

# Birangona Shefali Das' dream to own a house still elusive

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Birangona (war heroine) Shefali Das has been living in an abandoned quarter of Bangladesh Railway with her youngest son Kamol Das as she does not have a house of her own. Shefali Das runs her family with the government allowance. Her eldest son, who works at a private company, lives in Dhaka. With much efforts, she has got her daughters married off. "I don't have my own house. I live in an abandoned quarter of the railway but it is not suitable for living. If it rains a little, I can't live in the room," said Birangona Shefali Das. "My youngest son is still unemployed. I have been living on government allowance for the last four years," she said. Shefali Das' husband Dhiren Chandra Das was a railway employee. He died almost twenty years ago, and after the death of her husband Shefali had to live in extreme poverty with her children. After she was recognised as a Birangona Nari four years ago, she has

been financially solvent. Shefali Das said that she does not afford to buy land and build a house. So, she is forced to live in a dilapidated railway quarter. Her dream of living at her own house seems to be a far cry. "I applied for a government house. But the government house was not allotted in my name as I did not have my own land," she said. Kamol Das, the son of Shefali Das, said "My mother has been trying to get a government house but she is not getting it." "As a son I can't fulfill my mother's dream to own a house," he said. Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mahmuda Masum said that the application for the government house submitted by Birangona Nari Shefali Das has been sent to the ministry concerned. The construction work of her house will start after getting the approval of the ministry. "I hope her application will be approved soon," the UNO added.



Birangona Shefali Das.

PHOTO: STAR



Academic activities at Pashchim Kamalapur Government Primary School in Madaripur's Dashar upazila have been badly hampered due to the delay in construction of a new schoolhouse.

PHOTO: STAR

## PASHCHIM KAMLAPUR GOVT PRY SCHOO IN MADARIPUR

# Teachers, students suffer for delay in building construction

Suffering mounts as work deadline exceeds over 2 years ago

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Fariapur

Although the deadline for the construction of a government primary school in Madaripur has exceeded two and a half years ago, the contractor concerned yet to complete the work. The delay in the construction work has been causing sufferings to the teachers and students of the institution. Established in 1995, Pashchim Kamalapur Government Primary School in Madaripur's Dashar upazila got nationalized in January, 2013. The school, built on 33 decimals of land, has a total of 116 students and four teachers. According to Kalkini upazila Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), a tender

was floated, under the Newly Nationalized Government Primary School Development Project-1 Fund, for the construction of Pashchim Kamalapur Government Primary School building at a cost of over Tk 59 lakh in 2016-17 fiscal year. Contractor firm MM Builders and Engineers Limited of Dhaka got the work in June 2018, and later sold the work to another contractor, Syed Tuhin Hasan. But, again another contractor, MS Mazeda Traders, took over the work from Tuhin and started the construction of the schoolhouse. Surprisingly, after completing the roof the contractor concern withdrew 85 percent of the contract money. According to the agreement, the work was supposed to start in June,

2018, and completed by June, 2019. Obaidul Haque, headmaster of Pashchim Kamalapur Government Primary School, said due to the delay in construction work they are taking classes in a tin-shed house of five rooms. Now locals use the under construction building for their personal purpose, much to the sufferings for students and teachers, the headmaster said. "I have written to different departments to complete the construction work, but no step has been taken yet," he said, adding that construction of almost all the schools under the project has already been completed. "As we are compelled to take classes in the old tin-shed house, the number of students is also

decreasing," he further said. Hanif Matubbar, an assistant teacher of the school, said due to the delay in building construction they are the worst sufferer as it is quite impossible to take classes under the tin-shed in the summer. School Managing Committee President Kazi Anwar Hossain said they tried their best to cooperate, but the situation arises due to the negligence of the contractor concerned. Abul Khair, owner of MS Mazeda Traders, said he has completed most of the work, but couldn't finish it due to personal problems. Rezaul Karim, an engineer at Kalkini Upazila LGED, said he has asked the contractor concerned to finish the work and the later assured him to complete the work soon.

3,000 states and several other parts of India between 2019 and 2020. The government said in July this year that there will be a delay in the implementation of CAA and an extension has been sought till January 9 next year.

**Don't** possible because the Awami League does not believe in oppression." Milton said, "I want to tell the people of the union clearly that the polls will end on January 5, but the Awami League government's tenure will not expire." "But we will identify every one of you. It may be that I will not allow you to enjoy the development that the government has made in this union." "Don't go against boat, no one can save you. No one can stand by when you will be in danger." His statement sparked criticism after it went viral. This correspondent failed to contact Milton for comments as his mobile phone was found switched off.

Journalist Hasan Ali, who contests the union polls as independent chairman candidate, said it was the voters' rights to cast votes as per their choice. He also urged everyone to maintain peace during the elections.

