

Sylhet's archaeological heritage about to find new home



Officials from the Department of Archaeology yesterday visited "Jitu Miah'r Bari" -- a hundred-year-old house. It is one of the proposed sites for Sylhet Divisional Archaeological Museum.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

To promote the heritage of the region, the Department of Archaeology is planning to establish the Sylhet Divisional Archaeological Museum. With this goal, Department of Archaeology Director General (DG) Md Hannan Mia visited Sylhet yesterday to look for a suitable site for the museum. The regional office of the department for Chattogram and Sylhet divisions filed a memorandum to the DG on November 5 proposing three prospective sites for the museum. These sites are: Jaintia Rajbari under Jaintiapur upazila; Sylhet Central Jail-2 (popularly known as "Old Jail"); and "Jitu Miah'r Bari" --

a hundred-year-old house originally owned by Khan Bahadur Abu Nasar Mohammad Ahia alias Jitu Miah. DG Hannan Mia said, "To boost tourism in the area, we are planning to develop archaeological sites in Sylhet city, Jaintiapur upazila in Sylhet, and Laurer Garh of Sunamganj." "I have visited the proposed sites for the museum and will select the most suitable location. Considering everything, Jitu Miah'r Bari seems to be the best choice so far," he said about the possible site for the establishment. The DG added, "We are going to work on the legal issues necessary to get the museum started. A gazette will be published after all legal procedures are completed."

Md Ataur Rahman, regional director of the department, said, "Sylhet is brimming with archaeological sites. The museum will showcase the region's culture. Archaeological collections and artefacts from collectors will be gathered in the museum for younger generations to learn from." Abdul Hye Al-Hadi, coordinator of Save the Heritage and Environment, said, "Sylhet's archaeological heritage is scattered all across the region. Important cultural artefacts can be found at personal museums or in private collections. If the museum is established, it will prove to be helpful in conserving the region's cultural heritage."

PHOTO: COLLECTED

'Stand by people' PM to new air force cadets

UNB, Jashore

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said everyone expects the newly-commissioned officer cadets of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) to serve the country and stand beside citizens selflessly. "You'll stand beside the people selflessly and serve the country...this is everyone's expectation," she said while speaking at this year's President's Parade at BAF Academy in Jashore. From now on, the sacred responsibility of protecting the country's independence and sovereignty is in the hands of the new officer cadets, she said. "You always have to be vigilant and ready to discharge your duties," she added. "You've to obey senior officials and maintain the chain of command, so that BAF can be a force strong in discipline," the PM said. Hasina said the life of a soldier is a tough one due to the constant moral struggle of being dutiful and ready to sacrifice for the country. "You must not stray from the right path," she told the new officers. Sheikh Hasina directed the newly-commissioned officer cadets to develop themselves by working hard and being honest, sincere and virtuous. She elaborated on various steps of the government for modernising and strengthening the air force. She said the government wants to establish BAF as a modern force. Referring to the Forces Goal 2030, which was formulated in light of the defence policy of the Father of the Nation, she said the government has been implementing the forces goal in phases. Putting emphasis on imparting proper training to air force members, she said the government has given priority to providing appropriate training in a

CTG-8 BY-POLLS Campaign gaining momentum

ARUN BIKASH DEY, CTG

Campaign for Chattogram-8 by-polls is gaining momentum with the election getting closer. In their relentless efforts to garner people's support, candidates are going door to door. In the constituency (Boalkhali-Chandgaon), a total of six candidates -- including an independent -- are competing in the polls scheduled for January 13. Locals said there will be a fight between ruling Awami League and BNP candidates although contestants from other parties -- including Bangladesh Nationalist Front, Islamic Front Bangladesh and National Awami Party -- are also in the race. AL-nominated Moslem Uddin Ahmed, in his campaign, is pledging for a road bridge over the river Karnaphuli. Moslem, also president of Chattogram south district unit of AL, yesterday organised a views-exchange meeting with journalists at Chattogram Press Club where he said he is in touch with the pulse of locals as he was born in Chattogram. On the other hand, BNP candidate Abu Sufian is not familiar with this as he is "an outsider", Moslem added. Moslem said, if he is elected, works on a road bridge in Kalurghat will start in a year. Moslem said he wants to be elected with people's support in a participatory polls. "I do not want violence. I want a fair election," he said at the meeting. Meanwhile, BNP candidate Abu Sufian is campaigning for people's rights to vote. "We want to free our leader Begum Khaleida Zia from jail," he said while talking to The Daily Star. "My appeal to voters is to give me mandate to stand against the government's wrongdoings," he said. Abu Sufian from Chokoria in Cox's Bazar has been permanently living in Chattogram's Chandgaon for years. Talking about the outsider issue, he said, "It is an obtuse weapon in the modern age... when Bangladeshi origins Tuilp and Rushanara are elected lawmakers in British parliament." About the bridge, Sufian said, "As far as I know, the government is planning to build a rail bridge in Kalurghat but people's demand is for a road-rail bridge... what Moslem is pledging is sheer deception with voters." "If I am elected, I will try my best to realise people's demand for a rail-road bridge in Kalurghat," he said. A total of 4,75,988 voters are expected to cast their votes through electronic voting machine in the polls, said election commission officials.

