



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



HIGHEST SELLING 12 CEMENT for more than years



'Guardians' honoured

AGENCIES

Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was murdered in October at his country's Istanbul consulate, was named Time magazine's "Person of the Year" yesterday, an honour he shared with other targeted journalists recognised as "guardians" of the truth.



Among those named with Khashoggi were Philippine journalist Maria Ressa, Reuters reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo -- currently imprisoned in Myanmar -- and the workforce of the Capital Gazette in the US city of Annapolis, including five staff members killed in a June shooting.

The collective of journalists, the most well known of which is Washington Post reporter Khashoggi, will grace the covers of Time magazine's next issue after the publication's editors decided they had come to represent 2018 more than any other individual or group for the sacrifices they made in the "war on truth".

Time noted several examples worldwide of journalists being muzzled by unfair means by governments. Bangladeshi photographer Shahidul Alam was jailed for more than 100 days for making "false" and "provocative" statements after criticising Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in an interview about mass protests in Dhaka.

The honour for press comes amid alarming trend of shrinking journalistic freedom worldwide. A record number of journalists -- 262 in total -- were imprisoned in 2017.

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Abdul Hamid tends to his crops at his mango orchard in Rajshahi's Bohora village where he is currently growing bitter melon and beans. Thanks to his vermicompost fertiliser, he is able to grow multiple crops in a single season. Inset, Hamid checks on the fertiliser in a shed next to his house.

Organic all the way

Rajshahi farmer produces 6.52pc of the region's fertiliser supply

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

In a tiny tin shed in the Barind village of Bohora, Abdul Hamid scoops out a handful of stinky cattle dung from a bucket with his bare hands. He seems undeterred by the earthworms squirming in and out of the compost.

The 58-year-old has transformed the region's vegetable and fruit cultivation method into an organic one in the last three years.

"I hated touching this at first. Soon, it became my staircase to prosperity," says Hamid, from Tanore upazila, 58km away from the city.

Vermicast is the end product of the breakdown of organic matter by earthworms. These castings contain reduced levels of contaminants and a higher saturation of nutrients.

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Maintain polls atmosphere

CEC to judicial magistrates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday instructed judicial magistrates across the country to maintain the election atmosphere and make sure there is no destability in the heat of the campaigns.

"We have to remain watchful so that the polls atmosphere does not get heated," he said at a briefing for the magistrates at the capital's Nirbachan Bhavan yesterday.

"Our aim is to conduct the election properly so that there is no conflict or misunderstanding. We have to ensure that everyone follows the electoral code of conduct," he added.

Pointing out that the day after the election is crucial, the CEC urged caution about the risk of possible violence after the election.

He also expressed hope that the judges would mete out justice without considering anyone's affiliation in order to carry out a fair election.

A total of 1,841 candidates are set to take part in the upcoming election. Electioneering began on December 10, as the Election Commission allotted polls

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999 proving handy

12.86 lakh calls responded to in a year

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

It was 6:00pm on November 13 when a young man was spotted shouting while vandalising a residence at Kaptan Bazar area in Cumilla.

Alone in the house, a young girl screamed for help from the neighbours. As they went forward to catch the culprit, one of them -- Abu Jafar -- made a quick call to the national emergency helpline -- 999.

The dispatcher immediately informed Kotwali Police Station in the district and sub-inspector Kazi Hasan rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control.

SI Hasan said the man -- Md Mesbah, 22 -- was a drug addict and was vandalising the residence to get money for drugs.

This swift and prompt response was just one example of the 999 national emergency services. Since the service was inaugurated on December 12 last year, it has responded to 12.86 lakh calls till November 30.

Of the calls, 75 percent were for police service, 20 percent for fire service and 5 percent for ambulance service, according to the national help desk database.

