



## DON'T KILL OUR CRICKET

Former BCB chief Saber urges the incumbent cricket board president

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## 'A GIFT FROM GOD'

Pope Francis hails the internet in World Communication Day message

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## POST-POLLS ATTACKS IN JESSORE

# Rishipara victims reel from shock

2 arrestees confess planned attack, rape of 2 Hindu women

PINAKI ROY and MOKAMMEL SHUVO

They did not even cast votes in January 5 polls. Yet they got the "punishment for voting" -- they were gang-raped.

The victims belong to two Rishi families who had built their houses four years back at a corner of the Hazrail village in Monirampur upazila, Jessore.

The families are relatives and traditionally, their profession is weaving baskets with bamboos or canes and making leather goods.

These correspondents talked with them during a visit to Rishipara in Hazrail on Wednesday afternoon.

One of the victims is still in trauma. According to her mother-in-law, "She is so scared that she cannot sleep without somebody holding her."

The husband of another victim is too distressed to go to work. He is also feeling insecure. "There should be a permanent police camp in our village," he said.

"Yes," his wife couldn't agree more. "The repression on us will never end and such a police camp is necessary as long as we are alive." The couple married just four months back.

The families were all busy dismantling their huts as they decided to move to their relative's house.

"Maybe someday we would have to leave the country," said the father of one of the rape victims.

On January 5, they were going to Katakhal High School polling centre

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A Hindu family in Hazrail village of Monirampur in Jessore is dismantling their home and moving elsewhere after they had become victims of post-polls violence. Inset, a member of another Hindu family subjected to the atrocities tears down his home.

PHOTO: PINAKY ROY

## Democracy at stake in AL's hand

Says Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday alleged that the Awami League government "has taken democracy to a near death situation in a bid to realise its hidden BAKSAL agenda".

"Democracy was never safe at the hands of the Awami League," said the BNP chief.

Khaleda Zia made the remarks in a statement

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# DCC polls not in sight

AL wants to hold polls to all local govt bodies, but no timeframe yet for DCC; EC waits for govt green signal

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER and PANKAJ KARMAKAR

The Awami League government does not seem to want polls to Dhaka city corporations held anytime soon for some unexplained reason.

Soon after assuming office on January 12, the government has taken measures to see upazila elections start from next month, but it said nothing specific about when Dhaka city corporations would go to polls, due for seven long years.

The last city polls were held in 2002 in which BNP-backed Sadeque Hossain Khoka became mayor. When his tenure ended, the elections could not be held due to the state of emergency that was in force then.

In 2011, four years after his tenure ended, the government removed Khoka, split the corporation into two, and appointed administrators.

Local government experts had suggested that the government go for a complete overhaul of the DCC structure to ensure good governance.

However, things have not gone well since. Dhaka was ranked the least liveable city in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit a few days ago.

Failing to hold the "non-partisan" elections earlier, the Election Commission wanted to hold the polls on May 24, 2012, but a court verdict on voter list update put a stop to that.

In May last year, the High Court had cleared the

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## MINISTER'S RECEPTION

# School children forced to join

Kept waiting for hours on streets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Authorities of more than 10 schools in Bagha upazila yesterday made around 500 students queue up along the road for two and a half hours to welcome State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam.

At his reception held at Bagha High School, Bagha municipality Mayor Akkas Ali presented Shahriar with a gold boat while Kawsar Ahmed, ward unit Awami League president of Monigram union, gave him a gold coat pin.

Headmasters of different schools and around 500 organisations and individuals also offered the minister wreaths

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# Feroz made chief whip

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ASM Feroz, the law-maker from Patuakhali-2, has been appointed as the chief whip of the 10th parliament. He was a whip in the previous parliament.

Former chief whip Abdus Shahid (Moulvibazar-4) has failed to secure any position in the cabinet and parliament due to some allegations of irregularities, said Awami League sources.

Besides, five legislators have been made whips yesterday through a gazette

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Overflowing devotees offer Juma prayers at the Biswa Ijtema ground on the Turag river yesterday. The first part of the Ijtema began yesterday. Related photo on page 11.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## BISWA IJTEMA BEGINS

# Devotees swarm banks of Turag

HELEMUL ALAM and ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE AKAND

Devotees from home and abroad poured into the Ijtema ground on the Turag as the first phase of Biswa Ijtema began yesterday.

The Ijtema venue in Tongi, around 20-kilometres off the capital, literally turned into a human sea during the Juma prayers with rows of worshippers on the 160-acre ground. Maulana Qwari Zobayer, imam of Kakrail mosque, led the prayers.

Many people offered Juma prayers on boats and the roofs of vehicles, while some others along the nearby roads and roofs of buildings. A huge number of devotees from in and around the capital came to the ground only to attend the Juma prayers.

Traffic on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway and Tongi-Kamarpura road was halted for a few hours, creating tailbacks.

The Ijtema began with religious sermons by Maulana Ismail Bhatara of Pakistan after

the Fajr prayers yesterday and is scheduled to wind up tomorrow with Akheri Munajat.

Devout Muslims from 32 districts have joined the first phase of the Ijtema. Participants from rest of the districts will congregate for the second phase (January 31-February 2), said the organisers.

Around 7,000 devotees from 20 countries, including Qatar, Australia, Denmark, India, Pakistan, Germany and Brunei, have joined the Ijtema.

The three-day congregation includes sermons on the fundamental issues of Tabligh, prayers for exaltation and welfare of the Muslim Ummah and recitation from the holy Quran and Hadith.

Ulemas and Islamic scholars from different countries have been giving lectures, which are interpreted instantly in Bangla, English, Arabic and some other languages.

Like the previous years, a dowry free marriage ceremony will be held today.

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# Caab eyes 7,000 new staff

Waits for govt nod to new organogram aimed at heightened airport security

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab) is awaiting government approval for its restructured organogram that proposes creating around 7,000 new jobs to correct serious lapses in security, supervision and monitoring at the airports.

The Caab had submitted a draft organogram to the civil aviation ministry in February last year pro-

posing 13,776 posts for officials and staff. The ministry after scrutiny reduced the number to 10,694 and forwarded it to the establishment ministry in April.

The existing Caab organogram, approved upon an ordinance in 1985, has 3,716 posts with a chairman as its head.

The new organogram has been prepared keeping in mind the demand and operation in next 20 years.

Caab officials said they have been suffering from serious staff shortages, resulting in their struggle to carry out regular necessary safety and airworthiness inspections. A number of key points like control tower, area control centre and radars are so understaffed that only one person carries out duties at those places.

Shortage of staff at the fire control section in Chittagong and Sylhet airports was so acute that the

authorities often had to send people from Dhaka to carry out their day-to-day activities, mentioned the officials.

"The new organogram is one of the key requirements of the American Federal Aviation Administration [FAA] to get the Caab upgraded to the top category from the existing category-2," Caab Chairman Air Vice-Marshal Mahmud Hussain told The Daily Star.

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