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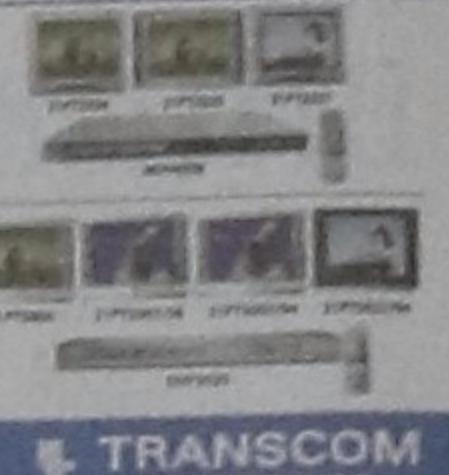
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TRANSOM ELECTRONICS

Pakistanis fear bloodshed, cheating during polls

Pak attorney-general denies 'rigging' remark

AP, AFP, Islamabad

The stakes are high but enthusiasm appears low as Pakistanis face one of the most crucial elections in their history.

The assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, the absence of charismatic candidates and the fear of rigging have left many wondering if going to the polls is worth it. "It all seems so futile," said Ghulam Jilani, 36, flipping through his newspaper on the side of a dusty road in Quetta as taxis and trucks zipped by. "Why should I put my life at risk to cast a ballot?"

Campaigning itself has been

remarkably subdued, with the December 27, 2007 assassination of Benazir Bhutto leaving many in the South Asian nation of 160 million feeling gutted as they prepare to pick a new parliament. That slaying, and a suicide bombing two months earlier, left more than 150 people dead.

More than 35 others have been killed this week in two separate attacks targeting campaign rallies, both blamed on Islamic militants.

Though momentum has picked up in recent days, candidates have largely abstained from staging massive demonstrations, instead

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Army does not want to see a poor Bangladesh any more: Moeen

UNB, Noakhali

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed has said the army does not want to see Bangladesh as a poor country anymore.

He made the remark at the inaugural function of a small-scale dairy farm project near Shafipur Union Parishad in Begumganj upazila yesterday.

Gen Moeen urged all to shun the path of violence and take the country towards the path of development.

He mentioned that five disasters took place in the country last year. These are two successive floods, cyclone Sidr, price-hike of goods, and also rise in fuel oil price.

He said only 19 percent of milk

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Criminals kill Sylhet trader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Criminals killed a construction material trader of Golapganj upazila in Sylhet Thursday night.

Md Alauddin, 50, chief of Bhaeswar Mokambazar Byabosayee Samiti, was killed allegedly around 10:00pm as he was returning to his Dakshinbagh home from his business house at Mokambazar.

Police recovered his body from a local playground around 2:00am yesterday. The body had marks of injury.

Alauddin's motorbike was found lying nearby, police said adding that the body was sent to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College for autopsy.

Fellow businessmen demanded immediate arrest of the killers of Alauddin.

BIRD FLU

Fowls culled in Comilla, Gazipur, eggs seized in Khagrachhari

STAR REPORT

Livestock officials have culled some 65,000 chickens and other fowls in Gazipur and Comilla districts after detection of avian influenza.

Of them, about 40,000 poultry and domestic chickens and other fowls were culled at Tepirbari village under Steepur upazila of Gazipur yesterday while the rest at seven villages under Adarsa Sadar upazila in Comilla on Wednesday and Thursday night.

Talking to reporters, Steepur Upazila Veterinary Surgeon Dr Mohammad Helaluddin said they culled the chickens of Nova Poultry Farm at the village after detecting

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NINE YEARS OVER

Convicted killers of Kazi Aref, 4 others still absconding

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Police are yet to arrest the absconding convicted killers of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) president and an organiser of the Liberation War, Kazi Aref Ahmed and four leaders of the party's Kushtia unit even after nine years of the killings.

Leaders, activists and people from different sections today observe the ninth anniversary of death of these leaders and demanded immediate arrest of the

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Make migration of Bangladeshis to UK easier
Urge British charity

STAR REPORT

Immigration Advisory Service (IAS), a British charity, urged UK ministers to make Bangladeshi workers' migration to UK easier to avert a potential staff crisis in Britain's curvy houses.

At least 27,500 extra workers are needed if Britain's favourite meals such as chicken tikka masala are to stay on high streets, reports Daily Mirror in UK on February 13 quoting.