On August 7, the 999 emergency service helped save 300 lives at one go when a ferry heading towards Kathalbari from Mawa started to fill up with

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SERVICE PROVIDED FROM DEC 12, 2017 TO NOV 30, 2018

SERVICE NAME	NUMBER OF CALLS
Accident	4596
Public Security	2869
Narcotics	1850
Attempt to Murder	294
Fire Service	972
Ambulance	1856
Child Marriage	1189
Family Conflicts	629
Crime Against Women	542
Cyber Crime	224
Transgender Attack	283

4th grader raped in Cox's Bazar

Police say

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A fourth grader was allegedly raped by Mohammad Shahidullah, 50, a vaidya (local medicine man), in Chakaria upazila of Cox's Bazar Monday night.

Bakhtiar Uddin Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Chakaria Police Station, said they had arrested the vaidya and Shajahan Begum, 40 in this connection.

Shajahan took her husband Nurul Afsar, a mental health patient, to Shahidullah in the upazila's Badarkhali area for treatment, said the OC.

The vaidya told her that an innocent girl aged about 8 to 9 years would be needed in order to treat her husband.

Shajahan convinced one of her neighbours to let

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Nasa probe finds water on asteroid



CNN ONLINE

Nasa's first asteroid sample return mission, OSIRIS-REx, reached the asteroid Benu only a week ago, but it's already learning more about this time capsule from the early solar system.

OSIRIS-REx, which stands for Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer, has found water within the clays on Benu.

Benu was worth the two-year wait to reach it. As OSIRIS-REx travelled 1.4 million miles from Earth and approached Benu, three of its instruments were pointed toward the asteroid to make scientific observations between mid-August and early December.

Two spectrometers on the spacecraft, OVIRS and OTES, discovered hydroxyls, or molecules of

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US for free, peaceful campaign

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Earl R Miller yesterday laid emphasis on ensuring a favourable environment so that all political parties can continue peaceful election campaign throughout the country freely as the crucial national election takes place on December 30.

"All parties should be free to participate in the polls and political process. They should be free to express their political views,

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 12

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

Chandpur-4 BNP candidate leaves area to protest 'police harassment'

STAR REPORT

BNP candidate for Chandpur-4 MA Hannan yesterday quit electioneering and left his electoral area in protest against a case filed against his supporters and subsequent harassment by police.

Police filed a case accusing 250 named BNP men and around 500 unnamed people in connection with a clash between law enforcers and the party activists on Monday at Faridganj upazila. At least 19 BNP men were arrested the same night, reports our correspondent in Chandpur.

"Not the Awami League candidate, the police are my opponent in the election. Fed up with harassment by police, I have come to Dhaka to file a complaint with the CEC [chief election commissioner]," he told The Daily Star last night.

Before leaving his
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Covering his nose with hand, a pedestrian walks past a garbage container placed on Atish Dipankar Road near the city's Malibagh level crossing yesterday. Such injudicious placement of trash containers by the city corporation is polluting the environment. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Thai junta lifts ban on politics

Polls likely on Feb 24 next year

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's junta yesterday lifted a four-year ban on political campaigning ahead of 2019 elections, prompting Thaksin Shinawatra -- the exiled billionaire who sits at the heart of the kingdom's political rupture -- to hail a "new hope" for the nation.

One of the military's first acts after seizing power in May 2014 was to outlaw political activity of all kind, as it muzzled opposition in a country notorious for its rowdy -- and often deadly -- street politics.

But the ban was officially lifted yesterday, prompting the Election Commission to confirm an expected poll date of February 24.

"Political parties should be able to campaign to present their policies," according to an order signed by junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha and published by palace mouthpiece the Royal Gazette.

The junta "has decided to amend or abolish the laws" which could inhibit campaigns before elections, it said.

Thailand's rulers began easing restrictions in September, allowing political parties to recruit new members and elect leaders. But campaigns and street rallies remained banned.

The order raises the prospect of a return to Thailand's rambunctious politics and the potential for street rallies that have defined much of the turbulent last decade of Thai politics.

In that time, Thai politics has been sharply polarised between supporters of the powerful Shinawatra clan -- popular in the poor, populous north and northeast -- and the royalist, conservative Bangkok-centric elite backed by the army.

The military loathes Thaksin, the former cop turned
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