City polls coinciding with Saraswati Puja

Hindu leaders demand rescheduling of election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Hindu community yesterday protested Election Commission's decision to hold the two Dhaka city corporation polls on the day of Saraswati Puja (January 30). They expressed their dissatisfaction at a joint meeting of Bangladesh Puja Uddjan Parishad and Mahanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee, said a press release. Saraswati Puja falls on the fifth day of the Bengali month of Magh, when Hindus worship Saraswati,

GOVT-SET RICE PRICE Increase profit margin up to 25pc: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called upon the government to increase the profit margin up to 25 percent while setting the price of rice, and create a framework to ensure direct procurement from farmers. They also urged the government to take necessary steps to reduce Haor area farmers' dependence on single crop to minimise financial loss. The seminar, titled "Fair price of rice: Crisis and proposal in the context of Haor", was organised jointly by Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) and Bangladesh Resource Center for Indigenous Knowledge (BARCIK) at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka. Poba Chairman Abu Naser Khan said fair price of rice is directly related to food security. "If the farmers do not get fair price, they

would be reluctant to cultivate paddy. This would, in turn, push the country towards a serious food crisis," he said. Naser said farmers' livelihood is correlated to education, health and other sectors. "When farmers have money, they spend on better education and medical treatment. Thus, more investment flows to rural areas for improvement of infrastructure," he said. Quoting a report of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Director of BARCIK Syed Ali Biswas said Bangladesh has earned the top position in rice production. In 2018, the growth rate was 5.67 per cent and according to forecast the pace of growth will remain stable in future, he further added. "Though farmers, the government and other organisations have contributed to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



CARE Bangladesh signed an MoU with The Daily Star yesterday to co-create content and explore multiple media avenues. Editor and Publisher of the newspaper Mahfuz Anam was present on the occasion. Zia Choudhury, country director of CARE Bangladesh, said, "In collaboration with The Daily Star, CARE Bangladesh hopes to shed light on the work, progress and future endeavours that we will work towards." He hoped this partnership would initiate a movement for tolerance, opportunity, social justice, dignity and security for all.

PHOTO: STAR



United Hospital Managing Director Faridur Rahman Khan presented a 2020 calendar, designed with photographs of boat, to Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque at his Secretariat office yesterday, to pay tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, marking Father of the Nation's birth centenary. Dr Shagufa Anwar, hospital's chief of communication and business development; Brig Gen (retd) Shahidul Islam, chief of operation and administration; and Dr Mahbud Uddin Ahmed, chief of clinical services, were also present.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

2 JMB suspects held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-14) arrested two suspected members of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) from an under-construction house in Mymensingh city's Digarkanda area early yesterday. The arrestees are Ayatullah Al Kabir (19), from Kalmakanda upazila in Netrokona; and Abu Abdullah Md Soyaeb (25), from Lohagara upazila in Chattogram, Rab sources said. Kabir is a pathology student at a medical institute while Soyaeb is an employee at a company that deals with machineries in Mymensingh city, they added. At a press conference yesterday, Rab-14 Commander Lt Col Iftekhar Uddin said a group were holding a clandestine meeting to plan subversive activities in the area. On information, a Rab team raided the area around 12:30am, he added. Law enforcers caught the two from the spot but the others managed to escape. The team also seized books promoting extremism, two laptops, two mobile phones and leaflets from their possession. During primary interrogation, the arrestees confessed that they are active members of JMB since 2017, Rab claimed. After interrogation, they were handed over to Kotwali Police Station.

