti-Terrorism Squad of western Indian city of Pune in Maharashtra state on charges of aiding and harbouring members of ABT in Pune.

The NIA said its investigation revealed SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Count 100m rice grains in 2 days

Teacher's homework baffles parents in China



CGTN ONLINE

A Chinese math teacher has triggered mixed reactions from parents after giving fourth graders a rather unusual homework that entailed counting 100 million grains of rice.

"One of the homework today is to count 100 million grains of rice, and hope parents could help their children finish it," reads the assignment posted on one of the group chats of a primary school in south China's Foshan City on WeChat, which was later posted by startled parents on the messaging app and Twitter-like Weibo platform.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

## UP chairman shot dead in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Unidentified criminals shot a union parishad chairman dead in Satkhira last night.

Mosharaf Hossain, 48, chairman of Krishnanagar Union Parishad in Kaliganj upazila, also the assistant organising secretary of district Jatiya Party, was chatting with some people in front of Krishnanagar Union Jubo League office SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



SIBL Social Islami Bank Limited

PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 9  
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-35 12-45 4-30 6-20 7-45  
JAMAAT 5-10 1-15 4-45 6-25 8-15  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## 5 girls flee safe home in Gazipur

12 detained after their escape from the home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Police are hunting for five of the 17 girl inmates who escaped from a juvenile detention centre in Gazipur early yesterday.

Authorities caught four of them before they managed to go far and eight others in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila yesterday noon.

The girls appear to have cut open the grilles of a window in the rear side of the two-storey building of the safe home for women and children detainees, said Shahnowas Dilruba Khan, additional director of Directorate of Women Affairs.

She added that the girls seem to have taken weeks to cut the grilles with nothing but spoons.

Most of the girls at the home are underage, have fled home and married, or rape victims, she said, adding, they don't know what is good for them. SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Ignoring oncoming vehicles, some students jaywalk on busy Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Sitakunda's Bhatary yesterday, putting their lives at risk. There is a footbridge yards away.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

## 2013 PRO-ISLAMIST SIT-IN Egypt sentences 75 to death

More than 600 including top Brotherhood leaders jailed

REUTERS, Cairo

An Egyptian court yesterday issued death sentences for 75 people, including prominent Islamist leaders, and jailed more than 600 others over a 2013 sit-in which ended with the killing of hundreds of protesters by security forces.

The sentencing concluded the mass trial of some 700 people accused of offences including murder and inciting violence during the pro-Muslim Brotherhood protest at Rabaa Adawiya square in Cairo.

The government says many protesters were armed and that eight members of the security forces were killed. It initially said more than 40 police had died.

Rights groups say over 800 protesters died in the single most deadly incident during the unrest that followed Egypt's 2011 popular uprising. Amnesty International condemned yesterday's decision, calling the trial "disgraceful".

In yesterday's hearing at the vast Tora prison complex south of Cairo, a criminal court sentenced to death by hanging several prominent Islamists including senior Brotherhood leaders Essam al-Erian and Mohamed Beltagi and preacher Safwat Higazi.

Muslim Brotherhood spiritual leader Mohamed Badie and dozens more were given life sentences, judicial sources said. Others received jail sentences ranging from five to 15 years.

Cases were dropped against five people who had died while in prison, judicial sources said, without giving further details.

Following weeks of protests in 2013 against the ouster of SEE PAGE 10 COL 2