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UK enters new era

Exits EU single market

AFP, London

Britain yesterday began a new year and life outside the European Union after leaving the bloc's single market, with the first trucks crossing the Channel by ferry and rail reporting largely plain sailing despite new customs rules.

Brexit, which has dominated politics on both sides of the Channel since 2016, became reality an hour before midnight on Thursday, ending the United Kingdom's 48-year obligation to follow Brussels' rules.

Free movement of over 500 million people between Britain and the 27 EU states ended.

More rigorous customs checks returned for the first time in decades, despite the hard-fought brokering of a tariff and quota-free trade deal.

But the approach to key port Dover, where ferries to and from northern France dock, was quiet as dawn broke.

"It's good to see the port's done its job and there's no backlog," said Alan Leigh, 52, of nearby Folkestone, taking an early morning stroll on the cliffs above Dover's docks.

Scores of heavy goods vehicles also passed through the Channel Tunnel connecting Britain and France by train "without any problem" early yesterday, its operator said.

However, the British government, which is implementing a phased introduction of checks, expects next week to be the true test, once the quiet holiday period is over.

New Year's Day newspapers reflected the historic but still deeply divisive change, which will have repercussions for generations to come.

The front-page photograph on the pro-Brexit Daily Express showed the White Cliffs of Dover -- an enduring symbol of Britishness -- with "Freedom" written on a Union flag.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



A child collecting sap from a date palm tree while also pouring a bottle of the winter delicacy into the mouth of a friend, who is perched lower down the trunk of the tree. The photo was taken recently in Barishal Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

ROHINGYA LENS MAN 51 eminent citizens call for release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty-one academics, human rights activists and lawyers have issued a statement demanding the release of Rohingya photographer Abul Kalam, who they claim landed in jail on Thursday for taking photos of buses departing Kutupalong for Bhasan Char.

Photographer Abul Kalam was brought to the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court in Ukhiya on Thursday with charges of impeding officers from discharging their duties during an incident that happened over seven months ago, according to court documents obtained by The Daily Star.

Dr CR Abrar, one of the 51 signatories to the statement, said Kalam was sent to Cox's Bazar Jail by a magistrate on Thursday.

However, Public Prosecutor Faridul Alam of Cox's Bazar said he was not aware of any such development.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

The poor suffer as cold wave sweeps North

Lowest temperature recorded at 7.6 degrees Celsius in Tentulia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

People of low income group are suffering immensely as a mild to moderate cold wave sweeping through the country's northern region.

According to Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), the lowest temperature yesterday was recorded in Tentulia at 7.6 degrees Celsius.

Mohammad Rasel Shah, officer at Tentulia Weather Observation Centre, said a moderate cold wave from the Himalayan side was sweeping over the region.

The cold wave has been sweeping over the region for about two weeks already and it might continue for several more days, he added.

Meanwhile, as the falling temperature is forcing people to stay indoors from afternoon, businesses are being hampered.

Poor people are suffering due to lack of warm clothes.

The district administration, a bunch of well-off people and several non-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Resist bid to foil election



Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressing a big public meeting at Pirojpur on January 2, 1973.

January 2, 1973

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU VISITS PIROJPUR

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today says some have realised that people would not vote for them and they are trying to create disruption to foil the elections. Addressing a mammoth gathering at Pirojpur, Bangabandhu says the people would go to polls again. He adds that he could have stayed in power for five years; instead of that he is going to the people for their mandate. If he is not given the mandate he would go, reiterates the prime minister.

Explaining why he accepted prime ministership on his return from Pakistan, Bangabandhu says people call him Father of the Nation, prime ministership is nothing to him. "I was compelled to accept the prime ministership so that help could come from all over the world," he adds. He points out that 97 countries of the world have already recognised Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu asks people to work hard for the reconstruction

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Covid cases lower in Dec than in the past month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though the number of daily tests increased, a fall in the total number of coronavirus cases was seen in December compared to the previous month.

In December, 4, 54,897 tests were done and 48,578 of them were Covid-19 positive.

Some 4,36,439 tests were carried out in November and 57,248 of those were positive.

With the arrival of winter, Covid-19 positive cases started going up in the country.

However, the death toll from the virus rose last month.

In November, the death toll was 721, while the figure was 915 last month, according to the daily reports of Directorate General of Health Services.

Alongside the drop in the number of total

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Rogue squirrels attacking New Yorkers in Queens



AFP, New York

People living in the Rego Park neighborhood of Queens have reported several squirrel attacks over the past month, with one woman needing emergency attention after a bite to the hand.

One resident told local media she leaves the house with pepper spray in case of encountering an aggressive squirrel or a pack, and others voiced fear for their children.

"Next thing I know, it's a cage match and I'm losing," Micheline Frederick told the local ABC7 station of an instance that saw a squirrel bite or scratch her neck, necessitating a precautionary rabies shot.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BCL leader shot dead in Teknaf

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A local leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League was shot dead in Teknaf over what police said was his enmity with two local men.

Mohammad Osman Sikder, 30, was the vice president of Teknaf Chhatra League, police said.

He had rivalry with Mohammad Saker and Kefayet Ullah. Saker is the son of former union parishad chairman Mohammad Abdullah, said Mohammad Nurul Bashar, general secretary of Teknaf Awami League.

Osman recently filed a complaint against the duo with police after he was injured in an attack, he added.

Osman was going to a mosque early yesterday

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Two 'JMB members' held in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday detained two men for their alleged involvement with banned militant outfit Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh.

The duo -- Mohammad Yahya, 22, and Hujaiifa Saad, 20 -- was detained in Brahmanbaria's Sarail upazila around dawn, said Rab.

Additional Superintendent of Police Rofiuddin Mohammad Zobayer, who is also the company commander of Rab-14's Bhairab camp,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Rabeya, a young deaf and mute girl, cradles her baby brother in her arms as they enjoy the early morning warmth to stave off the winter chill. Her parents and another brother are also deaf and mute. The photo was taken near the Mohanagar Natya Mancha in the capital's Gulistan yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Justice will be served'

Iran says Qasem Soleimani killers 'not safe on Earth'

AFP, Tehran

Iran's judiciary chief yesterday warned that Qasem Soleimani's killers will "not be safe on Earth", as the Islamic republic began marking the first anniversary of the top general's assassination in a US strike.

Ebrahim Raisi, speaking at an event in Tehran to pay tribute to Soleimani, said not even US President Donald Trump, who ordered the strike, was "immune from justice".

Soleimani was killed in a US drone strike at Baghdad airport on January 3, ratcheting up tensions between decades-old arch foes the United States and Iran.

"They will witness a severe revenge. What has come so far has only been glimpses" of it, Raisi told the gathering at Tehran University.

"Do not presume that someone, as the president of America, who appeared as a murderer or ordered a murder, may be immune from justice being carried out. Never," he said.

"Those who had a role in this in this assassination and crime will not be safe on Earth."

The event was attended by Iranian officials, and speakers included representatives from allied regional countries and forces, namely Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen.

A separate event is expected to be held in the coming days in Kerman, Soleimani's hometown where he is buried.

Soleimani headed the Quds force, the foreign operations arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Top Iranian authorities, including supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had previously said that all those involved in his killing would face retribution.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 2

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:00
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION