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World Cup fever cooled by Qatar costs

AFP, Dubai

Qatar's World Cup will be the first on Arab soil but despite excitement in the Middle East, the fervour is not universal in a region usually united by its passion for football.

Although the November 20-December 18 tournament is geographically close for many Arab fans, high costs are a problem as a cocktail of crises and economic woes plague much of the Middle East and North Africa.

"Accommodation and transport costs are exorbitant," said Makram Abed, who runs a

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



US President Joe Biden shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping as they meet on the sidelines of the G20 leaders' summit in Bali, Indonesia, yesterday.

PHOTO:REUTERS

Pursuit of dues hits brick wall

Hundreds of workers unemployed since factory closed abruptly in 2008

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fourteen years have passed since the RMG factory closed down in Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) but the 1,400 workers who had lost their jobs are still having to do door for the money they are owed.

Workers of the Honour Way Textiles factory held a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the capital, stating that they are owed at least Tk 14 crores in termination benefits, arrears, and provident payout.

On July 17, 2008, the owner of the factory—one Hong Kong-based Alvin Di Lao—stopped showing up at work, said Abdur Rashid who was the factory-in-charge at that time.

"In addition to the workers, there are also 150 staffers who are waiting for their dues," said Rashid.

DEPZ authorities, however, say they have no way to pay the workers.

"Because of a management failure, the owner suddenly left the factory one day. We heard later that he died but none of his representatives came to make any claims," said the General Manager of DEPZ Md Abdus Sobhan.

"According to BEPZA rules, when something like this happens, the factory and its machinery are auctioned off. But this factory was located in a BEPZA (Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority) owned building, so only the machinery could be auctioned," explained Sobhan.

"The money from the auction was used to pay off their outstanding debts to the customs authorities, there was nothing left behind to give to the workers," said Sobhan.

In short, the demands of the workers have hit a brick wall because there is no money to pay them back with.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

BNP prepares for a grand Sylhet rally

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

BNP leaders and activists have been campaigning hard to ensure over "four lakh people" join the party's upcoming rally in Sylhet city.

Slated for November 19, the rally is to be held on the Aleya Madrasa ground in the city's Chowhatta area.

Party activists are leafleting the city neighbourhoods from morning to night. They have hung banners and festoons and pasted posters on the walls, while archways have also been erected.

Six sub committees are working round the clock to organise the rally successfully.

Meanwhile, BNP leaders have alleged that police have been creating obstacles for them during campaigning.

On Saturday, the party's campaign at Gopalganj upazila was allegedly obstructed by police.

On Sunday afternoon, five BNP men, including Md Rubel Miah, president Moulvibazar district JCD, were arrested.

Abdul Quiyum Choudhury, president of the Sylhet district BNP and convenor of the publicity and media sub-committee for the rally, said, "Our leaders and activists are being obstructed during peaceful campaigning. We strongly condemn the police excesses."

"The leaders arrested in Moulvibazar must be released immediately."

The DIG of Sylhet Range of police did not respond to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Biden, Xi clash on Taiwan

Find areas of common ground on Ukraine as they meet for talks ahead of G20 summit

AFP, Nusa Dua

Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping yesterday clashed over Taiwan but found areas of common ground, including a joint warning against Russia using nuclear weapons in Ukraine.

Xi and Biden both sought to lower the temperature as they met for more than two hours on the resort island of Bali, with the presidents both saying they wanted to prevent high tensions from spilling over into conflict.

In a sign of headway on working together, the White House announced that Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit China—the most senior US visitor since 2018.

Biden and Xi, who is on only his second overseas trip since the pandemic, shook hands and smiled before the two countries' flags at a hotel in Bali, where the Group of 20 opens a summit today.

Biden, sitting across from Xi at facing tables, said that Beijing and Washington "share responsibility" to show the world that they can "manage our differences, prevent competition

from becoming conflict".

Xi, China's most powerful leader in decades who is fresh from securing a norm-breaking third term, told Biden that the world has "come to a crossroads".

"The world expects that China and the United States will properly handle the relationship," Xi told him.

Xi later told him that China and the United States "share more, not less" in common interests, according to a Chinese statement.

Tensions have risen sharply over Taiwan, with China in August conducting major military exercises after a visit to the self-governing democracy, which it claims, by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Xi told Biden that Taiwan is the "first red line that must not be crossed in China-US relations," according to the Chinese foreign ministry statement.

The White House said that Biden told Xi he opposed any changes on Taiwan—after the US leader repeatedly indicated that Washington was ready to defend the island militarily.

Biden raised US "objections" to China's "coercive and increasingly

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

'Missing' doctor linked with militancy CTTC officials say after his arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The "missing" doctor of President Abdul Hamid Medical College and Hospital in Kishoreganj is a top leader of Al-Qaeda-inspired banned militant outfit Ansar Al Islam, claimed officials of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit yesterday.

Mirza Kawsar alias Abdul Kader, 28, a lecturer of the pharmacology department, was recruiting youths for militancy, they said, adding that he used a coaching centre as front to do so.

Besides, he was donating a major portion of his earnings for the outfit, they claimed.

Earlier, the doctor's family alleged that he was picked up by some unknown people from Medix Coaching Centre in Khorompatti area of Kishoreganj on Saturday evening. His family even filed a missing person's

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

SECONDARY SCHOOLS Admission process for all begins on November 16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The online application process for admissions to all government and non-government secondary schools for the upcoming academic session will begin on November 16.

The deadline of the submission is till 5:00pm on December 6, said Prof Nehal Ahmed, director general of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), yesterday.

- Online from distribution from 11:00am of Nov 16 to 5:00pm of Dec 06
- Lottery for govt schools on Dec 10
- Lottery for non-govt schools on Dec 13
- Admission form price Tk 110
- Student can pick 5 schools against one application
- Admission completion by Dec 28

He said the necessary directives about the admission process have been uploaded on the DSHE website already.

The DSHE set December 10 as the date for the central lottery for admissions to all government schools, and December 13 for non-government schools.

Non-government schools in metropolitan areas and Sadar upazilas will come under the central lottery. However, non-government schools that are not part of

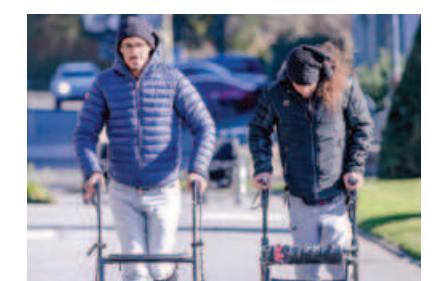
SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



A worker stacking new textbooks in Pahartali Girl's School and College in Chattogram city yesterday. Under the government's initiative, these textbooks will be distributed to primary and secondary school students across the city on the first day of the new academic year -- January 1.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Neurons that help paralysed patients walk again found



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have identified a group of nerve cells that helps patients with paralysed stand up and walk again.

These nerve cells, or neurons, called Vxs2, are present in the brain stem and the spinal cord and have been found to play a key role in the recovery of motor function after spinal cord injury.

The researchers from Switzerland hailed their findings, published in the journal Nature, as a "clinical breakthrough".

Study author Jordan Squair, who focuses on regenerative therapies at Neurorestore – a centre set up by scientists in Switzerland to develop

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6