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A flock of water birds at Sonadia of Maheshkhali island in Cox's Bazar. Their habitat is gradually spoiled by unplanned urbanisation and indiscriminate use of water bodies. PHOTO: STAR

Birds galore in Cox's Bazar

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A total of 15,933 birds of 52 species have been spotted in Cox's Bazar, according to a census of aquatic birds. Nature conservation and research organisation 'Marine Life Alliance' conducted the census at Sonadia, Maheshkhali, sea beaches at Cox's Bazar and Teknaf, Shah Parir Dwip and on the bank of the Naf River in Bangladesh side from January 27 to 30. Organisation Director Zahurul Islam said of the 52 species, 37 are migratory birds. About 11,878 birds were found at Sonadia and Maheshkhali.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Another flock of aquatic birds on the Cox's Bazar beach. These are often disturbed by tourists driving SUVs on the beach on their way to and from Teknaf. PHOTO: STAR



AUSTRALIAN OPEN Nadal lifts first title in style

AFP, Melbourne

Rafael Nadal won a classic Australian Open final against Roger Federer to secure his first hard-court Grand Slam title and stop the Swiss equaling the all-time Majors record on Sunday.

The world number one recovered from his five-hour SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

DCC elections to miss ward update

EC prepares to hold polls under 15-year-old demarcation

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) is preparing to hold the long overdue election to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) based on a 15-year old delimitation of its wards, risking a lopsided representation of voters in the next city administration.

Now the numbers of voters in the wards vary between the lowest of 20,000 and the highest of over 1,00,000 according to the 1993 delimitation which is currently in effect, since the 1998 redemarcation was scrapped by the last BNP-Jamaat-led four-party alliance

government in 2001. Sources in the EC Secretariat said the commission is mulling the holding of the election to the local government of the capital in April or May between the Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate examinations, using the current voter list with photographs, prepared just before the recent parliamentary election.

The EC on January 14 decided to begin countrywide updating of the voter list after May or June, on completion of the due polls to DCC, the municipalities, and the union parishads, the sources said.

The decision means, the EC plans to hold elections to over 4,000 union parishads and over 200 municipalities as well without updating the current electoral roll.

The DCC wards were last redemarcated in 1998 by the erstwhile EC, increasing their number to 100 from 90, bringing an equilibrium among the numbers of voters in the wards, which was also published in an official gazette.

But five cases were filed challenging the redemarcation, following which the last BNP-Jamaat-led government SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Ministries to get climate cells

Secretariat formed to monitor climate activities, fund

PINAKI ROY

The government has set up a secretariat on climate change under the environment and forest ministry to monitor the activities for combating climate change and deal with the climate change fund.

The government has taken the initiative to face the challenges of climate change as Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to global warming.

A special allocation of Tk 300 crore was given in the last budget for the first time for development activities to combat climate change.

Ministry sources said the government is going to form climate change cells with experts at all ministries to take necessary steps for mitigating the impacts of climate change on their respective sectors.

"The climate change cells at the ministries will monitor the activities to mitigate climate change's impacts and make suggestions for taking new programmes. The secretariat on climate change will coordinate the activities," Deputy Secretary of SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



Danish climate minister arrives today

UNB, Dhaka

Danish Minister for Climate and Energy Connie Hedegaard arrives today to open a conference on 'Bangladesh on the road to Copenhagen - towards a global deal on climate change at COP15, December 2009'.

The conference takes place SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

HC JUDGE REAPPOINTMENT Govt appeals to withdraw petition by CG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday prayed to the Supreme Court (SC) for withdrawal of the pending appeals filed by the Fakruddin-led caretaker government against the High Court (HC) judgment that directed the government to reappoint 10 additional judges with seniority.

The jobs of 10 additional judges were not confirmed during the rule of the BNP-Jamaat coalition government.

During the hearing of a petition jointly filed by 10 SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Favourable weather facilitated an extraordinary carrot harvest this season in Singair upazila of Manikganj; farmers produced over eight tonnes of carrots in one bigha of land. PHOTO: STAR

Huda freed on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After over two years of imprisonment, former BNP minister Nazmul Huda was released on bail last night from the prison cell cabin at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital.

