



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

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# Learning in the open

70-yr-old gives free schooling for children in Pabna

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Taherul Islam, a retired primary teacher of Shara-Gopalpur village in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila, set up a free school for underprivileged children seven years ago.

What began as a ray of hope for 4-5 children now has 50 children who are learning to read and write.

In the last leg of his career, Taherul served as the headmaster of Rooppur Girls Primary School. Upon retirement, his desire to make a change in society did not end.

He hung a signboard on a roadside tree that read 'Bina Poishar Pathshala' and began enrolling street children.

"There are many families living on railway lands beside the Ishwardi-Rooppur road. Most of the children dropped out soon after admission, with the crux of the problem lying in extreme poverty," 70-year-old Taherul told The Daily Star last week.

Parents of slum children are not interested in education, as it takes the children away from other revenue earning opportunities, like begging.

"Initially, I had to do quite a bit of counselling so that they sent their children to study. I, myself, often picked up the children and dropped them home after classes.

"Now, word of mouth ensures that they are present."

A student at the school, nine-year-old Jewel Rana said, "I was admitted at Shara Gopalpur Primary School last year, but I did not continue as I did not have money to buy writing pads, pencils or anything else.

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Taherul Islam teaches students in the open beside Ishwardi-Rooppur road in Pabna's Shara-Gopalpur village recently. Inset, a signboard that reads Bina Poishar Pathshala (Free School) hangs on a tree nearby. The 70-year-old has been running the school for underprivileged children for the last seven years.

PHOTO: STAR

ABIDING BY LAWS 50 drivers, 2 transport owners awarded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The words uneducated, rowdy and lawbreaker are likely to pop up when anybody thinks of drivers in Bangladesh thanks to the existing indiscipline in the transport sector.

However, within this community, there are professionals who are law-abiding, caring and have been serving for years without having accidents.

Forty-eight such drivers were felicitated yesterday by the Road Safety Foundation, a private organisation that works for safe road and safe driving. Two of the awardees did not show up at the programme.

"Throughout my driving career I have always been rebuked, mostly for others' faults," said Nurun Nabi, who has been in the profession for 32 years and lives in the capital's Kamrangirchar.

"Today I feel honoured," said the 54-year-old driver after receiving "Skilled

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# Respect the will of voters

Says US resolution placed at House

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A new resolution in the US House of Representatives, placed by a Democrat congressman, has urged Bangladeshi political leaders and judicial authorities to respect the will of voters and ensure their free participation in the December 30 polls.

The legislation was placed on Thursday, reaffirming "the commitment of the United States to promote free, fair, transparent and credible polls in Bangladesh".

The resolution, placed by William Richard Keating, also mentioned the persecution of the Rohingyas in Myanmar's Rakhine State as a "crime against humanity" and "genocide" for the first time in the House.

It also called upon the Bangladesh government to ensure freedom of speech, freedom of the press and security for minorities for a peaceful election.

The bipartisan bill was sponsored by Democrat Congressmen Eliot Engel, Brad Sherman and Gerald Connolly, and Republican Congressmen Ted Yoho and Steve Chabot.

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# A bad Friday for Trump

US prosecutors name president in hush payments, detail Russian contacts, lies by his former aides

REUTERS, Washington/new York

US prosecutors said on Friday President Donald Trump directed his personal lawyer to make illegal hush payments to two women ahead of the 2016 election, and also detailed a previously unknown attempt by a Russian to help the Trump campaign.

In court filings, federal prosecutors in New York and those working for Special Counsel Robert Mueller made the case for why Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, and his former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, deserved prison time.

The documents turned up the heat on Trump by confirming prosecutors' belief of his involvement in a campaign finance violation, while adding to a growing list of contacts between campaign aides and Russians in 2015 and 2016, legal experts said.

"In total, the prosecutors seem to be saying the president was more aware than he has claimed to be," former federal prosecutor Michael Zeldin said.

Prosecutors in both of the Cohen cases were required to submit separate memos on Friday on his cooperation to US District Judge William Pauley in Manhattan, who will decide on the former lawyer's sentence on Dec 12.

While Cohen implicated the president in the hush payments to two women -- adult film actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal -- in his guilty plea in August in New York, the filing on

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# Girl, 13, killed in road crash in Gulshan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 13-year-old girl was killed as a bus hit a motorcycle from behind in the capital's Gulshan area yesterday.

The victim, Israt Jahan Sneha, was a class-VII student at the National Ideal School in Banasree.