**UNSC** FROM PAGE 12 An earlier US resolution had sought to authorize case-by-case exemptions to sanctions, but that was blocked by veto-wielding permanent Security Council members China and Russia. "Humanitarian aid and life-saving assistance must be able to reach the Afghan people without any hindrance," China's UN Ambassador, Zhang Jun, said in a tweet Monday. The decision to limit the scope of the resolution to one year, which was not part of the first draft, aims to satisfy Washington's European allies, who, like India, had criticized the absence of any deadline and called for strict control over the destination of aid.

# Bangladeshi killed in BSF

FROM PAGE 12 "BSF men of Shashani camp from Malda BSF Battalion informed us that a Bangladeshi died around 2:00am and his body was kept in Malda hospital." He, however, added, "We cannot ensure that he was Bangladeshi until we see his body. We are investigating the matter." A handout provided by the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh said, "At 01:30am on the night intervening 21-22 Dec 2021, a group of about 15 persons on Indian side reached close to 150 meters of the International Border and attempted to throw bags across the fence. There where about 10 persons on the Bangladeshi side already gathered to collect these bags. Two BSF personnel deployed on the border fence tried to scare away the miscreants with stun grenades, but did not succeed. One BSF constable was

**Red carpet rolled** FROM PAGE 12 Besides, the MoU on recruitment of qualified health professionals between the countries will be renewed. During the visit, Bangladesh will gift 13 military vehicles to the Maldives as a token of friendship between the two nations. On the second day of her visit today, the Bangladeshi premier will have a bilateral meeting with the Maldivian president to discuss various issues at the Presidential Palace. After the meeting, officials of the two countries will sign the instruments in the presence of the Bangladesh prime minister and the Maldivian president. A joint statement will be issued when the two leaders jointly appear in front of the media.

# 'Another storm coming'

FROM PAGE 12 variants, leading to "previously unseen transmission rates" in countries with a significant number of Omicron cases. In those countries, cases of the variant are doubling every 1.5 to 3 days. Omicron has forced countries across the world to impose new curbs days before Christmas, but a South African study offered a glimmer of hope about the new variant's firepower, reports Reuters. Governments made urgent pleas for citizens to vaccinate as Omicron emerges as the dominant variant, upending reopening plans that many had hoped would herald the start of a post-pandemic era and unnerving financial markets. According to WHO data, the Omicron variant has been confirmed in 106 countries. Germany, Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands and South Korea have reimposed partial or full lockdowns or other social distancing measures in recent days. Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Spain were among European countries due to consider new curbs yesterday. Over 13 million people were ordered to stay home in the Chinese city of Xi'an, which imposed a strict lockdown yesterday and dramatically tightened travel controls to

physically overpowered by miscreants on Indian side and in the scuffle, his rifle was fired." It further said that after firing, the perpetrators on both sides started running away from fence to their own territories. One injured miscreant was noticed about 10-12 metres away on the other side of the fence by a BSF personnel. The man may have been shot in the firing during the scuffle. The gate of the border fence was opened and the injured person was immediately taken to hospital but died on the way. "He was later identified as Ibrahim of village Dhulipara of Chapainawabganj in Bangladesh, which is about 6kms from the place of occurrence... From the spot, around 200 bottles of Phensedyl were also recovered. A senior BSF Officer visited the spot to verify the facts early in the morning today [yesterday]." Maldivian Vice-President Faisal Naseem, Speaker of the People's Majlis, Maldivian National Parliament, Mohammed Nasheed and Chief Justice Uz Ahmed Muthasim Adnan are expected to pay courtesy calls on the Bangladesh premier at the meeting room of Hotel Jen in Male. The prime minister will address the Maldives parliament in the afternoon. In the evening, Hasina is scheduled to attend a state banquet to be hosted by the Maldivian president and the country's first lady in the PM's honour. Tomorrow, she will join a virtual community reception to be accorded by the Bangladeshi expatriates in Male. The premier is scheduled to return home on December 27.

fight a growing Covid-19 outbreak, reports AFP. However, a new South African study suggested reduced risk of hospitalisation in people infected with Omicron compared with Delta, although the authors said some of the reduction was likely due to high population immunity. France said it could soon have around 100,000 new Covid-19 cases a day, up from around 70,000 currently as the country battles a fifth wave of the epidemic. In India, the Delhi government yesterday banned all gatherings to celebrate Christmas and New Year amid surging Omicron cases. President Joe Biden on Tuesday told Americans the country was "prepared" to fight Omicron, as Israel -- which pioneered the use of Covid vaccine boosters -- announced fourth shots for those over 60 and health workers. The UK government yesterday announced that it is buying millions of doses of new Covid treatment pills as the Omicron variant takes hold, while cutting the isolation period for positive cases. The government said it has signed deals to buy 4.25 million courses of two new antiviral drugs: Pfizer's ritonavir and US rival Merck/MSD's molnupiravir, which will be available early next year.

