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SHAH CEMENT

Surma choked with garbage

7.5km stretch of the river in Sylhet city littered with trash, household waste

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

The Surma river in Sylhet is on the verge of becoming another Buriganga, environmentalists fear.

Although the local office of the Department of Environment claims that indicators regarding the river's health were acceptable, people living by it are saying that the water is so polluted that some are suffering from skin and stomach diseases.

More than 7.5km of the river flows through Sylhet metropolitan areas. During a recent visit, this correspondent saw plastic bottles, polythene bags and other household wastes floating at several points.

Filthy and sluggish flow of water was seen at Sheikhghat, Kazirbazar, Topkhana Chadnighat, Kalighat, Machimpur, Kadamtali, Kushighat, and Technical Road.

Residents of these areas use the water of the Surma for bathing and various household purposes.

Ananda Das, a resident of Topkhana, said, "This is the only source of water for household chores and bathing. We have been using it for generations but it has turned opaque over the past few years."

Ajmol Miah, a slum dweller in Kazirbazar, said, "After swimming in the water, we have itching all over the body. But it goes away. But children suffer more due to skin diseases."

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SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO

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A ragpicker rummages through a heap of litter on the bank of the Surma river in Sylhet. Inset, pollution and littering have resulted in the river losing its navigability. The pictures were taken recently in the city's Muktir Chawk area.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



MARCH 31, 1971

Indira vows support for Bangalees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the end of March, the month in which the flames of freedom were ignited, came the beginning of the 1971 Liberation War.

The Pakistani army continued their atrocities.

Searching for a safe abode, over one lakh Bangladeshis left their homes and crossed the border to take refuge in India.

Meanwhile, in the Chattogram Hill Tracts, a one-Kilowatt range/power independent Bangla radio station was established.

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in parliament, pledged her and her people's support for the freedom of Bangladesh.

Portraying a picture of Dhaka, Archer Blood, the then US Consulate General in Dhaka, reported that an estimated 4,000 to 6,000 people "lost their lives as a

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107 upazilas go to polls today

No election in 15 UZs as all the contenders elected unopposed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fourth phase of upazila election takes place today in 107 upazilas amid tight security.

Over 2.55 crore people are expected to cast their votes in 9,740 centres.

The election that began on March 10 and would be conducted in 480 upazilas in five phases this year is boycotted by the BNP and several other parties.

The Election Commission is yet to announce the schedule for the fifth phase. But, the EC officials said the final phase would be held on June 18, after the Higher Secondary Certificate exams and the Eid-ul-Fitr.

The first three phases of the polls were held on

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MALAYSIA LABOUR MARKET 6 lakh Bangladeshis face deportation

PORIMOL PALMA

Over six lakh Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia may face deportation as the Southeast Asian country plans to reform its foreign workers sector, with an immediate step being the shutting down of its outsourcing companies by March 31.

The large pool of migrants -- around two lakh -- working under such companies, which hire foreign workers and supply them to others, will become undocumented following the move, experts said.

Meanwhile, as Malaysian officials are determined not to regularise any more workers, the fates of four lakh others remains in the air.

"Malaysia officials said they are not going for anymore legalisation. There are over six lakh irregular Bangladeshis in Malaysia, and they could be deported," Israfil Alam, Member of Parliament and chairman of Bangladesh National Parliamentarians' Caucus on Migration and Development, told this correspondent on March 24.

He had just led a delegation to Malaysia to learn of the latest labour situation during meetings with Malaysian officials, lawyers and rights activists from March 7 to 8.

There are some 10 lakh Bangladeshis working in Malaysia. Of them, around six lakh were irregular and had applied for regularisation during the more than two-year long rehiring programme from early 2016 to August 2018.

Of the six lakh, three were legalised and the others were not due to problems with their paperwork, Israfil Alam said.

"Malaysian authorities are already detaining migrant workers. In the last three months, they have detained 3,164 Bangladeshis," said Israfil Alam.

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NZ MOSQUE MASSACRE Facebook to tighten live stream rules

AFP, San Francisco

Facebook on Friday said it is tightening live video streaming rules in response to the service being used to broadcast deadly attacks on mosques in New Zealand.

The Christchurch attacks -- carried out by a self-avowed white supremacist who opened fire on worshippers at two mosques -- claimed 50 lives.

Many people have "rightly questioned how online platforms such as Facebook were used to circulate horrific videos of the attack," chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg said in an online post.

"In the wake of the terrorist attack, we are taking three steps: strengthening the rules for using Facebook Live, taking further steps to address hate on our platforms, and supporting the New Zealand community," she added.

Facebook is looking into barring people who have previously violated the social network's community standards from livestreaming on its platform, according to Sandberg.

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The 70-year-old 'Pokemon uncle'



IANS, Taipei

A 70-year-old man in Taipei rides long distances daily with 24 smartphones on his bicycle to chase his passion: hunting Pokemons.

Among tens of thousands of Pokemon hunters in Taipei, Chen San-yuan stands out as the most popular as he has so far caught 45 million creatures since he began playing "Pokemon Go" in 2016, Efe news reported.

This game of augmented reality requires players to seek and capture characters -- from the Pokemon saga, which are hidden at real places -- and fight with them, which require wide movements and gathering of many players.

