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of democracy within the two major political parties, and the gap between intent and actual practice within the parties.

PARTYARCHY AND POLITICAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT

As part of the study, the BIGD looked into the activities of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), the police and union parishad. "Politicisation of the SCBA leads to

corruption and malpractices," said Dr Minhaj Mahmud, head of research at BIGD, while presenting the report. SCBA members disrespected the

rule of law, resorted to vandalism over political issues, and continued to hold partisan political activities on court premises, he said. Recruitment in civil administration

couldn't be made merit-based, rather civil administration has been politicised with regionalism and political links being the major factors behind it, said Dr Minhaj. "While civil society in Bangladesh

has been able to play an impressive role in expanding public and economic services across the country to help reduce poverty, it has not been able, especially in recent years, to play the original role," the report says.

Dominant political parties have managed to "capture" civil society organisations that have "diminished" over the years, it adds.

Renowned economist Dr Binayak Sen said Bangladesh's economic growth relied mostly on readymade garment, remittance, agriculture and rural non-farm sectors that involved low-skilled labour.

"These low-skilled people have not been able to demand democracy, while the middle class could not play their role, and they [middle class] benefit from the inequality that persists in society," he said.

PARTY FINANCING AND

TRANSPARENCY The study found a rise in inclusion of

businessmen in major political parties as a means of expanding their financial resources. Though the major parties claim that

membership fee is the main source of their income, they actually rely mostly on donations from the private sector.

"There is significant divergence between what the parties claim as their source of finance and their actual sources," it said.

DIVERGENCE BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC NORMS AND

PRACTICES The constitution doesn't make any

specific mention of the need for trans-

parency and accountability within the members, who face corruption parties. Evidence suggests that the central leaders dominate the grassroots leaders and activists, says the report.

In democracy, there is a "crying need" for inclusive and decentralised representation. "Without this, the democratic governance of a country risks descending into authoritarianism," it said, suggesting constitutional amendments.

RISE IN POLITICAL VIOLENCE

According to the report, such violence increased at a steady rate of 4 percent between 2008 and 2013. "The ruling party, whichever it is,

terms of perpetrating violence," said Dr Minhaj. Moreover, intra-party violence accounts for a large share of overall political violence which, in most cases,

is attributed to ruling parties. "Political culture goes beyond healthy competition and becomes

SUGGESTIONS

 Enlightened national dialogue a crying need

• Two main political parties must avoid antagonism

• Reaching consensus on fundamental national issues

• Ensuring transparency & democratic values within parties

more confrontational whereby differences are sought to be solved in nondemocratic manner and that slow political development contributes to more violence," he said.

The study said, "There is a dire need for the political leaders to rally the party rank and file around their respective ideologies using profound political mobilisation methods that promote liberal thinking, open debate, pluralism and peaceful tactics to achieve political ends."

Those breaching these principles must be held accountable, it said.

PROFILE OF POLITICIANS

There has been a greater bias towards the induction of businessmen and dynastic aspirants into parliamentary politics, and it is well reflected in attendance of parliament, participation in budget speech and so on, the report

Political parties influence the extent to which members perform effectively in parliament. The businessmen and

charges, have lower attendance levels, it said.

WOMEN IN POLITICS

Though quotas were allocated to include women in politics, women's participation in major political parties is abysmally low, according to the

"More specifically, women are used primarily for community mobilisation purposes at the grassroots," it said. The number of women who contested as independent candidates in national elections is surprisingly low.

This trend is related to general gender bias, and also because of preferalways outstrips the opposition in ence given to male politicians perceived as being more likely to act as a source of funding, the report said. Speaking at the launching, Gono

Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain suggested a constructive national dialogue that would involve political parties, civil society members, NGOs, human rights organisations and youths. "We need to have a consensus on

certain fundamental issues," he said, putting emphasis on merit-based recruitment in civil administration, banning of religion-based politics and an improved environment in educational institutions. Imtiaz Ahmed, professor of interna-

said the spectre of liberal fascism is haunting the country, and what exists here is electoral authoritarianism. "Misgovernance has become profitable. You can get promoted and get

tional relations at Dhaka University,

contracts without the qualifications actually required," he said. "You need to come up with a structure where governance is profitable,"

Imtiaz said.

Ruling Awami League leader Yusuf Hossain Humayun said if there is to be any dialogue, the BNP has to come up with issues of national interest, not

with any conditions. BNP leader Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said the present government is not elected by the people. "How is it possible to start a dialogue with this government?" he asked.

Veteran AL leader Suranjit Sengupta said there wouldn't be any economic growth in the absence of good gover-Asif Nazrul, professor of law at

Dhaka University, said the country saw economic growth as a result of an ongoing process, not because of good governance.

"This growth would have been much higher if there was good governance in the country," he said.

BNP to find out why oil tanker sank FROM PAGE 16

government or its administration, which caused the incident.

When his attention was drawn to Khaleda's remark that the incident was pre-planned and the government was behind it, he did not make any com-Hit by a cargo vessel, the tanker,

Southern Star-7, carrying 3.58 lakh litres of furnace oil went down in the Shela river near Mongla upazila of Bagerhat. Almost the whole amount of the oil spilled and spread on a stretch of 100 kilometres in the Shela and Pashur rivers and their adjoining

At a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the world's largest mangrove forest was being destroyed in a planned way.

He added that suspicions had been raised from different quarters, including environmental scientists, that the

Review CHT

claimed that Jyotirindra Bodhipriya

Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati

Larma aka Santu Larma, chairman of

Samiti, has been dissatisfied since the

accord's signing and never wanted to

The government must meet the

give time for the implementation.

just demand and implement the

accord, said Chakma Circle Chief

Barrister Raja Devasish Roy, adding

that Santu Larma never demanded

anything not stated in the accord,

On Santu Larma threatening a

non-cooperation movement, Firoza

Signed by the then ruling Awami

League in 1997 to end a two-decade-

many key provisions yet to be imple-

mented, including a functional CHT

land dispute resolution commission

PM stands by

Earlier, the PM provided Tk 15 lakh

for his treatment, the sources added.

of famous songs including Mora Ekti

Phulke Bachabo Bole Juddho Kori, Ek

Swadhinata Anlo Jara, Purbo Digonte

Surjo Uthechhe Rokto Lal and Padma

Meghna Jamuna Tomar Amar Thikana.

Sagor Rokter Binimoye Banglar

Gobinda Halder wrote a number

long armed conflict, the accord has

said they would face it politically.

reports BBC radio.

and a taskforce.

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incident was part of a conspiracy to destroy the Sundarbans to pave the way for setting up of the proposed Rampal Power Plant about 14 kilometres off the forest.

The party spokesman held the press

conference to announce an eight-day programme to be organised by pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Krishok Dal to mark its 34th founding anniversary. Fakhrul there demanded an impar-

tial investigation into the oil spill, arrest of those responsible and their punishment immediately. "The government is destroying our

heritage like the Sundarbans at whim," he claimed. He also lambasted the government

for importing rice seeds "Nerica" from Africa, saying that Nerica produces 1.7 tonnes of rice per hectare whereas any type of Boro seeds "Bri" produces four times the amount.

The government in 2011 imported five tonnes of Nerica seeds for the first time as the variety is drought-tolerant

and requires less water to grow. Besides, it has no lodging or shattering problems, its grains have better protein value and crops can be harvested in less than 100 days.

Fakhrul also criticised the government, saying it was trying to import duty-free rice from India despite bumper production of Aman in the country in the current season.

However, according to the food ministry's website, only private sector imported 444 thousand tonnes of rice between July 1 and December 15. The government has not yet floated any tender for rice import.

Fakhrul at the press conference demanded cutting down of the prices of diesel for irrigation as well as the

agricultural equipment. A memorandum will be submitted to all deputy commissioners on December 23 regarding the issue, said Fakhrul, also Krishok Dal president.

