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PAYRA PORT

# Deal signed for dredging

*Belgian company to start work within six months*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a big leap forward, the Payra Port Authority (PPA) yesterday signed a deal with a Belgium-based company to start capital dredging of the port's main channel to facilitate entries of large ships at the Chattogram and Mongla ports.

The dredging of the 75 kilometre long and 100 to 125 metres wide channel is expected to begin in the next six months. The estimated cost is Tk 8,643 crore (€864.32 million).

M Jahangir Alam, chairman of the PPA, and David Jonckheere, chairman of Belgium-based firm Jan De Nul, signed a public-private partnership (PPP) agreement at the shipping ministry conference room at the secretariat.

Earlier in December 2017, the PPA and Jan De Nul formed a joint venture company, of which PPA has a share of 51 percent and the Belgium-based company has the rest.

Sitting on the west bank of Ravnabad channel at the confluence of Galachipa-Tetulia river, the Payra port started operation in August 2016 with ship-to-ship cargo transfer on a limited scale.

The two existing seaports in Chattogram and Mongla continue to face challenges in handling the growing volume of containers and cargos due to rising exports and imports. The two handled about 20 lakh Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) of containers in 2015.

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Illegal sand and stone extraction on the Piyain river bed has altered the landscape of Jaflong in Sylhet's Gowainghat. The gaping holes near the bridge, which was open to traffic last year, may weaken its pillars. *Inset, villagers extract stones from the river. The picture was taken recently.*

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

College boy rescued 4 days after abduction  
One suspect held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detectives rescued a college student from Lohagora upazila early yesterday, four days after he was kidnapped from Satkania for a ransom of Tk 50 lakh.

A team of the Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police raided a boarding house in Satkania and rescued Sadeq Sobhan Sakib, 17, from a room, said DB officials.

Law enforcers arrested suspect Md Hossain, 30, and recovered a toy gun, two knives and three towels from the room.

Detectives said they found Sadeq's hands and legs tied with towels. They suspected that the abductors had taken preparations to kill the college student as he identified his cousin Jahangir Alam Joy, 28, as one of the kidnappers.

Sadeq is an HSC second-year student at BGC Trust College. His father Fouzul

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JP won't be 'questionable' opposition  
Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Co-Chairman GM Quader yesterday said his party would never become a "questionable opposition" in parliament.

Instead, he said, the JP would gain people's confidence by playing the role of a "real opposition party" in the House.

GM Quader came up with the statements at a reception, organised by Rajshahi city JP, at party Chairman HM Ershad's Banani office in the capital.

Addressing JP leaders and activists, Quader, who has been acknowledged by the Speaker of Parliament as deputy leader of the opposition, said the party would play its due role in the Jatiya Sangsad for becoming stronger before the next national election.

"There are a lot of

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## Building future with boutique

*Housewife becomes solvent by opening apparel shop in Jamalpur's Tomaltola*



AMINUL ISLAM LITON

Once a housewife struggling to make ends meet, Khurshed Begum Khushi has now become a shining example of self-employment in her locality in Jamalpur.

The 45-year-old runs her boutique "Khushi Basralay" at Tomal tola, making a profit of around Tk 25,000 per month.

Her road to success, however, was a bumpy one.

Growing up in poverty, Khushi dropped out of school and was married off when she was only 16. After the birth of her daughter two years later, her husband Abdul Alim, a trader, was struggling to bear the expenses of the family.

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**GUNFIGHT WITH COPS  
Two 'robbers' shot dead in Shariatpur**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Two suspected robbers were killed in what police said was a gunfight between law enforcers and armed gang members in Dakshin Dehobhog area of Shariatpur's Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The dead Jahangir Akonda, 40, and Russel Fakir, 34, were residents of Madaripur's Rajor and Kalkini upazila.

Police claimed that Jahangir was accused in four robbery cases while Russel had six cases filed against him.

However, Surmani Begum, wife of Russel, said her husband, who was a vegetable trader, was innocent, adding that they used to live in a rented house in Savar's Baliapur area.

"One Zakir, who is familiar to us, came to our house on Thursday and took my husband out with him."

"He [Russel] never returned since then," she added.

Zakir told her that some CID men had picked them up from somewhere in Savar

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**Beijingers vent their stress in anger room**



REUTERS, Beijing

It took Smash customer Qiu Siyu just a few sharp blows with a baseball bat to wreck what looked like an old car radio, after which two friends battered telephones, audio speakers, rice cookers and even a mannequin.

All three paid 158 yuan (\$23) to spend half an hour in an "anger room" in Beijing where patrons wearing protective gear use hammers and bats to vent their frustration on household objects while staff play music of their choice in the background.

Qiu, a bespectacled 16-year-old high school student with braces, said she was there to vent anger about school.

"It feels so good when I destroy those bottles and watch them explode," she said, smiling sweetly.

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RAKHINE STATE  
UN calls for unimpeded aid access

REUTERS, Yangon

The United Nations yesterday called on the Myanmar government to allow "rapid and unimpeded" humanitarian access to Rakhine State, where fighting between government troops and autonomy-seeking rebels has displaced thousands of people.

The Rakhine State government issued a notice last week blocking non-governmental organisations and UN agencies from



PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 15

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5-30 12-45 4-00 5-36 7-00  
JAMAT 6-05 1-15 4-15 5-40 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Member of Jubo Samity shot dead in Khagrachhari  
Motive remains unknown

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Khagrachhari

A member of Jubo Samity, a pro-Parbatai Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS-MN Larma) body, was shot dead in Khagrachhari's Ramgarh upazila yesterday.

Quoting locals, police said unidentified criminals opened fire on Mohan Tripura, 35, inside his home in Jagannathpara area around 7:30pm and fled immediately.

On information, law enforcers rescued the victim and took him to the upazila health complex where doctors declared him dead.

The identity of the attackers could not be known immediately.

Tareq Mohammad Abdul Hannan, officer-in-charge of Ramgarh Police Station, confirmed the incident.

Police said they were trying to arrest the killers.



These cars, some quite expensive, have been rusting away on the premises of Chattogram Customs House for years. Thanks to lengthy lawsuits over tax dodging, the authorities are often unable to auction or dispose of the vehicles they impound. The picture was taken recently.

## 'Paralysis' in House looms

*UK PM warns MPs ahead of vote on her Brexit deal, publishes further assurances from EU*

AFP, London

Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday published further assurances from the EU on the eve of a crucial parliamentary vote on her Brexit deal and warned MPs that rejecting it would lead to "paralysis" that could see Britain stay in the bloc.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and European Council President Donald Tusk repeated in a letter that they would not reopen the divorce deal, but offered clarifications with "legal value" on a controversial clause.

In a speech shortly afterwards in Stoke, a Brexit-backing city in England's Midlands famous for its pottery, May admitted their offer fell short of what she wanted.

But she said: "I'm convinced that MPs now have the clearest assurances that this is the best deal possible and is worthy of their support."

May had promised assurances on the so-called Irish backstop arrangement when she postponed a vote on the agreement in December, facing certain defeat in the House of Commons.

'DETRIMENTAL' DEAL

As MPs prepare to finally cast their judgement this evening, large numbers of her own Conservative MPs and her Northern Irish allies are still strongly opposed.

In a further setback, government whip Gareth Johnson -- a Brexiteer and one of the officials charged with getting MPs to vote for the deal -- announced his resignation.

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