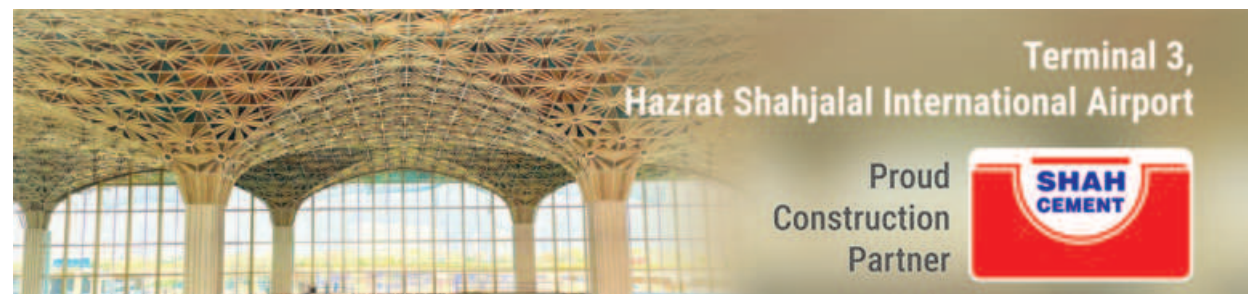




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From wheelchair to Paralympics

Jhuma's inspiring journey

SABBIR HOSSAIN

"So what if I'm a person with disabilities?" said Jhuma Akhter, with sparks of defiance and confidence in her eyes, to anyone who ever doubted her.

Jhuma, a Bangladeshi para archer who on Thursday qualified for the Paris Paralympic Games to be held in this year's August-September, has already become an inspiration for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh with her rapid rise in the world of para archery.

But her inspirational story began with a tragic accident that changed the course of her life forever.

Narsingdi's Jhuma was living a normal life, preparing for her SSC exam with hopes of becoming a lawyer when an accident in 2018 completely derailed all of her plans.

She had climbed a litchi tree and sat on one of its branches, something she had done many times before. But on that fateful day, the branch she was sitting on snapped and she crashed to the ground, seriously injuring her spinal cord. After the fall, she lost the ability to walk and became wheelchair bound.

"A lot of people said many horrible things. They said my life was over now, what would I do for the



PHOTO: IBRAHIM KHALIL IBU

rest of my life, how would I get married and how would I continue my studies," Jhuma told the reporter in a recent interview in BKSP, holding back tears.

She covered her face for a bit to hide the tears but soon regained her composure and said, "Alhamdulillah, I'm really happy now. Earlier, I used to feel really bad that I couldn't walk, couldn't hang out with my friends anymore. But now, I'm completely engrossed in sports," said Jhuma.

Jhuma's life took a new turn when she was staying at the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) in Savar where she discovered sports as a way to conquer her disability and also carry on with her studies.

Jhuma had started out with wheelchair basketball, but later she shifted her focus to archery. It didn't take her too long to become an expert at it and very quickly she caught everyone's attention. After the Bangladesh Para Archery Association (BPAA) began last year, she has been staying and training at the BKSP.

After just two-and-a-half months of training, she finished ninth in last year's Para Asian Games in China. She continued making waves with her performances, by competing against non-disabled women archers in the National Ranking Open Tournament and winning a bronze medal in the compound event.

"I can't express in words how it felt," Jhuma

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



PHOTO: AFP

Palestinians inspect the rubble of a building in Deir el-Balah following Israeli bombardment in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

GAZA MARITIME AID CORRIDOR West pushes ahead with 'unrealistic' port plan

AGENCIES

An international effort led by the United States gathered pace yesterday to get desperately needed humanitarian relief into Gaza by sea, in the latest bid to counter overland access restrictions blamed on Israel as it battles Hamas militants.

In the Cypriot port of Larnaca, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen expressed hope a maritime corridor could open this Sunday, though crucial details of the planned operation remained unclear.

She said "an initial pilot operation" would be launched on Friday, and the United Arab Emirates had helped activate the corridor "by securing the first of many shipments of goods to the people of Gaza".

Her announcement came after US President Joe Biden, in his annual State of the Union address on Thursday, said the US military would establish a "temporary pier" off Gaza's coast to bring in aid.

The United Nations has repeatedly warned of looming famine in the long-blockaded Gaza Strip, which has been

under Israeli siege since the Hamas attack of October 7 triggered the war, now in its sixth month.

With relatively few aid trucks entering by land and convoys headed to Gaza's north often blocked or looted, several countries including Israel's top ally the United States have been parachuting food and other assistance.

But air or sea delivery is not the best way, and the "diversification of the supply routes via land" remains the optimal solution, said Sigrid Kaag, the United Nations aid coordinator for Gaza.

Biden, whose administration has been increasingly vocal about the war's consequences for civilians, delivered some of his strongest comments yet, as hopes dimmed for a new truce before Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month which could begin Sunday depending on the lunar calendar.

