



**PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK PROJECT IS BEING BUILT WITH BSRM**

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# The school of inclusion

*Patuakhali's floating school serves kids of underprivileged Manta community*

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Eight-year-old Khadija Akhter has never been to school. She is also well past the eligible age to enter a primary school.

A member of the Manta community, she was born and lived her whole life with her family in a boat at a riverbank in Char Montaz Launch Ghat area, a remote shoal in Patuakhali's Rangabali upazila.

The community survives on fishing and leads a nomadic life in boats since losing their lands to river erosion and climate change. They have no identity, like National Identity Cards or birth registration.

Attending school is, at very best, an alien concept to her. But the unthinkable has become possible for her, thanks to an initiative of local nongovernment organisation Jago Nari with funding from UK-based donor agency Muslim Charity.

They inaugurated a floating school at a remote shoal area near her fishing community.

Her nineteen-year-old brother Md Ripon, never having had the privilege of attending school himself, recently enrolled his sister in the free school.

"I never got an opportunity at education. But I should send my sister when there is a chance of a better future," Ripon told The Daily Star.

There are a total of 86 Manta families in Char Montaz area, with a population of 350, including 100 children.

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Children from Manta community and a teacher inside a classroom of a floating school on the Bura Gouranga river in Patuakhali's Rangabali upazila. Inset, Deputy Commissioner Matiu Islam Chowdhury inaugurating the free school on October 18.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

# JSC, JDC EXAMS Four-point grading from 2020

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The results of Junior School Certificate and Junior Dakhil Certificate examinations are likely to be published under four-point grading scale from 2020, said Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday.

She said this during a press briefing on JSC and JDC examinations -- to begin on November 2 -- at the secretariat.

Currently, the results of public examinations up to higher secondary level are published under grade point average, commonly known as GPA, scale of five.

The government has been planning to make the change to comply with the grading system used by local and international universities, said education ministry officials.

Dipu Moni yesterday called upon the parents not to push their children into unhealthy competition of getting GPA-5.

She said the government ordered all coaching centres

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# Bangladesh 10th easiest country to get away with killing a journo

AGENCIES

Impunity for the murders of journalists is still overwhelmingly the norm in more than a dozen countries, including Bangladesh, a Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) report warned yesterday.

The study titled "Getting Away with Murder" was released ahead of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists on November 2.

The New York-based group's report placed Bangladesh, with 10 unsolved murders, at 10th spot on a list of 13 worst offenders.

In the past decade, 318 journalists have been killed for their work across the globe, the report found. Of those cases, some 243 perpetrators have gone unpunished.

Of the murders, some 222 were in the 13 countries listed in the report, CPJ said, with many of the cases linked to war and civil unrest.

The countries "represent a mix of conflict-ridden regions and more stable countries where criminal groups, politicians, government officials, and other powerful actors resort to violence to silence critical and investigative reporting."

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# UK set for polls to end Brexit chaos

*Opposition parties back PM's December 12 election*

REUTERS, London

Britain was heading towards its first December election in almost a century after Prime Minister Boris Johnson's bet on breaking the Brexit deadlock with an early ballot gained support from opposition parties yesterday.

As the European Union agreed a third delay to the divorce that was originally supposed to take place on March 29, the United Kingdom, its parliament and its electorate remain divided on how or indeed whether to go ahead with Brexit.

Johnson, who had promised to deliver Brexit on Oct. 31 "do or die", has repeatedly demanded an election to end what he casts as a nightmare paralysis that is sapping public trust in politicians by frustrating any Brexit outcome at all.

After parliament refused Johnson his third demand for an election on Monday, he was set to try to force a bill through parliament yesterday that calls for a Dec. 12 election. It needs a simple majority in parliament.

In a move that aligns the stars for an election after months of Brexit discord, Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, said he would back an election now the threat of Britain exiting the EU without a transition deal had been removed.

"Whatever date the House decides the election will be, I'm ready for it, we're ready for it," Corbyn told parliament.

Johnson said the House of Commons was obstructing Brexit and thus damaging the economy by preventing investment decisions, and corroding faith in democracy.

