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Fiddling with disaster

Hydrogen gas cylinders used for inflating balloons pose risk of explosion

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

It is hard to find a birthday party without a few floating balloons.

But in order to get the balloons to defy gravity, one needs a gas that's lighter than air, namely hydrogen or helium.

Since hydrogen is the cheaper of the two gases, most vendors in the country use it to inflate balloons.

However, the method in which most of the vendors produce the inflammable gas has proven to be risky on many occasions.

A cylinder used for inflating balloons exploded last week in the capital's Rupnagar killing seven children and injuring 20 others. Six of the injured children are being treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.



Besides, a hydrogen balloon can cause mishaps if it catches fire.

"There is neither any act nor any regulation regarding the use of hydrogen in balloons," Samsul Alam, chief inspector of the Department of Explosives, told The Daily Star.

Officials and balloon sellers said that the vendors collect old and discarded LPG and CNG cylinders and, with some modifications, use them for producing hydrogen.

LPG and CNG cylinders and, with some modifications, use them for producing hydrogen.

They modify the cylinders to be able to put aluminium powder, sodium hydroxide and water inside, and then seal it, said Samsul.

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A police man looks on as a JSC examinee's father and uncle check the student's folder for necessities before he walks off to the exam hall at Motijheel Government Boys' High School. A total of 26,61,682 students are taking the JSC and JDC exams that started across the country yesterday. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Kuet shut after clash over soccer match

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KHULNA

University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) was closed for an indefinite period yesterday after students of two dormitories clashed over a football match on Friday, which left six injured.

"The residential students have been asked to vacate the halls," said Kuet Vice-chancellor Quazi Sazzaad Hossain, adding, "To avoid any untoward incident, the university authorities made the decision."

Male students were asked to leave their dormitories by 5:00pm yesterday and female students by 10:00am today, he added.

Around 3,500 students reside in seven dormitories, including the female one.

Visiting the Kuet campus around 1:30pm yesterday, this correspondent found students leaving with their belongings. Some of them were going to nearby student messes or their relatives' houses.

Talking to this correspondent, some students said the sudden closure of their educational

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Pretty Italian town offers free houses

CNN ONLINE

Over the past few years, numerous towns in Italy have resorted to selling homes for just over a dollar in a bid to revitalize their dwindling communities.

Zungoli near Naples and Sicily's Sambuca were the most recent Italian destinations to get in on the act, launching schemes promoting dilapidated properties for just over a dollar with the hope of attracting new residents.

Now, the Sicilian town of Cammarata has gone one step further -- offering homes for absolutely nothing.

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No case for next 7 days

Says Quader about new Road Transport Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No case will be filed under the new Road and Transport Act (RTA) for the next seven days when public awareness programmes on the matter will be conducted, said Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday.

"Major developments in the road sector have taken place, but there is a lack of discipline.... It may take time but we believe this law will bring discipline on the roads," he said during an awareness programme at Signboard area in Narayanganj district.

The minister said accidents and traffic jams were major concerns and tougher laws were needed to solve those, but awareness was also needed.

"It is not possible to bring discipline by implementing laws only. People have to be aware... We are now campaigning for that," he added.

Meanwhile, transport owners yesterday

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Trump predicts 'angry majority' in 2020 polls

IMPEACHMENT PROBE

AFP, Tupelo

A combative US President Donald Trump told supporters in his electoral stronghold of Mississippi on Friday that a push to impeach him is driving an "angry" Republican surge ahead of 2020.

"We've never had greater support than we have right now," Trump claimed in front of thousands of cheering supporters in a packed arena in Tupelo.

The latest average of polls shows only 40.9 percent of Americans approve of Trump, but the fired-up president clearly sees his core base as essential to his political survival -- and reelection next year.

He called impeachment proceedings against him in the Democratic-led House of Representatives "an attack on democracy itself."

"But I tell you the Republicans are really strong," he said, touting the emergence of "an angry majority."

The rally in Tupelo was Trump's first since the House voted overwhelmingly -- but along sharply divided party lines -- to put the impeachment probe on a formal track.

That vote Thursday set in motion a likely unstoppable drive toward

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PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 3

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-55	12-45	4-00	5-30	7-15
JAMAAT 5-30	1-15	4-15	5-34	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Today is the 6th Death Anniversary of **Begum Rabeya Ahmed**

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

METRO RAIL. CONSTRUCTED WITH ONLY BASHUNDHARA CEMENT

Bangladesh makes significant strides toward socioeconomic development. As part of it, the government has moved to establish railway communications from city's Uttara to Motijheel to facilitate hassle-free journey of the people. Bashundhara Cement, the only cement being used in the mega project, is a trusted brand to local and foreign companies.

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