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Man hacked for 'keeping Bangabandhu portrait'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A gang of unidentified criminals hacked a middle-aged man in Faridpur town Thursday evening for keeping portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and seven Birshreshthas at his house.

The seriously injured, Selim Ahmed, 39, son of Bashir Ahmed of Alauddin Kha Road in the town, is now undergoing treatment at Faridpur General Hospital.

Selim came under attack while he was going to attend the meeting of Sheikh Hasina at Rajendra College ground.

He told reporters that a gang of three to four stopped him in front of Desh Clinic on Kabi Jasimuddin Road in the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Munshiganj factor to pick Dhaka-6 victor

WASIM BIN HABIB and NAIMUL ALAM NOBIN

A large number of voters having their origins in Munshiganj might play a decisive role in the upcoming parliamentary elections in Dhaka-6 constituency as the two electoral alliances have nominated candidates hailing from that district considering the factor.

Besides the Awami League-led grand alliance and the BNP-led four-party alliance, Bikalpadhara Bangladesh also nominated a person who hails from Munshiganj as its candidate in the seat where the largest chunk of votes is from Sutrapur and part of Kotwali thana.

A significant number of minority voters, who constitute about 30 percent of the vote bank in the constituency, would also be an important factor for the six aspirants for the seat.

The main contenders, however, are



Badruddoza Chowdhury Sadeque Hossain Khoka Mizanur Rahman Dipu

Bikalpadhara candidate and former president Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, BNP candidate and Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka and AL-led grand alliance candidate Mizanur Rahman Khan Dipu.

Khoka, who was the MP from the area for the last three times, would face tough challenge this time from former BNP

strongman Badruddoza Chowdhury who has huge supporters in the seat although he is contesting from this seat for the first time.

Meanwhile, AL leaders speculate that votes of the four-party alliance will get divided between Khoka and Badruddoza and this will give their candidate Dipu

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

36 graft accused in JS polls race

Charge sheets submitted against many of them, says Shujan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-six candidates in the upcoming parliamentary election have corruption cases against them with charge sheets submitted against many, said a Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (Shujan) survey conducted in 102 constituencies.

The High Court (HC) stayed the cases against many of the candidates, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar said yesterday at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

He said their findings are based on affidavits and tax returns of candidates in the constituencies where they conducted a polls-related survey.

Referring to reports in different newspapers, he said 16 contestants in the polls are alleged war criminals -- all from four-party alliance.

Badiul said many of the candidates also have allegations against them about loan default, killings and involvement in other crimes.

About 35 percent of the candidates are not under the tax net, he mentioned referring to National Board of Revenue (NBR) statistics.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

10 AL men hurt as procession attacked in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least ten Awami League (AL) activists were injured yesterday as BNP supporters allegedly attacked an AL election procession at Boalkhali upazila in Chittagong-6 constituency.

Sub-inspector of Boalkhali Police Station Maksud however said the activists of BNP and AL clashed when their processions came face to face at Kerani Bazar of Kharandip union at around 5:30pm.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, he added.

When contacted, AL candidate Dr Hasan Mahmud in Chittagong-6 alleged that a group of BNP activists led by local Union Parishad chairman and BNP leader Azizul Hoque Chowdhury attacked the election procession brought out by Mahmud's supporters.

Dense fog disrupts life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A blanket of dense fog disrupted normal life across the country yesterday.

Vehicular movement on long routes was hindered while flight schedules at the Zia International Airport had to be rearranged because of thick fog.

A Met office official said the inclement weather might continue for the next few days.

Sources said the people living in the northwestern, central and coastal belts have been suffering the most from biting cold.

The lowest temperature of 8.5 degrees Celsius was recorded in Sylhet while 13.5

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

BNP launches poll website

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday set up its election website [www.votebnp.net] for the December 29 election.

Inaugurating the website at the BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office, party's Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan said voters will be able to question BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia through the website.

The response will also be given through the site, he added.

BNP's development activities, manifesto, and news, columns, videos, photos and cartoons on the party are available on the website.

The website also contains

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Army personnel yesterday set up barbed wire fences at Paltan Community Centre as they turn it into a temporary camp. The army will be deployed today across the country to ensure security during the upcoming elections.

PHOTO: STAR

Prof Ataur's legal notice and our reply

The Daily Star has received a legal notice from Prof Ataur Rahman of Dhaka University, which contested our report titled "Question leak at DU, 3 teachers 'guilty' but syndicate for experts' opinion", published on November 29.