"There is only one way to get Brexit done in the face of this unrelenting parliamentary obstructionism - this endless wilful fingers-crossed 'not me Guv' refusal to deliver on the mandate of the people - and that is, Mr

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# Three killed in single 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three men were killed in what Rab said was a gunfight with their members in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila early yesterday.

Rab said the three, aged between 26 and 30, were active operatives of a robber gang, however, the elite force could not provide identities of the deceased till filing of this report last night.

Being tipped off that a group of robbers gathered in Chhoto Kumira area to conduct a robbery, a team of Rab-7 raided the spot around 2:00am, said Mahmudul Hasan Mamun, assistant director of Rab-7 Media Wing.

Sensing presence of the Rab personnel, the robbers opened fire on them, forcing them to retaliate which eventually triggered a gunfight, he said.

Later, Rab members found three bullet-hit

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# Origin of modern humans traced to Botswana



AFP, Paris

Modern humans emerged 200,000 years ago in a region of northern Botswana, scientists claimed Monday, in what appeared to be the most precise location of mankind's "ancestral homeland" yet discovered.

While it has long been known anatomically modern humans -- homo sapiens -- originated in Africa, scientists have until now been unable to pinpoint the precise location of our species' birthplace.

An international team of researchers took DNA samples from 200 Khoesan people, an ethnic group known to carry a high proportion of a branch of DNA known as L0, living in modern day South

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# Eight held for rape in 3 districts

STAR REPORT

Police have arrested six people on charge of gang-raping a woman in Ashulia, while a madrasa teacher has been sent to jail for sexually harassing a student in Narayanganj.

Besides, another madrasa teacher and a teenage boy have been detained for attempting to rape a third-grader in Jashore Sadar upazila and a two-year-old girl in Sharsha upazila.

In Ashulia of Dhaka, Robin, 22, Akbar Hossain, 23, Shanto, 21, Imran, 20, Nahid, 21, and Azimuddin

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**PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 30**

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
 AZAN 4-50 12-45 4-00 5-32 7-15  
 JAMAAT 5-25 1-15 4-15 5-35 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# They built bridge on their own

*Authorities did not repair the broken one in 4 years*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Locals of Gaddimari village have taken it upon themselves to build a bridge made of bamboo after the government failed to do so, despite repeated appeals.

The concrete bridge over a canal at the Teesta basin had collapsed around four years ago in the village of Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha upazila, which locals were now replacing with a bamboo bridge.

They donated the bamboo and raised funds for the construction of the bridge, which is being built to ensure better communication to the upazila headquarters.

Nurnabi Islam, an ex-member of the Gaddimari Union Parishad, said the locals had been working together to build the around 400 metres bridge over the canal since Thursday and only a

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Locals building a bridge with bamboo on a canal in Gaddimari village of Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha upazila. They are putting in the effort after failing to get any help from the authorities to repair a bridge that collapsed in 2015. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Baghdadi given burial at sea

*US officials say remains of IS chief afforded religious rites, did not disclose where ritual was performed*

REUTERS, Washington

The United States has given the remains of Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi a burial at sea and afforded him religious rites according to Islamic custom after he was killed in a US commando raid in Syria on Saturday, three officials told Reuters.

Baghdadi, an Iraqi jihadist who rose from obscurity to declare himself "caliph" of all Muslims as the leader of Islamic State, died by detonating a suicide vest after fleeing into a dead-end tunnel as elite US special forces closed in, according to the US government.

The US officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, did not disclose where the ritual was performed or how long it lasted. Two officials said they believed his remains were delivered to the sea from an aircraft.

US Army General Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a Pentagon news briefing on Monday that the US military disposed of Baghdadi's remains "appropriately, in accordance with our (standard operating procedures) and in accordance with the law of armed conflict."

Given the gruesome nature of Baghdadi's death, it was unlikely the US military followed as complete a process as it did after Navy SEALs killed al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden in a 2011 raid into Pakistan. Bin Laden was killed by a gunshot wound to the head, according to the US government.

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