



www.bsrn.com

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

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT

**BSRM**  
building a safer nation



**GUINNESS**  
**WORLD RECORDS**  
**RECOGNIZES**

World's Largest VRM



**SHAH**  
**CEMENT**

# Left out in the cold

*Around 350 become homeless as fire rips through Baunia slum in the capital's Mirpur*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ash-blackened bare feet and thin, shivering people shuffled about on the premises of Ananda Niketon Model School as a fire blazed through Bauniabandh slum early yesterday. The residents fled with just the clothes on their backs.

The fire, which broke out around 12:45am, gutted 87 homes and 17 shops, and left at least 350 people homeless. Eleven fire engines doused the flames around 1:50am, said Ershad Hossain, duty officer at Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters.

While homes and livelihoods were burnt to a crisp, the people were left freezing as the mercury dipped to 12 degrees Celsius.

Shahana and her brother Ratan Miah waited in line to get their names registered as victims. Both were barefoot. Ratan had a thin military-issue blanket wrapped around him, while Shahana shivered in just her cotton sari.

"We are originally from Kishoreganj. We lived in the same shanty. It had two rooms that housed each of our families," Shahana told The Daily Star.

They both pull garbage carts around the neighbourhood. They have no relative in Dhaka they could seek help from. The cold concrete floor of the school is their only refuge as long as the authorities allow them to stay there.

Beside them, 2-year-old Jannatul, exhausted from the night's happenings, dozed off. She wore just a thin shirt and a pair of cotton shorts. Her grandmother Bokula tried

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2



Clad in yellow saris, women prepare pithas (rice cakes) at Nobanno Utsab in Baburghon village of Chapainawabganj's Gomastapur upazila yesterday. The traditional harvest festival is celebrated in rural areas with food, dance and music as new crops bring with them happiness for farmers.

PHOTO: RABTUL HASAN



## On this day in 1971

DECEMBER 28  
Awami League decide to commemorate January 9 as "Sheikh Mujib Day" demanding the immediate release of Bangabandhu, a report from ENA says.

Sheikh Mujib refrained from radio or newspapers during the nine-month long Liberation War, a source from Rawalpindi reports. After he was taken to house arrest, he learned about the war after April 1971.

Eminent author and producer Zahir Raihan, in a press conference, alleges the Al-Badr members were the executors of hundreds

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## JP creates new post for Raushan

*Amends charter to have 15 more posts; the party to hold council today*

RASHIDUL HASAN

In a major change to its charter, main opposition in parliament the Jatiya Party yesterday created a ceremonial post called "chief patron" and picked Raushan Ershad for it.

The party also introduced eight new posts of additional secretary generals and seven new posts of co-chairmen.

The decisions were made at an emergency meeting of the party's presidium held at JP chairman's Banani office in the capital yesterday.

After the meeting, JP Secretary General Moshir Rahman Ranga said Raushan would enjoy the highest honour in all general meetings and other programmes of the party.

Raushan will remain in the post as long as she is alive, he also said.

Ranga, however, said the party's highest power would remain in the hands of GM Quader and he would preside over all the party meetings.

The changes have been brought in allegedly to pacify a section of party leaders who wanted Raushan to become the chairperson at the ninth council of the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

## CONTROVERSIAL CITIZENSHIP ACT IN INDIA

# Tensions rise as rival camps take to the streets

AFP, Mumbai

Thousands protested in rival demonstrations in India yesterday as tensions rise over a citizenship law seen as anti-Muslim, with authorities deploying huge numbers of riot police in the country.

Twenty-seven people have died in two weeks of at times violent demonstrations after Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government made it easier for non-Muslims from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh to be naturalised.

Coupled with a mooted citizens register, it has stoked fears -- including in Washington and the UN rights office -- about the marginalisation of Muslims who make up 14 percent of India's 1.3 billion people.

Hundreds of armed policemen patrolled areas of the financial capital Mumbai, where demonstrators rallied both in favour of and against the legislation, underlining the divisions rippling through India.