Accused in 23 cases for different charges including corruption, bribery and extortion, Huda was sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Of these, a special court sentenced him to 12 years in jail in an extortion case, another sentenced him for seven years in a bribery case filed by the Anti-Corruption SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Aid groups, diplomats warned in Lanka

Threatened to be expelled over Tiger sympathy; troops capture 2 LTTE bombers' camps

AFP, AP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's top defence official has threatened to expel aid agencies, diplomats and foreign journalists seen as supportive of Tamil rebels cornered by troops in the island's north, a report said Sunday.

Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapakse told the Sunday Island that there would be "dire consequences" for any foreign non-governmental organisation, diplomat or correspondent attempting to give "terrorists a second breath of life."

"They will be chased away (if they try) to give a second wind to the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) terrorists at a time the security forces, at heavy cost, are dealing them the final blow," Rajapakse was quoted as saying.

Rajapakse is leading the government's crackdown against the Tigers who lost their mini state last month in the face of a military offensive that has pushed the rebels back to a narrow strip of land.

"Rajapakse did not mince his words when he said that some ambassadors, specially the SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

17 killed in post-polls violence

Says Odhikar report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Violence after the December 29 national elections caused the death of 17 people and left 500 injured, human rights organisation Odhikar said yesterday.

Odhikar in its report on post-poll violence suggests that the police should be more active in countering incidents of post-parliament election.

The report observed that though the security forces SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

2 policemen beaten for assaulting housewife

UNB, Lalmonirhat

Villagers beat 2 policemen including a sub-inspector and kept one confined, for assaulting a housewife at Vatiari in Sadar upazila.

According to the villagers, Jobeda Begum, a police source and also a habitual litigant, lodged a case against Aynul Haq on dispute over land.

Upon complaint, Sub Inspector (SI) Kiron and SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Kenya oil tanker fire kills 111

AP, Molo, Kenya

An overturned petrol tanker exploded as hundreds of people were trying to scoop up free fuel, killing at least 111 people and wounding 200, officials said yesterday.

Nearby hospitals were packed with victims, including small children, suffering from horrific burns. Trembling patients were loaded into ambulances Sunday for transfer to burns units.

"Everybody was screaming and most of them were running with fire on their bodies, they were just running into the bush," said Charles Kamau, 22, who was driving through the town of Molo on Saturday night when he saw the road blocked by hundreds of people surrounding the overturned truck.

As he waited to get through, the petrol ignited. "I just ran to where there was no fire," he said at a Red Cross SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Priyanka Gandhi due tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Priyanka Gandhi, daughter of the current President of the Indian National Congress Sonia Gandhi, will arrive here tomorrow afternoon to get a first-hand experience of rural development projects run by Brac.

Foreign Secretary Touhid Hossain confirmed the visit of Priyanka and said she will be SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Contractor gunned down in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals gunned down a contractor in the city's Khilgaon area yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Harun Gazi, 40, son of Wajed Gazi of East Rampura.

Police said a gang of five to seven around 2:30pm shot him when he was supervising a construction site at Nabinbagh Balur Math of SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Ex-MD of RPGCL charged with graft

Tk 7.33cr public fund embezzled

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday pressed charges against former managing director (MD) of Rupantarita Praktik Gas Company Limited (RPGCL) ABM Fazle Elahi in connection with embezzlement of Tk 7.33 crore from public fund.

ACC Assistant Director Abdul Majed, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, showing 15 people as prosecution witnesses. Seven other accused in the case were dropped from the SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Alert on Indian passenger jet at Delhi airport

AFP, New Delhi

An Indian jet with 150 people on board was taken to an isolated area of New Delhi airport yesterday after a male passenger started behaving in an unruly manner, officials said.

The Indigo airline Airbus A320 plane was landing in the Indian capital from the tourist resort state of Goa when the emergency was declared.

A civil aviation ministry SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Israel vows tough rocket response

Hamas rules out permanent truce under blockade

AFP, Jerusalem/Teheran

Israel -- which goes to the polls on February 10 -- has been hit by several rockets since a January 18 ceasefire brought an end to the 22-day war on the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip.

"We will act according to new rules that will guarantee that we are not dragged into an incessant tit-for-tat war that will not allow normal life in the south of the country," Olmert said. "The situation... in recent days has increased in a manner that does not allow Israel SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Prayer Timing

February 2

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-52	5-56
Isha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation