

"MY HOME IS AS GREAT AS THE PADMA BRIDGE TO ME"

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT

BSRM building a safer nation

Whether for your home or the Pillars of Padma Bridge We forge steels with the same expertise

SHAH CEMENT

ACHIEVED Superbrands AWARD

AWARDED Superbrands BANGLADESH'S CHOICE 2018

Brexit hangs on a knife edge

British parliament set for extraordinary vote today to decide fate of Johnson's deal

REUTERS, London

Britain's exit from the European Union hung on a knife-edge yesterday as Prime Minister Boris Johnson scrambled to persuade doubters to rally behind his last-minute European Union divorce deal in an extraordinary vote in parliament.

In one of the most striking flourishes of the three-year Brexit drama, Johnson confounded his opponents on Thursday by clinching a new deal with the EU, even though the bloc had promised it would never reopen a treaty it agreed last year.

Yet Johnson, the face of the Brexit campaign in the 2016 referendum, must now ratify the deal in the British parliament where he has no majority and opponents are plotting maximum political damage ahead of an imminent election.

The numbers are too close to call: Johnson must garner 318 votes in the 650-seat parliament to get a deal approved. Yet his Northern Irish allies are opposed to a deal and the three main opposition parties have pledged to vote it down.

"We've got a great new deal that takes back control — now parliament should get Brexit done on Saturday,"

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Vehicles stranded at Shimulia Ghat in Munshiganj as there has been massive disruptions in ferry services on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route for nearly a week due to poor navigability in a stretch of the Padma. Inset, people crossing the river in a speedboat. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

130 gold bars seized in Ctg airport

Passenger from UAE held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Customs Intelligence officials yesterday detained a person with 130 gold bars, weighing 15kg, hidden inside three rechargeable lamps in his luggage at Hazrat Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram.

The detainee — Mohammad Joyal Abedin of Fatikchhari upazila in Chattogram — flew in from the United Arab Emirates at 8:20am, said Babul Iqbal, deputy director (DD) of Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate.

The directorate officials

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 19

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-50	12-45	4-00	5-38	7-15
JAMAAT 5-25	1-15	4-15	5-41	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Fastest ant found in Sahara



AFP, Paris

It's official: The Saharan silver ant is the fastest of the world's 12,000 known ant species, clocking a blistering 855 millimetres — nearly a metre — per second, researchers said Thursday.

Measured another way, the six-legged sprinter covers 108 times its own body length per second, a feat topped only by two other creatures, the Australian tiger beetle and the California coastal mite.

To run 100 times his body length as quickly, the fastest man in the world, Usain Bolt, would need to sprint the 200-metre dash in less than a second.

Making the exploit even more remarkable, the Saharan silver hits top speed racing at midday across desert sands that reach 60 degrees Celsius (140 degrees Fahrenheit), the researchers reported in the Journal of Experimental Biology.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

One arrested, another jailed over rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A man was arrested yesterday for allegedly raping a college girl, while another was sent to jail on Thursday night on charge of raping his stepdaughter.

In addition, two brothers were sued yesterday for "attempted rape."

The three incidents happened in different parts of Moulvibazar.

In Sreemangal upazila, barber Pulak Kanti Baidya, 30, a resident of Uttarsur village, "raped" a college girl multiple times by promising to marry her.

According to the case statement, the girl had a long-time relationship with Pulak, but he refused to marry her recently. On Thursday night, she filed a rape case against him.

Pulak was arrested yesterday.

Abdus Shalek, officer-in-charge (OC) of Sreemangal Police Station, said the girl

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

RISING DEFAULTS ON LOANS IMF raises alarm

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN, from Washington DC

The rising defaults on loans poses the biggest risk for the Bangladesh economy that stands to grow at a remarkable pace, said the International Monetary Fund yesterday, raising the urgency level for the government to address the banking sector's ills.

"Now is the time to start a reform programme in the financial sector of Bangladesh," Anne-Marie Gulde-Wolf, deputy director of IMF's Asia Pacific Department (APD), told a press briefing during the World Bank-IMF's annual meeting here in the American capital.

As of June, the total defaulted loans in the banking sector was Tk 112,425 crore, up 19.71 percent from December last year, according to data from Bangladesh Bank.

"The percentage of defaulted loans in Bangladesh is around 11 percent. This means a good amount of fund was not paid back to the banking sector. For this reason, the country's private sector is not getting required loans," she said.

The high level of defaulted loans is "a very big issue" for Bangladesh and the trend will have to be arrested to ensure future growth, she said.

Gulde-Wolf particularly singled out the state banks, which are saddled with high levels of defaulted loans.

"This has narrowed their capacity to give out credit to businesses," she said, while calling for an urgent improvement in corporate governance in state banks.

The authorities concerned of Bangladesh should start working on modernising the financial sector, she said, adding, "A modern financial sector will help banks disburse their credit evenly to economically reliable sectors."

Gulde-Wolf also said economic reforms were essential to make the Bangladesh economy more vibrant and ensure

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Air raids, shelling test Syria 'truce'

Disagreement arises over size of 'safe zone'; Erdogan threatens to restart offensive if Kurds don't respect deal

AGENCIES

Air raids and shelling could be heard at the Syrian-Turkish border yesterday morning despite a five-day ceasefire agreed between Turkey and the United States, and Washington said the deal covered only a small part of the territory Ankara aims to seize.

Reuters journalists at the border heard machine-gun fire and shelling and saw smoke rising from the Syrian border

battlefield city of Ras al Ain, although the sounds of fighting had subsided by mid-morning.

The truce, announced on Thursday by US Vice President Mike Pence after talks in Ankara with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, sets out a five-day pause to let the Kurdish-led SDF militia withdraw from an area controlled by Turkish forces.

The SDF said air and artillery attacks continued to target its positions and

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

শ্রদ্ধাজলি

আজ ১৯শে অক্টোবর ২০১৯ইং, (শনিবার) দেশের অন্যতম উদ্যোক্তা ও বিশিষ্ট ব্যবসায়ী এবং নাভানা লিমিটেড ও আফতার অটোমোবাইলস্ লিমিটেড এর প্রতিষ্ঠাতা, আমাদের পরম শ্রদ্ধেয় মরহুম আলহাজ্জ জহুরুল ইসলাম সাহেবের ২৪তম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী।

তিনি ছিলেন আমাদের আদর্শ, পথ প্রদর্শক এবং সকল কর্ম প্রেরণার উৎস। আজকের এই দিনে আমরা তাকে শ্রদ্ধাচিতে স্মরণ করছি এবং তাঁর বিদেহী আত্মার মাগফেরাত কামনা করছি।

সফিউল ইসলাম (কামাল)
চেয়ারম্যান
নাভানা লিমিটেড
আফতার অটোমোবাইলস্ লিমিটেড

Abandoned by one, desired by many

Panchagarh Deputy Commissioner Sabina Yasmin holding the baby at a hospital in the district on Thursday night.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A woman found a one-month-old baby girl abandoned beside her home in Panchagarh town on Thursday night. Doctors said the baby is healthy. Julekha Begum spotted the baby wrapped in a towel around 8:30pm near her home in Kamatpara area. Police later took the infant to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital.

Many couples visited the hospital throughout yesterday and said they were willing to adopt the baby, officials said. Meanwhile, another woman of the area named Peyara Majumdar told police that a woman who used to live in the neighbourhood two years ago showed up at her home around 8:00pm on Thursday and asked her if she would be interested to keep the baby.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

24th DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF LATE AL-HAJJ JAHURUL ISLAM

The 24th death anniversary of the founder Chairman of Islam Group **Al-Hajj Jahurul Islam** is being observed today.

A Doa mahfil will be held at his birth place Bhagalpur, at 11 a.m. October 19, 2019 in the mosque of Jahurul Islam Medical College & Hospital. All relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for his eternal peace.

On behalf of Islam Group
Begum Suriya Islam
Manzurul Islam
Syeda Islam, Mafida Islam
Naima Islam, Kaneta Islam
and Members of the Family