



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



HIGHEST SELLING 12 CEMENT for more than years



BREXIT IMPASSE

May survives, chaos remains

UK PM in Brussels expects no breakthrough in talks

REUTERS, Brussels

Britain's weakened prime minister, Theresa May, yesterday said she did not expect to secure a quick breakthrough in Brexit talks that would give her fractured party the reassurances needed to get her deal through parliament.

Arriving in Brussels just a day after a failed attempt to topple her at home, May was met largely by readiness to help from European Union leaders and one demand: tell us what you want.

Britain's departure from the EU, its biggest shift in trade and foreign policy for more than 40 years, is proving anything but smooth, complicated by the deep divisions in her Conservative Party, the lower House of Commons and the country as a whole.

With less than four months before Britain is due to leave on March 29, May faces deadlock in parliament over the deal she agreed with the EU last month but which has hardened opposing positions at home, throwing up more uncertainty for businesses trying to predict what will happen to the \$2.8 trillion economy.

"I recognise the strength of concern in the House of Commons and that is what I will be putting to colleagues today," May said. "I don't expect an immediate breakthrough, but what I do hope is that we can start work as



SEE PAGE 17 COL 5



As captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) leads the team out for a Bangladesh record 70th time in ODIs in the series-deciding third and final game against the West Indies today, he will be hoping that ever-dependable opener Tamim Iqbal can set the platform for a memorable victory.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

High stakes in Sylhet's first

SAKEB SUBHAN from Sylhet

The gates of the Sylhet International Stadium were barely visible from the road leading up to one of Bangladesh's most picturesque venues as hundreds of people lined up to buy tickets yesterday afternoon for today's main event -- the first ODI to be held at the stadium. With the series tied at 1-1 and the match being the last ODI of the year for both teams, a lot is at stake for hosts Bangladesh and West Indies in the third and final ODI.

When the match begins at 12:00pm, Bangladesh's beloved captain Mashrafe

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5



PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 14

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-15 12-30 3-45 5-19 7-00

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

No more rate hike, charges for dropped calls

HC issues ban for telcos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a ban on future mobile call rate hikes and on charging subscribers for dropped calls.

The ban was issued for all five mobile phone operators in the country -- Grameenphone, Robi, Airtel, Banglalink and Teletalk.

In response to a writ petition that challenged mobile call rate hikes and charges for dropped calls, the court also directed the authorities concerned to form a committee to look into the call rates and take necessary steps.

Secretary to the post and telecommunications ministry, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and its secretary have been directed to immediately form the committee.

Moreover, the HC issued a rule asking the respondents of the government and the mobile phone operators to explain in four weeks why hiking mobile charges without taking the opinions of subscribers

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

He acts before they are lost

Rajshahi farmer has a collection of 200 rare, almost extinct varieties of paddy



ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Seeing Yusuf Molla's collection of paddies, one is likely to reminisce about the famous verses of Jogindranath's poem "Kajer Chhele": "Dadkhani chal, mosurir dal, chini-pata doi..."

Yusuf, a farmer in Rajshahi's Tanore, has at least 200 rare and almost extinct varieties of paddy in his collection that he has developed over the years out of love for the crop.

During a visit last month, this correspondent found 77 sections in Yusuf's land. Each section was signified with signboards carrying the names of the varieties cultivated there.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Private banks' directors slam CPD report

Think-tank mentioned 'embezzlement' of Tk 22,000cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Association of Banks, a platform of the directors of private banks, yesterday heavily criticised the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) report that claimed Tk 22,000 crore was embezzled from the country's banking sector in the last decade.

In a statement, the BAB termed the CPD's report "false and misleading", expressing concern over its release ahead of December 30 polls.

The observation was made at the BAB's 25th annual general meeting in Dhaka, presided over by the platform's Vice-Chairman Professor Md Nazmul Hassan, the statement said.

Speaking at the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Pigeons threaten tourists in Cádiz



CNN ONLINE

It's always nice to share a meal with the locals on vacation, except when the locals steal your food, smash your plate, defecate on the table -- and then fly away.

That's the situation in the southwestern Spanish port town of Cádiz where pigeons have been terrorising tourists to such an extent that local authorities are now taking steps to banish thousands of birds.

"We are not exaggerating, the pigeons are not scared of humans anymore," Carlos Fernández, the manager of one of the restaurants in Cádiz's beautiful Cathedral Square, tells CNN.

"They throw themselves at the food even when there are clients seating ready to eat it. They push glasses, plates and jars on to the floor and it's a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

FACEBOOK & FAKE NEWS

The election is around the corner. This year, social media is going to be one of the most effective platforms for election campaigns. Keeping this in mind, The Daily Star had sent a set of questions on how Facebook would deal with fake news, rumours, duplicate pages, and dubious groups to Shivnath Thukral, the public policy head of Facebook for India and South Asia.

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR THE COMPLETE INTERVIEW



THE KING CROW COMETH

A couple of Black Drongos fight over a meal. The feisty little creatures are well known for their aggression with the trait earning them the name "King Crow".

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

China, Canada spat escalates

Beijing probes two Canadians citing security threat, calls for release of Huawei CFO

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday confirmed two Canadians are under investigation on suspicion of endangering the country's national security, fuelling tensions after Canada's arrest of a top Chinese telecom executive on a US request.

Former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and business consultant Michael Spavor were put under "compulsory measures" on Monday, foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said, using a term which would usually mean they are in custody.

The two Canadians are "suspected of engaging in activities that threatened China's national security," Lu said at a regular press conference, without explaining if the two cases are related.

Kovrig, who works for the International Crisis Group (ICG) think tank, was being investigated by the Beijing bureau of state security, while the agency's office in north-east Liaoning province was handling the probe into Spavor, Lu said.

Spavor is a China-based business consultant who facilitates trips to North Korea, met with its leader Kim Jong Un and arranged some of retired NBA star Dennis Rodman's trips to the country.

Their cases will fuel suspicions China is retaliating

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4