First-time protester Amanda Castellino said she had joined the demonstrations "to safeguard India's secular ethos".

"At this moment, either we can stay silent and mute for the rest of our lives or speak up", the 27-year-old told AFP on the sidelines of the rally, which was attended by around 5,000 people.

A similar number of protesters showed up at a rival pro-government demonstration in the city, clutching flags and posters in favour of the new law.

"We should welcome persecuted Hindus back home without any restrictions," said Mahindra Shah, an 82-year-old protester.

"Why do Muslims need to come here when Pakistan, Afghanistan and

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

## Geopolitical divides may deepen in SA

14 noted citizens say on new law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fourteen South Asian citizens said India's Citizenship Amendment Act had the potential to deepen geopolitical divides among the countries of the region.

"We independent citizens of countries neighbouring India wish to register our reservations about the Citizenship Amendment Act adopted by India's Parliament, which aims to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslims who approach from three countries -- Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan," read a joint statement issued on Thursday.

Signatories to the statement include Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury, rights activist Hameeda Hossain,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

## Netherlands isn't Holland anymore



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The Netherlands is gearing up to drop the moniker "Holland" as it rebrands itself in 2020.

Holland is a region of the Netherlands, but the two names are often used interchangeably to describe the northern European country.

From January, the Netherlands will officially drop "Holland" from all literature and marketing materials, so the country will only be referred to be its official name.

The rebrand, which cost €200,000, is part of a wider relaunch of the country's image, reports the Sydney Morning Herald.

It comes before the country is due to host the Eurovision Song Contest and participate in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The orange tulip logo has been axed in favour of the letters NL, which look like a stylised tulip,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## 2 killed as truck veers off road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

At least two people were killed yesterday as a truck carrying livestock skidded off the road and plunged into a pond beside Dhaka-Aricha highway in Jorjol area of Savar, on the outskirts of the capital.

The deceased were identified as Jakaria Jakir, 30, a livestock trader from Joypurhat and Hasan, 23, assistant of the trucker, said Liton Ahmed, senior station officer at Savar Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Another businessman

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6  
PHOTO ON PAGE 2



**PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 28**

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN	5:30	12:45	4:00	5:27	7:00
JAMAAT	6:05	1:15	4:15	5:30	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## INDIGENOUS/ADIVASI NGOs asked to drop the words from their names

SANJOY KUMAR BARUA, Bandarban

NGO Affairs Bureau has directed all the registered NGOs that have the words "indigenous/ativasi" in their titles to rename themselves by dropping the words.

A December 19 letter, signed by Shilu Ray, assistant director of the Bureau, has asked the NGOs to implement the directive within a month.

The letter says, "According to article 23 (ka) of the constitution of Bangladesh, no community has been identified as Adivasi. Besides, as part of global indigenous politics, a local/international vested quarter is active in realising benefits, mentioned in ILO convention 169 for indigenous people, which the NGO Affairs Bureau considers a threat to non-communal Bangladesh.

"Considering the reality of the Chattogram Hill

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5



Emergency and security personnel are working at the site of a plane crash near Almaty, Kazakhstan, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 12 die in Kazakh plane crash

AFP, Almaty

Twelve people died when a plane carrying 100 passengers and crew crashed shortly after takeoff in Kazakhstan yesterday and collided with a house, but many onboard survived without serious injury.


The 23-year-old plane operated by budget carrier Bek Air was torn apart and its nose crushed on impact with a building that partially collapsed, a video released by the Central Asian country's emergencies committee showed.

The aircraft disappeared from the radar minutes after it took off from Almaty airport at 7:05 am (01:05 GMT) on its way to the capital Nur-Sultan with 95 passengers and five crew members aboard, the airport authority said in a statement.

It hit a concrete barrier and then slammed into an

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

Today is the 22<sup>nd</sup> Death Anniversary of  
**Engr. Ejabuddin Ahmed**



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