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'BLACK MONEY IN ZILA PARISHAD POLLS' EC won't look into informal allegations

PANKAG KARMAKAR
The Election Commission will not investigate informal allegations of black money use in the recently held district council polls. Even Awami League lawmakers had made such allegations. The commission thinks that the elections were held peacefully and no irregularities were reported at polling stations. And that it was not necessary to look into such informal allegations of irregularities that might have happened behind the curtains. "We took all necessary measures so that voters could come to the polling stations and cast their votes without any hassle. We have succeeded. We need not investigate the allegations that are not provable," said EC Secretary Muhammad Abdullah on Thursday. In most of the cases, the aggrieved people made the allegations through the media instead of filing formal complaints. The commission received only four to five formal complaints and instantly enquired into those, but found those to be false. So, it is not necessary to further investigate those, he told The Daily Star. However, Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) President Hafiz Uddin Khan said, "The commission should not overlook those allegations. Rather, it should properly look into the allegations and take action if the allegations are found to be true." The first-ever district council election since independence was held on December 28 last year. The ruling Awami



POACHING WITH POISON... As the migratory birds start arriving, the poachers get active too. Across a swath of the country's coasts, poachers are spreading fine nets the birds fly into and get trapped. But they do not stop there. They mix poison with seeds and leave them for the ducks to eat. As the ducks fall dead in hundreds, the poachers collect the bodies and sell in the market for Tk 600 to Tk 800 a piece. This is exactly what our reporter Jahirul Islam Jewel saw when he visited the islands near Bhola in the southwest. In these photos, poachers are seen collecting Ruddy Shelducks, poisoned and dead.

FREE, FAIR POLLS Consensus among parties is also vital

Says president
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
President Abdul Hamid yesterday said apart from a strong Election Commission (EC), consensus among political parties is also essential for a free and fair election. He made the comment during his talks on formation of the next EC with Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Rob) at the Bangabhaban. The president hoped that his ongoing dialogues with different political parties would be effective in forming a strong EC. So far, Hamid has held talks with 15 political parties, including the BNP and the Jatiya Party. The tenure of the current EC led by Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad ends in February. During yesterday's talks, the JSD (Rob) proposed that the president takes steps for the formation of a new law in line with the constitution to form the next EC. The party also stressed

Putin 'sought to help' Trump

Say US intel agencies; president-elect insists hacking played no role
REUTERS, Washington
Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an effort to help Republican Donald Trump's electoral chances by discrediting Democrat Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential campaign, US intelligence agencies said in an assessment. Russia's objectives were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate former Secretary of State Clinton, make it harder for her to win and harm her presidency if she did, an unclassified report released on Friday by the top US intelligence agency said. "We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election," the report said. "We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump. We have high confidence in these judgments." Russian authorities, which have previously denied interfering in the US elections, offered no immediate comment on

Santal children yet to get textbooks in mother tongue

Debate over alphabets deprives 50,000 pre-primary kids of books in new year
ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi
Santals say *Joharh* to say hello and *Seta' Joharh* to say good morning in their mother tongue. But not all the Santals use the same alphabet to write the words. Some of them go for the Bangla alphabet while others like to write with the Roman alphabet. There is a strong division among their leaders over the use of the alphabet in their children's textbooks. And as the leaders failed to reach any consensus, some 50,000 pre-primary Santal children have been deprived of textbooks which had been decided to be in the Santali language, said experts. Each of the Santal children was supposed to get a pre-primary book on January 1 under government's first-ever mother tongue-based multilingual education programme. Recently, the government has distributed pre-primary books in five most-used languages of the indigenous communities -- Chakma, Marma, Garo, Tripura and Sadri, said Prof Mesbah Kamal, chairperson of the Research and Development Collective (RDC), a research organisation. Prof Kamal is also a member of the Multilingual Education Forum. He said before starting the programme, the government took advice from the forum and the RDC. He said the government had decided to introduce the pre-primary books

MP LITON MURDER Police arrest 6 suspects

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha
Police yesterday arrested six people in Sunderganj upazila of Gaibandha for their alleged involvement in the killing of Awami League lawmaker Manzarul Islam Liton. All the arrestees -- Farid Mia, Hazarat Ali, Nabinur, Shamiul Islam, Hadisur Rahman, and Ziaur Rahman -- are affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami, police said. They were produced before a court which sent them to jail. Police made the arrests at various places in Sunderganj in the wee hours of yesterday. Ashrafuzzaman, investigation officer of the murder case, said police yesterday sought seven-day remand for each of the arrestees and that the hearing on their remand prayers could

POOR CHINESE BACHELORS Rising 'bride price' makes marriage 'impossible'

ODDITYCENTRAL.COM
The shortage of women caused by China's one-child policy, combined with the country's economic boom over the last two decades, has made marriage a grim prospect for poor men in rural regions. These two factors have bumped up the "bride price" to hundreds of thousands of yuan, sometimes even millions, obscene amounts that most men can't hope of raising without taking a bank loan. SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



Fog disrupts ferry services, vehicular movement

Mercury likely to drop from Jan 12
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Dense fog disrupted ferry services and vehicular movement on different routes for several hours on Friday night and yesterday, causing untold sufferings to passengers. Two flights of Biman Bangladesh Airlines were also delayed yesterday due to poor visibility. Ferry service on Shimulia-Kawrakandi route remained suspended for over 11 hours from 11:00pm Friday, reports our Munshiganj correspondent. Six ferries with around 500 passengers got stranded in mid-river due to dense fog. Besides, queues of over 800 vehicles were seen on both sides of the Padma river. Ferry service on

Bangladesh Tourism Board logo. Visit Bangladesh 2016. Mega beach Carnival Kuakata-2017. Beach Carnival KUAKATA 2017. Sun - Fun - Gaan. Catch the Rising Sun, Enjoy the Gan (Song) Fun in the Sand with Kin - Joyously, Blissfully and Delightedly. Date: 14-16 January 2017. Place: Kuakata Beach, Patuakhali. For details Visit www.tourismboard.gov.bd

Bangladeshi killed by BSF in Chuadanga

UNB, Dhaka
A Bangladeshi national was tortured to death by members of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along Chakulia border in Damurhuda upazila in Chuadanga early Saturday. The deceased was identified as Bakul Mandal, 38, son of late Soda Ali Mandal of Phulbari village of the upazila. Commanding officer of BCB-6 battalion Lt Col Amir Majid said when a group of cattle traders

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Tonight the stars are gleaming. on a lonely silent grave where sleeps in dreamless slumber one we loved but could not save no one knows the silent heartaches only those who have lost can tell of the grief that we bear in silence for the one we loved so well. Rest in Peace Amma. The Robin Printing Family