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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 Ishaq Khan, 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 on her homecoming parade 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

going door-to-door to drum up support or hanging banners along roadsides. That has made this campaign one of the most colourless and lackluster in the country's 60-year history.

"We're not seeing any of the hustle and bustle we've seen in past elections," lamented Mohammad Sharif, a 55-year-old journalist in Karachi, noting so much was at stake.

One of the new parliament's most crucial tasks will be determining how to fight al-Qaeda and Taliban-linked militants, who have expanded their reach beyond

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



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 investigate cases, they added.

"Almost all the police stations outside the metropolitan areas

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

Criminals kill Sylhet trader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

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

Md Alaaddin, 50, chief of Bhadeshwar 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.

Alaaddin'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 Alaaddin.

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 Sreepur upazila of Gazipur yesterday while the rest at seven villages under Adarsha Sadar upazila in Comilla on Wednesday and Thursday night.

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



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



NINE YEARS OVER Convicted killers of Kazi Aref, 4 others still absconding

AMANUR AMAN, Kusthia

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 Kusthia unit even after nine years of the killings.

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

Make migration of Bangladeshis to UK easier

Urges 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 curry 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 IAS.

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

Hillary wins New Mexico caucus after string of defeats

AFP, Washington

Hillary Clinton got a badly needed piece of good news Thursday with word she had won last week's New Mexico Democratic presidential caucus over her surging rival Barack Obama.

Hillary Clinton received 73,105 votes while Obama had 71,396 votes in the February 5 caucus that drew record turnout, state Democratic official Brian Colon told a televised news conference from New Mexico.

It was a welcome result for the former first lady who had lost eight straight nominating contests to her Senate colleague Obama since splitting the "Super Tuesday" slate of caucuses on February 5.

With New Mexico, Hillary Clinton now has won party contests in 12 states compared to 22 for Obama, who has pulled ahead in the all-important tally of delegates to the Democratic nominating convention in August.

Hillary Clinton has been struggling to blunt Obama's momentum and hang on until the race moves to the delegate-rich states of Ohio and Texas on March 4 and Pennsylvania on April 22.

A total of 492 delegates, nearly a quarter of the 2,025 needed for the nomination, will be at stake in primaries in the three states, where Clinton feels on friendlier ground.

A Quinnipiac University poll published Thursday gave Clinton a 55-34 percent lead over Obama in Ohio and a 52-36 percent edge in Pennsylvania. There have been no recent polls reported on the Texas race.

Clinton narrowly trails Obama in the delegate count, 1,237 to 1,289, according to the independent website RealClearPolitics.

She embraced the belated results from New Mexico although her campaign said she had secured only 14 of the state's 26 delegates.

"I am so proud to have earned the support of New Mexicans from across the state," Clinton said in a statement.

6th Bangladesh Mathematical Olympiad on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sixth Bangladesh Mathematical Olympiad 2008 began at St Joseph's Higher Secondary School in the capital yesterday with high hopes for innovations and building a prosperous Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Mathematical Olympiad Committee organised the two-day programme to form a team for the 49th International Mathematical Olympiad to be held this July in Spain and promote exercise of mathematics among students.

St Joseph's Principal Brother Leo Pereira inaugurated the Olympiad amid excitement of over 860 students and their guardians.

Winners among over 15,000 students at the divisional Olympiads held in 14 cities and towns since December 2007 are participating in the national level event sponsored by the Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd and the daily Prothom Alo.

They participated in the key part of the Olympiad in primary, junior, secondary and higher

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The Daily Star

Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views.

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Star Campus helps link young minds together.