A looming shortage of cooks and waiters, the result of the government's new immigration points-based system, has left

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Prayer Timing

February 16

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-57	6-01
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Winners of Biswa Sahitya Kendra's book reading programme are jubilant after the prize giving ceremony at Ramna Batamul in the capital yesterday. One hundred schools participated in the programme.

INVESTIGATION WINGS AT POLICE STATIONS Plan fails to take off for lack of sufficient SIs

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The plan to set up separate investigation wing at all the police stations remains far from being effective mainly due to lack of sufficient number of sub-inspectors (SIs).

Introduced in 2004, the initiative requires at least two sub-inspectors (SIs) in each unit tasked only with probe into criminal cases so that proper and prompt investigation and speedy submission of charge sheets are ensured.

However, the authorities cannot afford to implement the plan as they are already short of adequate

workforce. It becomes difficult for them to maintain law and order if they count out two SIs of a police station only for investigation, police officers concerned said.

Out of a total 571 police stations countrywide, there are separate case investigation units at 300 police stations at present, sources at the Police Headquarters said.

However, these units exist on paper so far, as the officers for the units could not be assigned due to shortage of SIs, who generally work at the metropolitan areas

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have three to five SIs. If we assign two of them for case investigation only, it will be nearly impossible for the remaining SIs to maintain the law and order," said the superintendent of police of a district in Barisal division.

Admitting the problem, a top official at the Police Headquarters observed that at least 10 SIs are required at any given district sadar police station to make the separate case investigation unit successful.

Talking to The Daily Star on February 7, Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad also

Almost all the police stations outside the metropolitan areas

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Bird lovers, left, watch migratory birds, right, at the Brac Bank Pakhi Mela 2008 organised by the zoology department of Jahangirnagar University on the campus yesterday. The fair was held ignoring the bird flu epidemic sweeping across the country.

Bird watching amid flu fear

No precautionary steps for visitors' safety at JU

EMRAN HOSSAIN

A day long migratory bird watching fair was held on Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus yesterday without any precautionary measure to mitigate the chances of direct contact between visitors and the birds amid an epidemic of bird flu sweeping across the country.

The fair without any precaution took place despite warnings from the government and experts that extreme precaution should be ensured, so humans and wild birds do not come into direct contact since migratory birds are known to be carriers of avian influenza.

When asked about the lack of preventive measures, organisers

said the chance of coming into contact with the birds was very little or almost negligible and they were telling the visitors to stay far away from the birds as they were also raising awareness among the visitors about bird flu.

An awareness raising pamphlet published by World Health Organisation (WHO) regional

office for South East Asia however says, "Bird Flu (avian influenza) is caused by a virus. It is present in droppings, respiratory secretions, and blood of infected birds."

So far bird flu was detected in 37 districts of the country.

These birds are basically shy and if disturbed they fly away at

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Shark hunters defy ban

Fishermen doing brisk business in south-western coast

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Sharks are being hunted indiscriminately in the south-western coast of the country threatening marine eco system even though catching sharks is banned under the Wildlife Act.

Catching sharks is now a lucrative business for a large number of fishermen as shark skin, fin, teeth, bones, stomach is sold at high prices abroad particularly in the Middle East and European countries.

Kuakata, Sonar Char, Rupar Char, Fatrak Char, Char Gongmoti in Patuakhali and Asar

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medicines and sold at over Tk 3,000 a kg. Their internal organs are used as food and poultry feed, fisherman of Kuakata said.

Sources say traders from Chittagong go to Barga and Patuakhali to encourage fishermen to catch sharks since these areas are considered shark territory. At least 2,000 fishermen of these areas are involved in netting and processing sharks.

Shark fin is used for making soup and considered a delicacy. The skin is used for making fashionable leather goods like wallets, women's bags, ornaments boxes and shoes. Shark skins are sold at Tk 2,500 to Tk 3,000 per kg in the Middle East and European countries.

Kuakata, Sonar Char, Rupar Char, Fatrak Char, Char Gongmoti in Patuakhali and Asar

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medicines and sold at over Tk 3,000 a kg. Their internal organs are used as food and poultry feed, fisherman of Kuakata said.

At least 250 trawlers are engaged in netting sharks. The peak season is between December and April when trawlers throng the shallow waters there, marine resources experts and fishermen said.

Even smaller sharks are netted as fishermen use a special net locally known as "Jatka jal" to catch them. More and more fishermen are attracted to shark netting as it brings more profit. Abdus Salam Howlader, president of fishing trawlers owners association, said.

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