Chen is Taoist Master of divination and Feng Shui -- an ancient system that establishes rules

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'Drug dealer' killed in 'gunfight'

3 cops injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An alleged drug dealer was killed in a "gunfight" between a drug gang and law enforcers near Habirchara union of Teknaf upazila in the early hours yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mohammad Hossain, 28, of Habirchara area.

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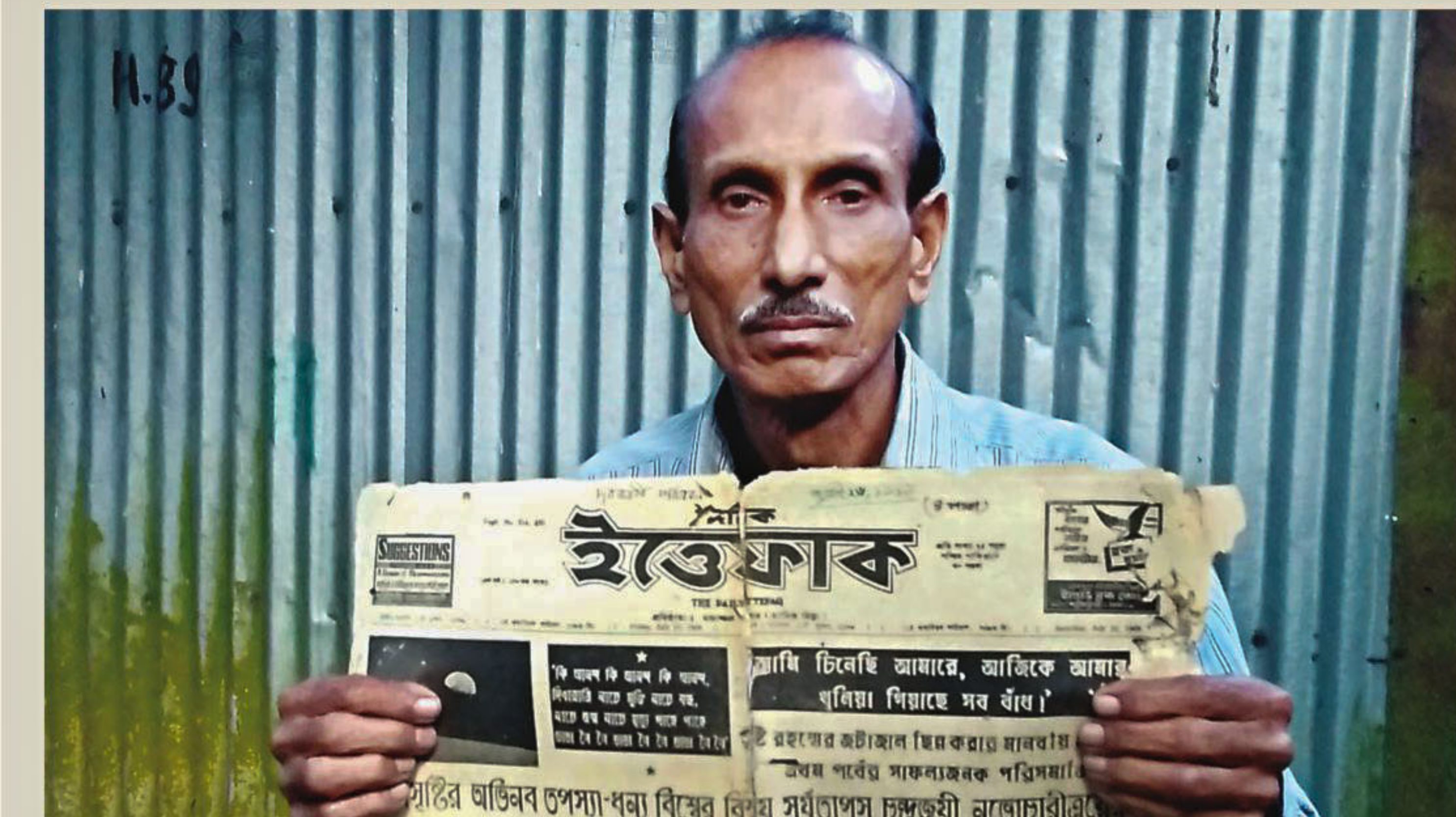
PRAYER TIMING MARCH 31

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-45 12-45 4-45 6-20 7-45

JAMAAT 5-20 1-15 5-00 6-25 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Musleh Uddin holds an issue of the Ittefaq from 1969 at his front yard in Mymensingh's Gouripur recently. The 72-year-old man, who struggles to make ends meet, has a rich collection of many historic issues newspapers.

A man with an unusual hobby

72-year-old Musleh Uddin collects dailies, periodicals from 1956

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

The 72-year-old Musleh Uddin does not spend a single day without reading newspapers and has a collection of rare publications.

Even though he has challenges in coping with basic financial necessities, he has collected around 2,500 copies of different newspapers and kept those inside his hut in Bakerkanda village of the district's Gauripur upazila.

His collection includes rare editions of the Ittefaq, the Daily Pakistan, The Morning News, the

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PHOTO: COLLECTED



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Today is the 48th Death Anniversary of **S N H Rizvi**



We request all relatives, friends and well-wishers to remember him in their prayers and to pray for eternal peace of his soul