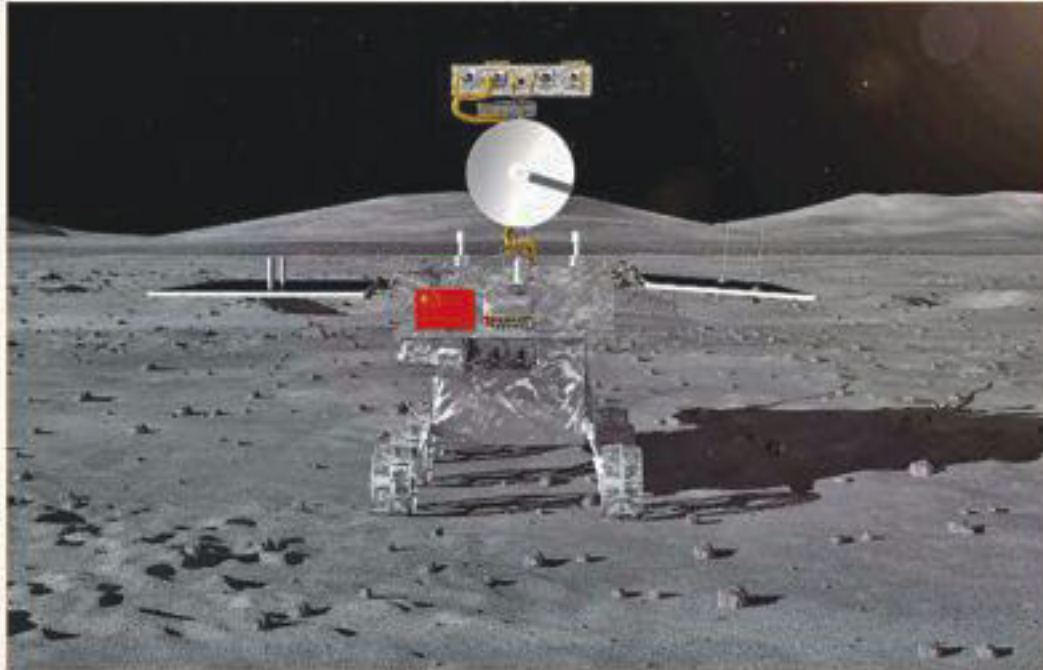
The accident happened around 7:00pm when Israt and her five-year-old brother Shahed were going to their village from their home in Banasree. They were travelling in their father Mohammad Shajahan's motorcycle, said Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station, citing witnesses.

Israt was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead, he said.

Shahjahan, who works at a garment factory, and Shahed were being treated at another city hospital.

Police seized the bus and held its driver Nazmul Hossain, added the OC.

# China sends rover to 'dark side' of moon



AFP, Beijing

China launched a rover early yesterday destined to land on the far side of the moon, a global first that would boost Beijing's ambitions to become a space superpower, state media said.

The Chang'e-4 lunar probe mission -- named after the moon goddess in Chinese mythology -- launched on a Long March 3B rocket from the southwestern Xichang launch centre at 2:23 am (1823 GMT), according to the official Xinhua news agency.

The blast-off marked the start of a long journey to the far side of the moon for the Chang'e-4 mission, expected to land around the New Year to carry out experiments and survey the un-trodden terrain.

"Chang'e-4 is humanity's first probe to land on and explore the far side of the moon," said the

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# Stop genocide, don't just react

Urges UN secy-general

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has urged the international community to prevent genocide instead of just reacting to it.

"Genocide does not happen by accident; it is deliberate, with warning signs and precursors," he said yesterday while speaking on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime 2018.

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 9

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-15 12-45 3-45 5-19 7-00

JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# China hopes polls will 'go well, smooth'

UNB, Dhaka

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Zhang Zuo yesterday expressed hope that Bangladesh's next national election would go very "well and smooth".

"We hope you'll have a very smooth election. Bangladeshis and the political parties can have that," he told reporters after attending a dialogue at a city hotel.

The envoy said Bangladesh and China would further deepen political, economic and people-to-people relationship.

Cosmos Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Cosmos Group, hosted the dialogue titled "Bangladesh-China Relations: Prognosis for the Future."

Speaking at the programme as chief guest, Zuo made five suggestions for deepening the Bangladesh-China strategic partnership of cooperation.

"First, we need to deepen strategic mutual

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Polling materials, including stamps and writing pads, being loaded onto a truck near the Election Commission Secretariat in the capital's Agargaon yesterday. Ahead of the election, the commission is sending such items to the election offices in different districts.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

# Japan's door now open to foreign workers

At least 345,000 skilled workers needed for 5 years

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition early yesterday rammed through legislation to bring more blue-collar foreign workers into the country, in a controversial move to address chronic labour shortages.

The bill was enacted after the upper house gave approval despite a raft of criticism by opposition parties following its passage through the lower house in late November. Both chambers are controlled by Abe's ruling camp.

Under the new system, the government plans to bring in as many as 345,000 foreign workers in construction, food services, nursing and other designated sectors for five years.

"We aim at starting it in April next year because we need to swiftly launch the new system in order to deal with the current labour shortage," Abe told parliament on Thursday.

But opposition parties claimed that the law fails to address the potential impact on Japanese society of new foreign labour, and does not protect foreign workers' rights.

In a bid to block its passage, opposition parties submitted censure motions against Abe and Justice Minister Takashi Yamashita, but they were easily rejected by the ruling bloc.

The law allows foreign nationals with skills in sectors facing particularly severe shortages to obtain five-year visas, which would not allow them to bring their families.

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