The legal notice sent by advocate Md Abdul Halim on behalf of Prof Ataur said our report has directly implicated Prof Ataur Rahman without any substance as to findings on facts. It also said as further investigation is pending, our report has lowered the image of Prof Ataur Rahman in the society.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

UN team to visit again before polls

STAR REPORT

The high-level delegation of the United Nations (UN) will visit Bangladesh again to witness the overall preparation for the parliamentary election.

Farhan Haq, spokesman for UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon told news agency ANA on December 18 that the diplomats of many democratic countries were happy to learn that Bangladesh would return to democracy soon.

Haq said the three-member team led by Frances Vendrel, former EU permanent representative on

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

US orders plan for closing Guantanamo

AFP, Washington

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates has ordered aides to draw up plans for closing the "war on terror" prison at Guantanamo, a declared priority for President-elect Barack Obama, a spokesman said yesterday.

Gates wanted to be ready in case Obama decides to take action on Guantanamo soon after assuming office next month, said Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon press secretary.

"He has asked his team for a proposal on how to shut it down, what will be required specifically to close it and move the detainees from that facility, and at the same time protect the American people from dangerous terrorists," he said.

"The request has been made, his team is

working on it so he can be prepared to assist the president-elect should he wish to address this very early in his tenure," Morrell said.

The prison, which currently has about 250 inmates, was opened in early 2002 at a remote US naval base on the southeastern tip of Cuba as a way of holding detainees beyond the reach of US courts.

Among those held there are Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged operational mastermind of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, and other alleged senior leaders of al-Qaeda and other extremist groups.

Prisoners captured in Afghanistan and Pakistan during and after the US-led overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan were flown to Guantanamo in orange jumpsuits and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Shoe-tossing Iraqi reporter appears beaten, says judge

AP, Baghdad

The Iraqi journalist who threw his shoes at President George W Bush during a news conference was beaten afterward and had bruises on his face and around his eyes, a judge said yesterday.

Judge Dhia al-Kinani, the magistrate investigating the incident, said the court has opened an investigation into the alleged beating of journalist Muntadhar al-Zeidi.

Al-Zeidi was wrestled to the ground after throwing his shoes during the news conference Sunday by Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, and there has been conflicting claims on his condition since then. One of his brothers said he was harshly beaten, but another said he seemed to be in good condition.

Al-Zeidi "was beaten in the news conference and we will watch the tape and write an official letter asking for the names of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

US offers automakers \$13b lifeline

AFP, Washington

The US government agreed yesterday to an emergency loan of 13.4 billion dollars to ailing automakers to stave off collapse of the sector that could deal a crippling blow to the economy.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Prayer Timing		
December 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-22	5-25
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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. Star Campus is an endeavour to bring into the center stage the visionary aspects of our college and university students, alongside their lifestyle, cultural trends and their multidimensional talents. Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine Of the Students, By the Students and For the Students. Star Campus helps link young minds together.



World economic gloom deepens as oil prices plunge

AFP, London

Evidence of global downturn deepened yesterday as oil prices plunged again, Japan slashed interest rates to near zero to stave off recession and a top banking association warned the world economy will contract in 2009.

The price of New York oil dropped to below 34 dollars a barrel -- the lowest level since 2004 -- as weak global demand overshadowed a record cut in output that was announced this week by the Opec cartel of major oil producers.

"The global recession continues to sap demand... Even after Opec cut production by more than two million barrels, oil prices have fallen below the 40 dollar per barrel level," said BetOnMarkets analyst David Evans.

Speaking on the sidelines of an oil conference in London, Opec head Chakib Khelil said the cartel, which includes the world's biggest producer Saudi Arabia, would continue cutting output until the price stabilised.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who has complained about major producers pushing up the price of oil, told the conference that price volatility was "in no-one's interest" and called for greater stability.

Prices have plunged since record highs of 147 dollars per barrel in July.

The downbeat mood was reflected on European stock markets, with the FTSE 100 in London plummeting 2.54 percent in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

SOUTHEAST BANK LIMITED
HEAD OFFICE, DHAKA

We Mourn

Mr. Mostori Miah, Director, Southeast Bank Limited, breathed his last on December 18, 2008 at London, United Kingdom at 1.30 p.m. Bangladesh Time at the age of 70 (Innalllahi O Inna Elahe Rajeun). His death is a great loss to his family and to the Bank of which he was a Sponsor. We are deeply shocked at his demise and express our heartfelt condolence and sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

We pray to Almighty Allah to grant the departed soul eternal peace in the best of Heavens. Ameen.

The Board of Directors
 &
The Management of Southeast Bank Limited