# Well-preserved

FROM PAGE 12 "This indicates that such behaviour in modern birds first evolved and originated among their dinosaur ancestors," said Ma. Oviraptorosaurs, which means "egg thief lizards," were feathered dinosaurs that lived in what is now Asia and North America during the Late Cretaceous period. They had variable beak shapes and diets, and ranged in size from modern turkeys at the lower end to massive Gigantoraptors, that were eight metres (26 feet) long. Baby Yingliang measures around 27 centimetres (10.6 inches) long from head to tail, and lies inside a 17 centimetre-long egg at the Yingliang Stone Nature History Museum. Researchers believe the creature is between 72 and 66 million years old, and was probably preserved by a sudden mudslide that buried the egg, protecting it from scavengers for eons. It would have grown two to three meters long if it had lived to be an adult, and would have likely fed on plants. The specimen was one of several egg fossils that were forgotten in storage for decades.

# Saudi-led coalition rejects Iran charges on Yemen envoy

AFP, Riyadh The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen yesterday rejected accusations that it was slow to facilitate the evacuation from Sanaa of an Iranian diplomat who later died of coronavirus. The Islamic republic's envoy to Yemen, Hassan Eyrrou, died on Tuesday despite being flown out from the Huthi rebel-held capital in a rare exemption from a Saudi-led air blockade. But the foreign ministry in Tehran blamed the "slow cooperation of certain countries" in facilitating Saturday's evacuation for Eyrrou's death.

# 'Hundred BNP men' hurt

FROM PAGE 12 Shah Rajib Ahmed Ringon, joint convener of the district unit Chhatra Dal, was sent to Dhaka for treatment. Mahmudul Hasan, additional superintendent of Habiganj police, said that efforts were being made to calm the situation. After the clash, GK Gaus, joint convener of the district unit BNP, held a press conference at his residence. Senior Member of BNP's Standing Committee Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain was also present there. Gaus said they were holding peaceful protests demanding the release of Khaleda. Police, however, obstructed our peaceful programmes.

# Nigeria ethnic violence toll jumps to 45

AFP, Kano Some 45 farmers were killed in attacks carried out by herders in Nigeria's central Nasarawa state, the presidency said on Tuesday, giving a higher toll than local officials. Local police said violence erupted on Friday and continued until Sunday when armed Fulani herders attacked villagers from the Tiv ethnic group over the killing of a kinsman that they blamed on Tiv farmers. The police initially gave a death toll of eight, with other sources suggesting many more had been killed. Later on Tuesday, President Muhammadu Buhari's office released a statement saying the leader "expressed grief over the heart-wrenching murder of 45 farmers and scores injured". Buhari was quoted as saying his government would "leave no stone unturned in fishing out the perpetrators of this senseless and barbaric incident, and bring them to justice". Nasarawa state police spokesman Ramhan Nansel earlier said military and police teams had deployed in the area to restore calm and arrest the perpetrators. "We received a complaint on the killing of a Fulani herdsman but while the

"Police first surrounded us and then fired rubber bullets and teargas. Around 100 BNP leaders and activists were injured," he said. Meanwhile, Soilen Chakma, additional superintendent (admin) of Habiganj police, said they surrounded the BNP men to ensure their safety as they were holding a rally on the streets. "Hundreds of enraged BNP leaders and activists suddenly hurled brickbats to us. At one stage, when we fired rubber bullets and teargas, the BNP leaders and activists fled," he said. The number of injured policemen and fired rubber bullets and teargas could not be known immediately, he added. investigation was ongoing, a reprisal attack was carried out in Hangara village and neighbouring Kwayero village," Nansel said. "Eight people were killed in the attacks and their bodies were recovered by the police and taken to hospital." However, Peter Ahemba of the Tiv Development Association said the death toll was higher. "We recovered more than 20 corpses of our people killed in the attacks in 12 villages across Lafia, Obi and Awe districts where around 5,000 were displaced," he said, adding that many people were still missing. Deadly clashes between nomadic cattle herders and local farmers over grazing and water rights are common in central Nigeria. The internecine conflict has taken on an ethnic and religious dimension in recent years. The Fulani herders are Muslim and the farmers largely Christians. The friction, which has roots dating back more than a century, was caused by droughts, population growth, the expansion of sedentary farming into communal areas as well as poor governance. Violence by criminal gangs of cattle thieves among the herders, who raid villages, killing and burning homes after looting them, has compounded the situation.

# Syria war killed 3,700 in 2021, lowest annual toll

AFP, Beirut The conflict in Syria killed 3,746 people in 2021, a monitor said yesterday, significantly fewer than in 2020, which had already seen the decade-old war's lowest death toll. According to figures compiled by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 1,505 of them were civilians and among those 360 were children. The figure is by far the lowest tally since the start of the war in Syria and confirms a downward trend that saw 6,800 people killed last year and just over 10,000 in 2019.

The Observatory, an NGO based in the UK but with a network of sources in all regions of Syria, said 297 people were killed in 2021 by landmines and various explosive remnants. The Landmine Monitor said in November that Syria had overtaken Afghanistan as the country with the highest number of recorded casualties from landmines and explosive remnants of war. The fighting, which erupted in 2011 after the brutal repression of anti-government protests, has abated over the past two years.