





PADMA BRIDGE
Proud Construction Partner




Architect Mubasshar no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Valiant freedom fighter Mubasshar Hussain, a pioneer in the country's architecture industry, breathed his last in a hospital in Dhaka early yesterday.

He was 79. Relentless in his pursuit of a modern and livable Dhaka, Mubasshar was always vocal on issues relating to civil rights and the environment.

He was an active organiser in the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



A water reservoir in Savar's Mograkanda being filled up to construct a road in order to build a new bridge over it. The initiative was taken after the authorities concerned demolished a number of rickety bridges from Savar's Bhakurta all the way to Keraniganj's Kalatia road.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

5-yr-old, hit by minibus, dies in hospital



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five-year-old Arafat Islam was on his way to the capital's Thalassemia Foundation Hospital with his mother for his ongoing treatment. But instead, he had to be rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after being hit by a minibus in Jatrabari's Kajla area.

While in hospital, the little boy passed away.

Arafat was the only son of Sharif Mia, from Munshiganj's Gazaria upazila.

Diagnosed with thalassemia at the age of three, he has had to visit the Shantinagar hospital every month to receive blood, family members said.

Like every other time, he was going to the hospital with his mother. They got off the bus near the Mayor Hanif flyover toll plaza to catch a rickshaw for the rest of the journey, Sharif Mia told The Daily Star.

"Arafat needed to use the bathroom suddenly. With no public toilet nearby, his mother asked him to relieve himself near the road. That

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

63 Russian troops killed in Ukrainian strikes

Admits Moscow; Kyiv claims 400 killed in Donetsk

AFP, Kyiv

Russia yesterday admitted dozens of its soldiers were killed in a Ukrainian strike on Russian-controlled territory in a bloody New Year's weekend for both sides of the conflict.

In an extremely rare announcement, the Russian defence ministry said that 63 Russian servicemen were killed "as a result of a strike by four missiles" in the occupied city of Makiivka in eastern Ukraine.

It was the biggest loss of life reported by the Russian side so far in a conflict that has dragged on since President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops to invade on February 24 last year.

The Russian defence ministry did not say when the strike took place but Ukrainian forces are believed to have struck as Russian troops rang in the New Year.

The ministry said US-supplied Himars rocket systems had been used and the target was a temporary deployment point.

Without claiming the strike, Ukraine's military put the death toll much higher, claiming nearly 400 troops were killed.

Russian strikes in different parts of Ukraine on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day killed at least five people.

The Ukrainian capital again came under fire from Iranian-made drones yesterday, although Ukrainian forces claimed the majority were shot down by air defences.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko reported an

explosion in northeastern Kyiv and said emergency services were dispatched.

"An injured 19-year-old man was hospitalised in the Desnyanskyi district of the capital," he said.

Authorities later said he was hit by the falling debris.

Following the strikes, the power company Ukrenergoh said the situation with the electricity supply in Kyiv was now "more complicated".

"That is why emergency shutdowns are now in effect," it said on social media.

The Russian defence ministry did not say when the strike took place but Ukrainian forces are believed to have struck as Russian troops rang in the New Year.

In Kyiv, police chief Andriy Nebitov at the weekend released a picture of the wreckage of a downed drone that featured the words "Happy New Year" in Russian.

"That is everything you need to know about the terror state and its army," he wrote.

After suffering a series of humiliating battlefield defeats, Moscow started to target electrical and other critical infrastructure in October.

The strikes have caused sweeping blackouts and cut off water supplies and heating to civilians as the temperature in

some regions dropped below freezing.

The UN's human rights chief has warned the campaign has inflicted "extreme hardship" on Ukrainians, and also decried probable war crimes by Russian forces.

But Putin declared during his midnight address on New Year's Eve that "moral, historical rightness is on our side".

Moscow said its New Year's attacks had targeted the pro-Western country's drone production.

"The plans of the Kyiv regime to carry out terror attacks against Russia in the near future have been thwarted," Russia's defence ministry said.

Russia has accused Ukraine of targeting its domestic military sites and infrastructure.

In December, Moscow said it had shot down drones three separate times over or near Engels airfield, an airbase in southern Russia more than 600 kilometres (370 miles) from Ukraine. Falling debris killed three people in one of those attacks.

In early December, another base in Russia's Ryazan region also saw attacks from Ukraine's drones that killed three people, Moscow said.

Yesterday, Russian officials said a Ukrainian drone had struck an energy facility in the southwestern Bryansk region neighbouring Ukraine.

Bryansk regional governor Alexander Bogomaz said on Telegram that the strike had cut off electricity to a village.

POLICE WEEK 2023 This time, officers won't make any demand to PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Field-level police officers will not place any demand before Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the welfare parade of the six-day police week beginning today.

Generally, the PM listens to the demands of police personnel of different ranks from constable to additional superintendent of police at the parade held after the inaugural ceremony of police week.

Haider Ali Khan, deputy inspector general (operation) of Police Headquarters, said this year, there would be no demand at the parade.

"Generally, police activities of the last one year is mainly evaluated in police week and we get instructions from the prime minister, ministers, and the IGP for the field-level officials regarding their work for the next one year," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Officials involved in organising the programme said the prime minister and the inspector general of police would address the welfare parade after the inaugural ceremony of the Police Week 2023 at the capital's Rajarbagh Police Lines.

They, however, said during the meeting with the home minister, police officials may demand the formation of cyber wings at every police unit, measures to mitigate transport shortage,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

China could claim the moon!

AGENCIES



The head of Nasa has said that China could claim the moon as its own territory if it beats the US in the race to the lunar surface.

In an interview with Politico, published Sunday, Nasa Administrator Bill Nelson said Chinese military expansion in the

South China Sea was an indicator of what might happen on the moon.

Nelson said: "It is a fact: we're in a space race. And it is true that we better watch out that they don't get to a place on the moon under the guise of scientific research. And it is not beyond the realm of possibility that they say, 'Keep out, we're here, this is our territory.'"

"If you doubt that, look at what they did with the Spratly Islands."

Recently published aerial photographs show new military installations on the Spratly Islands, a disputed archipelago in the South China Sea.

Nasa completed its Artemis 1 mission in November, which involved flying an unmanned Orion spacecraft around the Moon. The mission preceded Artemis 3, which aims to land astronauts on the lunar surface by 2025.

China recently completed its new space station, Tiangong, and in November, launched a crew of taikonauts towards the station. Beijing plans to launch three missions to the moon over the next decade as part of its Chang'e lunar program, after

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Over a dozen Mro houses torched in Bandarban

Victims point finger at rubber company

MONG SING HAI MARMA, Bandarban

Attackers torched and vandalised at least a dozen homes in Mro community in a village in Bandarban's Lama upazila early yesterday.

The victims alleged that the attack was carried out by people of a rubber plantation to drive them away from the area, but the plantation company denied it and said that the indigenous people were building houses on company land.

The attackers also looted mobile phones, household utensils, poultry, cattle and clothes of the villagers.

The incident took place at Rengyan Mro Para of Sorai union of the upazila around 1:00am yesterday.

The villagers said over 100 people with sticks came to the Mro para on several trucks and attacked the village.

Rengain Karbari, the village leader, said, "We were asleep at night. We were woken by the hue and cry of people. Through the bamboo wall, I saw that three to four houses were burning.

"I saw 10-15 Bangalees coming towards my house and I, along with my family, hid in the nearby bushes. Failing to get me, they ransacked the house and left," he told The Daily Star.

"Seven houses have been set on fire. Five to six houses have been demolished. I have come to know that five to six

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



A distraught Chamrung Mro, 26, along with her two children, stands on the pile of grey ash and rubble where her house used to stand in remote Rengyan Mro Para in Bandarban's Lama upazila. Criminals vandalised and torched at least a dozen homes belonging to the Mro people there early yesterday.

PHOTO: MONG SING HAI MARMA

Navratilova diagnosed with breast, throat cancer

AFP, Paris

Tennis legend Martina Navratilova says she is hoping for a "favourable outcome" after being diagnosed with breast and throat cancer.

The 66-year-old Czechoslovakia-born naturalised American told Tennis.com yesterday about the diagnosis but added they were both treatable.

It is not the first time the 18-times Grand Slam singles champion has been diagnosed with cancer -- in 2010 she had breast cancer but was assessed as being clear six months later.

"The double whammy is serious, but fixable, and I'm hoping for a favourable outcome," she said.

"It's going to stink for a while, but I'll fight with all I have got." Navratilova noticed an enlarged lymph node in her neck during

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5