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





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BUILDING 'SONAR BANGLA' Hasina seeks cooperation from all



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought cooperation from all, including the officials of public and private organisations, to establish a poverty- and hunger-free “Sonar Bangla” as dreamt by the Father of the Nation.

She was talking to senior civil and military officials, individuals and leaders of various organisations, including Bangladesh Scouts and Bangladesh Girl Guides Association, when they met her at the Gono Bhavan.

Presenting bouquets to the PM, they greeted her on the Awami League’s landslide victory in the national election.

Hasina, also the AL president, said her

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Fresh from being elected as the member of parliament from Narail-2, Bangladesh and Rangpur Riders skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's, right, focus returned to cricket as he started training for the Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium gymnasium yesterday. All cricketers present, including Bangladesh batsman Mushfiquir Rahim, were delighted to see Mashrafe return.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

15 injured in AL infighting in Shariatpur

25 shops attacked; 10 more hurt as ruling party men, police clash in Laxmipur

STAR REPORT

At least 25 people were injured, 25 shops damaged and a hospital vandalised in separate clashes involving Awami League men in Shariatpur and Laxmipur in the last two days.

In Shariatpur, two groups of local AL men allegedly clashed at Subochoni Bazaar on Tuesday evening. The clash left 15 injured and 25 shops vandalised, reports our Faridpur correspondent.

Police said the fight started around 7:30pm over distribution of cash among activists who worked for the party during the election.

The rivaling groups are led by local AL leaders Billal Gazi and Mujibur Sikder.

Contacted, Billal said Mujibur’s men attacked him and went on a rampage.

Mujibur refuted the allegation.

During the clash, police fired 18 rubber bullets to calm the situation, said Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Palong Police Station.

Two suspects were detained, he added.

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NOAKHALI GANG RAPE Key accused, another held Quader says culprits won't be spared

STAR REPORT

Police have arrested two more people, including the prime accused, in Cumilla and Laxmipur in connection with the alleged gang rape of a mother of four in Noakhali’s Subarnachar upazila.

Superintendent of Police in Noakhali Elias Sharif said they arrested Sohel – the prime accused – from a brick kiln at Moheshpur of Barura upazila in Cumilla yesterday noon.

With the two, so far, three of the nine accused have been arrested. Police on Monday night arrested one of the accused -- Badsha Alam.

The victim’s husband sued nine people over the gang rape with Char Jabbar Police Station on Monday, hours after she had been raped at the dead of night.

While undergoing treatment at Noakhali General Hospital on Monday, the mother of four told this newspaper that around 10 to 12 accomplices of Ruhul Amin raped her because she voted for the

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Of arms, ammo, and abduction

SHARIFUL ISLAM back from Rangamati

Firearms, including sophisticated ones, in the hills are not only for the extremists’ “ideals”, they are now a means for their financial solvency.

Members of four armed groups active in the three hill districts – Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban – are extorting rampantly from traders and contractors of different development projects.

They do not hesitate to abduct people to realise toll, amounting to several hundred crores of taka annually, said local traders and intelligence sources.

The armed groups often lock in fierce clashes over establishing supremacy in different areas of the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT), they added.

The groups smuggle in arms from insurgents active in India’s seven sisters and Myanmar through the largely unguarded hilly borders with Mizoram and Chin state of Myanmar. The firearms are sometimes sold to extremists operating outside the hills to make money, said law enforcers.

“We were 15 in the group tasked with dissuading intrusion in a specific area and to issue threats or abduct people unwilling to pay toll,” SK Chakma

(not his real name) told The Daily Star in Rangamati on December 3. He got an AK-47 assault rifle just after a month of training.

He claimed that in 2014, he joined the “armed wing” of regional political group United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF). His group was just one of four allegedly patronised by regional political groups.

The youth, now 23, quit the group in 2016.

According to officials in the law enforcement and intelligence agencies, several hundred armed youths working for Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS), PCJSS (reformists), UPDF (main) and UPDF (democratic) roam the rugged hills.

SK Chakma said the groups have weapons like machine guns, self-loading rifles, AK-47s, AK-22s, AK-56s and even rocket propelled grenades.

“We had all sorts of firearms that Bangladesh army got at its disposal and no dearth of bullets either,” he said.

None could, however, estimate the number of illegal firearms the groups have in their arsenal.

Rangamati Awami League president and law

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World's most expensive fish bought for \$1.8m



ODDITY CENTRAL ONLINE

S Legend, a red and white Koi Carp bred in Japan became the most expensive live fish ever sold, after fetching a mind-blowing price of 203 million yen (\$1.8 million), \$1.3 million more than the previous record.

The 101cm-long Koi Carp from the highly-regarded Kohaku variety was bought by a collector from Japan after a fierce bidding war at the Saki Fish farm in the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The female carp won first prize at the prestigious All Japan Koi Show last year, and is expected to bag her second title this year, which greatly increased collectors’ interest. Fans and collectors of Koi carp are now expected to travel from all over the world to catch a glimpse of the most expensive fish ever sold.

“This is a record price paid for a single Koi Carp,” British Koi expert, Tim Waddington, told Daily

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'FAKE' POLLS DATA Journos placed on three-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Khulna court yesterday placed Hedayet Hossain Mollah, local correspondent of the Dhaka Tribune, on a three-day remand in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Judge Nayan Biswas of Khulna Judicial Magistrate Court-3 passed the order after Batiaghata Police Station OC Mahabubur Rahman, also the investigation officer of the case,

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 3

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:00

JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

'GUNFIGHT' WITH COPS 3 suspected drug dealers shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three suspected drug dealers were killed in separate “shootouts” with law enforcers in Feni and Cumilla yesterday.

The dead in Feni were identified as Asad, 42, and Imamul Akand, 24, from Rajoir upazila of Madaripur district. They were members of a drug peddling gang, Rab officials claimed.

A “shootout” occurred when a Rab team, on information that drugs were being smuggled, signaled a lorry to stop in Silonia Bazar area of Daganbhuiyan upazila around 12:30am, said Shafayet Jamil Fahim, commander of Rab-7 in Feni.

Those inside the lorry began shooting at the Rab men while trying to escape, which forced the law enforcers to retaliate, triggering a “gunfight” in which Asad and Imamul sustained bullet injuries, he said.

Rab recovered the bodies

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Dense fog reduces visibility on a road in Panchagarh town yesterday morning. Temperature fell to 4.9 degrees Celsius in Tentulia upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

CHINA-TAIWAN REUNIFICATION Xi threatens to use force

AFP, Beijing

Taiwan’s unification with the mainland is “inevitable”, President Xi Jinping said yesterday, warning against any efforts to promote the island’s independence and saying China would not renounce the option of using military force to bring it into the fold.

Xi’s comments provoked a swift rebuke from Taipei, where President Tsai Ing-wen said Taiwan’s people would never willingly give up the kind of democratic freedoms unseen on the mainland.

China still sees democratic Taiwan as part of its territory to be reunified, despite the two sides being ruled separately since the end of a civil war in 1949.

“China must and will be united... which is an inevitable requirement for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese people in the new era,” Xi said in a speech commemorating the 40th anniversary of a message sent to Taiwan in 1979, in which Beijing called for unification and an end to military confrontation.

“We make no promise to give up the use of military force and reserve the option of taking all necessary means” against Taiwanese separatist activities and “outside forces” that interfere with reunification, he said.

In his speech, Xi described unification under a “one country, two systems” approach that would “safeguard the interests and well-being of Taiwanese compatriots”.

Taiwan considers itself a sovereign state, with its own currency, political and judicial systems, but has never

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