



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

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and its biodiversity?

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occupied Palestinian territories on Dec 17

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Infighting grips AL grassroots

Party's efforts to bring in new leadership in vain

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Infighting and violence have gripped the ruling Awami League's ongoing grassroots councils, which have so far offered nothing but old wine in new bottles.

The party aimed to rejuvenate its local committees by bringing in fresh blood, but failed to do so in most district and thana units. It is because some AL law-makers and other influential local leaders seem desperate to secure posts in local units.

While this has led to internal strife and clashes in some districts, it is also causing

Councils saw violence
in many districtsOnly 22 out of 73 dist
units held councilParty units struggling
to meet Dec deadlinedelay in holding councils
in some places.

In October, AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam sent letters to the party's 73 organisational district units and asked them to complete councils in all grassroots units by December. So far, councils have been held only in 22 districts.

Of them, presidents and general secretaries of seven units have retained their posts. Thirteen district units have new presidents, but six of them were general secretaries of the previous committees. Acting president

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HALL-MARK BOSS

SC questions HC bail order

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has come down heavily on a High Court bench for "not properly exercising its discretion and not assigning any reason" in granting anticipatory bail to Hall-Mark group Chairman Jasmine Islam in a corruption case.

"We have repeatedly held that it is an extra-ordinary remedy and an exception to the general rule of bail which can be granted only in extra-ordinary and exceptional circumstances upon a proper and intelligent exercise of

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Bus helpers push man to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following a scuffle over fare, a bus conductor and helper allegedly pushed a passenger out of the vehicle causing him to get crushed under the wheels of the very bus at Motijheel yesterday.

The victim was identified as Akbar Ali, 45, a driver by profession.

"The man [Akbar] had a quarrel with the bus

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SUNDARBANS SOBBING

Plants, including Nipa Palm aka golpata, on the shorelines of a canal off the river Shela have begun to be badly affected by a thick-toxic oil slick. At least 20 canals, sources of drinking water for animals of the forest, have already been polluted by furnace oil from a sunken tanker. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PINAKI ROY

VESSEL MOVEMENT THRU' SUNDARBANS

BIWTA to revive original route

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It took the Southern Star-7 disaster for the BIWTA to wake up and hurry with the dredging of Mongla-Ghasiakhali channel and restore the navigability on the original route for commercial vessels.

Vessels were using an alternative route via the Shela river through the Sundarbans for over a decade as the channel lost its navigability. The number of vessels using

the route had increased since 2012 when the Bangladesh and India goods carrying protocol was revived.

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority had allowed vessels to use the alternative route ignoring objections from the Department of Forest.

Anticipating a disaster like the massive oil spill from Southern Star-7, environmentalists had been expressing concerns

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FIGHTING OIL SPILLS

Experts against chemical use

PINAKI ROY

Experts and officials from a joint meeting in Dhaka yesterday suggested not using any chemical for the oil spill clean-up in the two rivers of the Sundarbans.

Some TV channels earlier quoted BIWTA Chairman Shamsuzzoha as saying the salvage ship Kandari-10 would spray an adhesive to increase the density of the oil which will then be swept away by fishing nets.

Masud Hossain, captain of the vessel, said yesterday that they had come from the Chittagong Port to the Shela river with 10,000 litres of liquid chemical called Propylene

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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 16



RAINBOW COMES DOWN: Uttam Bhikkhu teaches poor children free of charge at a Buddhist temple in Kuakata. His students come from different communities -- Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus.

A torchbearer of education

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Some people find happiness in pursuit of money, some in climbing up their career ladder. Some, however, carve out a different path and seek happiness by giving themselves over to establishing a just cause. Ven Uttam Bhikkhu, 47, belongs to the latter breed.

A Buddhist priest at the Misripara Seema Buddhist temple in Kuakata, Uttam spends most of his spare time teaching poor children free of charge. But there is more to it: his students come from different communities i.e. Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus. In a country where education has become a commodity and communalism is taking a heavy toll on ethnic and religious minorities, Uttam has taken up teaching, thus fostering a secular spirit in the locality.

Children carrying books and slates and writing pads are seen every morning and afternoon to walk to the temple where the priest, wearing a sage-like

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Oil spill takes toll on baby crocodiles

A CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Oil spill from the sunken tanker in the Sundarbans has affected seven young saltwater crocodiles at Karanj Wildlife Reproduction Centre.

The crocodiles, aged four months, got sick after drinking water polluted with oil, said environmental experts and wildlife sanctuary officials.

On Thursday, sores were spotted in the reptiles' mouths in two saltwater reservoirs at the reproduction centre on the Pashur River at Chandpai range of the forest.

The sanctuary staff
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SARADHA FUND SCAM

West Bengal minister Madan Mitra held Mamata terms it conspiracy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

West Bengal Transport Minister Madan Mitra, a key aide to the Indian state's Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, was arrested yesterday in connection with the multi-crore rupee Saradha chit fund scam.

He was arrested by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on the prima facie evidence of criminal conspiracy, cheating, and misappropriation of funds as well as deriving undue financial benefits from Saradha Group, a CBI spokesman said in Kolkata.

Mitra was arrested in Kolkata after five hours of intense questioning at the CBI office since yesterday morning.

This is the third major arrest of a key Trinamool Congress leader in the scam since November last year.

Earlier, two party MPs Kunal Ghosh and Srinjay Bose were held in connection with the scam in which crores of rupees of several lakh of investors was misappropriated on promises of lucrative returns. The scheme collapsed last year.

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Madan Mitra

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