"To the leadership of Israel I say this — humanitarian assistance cannot be a secondary consideration or a bargaining chip," Biden said.

Since October 7, Israel's relentless offensive has killed at least 30,878

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

- EU says corridor set to open this weekend amid famine fears
- UN says aid by air, sea not 'substitute' for land deliveries
- Gaza hospital medic says aid airdrop kills five

10 more lives lost on roads 7 of them killed in Pirojpur as bus rams auto-rickshaw, bike

STAR REPORT

At least ten people were killed and 16 others were injured in separate road accidents in three districts yesterday.

Of the victims, seven were killed in Pirojpur after a bus crashed into a battery-run auto-rickshaw and a motorbike.

The deceased are Mansura Begum, 35; Khairul Faraji, 20; Jesmin Akter, 30; Alamgir Meer, 28; Swapan Howlader, 35; Nayeem, 20; and Hemayet Howlader.

Of them, Nayeem was the auto-rickshaw driver. Of the rest, five were passengers of the auto-rickshaw and one was the motorcyclist.

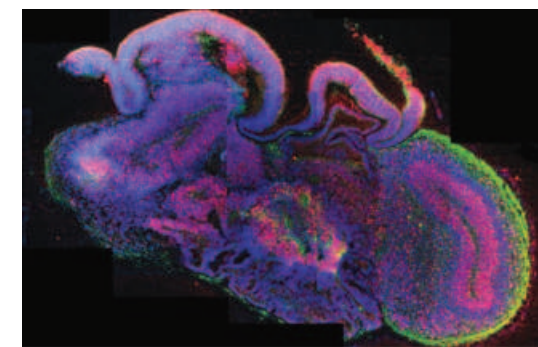
However, the identity of the motorcyclist could not be confirmed till last evening, said police.

The deceased were residents of different villages under Pirojpur Sadar, Indurkani and Bhandaria upazilas.

The accident took place at Jhawtala point under

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Scientists grow 'mini organs' in stem cell breakthrough



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

In a world first scientists have grown "mini organs" using human stem cells taken during pregnancy, in what could be a breakthrough for prenatal medicine.

The study means human development can be observed in late pregnancy for the first time. This raises the possibility of monitoring and treating congenital conditions before birth.

The research sets out that complex cell models, called organoids, have been grown, and these "mini-organs" retain the baby's biological information.

Organoids enable scientists to study how organs function when they are healthy and when impacted by disease.

However, there are currently regulations that restrict when foetal samples can be obtained, so scientists had to use a loophole to get around restrictions.

In the UK this can be done up to 22 post-conception weeks, the legal limit for the termination of a pregnancy, but in countries like the US foetal sampling is illegal.



Dust and exhaust fumes reduce visibility at Zero Point in Khulna city. Residents of the area say the young and elderly often suffer from respiratory illnesses because of the poor air quality.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

BGMEA goes to polls today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The biennial election of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) will take place today to elect the new executive committee for the 2024-26 tenure. Voting will begin at 10:00am and continue till



5:00pm at the BGMEA's Dhaka and Chattogram offices.

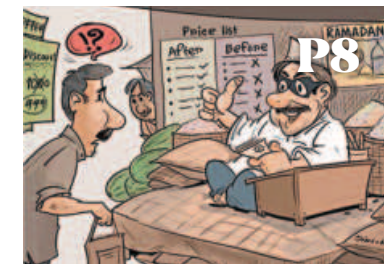
A total of 2,051 voters in the Dhaka zone and 512 voters in the Chattogram zone will cast their votes to elect 35 directors for the new board.

"We are ready to hold the election and I hope the polls will be peaceful," said Jahangir Alamin, chairman of the election board, on Thursday.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Jatiyo party braces for fifth split through council



Who will restrain prices in the month of restraint?

বিজিএমইএ নির্বাচন ২০২৪-২০২৬
"বাংলাদেশে তৈরি"

বিজিএমইএ কমপ্লেক্স: বাড়ী # ৭/৭এ, ব্লক # এইচ ১, সেক্টর # ১৭, উত্তরা, ঢাকা-১২৩০

সম্মানিত সদস্যদের জন্য জরুরী বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিজিএমইএ নির্বাচন ২০২৪-২০২৬ এর সকল ভোটারদের সদয় অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আজ ০৯ মার্চ ২০২৪ তারিখ (শনিবার) বিজিএমইএ নির্বাচন ২০২৪-২০২৬ অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। এ উপলক্ষে আজ সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত বিজিএমইএ কমপ্লেক্স, উত্তরা, ঢাকা এবং বিজিএমইএ আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম কেন্দ্রে বিরতিহীনভাবে একযোগে ভোট গ্রহণ চলবে।

বিজিএমইএ'র সম্মানিত ভোটারদেরকে নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের মধ্যে ৯ ঘণ্টা কেন্দ্রে উপস্থিত হয়ে ভোট প্রদানের জন্য বিনীতভাবে অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

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