Killing top ISIS leaders not enough to cripple group

AFP, Paris

The Pentagon has hailed the deaths of several top leaders of the Islamic State group, but experts say this is far from enough to cripple what has proven to be a resilient organisation.

US officials say air strikes have killed several senior and mid-level jihadists including Abu Muslim al-Turkmani, the right hand man of IS chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, dealing a serious blow to the group's operations. But analysts warn that disruptions of

this type are often fleeting and that the US-led coalition needs to look beyond their military campaign to weaken the supreme leader, deputies and cascadgroup that has become the world's most feared jihadist organisation since proclaiming a "caliphate" straddling Syria

and Iraq six months ago. "Eliminating key leaders is a means to disrupt plots and degrade

capabilities. But they do not defeat or destroy terrorist organisations," said Bruce Riedel, a former CIA agent and adviser to US President Barack Obama who is now a leading terror-"Al-Qaeda in Iraq lost its top lead-

ism expert. ership twice but still thrived sufficiently to give birth to the Islamic

State."

Pentagon spokesman Rear Admiral John Kirby said strikes against the group's leadership were disrupting the jihadists' "ability to command and control current operations against" Iraqi federal and Kurdish

But the real impact is hard to quantify, especially as the command structure of the Islamic State group is largely a mystery to intelligence services, with its members masters at disguising themselves through a multitude of false identities, nicknames and noms de guerre. And the Western view of a pyra-

mid-like command structure with a ing line of subordinates does not take into account a reality where tribal, regional, cultural and historical ties often take precedence. Even if jihadist supremo Baghdadi

was killed, this would not see the ideology that spurred the creation of the so-called caliphate crumble overnight. "If Baghdadi is out of the picture

before his caliphate is firmly established, the Islamic State group will be seriously challenged, but with resourceful lieutenants in charge, it will not be finished without a further fight," said Michael Ryan of the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation.



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and Ziaur Rahman, 36, have been arrested in a case filed for murdering the two.

In primary investigation, police came to know that Farid and Abu had a conflict with some other timber merchants over timber trading. This conflict might have led to the killing of the duo, said Abdur Rouf, officer-incharge of Chandgaon Police Station. Dipak Jyoti Khisa, assistant com-

missioner of Panchlaish circle, told The Daily Star that they were also looking into whether any other motive was behind the killing. Quoting witnesses, the police

official said around 11:00pm, Farid and Abu were returning home at Chandgaon on foot after attending the namaz-e-janaza in their locality. On their way home, criminals attacked Abu with sticks and sharp weapons, leaving him seriously injured. They also beat and hacked Farid as he tried to save his brother.

The two were taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where on-duty doctors declared them dead, said Nayek Shilabroto Barua of CMCH police outpost.

The bodies were then sent to the CMCH morgue for autopsies, he said Mainuddin Mohsin, brother of the

people, including Lokman and Ziaur, with Chandgaon Police Station in connection with the murder.

victims, has filed a case against 20

UN asks Israel

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The 2006 conflict began when the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah launched a raid into Israel and captured two Israeli soldiers.

Israel launched massive air and sea attacks on targets all over Lebanon, then invaded the south of the country.

More than 1,000 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and about 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers, died.

Cuban House

FROM PAGE 2

largely focused on the communist island's historic renewal of ties with the United States. He had been due to give a closing

address in the evening, but the session was extended to Saturday to finish discussions on the Cuban economy, the originally scheduled topic, reported state news agency AIN. The session was also attended by

the "Cuban Five," the group of intelligence agents jailed in the United States whose last three members were released in a prisoner exchange that paved the way for Wednesday's landmark rapprochement. The men are hailed as national

heroes in Havana, which says they were not spying on Washington but rather on Cuban exile groups determined to attack the island.

Cuba's 612-member National Assembly has no opposition representatives and meets twice a year.

