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No Christmas this year for Gaibandha Santals

KONGKON KARMAKER, from Dinajpur

Christmas, the biggest religious festival of the Christian community, is called Borodin in Bangla. The Santal community calls it Sorhai, which is celebrated on December 25 every year. But this year, the indigenous community in Gaibandha's Gobindaganj won't have any Christmas. Thanks to an eviction drive last month, they now have no home and no money.

The Santals who were driven out of the disputed land of Rangpur Sugar Mills in Sahebganj last month have taken shelter in nearby Madarpur and Joypur villages.

Most of them are farm labourers. They have been passing their days without work since their eviction by police and sugar mills staff.

"How can we celebrate Sorhai this year? We have no money and are living in a virtual confinement here," said Golapi Hembra, 51, a farm labourer, adding that cultivation of Boro paddy already began in many places.

No Santals had work during last Aman paddy harvesting season, she said.

There is a demand for Santal man and woman as farm workers as they are hard workers and honest, she said. She also talked about how she celebrated the festival last year with her family members.

Each of her family members got new clothes on this

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Chilli growers in Gaibandha's Phulchhari upazila have innovated a way to protect plants from insects. They are using mosquito nets instead of pesticides. In the upazila, many farmers have become solvent by cultivating chilli. The photo was taken at Fajlupur union a few days ago.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Putin: We are stronger than any aggressor

He warms to Trump, flexes muscles on Syria

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday appeared to cosy up to US President-elect Donald Trump while asserting his authority as the key powerbroker in Syria.

At his annual end-of-year press conference, the confident Kremlin strongman praised Trump for tapping into the public mood in the US to claim his surprise win in November.

"He went to the end, though nobody believed that he would win except us," Putin said.

Ties between Moscow and Washington hit their lowest point since the Cold War under President Barack Obama due to the Ukraine crisis and Russia's military

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N'ganj win boosts AL's confidence

BNP to find reasons for defeat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League has started portraying Selina Hayat Ivy's victory as a proof that fair and peaceful elections can be held under the incumbent government.

The party is also highlighting the government's popularity and trying to dismiss the BNP-led opposition alliance's demand for holding the national polls under a neutral polls-time government.

The election results have taken BNP leaders by surprise. They, however, believe they were able to send a positive message to people that they want to contest elections although they boycotted the January 5, 2014 national polls.

Meanwhile, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan headquarters in the capital yesterday demanded a judicial inquiry into polling, vote-counting and results of the NCC polls.

Both the AL and BNP took the NCC polls, held in a partisan manner for the first time, seriously and as a prestige issue. The much-talked-about election was held on Thursday in a free, fair and peaceful manner in which Ivy defeated Shakhawat Hossain Khan of BNP by nearly 80,000 votes.

AL'S CAMPAIGN

The AL has already started a campaign saying free, fair and credible

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TIMES OF INDIA REPORT
 'Many Indians sending black money to Bangladesh'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
 New Delhi

With the Indian Income Tax Department turning the heat on black money hoarders in the wake of government's banning currency notes of high denomination last month, many Indians could be sending their black money in new notes to Bangladesh to escape the I-T net, The Times of India reported yesterday.

In a story datelined Guwahati, capital of north-eastern Indian state of Assam, it said the possible modus operandi caught the

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World's first solar highway in France



AFP, Tourouvre

France on Thursday inaugurated the world's first "solar highway", a road paved with solar panels providing enough energy to power the street lights of the small Normandy town of Tourouvre.

The one-kilometre (half-mile) "Wattway" covered with 2,800 square metres (30,000 square feet) of resin-coated solar panels was hooked up to the local power grid as Environment Minister Segolene Royal looked on.

"This new use of solar energy takes advantage of

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Rajshahi college student found dead in dorm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
 Rajshahi

A female resident student of Rajshahi Government College was found dead inside her dormitory room in the city yesterday afternoon.

The student was identified as Nazma Khatun, 25, a Geography student who was awaiting admission in masters course in the college.

Her body was found hanging from the ceiling in room 115 of the women's dormitory around 2:30pm, said Shahadat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Boalia Police Station.

"She committed suicide out of frustration", said the OC, referring to a note she had left in her room. "Forgive me as I couldn't do much. Look after my sister,"

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A livelihood from waste materials

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Md Jahid from Sutiakathi village in the district's Nesarabad upazila felt like he had spent almost a life time trying to earn a stable livelihood.

That is until he discovered discarded polythene and saw a lifeline in it seven years ago. For Jahid found a way to coil discarded polythene to produce industrial-strength rope that he could sell.

"I used to make rope with linen as my family was involved in linen business. But I could not make enough profit from it and often faced losses also," Jahid said.

"When the thought crossed my mind, I found a way to coil the polythene strips into. This rope is now used in packaging," he added.

The 36-year-old spends Tk 32 to produce one kilogram of rope and sells it Tk 40 to wholesale buyers at Inderhaat in the upazila.

"This rope is very strong and is in a great demand at different areas of Rajshahi as it is used in places like mango orchards for tying bunch of mangoes," he says.

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Jahid is busy producing rope from discarded polythene with his simple machine. The 36-year-old from Pirojpur spends Tk 32 to make 1kg rope that he sells at Tk 40 to wholesalers.

PHOTO: STAR



UNSC demands end to Israeli settlements after US abstention

REUTERS, UN

The Obama administration yesterday allowed the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution demanding an end to Israeli settlements, defying pressure from US President-elect Donald Trump as well as Israel and several US senators who urged Washington to use its veto.

The resolution was put forward at the 15-member council for a vote yesterday by New Zealand, Malaysia, Venezuela and Senegal a day after Egypt withdrew it under pressure from Israel and US President-elect Donald

Trump. Israel and Trump had called on the US to veto the measure.

It was adopted with 14 votes in favour, to a round of applause. It is the first resolution the Security Council has adopted on Israel and the Palestinians in nearly eight years.

The US decision to abstain was a relatively rare step by Washington, which usually shields Israel from such action.

The US abstention was seen as a parting shot by US President Barack Obama, who has had an acrimonious relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

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PRAYER TIMING

DECEMBER 24

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-25 12-45 3-45 5-28 7-00

JAMAT 6-00 1-15 4-00 5-27 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Today is the 43rd Death Anniversary of Begum Firdaus Rizvi



We request all relatives, friends and well-wishers to remember her in their prayers and to pray for eternal peace of her soul