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ANOTHER DEADLINE ENDS TODAY

The central effluent treatment plant (CETP) under construction at the Tannery Industrial Estate in Savar on the outskirts of the capital. Another government deadline for relocation of all Hazaribagh tanneries to Savar ends today, but most of the factories have still not been shifted. On the other hand, the tannery town in Savar is yet to be completely ready. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN



Debbie Reynolds, right, with her daughter Carrie Fisher

Reynolds dies a day after daughter

AFP, Los Angeles

Debbie Reynolds, the "Singin' in the Rain" actress who tap-danced her way into American hearts as a star of Hollywood's Golden Age, died Wednesday, grief-stricken over daughter Carrie Fisher's death a day earlier.

The 84-year-old suffered a stroke at son Todd Fisher's Beverly Hills home after telling him "I miss her so much, I want to be with Carrie," he was quoted as telling celebrity news

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10 YEARS SINCE 2003

Ctg jobs tripled as trade grew fast: BBS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The number of employment in Chittagong almost tripled in 10 years after 2003 due to a rapid expansion in the district's wholesale and retail trade, says a government report.

A survey, conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) between March 31 and May 31 in 2013, found 19.68 lakh employed people in 3.8 lakh economic units in the district, says the Economic Census Report-2013 on Chittagong which was revealed yesterday.

In 2003, the number of employed people in the district was 7.04 lakh, 12.82 percent up from the number in 1986, when the first such census was conducted, the report says.

The District Statistics Office revealed the report in a meeting at the conference room of the deputy commissioner's office with Joint Director Emdadul Hoque of the Divisional Statistics Office in the chair.

Out of the 19.68 lakh employed people in Chittagong, some 5.84 lakh were females. The percentage of female workers increased significantly to 29.67 percent in 2013 from 8.7 percent in 2003, the report stated.

Of the employed people, 92.87 percent were engaged in permanent establishments, 3.59 percent in temporary establishments and 3.55 percent in economic households.

The BBS survey also found that the number of economic units in Chittagong was 3.80 lakh. The number was 1.95 lakh in 2003.

Of the economic units, 50.43 percent are located in the urban areas while the rest are in rural areas, said the report, suggesting the number of employment

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Syria ceasefire agreed: Putin

*Regime, opposition groups
sign truce deal brokered by
Russia and Turkey, agree
to sit down for peace talks*

AFP, Moscow

Russia President Vladimir Putin yesterday announced a nationwide ceasefire deal to come into effect across Syria from midnight and that the warring parties had agreed to sit down for peace talks.

The deal brokered by Russia and Turkey could represent a major breakthrough in nearly six years of war in Syria and comes a week after rebel resistance was crushed in the second city of Aleppo.

Although on opposing sides in the conflict, Turkey and Russia have been working intensively to find a ceasefire after the fall of Aleppo, in a process that conspicuously does not include the United States.

Putin said in televised comments that Damascus and the "main forces of the armed opposition" had inked the truce agreement and a document expressing a readiness to start peace talks.

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China presents Trump the bird



AFP, Beijing

A Chinese shopping mall is ringing in the year of the cock with a giant sculpture of a chicken that looks like US president-elect Donald Trump.

China has gone cuckoo for the cartoonish pastiche -- complete with orange pompadour -- of the billionaire politician in Taiyuan, capital of the northern province of Shanxi.

The scowling statue is one of many roosters popping up around the country as it prepares to celebrate the lunar new year at the end of January.

With its tiny wings parroting Trump's distinctive hand gestures, replicas of the bird are available on the Chinese shopping site Taobao for as much as

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Luck by chance

A CORRESPONDENT,
Narayanganj

It was a tie.

Two member candidates got 20 votes each in the zila parishad elections on Wednesday.

Their fate was then decided by a lottery, which is rarely seen in Bangladesh.

This incident took place in ward-8 of Sonargaon upazila, Narayanganj.

The contenders were

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 30
Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-30 12-30 4-00 5-27 7-00
JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-15 5-30 7-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



PHOTO: BULBUL AHMED
Pond herons rescued from hunters by a mobile court led by Natore Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Office in Chandrakola village recently. The birds were freed later. Inset, a poacher holding an airgun in Singra upazila of Natore.



Winter brings bird poaching frenzy to Chalan Beel

BULBUL AHMED with
ANDREW EAGLE

Winter in Bangladesh means hot pitha cakes, sweet date palm syrup and badminton matches under way in city laneway and village. It's also the season when flocks of migratory birds arrive from locations like the Himalayas and Siberia to make this country's waterholes, such as Natore's Chalan Beel, their temporary home. But while the beel should be a bird haven it's become a danger.

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Israel's right wing bins Kerry speech

*Says Palestinian state will be 'off the
agenda' once Trump takes over*

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's right wing yesterday dismissed US Secretary of State John Kerry's speech on the conflict with the Palestinians as a parting shot of little consequence, especially with Donald Trump soon taking office.

One minister repeated his assertion that a Palestinian state will be "off the agenda" once expected ally Trump takes over, while others from what is seen as Israel's most right-wing government ever mocked Kerry.

"Palestine will be taken off the agenda," Education Minister Naftali Bennett of the hardline Jewish Home party told the Ynet news site.

He repeated his call for Israel to annex most of the West Bank, which would destroy any hope for a two-state solution -- long the basis of negotiations and which Kerry passionately defended Wednesday.

Kerry's speech included forceful criticism of Israeli settlement building in the occupied West Bank and annexed east Jerusalem, warning that it was helping put the two-state solution in "serious jeopardy."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he still supports a two-state solution, but he has also described his government as Israel's most pro-settlement, leading many analysts to question his sincerity.

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