The current meeting, which is closed to foreign media, is due to review progress on the annual economic plan, which fell short of its 2.2 percent growth target this year, and approve a new plan for next year.

Economy Minister Marino Murillo told lawmakers that Cuba would use 30 percent of its export revenues to pay off \$5.7 billion in foreign debt next year -meaning the island will need new loans to maintain its cash flow. Despite Castro's tentative steps

toward reform since taking over from his older brother Fidel in 2006, the Cuban economy will achieve just 1.3 percent growth for 2014, the council of ministers said earlier this month.

A design to live forever

FROM PAGE 16 hopes to be able to replicate the

human brain as a mechanical system. Randal Koene says the key to this is the SIM - a 'Substrate-Independent

By mapping the brain, reducing its activity to computations, and reproducing those computations in code, Koene argued, humans could live indefinitely, emulated by silicon.

'When I say emulation, you should think of it, for example, in the same sense as emulating a Macintosh on a PC,' he told a recent San Francisco conference.

'It's kind of like platformindependent code.'

The thing that makes all of this possible is a 'Substrate-Independent Mind.' This, according to Koene, is not

merely an artificial intelligence, but a human mind downloaded to a computer. Neuroscientists are 99.9% percent

convinced that the brain is a mechanism, he says. It is something that computes,

something that carries out functions. If you can figure out how it works, you can build a replacement for it. 'The idea that you can take a small

piece of the brain and build a replica

for it is very mainstream and well understood,' he recently told Vice.

The Haily Star

'Why not do that with the whole brain? And then why not upload that to a computer so that we can process more data and store it better, the way a computer does, organizing thoughts into folders that we can access when-

ever we choose? He believes that, using his system, we will be able to inhabit other worlds,

more virtual world.

'Or perhaps bodies that aren't built to survive in this environment, but

carboncopies to work on the technical and ethical issues around the project. 'We support practical approaches

toward what we descriptively term "advanced substrate-independent minds (ASIM), i.e. transferring mind functions from the biological substrate to another substrate on which those functions can be performed,' it says.

technology agnostic stance. We organise workshops and confer-

ences where interested parties can exchange ideas, network with others,

Next target kids

saying the kids were committed to following in the footsteps of their parents.

The letter says that if any incarcerated terrorist is killed, TTP will take revenge by killing more young children. "Let us make it clear to Pakistan establishment that if any of our associates is harmed, we will avenge our-

tion at the homes of many army generals and politicians," Khurassani said in a statement emailed to reporters.

Pakistan hanged two convicted militants Friday in the country's first Seven people including a police-

man and paramilitary soldier were killed in two separate incidents yesterday when Pakistani security forces hit militant hideouts in the restive north-

killed by the army since the Tuesday's massacre.

paramilitary soldiers raided suspected hideouts in Shabqadar, a town around Tuesday's massacre at a military-run school in Peshawar -- the deadliest ever

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the

militant organisation that carried out

attack in Pakistan -- were also killed. In another incident, five members of the TTP including a local commander were killed. The army has been waging a major

offensive against longstanding Taliban

and other militant strongholds in the

restive tribal areas on the Afghan border for the last six months. But a series of fresh strikes after Tuesday's Peshawar attack, which left 149 people dead -- most of them children, suggest the military is stepping

up its campaign. As the Peshawar tragedy unfolded, army chief General Raheel Sharif said the attack had renewed the forces determination to push for the mili-

tants' "final elimination". Meanwhile, a US drone strike killed at least five militants in Pakistan's restive tribal region near the Afghan border yesterday, security officials said, warning that the death toll was

expected to rise. The strike occurred in North Waziristan, one of the seven semiautonomous tribal districts bordering Afghanistan, which is seen as a hub for

al-Qaeda and Taliban militants.