'Will keep memory of Jibananda Das alive'

Says state minister for cultural affairs in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

To preserve the memory of Jibananda Das, a sculpture and a memorial complex will be constructed at his ancestral place in Barishal, KM Khalid, state minister of cultural affairs, promised local cultural activists yesterday. Besides, construction work of Barishal district Shilpakala Academy Complex will be completed on February 27 next year, he said. District-level programmes related to the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be conducted there, the state minister said while visiting the construction site on Bandar Road. He said, "We will take steps to preserve the memories of renowned locals who have greatly contributed to the society." "Funds will not be an obstacle for cultural activities, and the cultural ministry

will extend all kinds of support in this regard," he added. Barishal Deputy Commissioner SM Ajjor Rahman presided over a meeting held on the site. Construction work of Shilpakala Academy Complex started in 2016 with an initial budge of Tk 17 crore, which was later extended to Tk 28 crore. The Shilpakala complex will have four floors with a total space of 16,600 square feet. It will have a 500-seat auditorium, open stage, art gallery and library, said Oliver Guda, executive engineer of Public Works Department, Barishal. Jibananda Das, one of the greatest poets of the Bangla language, was born on February 17, 1899 in Barishal of erstwhile East Bengal, and completed his matriculation from Brajamohan School in the district in 1915.

WATERAID BANGLADESH Hasin Jahan new country director

CITY DESK

WaterAid has appointed Hasin Jahan as the new country director of Bangladesh, said a press release. Hasin has been pursuing her progressive career in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector for the last 25 years, holding key positions at prominent organisations. Prior to joining WaterAid Bangladesh, Hasin worked as country director of Practical Action. Hasin is a civil engineer who graduated from Buet. She completed her master's degree in water and environmental management from Loughborough University of Technology in the UK. She is a popular blog writer, and is a member of different national and international committees. On the occasion, Hasin said she looks forward to working with WaterAid again, and she will focus on transforming lives of the most marginalised people by ensuring water, sanitation and hygiene for all by 2030. WaterAid is a UK-based international charity promoting safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in over 28 countries and has been working in Bangladesh since 1986.

Road accidents claim 6 lives

STAR REPORT

The last two days have seen six more people die in separate road accidents across three districts, our correspondents report. In Sripur upazila in Gazipur, two people were killed and three others were injured in separate road accidents yesterday, reports our Gazipur correspondent. Police suspect the ongoing spell of heavy fog contributed to both the accidents. In an accident at Master Bari on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in front of the Pushpadum resort, driver Shahinur (30) was killed when his covered van lost control and hit a pick-up truck parked by the road. He was killed on the spot, Mawna Highway Police Station sub-inspector Abul Hashem said. Police recovered his body and handed it over to family members. Meanwhile, Burju Mia (60), a fish trader from Kishoreganj, died in an accident on the Kawraid-Barmi road at Sohadia village. Three of his children were injured in the accident. Burju Mia was critically injured following a collision between a truck and an auto-rickshaw

and was taken to Sripur Upazila Health Complex, police said. However, his condition deteriorated gradually and he died before he could reach the hospital. In Gopalganj, two people were killed in two separate road accidents in the last two days, reports our Faridpur correspondent. In Raghunath village under Sadar upazila, Amit Sheikh (25), son of Kuddus Sheikh, died after crashing his motorcycle by the road on Wednesday evening, witnesses said. Critically injured, he was rushed to Gopalganj General Hospital. As his condition worsened, he was referred to Khulna Medical College Hospital. He died on the way to Khulna. Meanwhile in Garakhola area under Mukshudpur upazila of the district, truck-driver Rajon Sheikh (25), son of Kamrul Sheikh, died after losing control of his vehicle and crashing it into a roadside tree, said Bhanga Highway Police Station OC Ataur Rahman. The accident happened on the Dhaka-Khulna highway.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

DEFAMATION CASE AGAINST BARRISTER MAINUL Next hearing on April 12

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed April 12 for hearing on the charge framing against Barrister Mainul Hosein in connection with a defamation case filed last year. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Kaisarul Islam set the date after Mainul's lawyer submitted a petition seeking adjournment of the hearing. Mainul was not present during this time. Complainant Masuda Bhatti, acting editor of Dainik Amader Notun Shomoy, sought time for charge hearing in the case. On October 16 last year, Mainul hurled abusive words at Masuda Bhatti and termed her "characterless" on a talk show. Following the incident, Masuda Bhatti filed a case with the Court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Muhammad Asaduzzaman Nour in Dhaka on October 21. Another case was filed by the convener of Jamalpur Jubo Mohila League Farzana Yasmin Lita with the Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Soleman Kabir the same day. On October 23, Detective Branch of police arrested Mainul from the capital's Uttara in a case filed against him in Rangpur. The next day, a Dhaka court sent him to jail after detectives produced him before it. As many as 23 cases were filed against him across the country over the incident. The HC on different dates granted him bail in 13 cases. On January 27, he was released on bail, before being sent to jail again on September 3.