Big hike likely

FROM PAGE 1

100 percent for government employees. It may also recommend many attractive incentives in the form of non-cash benefits like accommodation facility, mandatory insurance,

To implement these recommendations, the total expenditure on salaries and allowances of public servants may increase by 50 percent for which Tk 28,709 crore has been allocated in the

A finance ministry official, wishing anonymity, said the government might hike the salary by 75 to 80 percent on an average.

The official also said the new pay scale would come into effect from July 1 next year and it would be implemented in three phases as was the case with the earlier Pay Commission.

to widen the scope of a family's size, secondly, to give more incentives to poorly paid government staff, and thirdly, to give them a share of the country's economic development.

commission due to three causes: first,

members excluding parents. The 17-member Eighth Pay and

November last year. In August 2008, the then militarybacked caretaker government had formed the 13-member Seventh Pay Commission headed by former secre-

The Seventh Pay Commission took 14 months to submit its recommendations which the subsequent Awami League-led government implemented since July 2009.

Oil spill takes toll

FROM PAGE 1 2,000 and zooplankton 500 to 600

per litre of water during the winter season. Besides, aquatic species that have

failed to migrate must have consumed

oil, which will have a negative effect on their life cycle and their population, he added. seen going to the river for netting, but

their catch was very low as the Shela spill. and the Pashur and adjoining canals were still carrying the oil spilled from the tanker. Amir Hossain Chowdhury, divisional forest officer of Sundarbans east zone, said, "Now it is the time for fish-

ing as the spring tide has started in the

river. But the catch of the fishermen are very poor." OTTERS FOUND DEAD

Meanwhile, two otters were found dead and floating in the Shela river and Chototengra canal yesterday. After try to assess the extent of damage due

autopsy, furnace oil was found in the mouth cavities of the animals, forest officials said. "Me and Dr Manirul of

Jahangirnagar University found a dead otter in the Shela near Andharmanik," said Mehedi Hasan, a wildlife officer of Chandpai station.

find out wildlife death due to the oil "Oil was also found in the furs of the dead otters," said Mafizur Rahman

Chowdhury, fisheries officer and member of the probe team. UNDPTEAM'S VISITTOMORROW A team of the United Nations

different international organisations is expected to visit the affected areas in the Sundarbans tomorrow.

it. They would also try to figure out if the local community living around the forest needs any support for their livelihood during the interim period," said an official. Besides, the UN team would also

efforts. Three representatives of the UN

delegation held a meeting with officials of the Department of Forest and the Department of Environment at the auditorium of the DoF office yesterday afternoon. They later met Environment and Forests Minister Anwar Hossain Manju. The UN team is scheduled to visit

the affected areas on a boat from Dangmari to Harbaria point in the Pashur river and up to the Harintana forest station, starting from the confluence of the Shela and the Pashur, says a Mongla port source.

and even virtual ones. 'It would be interesting to inhabit a

somewhere else, like space.' He has set up an organisation,

'Carboncopies initially takes a

and keep updated on the latest developments in the field'.

FROM PAGE 1 30 kilometres north of Peshawar. justified the killing of young children He said two militants belonging to

selves by targeting your children. We would ensure that houses of army generals and political leaders become centers of mourning," said the letter. "We can create a mourning situa-

executions in years, while warplanes and ground forces pounded insurgent hideouts in a northwest region bordering Afghanistan - part of a steppedup response to the Taliban slaughter of scores of schoolchildren.

west yesterday morning, officials said. Dozens of militants have been

In the first incident, police and

health cards etc.

current FY budget.

For the first time, the commission has incorporated a public servant's parents into the fold of his family while calculating family expenditures. Currently, a family means only four

Service Commission was formed in

tary M Mustafizur Rahman.

A member of the commission, who too requested anonymity, told The Daily Star that the proposed pay hikes were higher compared to the previous

to the oil spill and what measures can be taken immediately to recover from

Another otter was found by a team, support the government's clean-up Yesterday, some fishermen were formed by the forest department to

Development Programme (UNDP) comprising officials and experts from

"Basically, the UNDP team would