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# Part of country shivers in cold

STAR REPORT

A cold wave has been sweeping part of the country for the last couple of days causing immense sufferings to people, particularly to day labourers.

Children and elderly people have been crowding hospitals with complaints of cold-related ailments.

People in Tangail, Moulvibazar, Rajshahi, Pabna, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Panchagarh and Chuadanga experienced chilly weather yesterday as the mercury fell below 6 degrees Celsius, according to Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

Mild to moderate cold wave was blowing in Barisal, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Mymensingh, Netrakona, Sitakunda of Chittagong, Rangamati, Comilla, Feni, Bogra, Sirajganj, Rangpur, Khulna, Satkhira, Jessore and Kushtia with the temperature ranging between 6 and 10 degrees Celsius.

Yesterday, the country's lowest temperature was recorded in Rajarhat of Kurigram and Tetulia of Panchagarh at 5 degrees Celsius.

Sources at the Met office said the temperature might rise from today.

The chill is being felt not only in Bangladesh, but also in some other parts of the world. In the last one week, a winter cold snap across Europe has killed more than 60 people, reports AFP.

In Panchagarh, chilly weather almost paralysed normal life, mostly affecting poor people and farm labourers as they could not go out for work.

"We depend on daily income. We could not work in the last three days due to biting cold. We are passing days by borrowing money from others," said farm labourer Mojir Uddin, 52, of Boda upazila.

People, including school and college students, from different backgrounds were going door-to-door for collecting warm clothes to distribute those among the underprivileged ones.

Officials of the Department of Agricultural Extension said agricultural activities were being disrupted due to the cold wave as farmers could hardly

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**Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed scalped the wicket of a giant on his Test debut, sending Kane Williamson back to the dressing room to stem the hosts' momentum. The hosts go into the fourth day of the first Test in Wellington trailing by 303 runs with seven first innings wickets in hand.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Word 'Rohingya' missing from Suu Kyi's letter to PM

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Myanmar wants to address the Rohingya issue and other concerns in a spirit of good neighbourliness, trust and mutual understanding.

Myanmar State Counsellor and Foreign Minister Aung San Suu Kyi conveyed this message to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a letter, which was handed over to the PM on Wednesday by Myanmar's State Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin, who visited Dhaka recently as a special envoy.

"The special envoy also presented to the prime minister the state counsellor's letter expressing her confidence that Myanmar and Bangladesh would be able to address the issues of mutual concern in a spirit of good neighbourliness, trust and mutual understanding between the two countries," according to a statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar.

There is no mention of the word "Rohingya" in the statement.

The press release, which is available in the website of Ministry of Information of Myanmar, said Myanmar and Bangladesh "have agreed to start consultations

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## TEXTBOOK BLUNDERS Hefajat slams critics, defends changes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hefajat-e-Islam has defended the changes that the government brought in this year's school textbooks and praised the government decision.

Ahmed Shafi, ameer of the Qawmi madrasa-based organisation, in a statement yesterday said the government's policymakers brought "some positive changes" in the textbooks following their longstanding demand and agitation.

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## Comedy of error



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ever seen a visa in which the last date of entry to a foreign country you intend to travel to expires days before the issue date of the visa itself?

Well, this is exactly what happened to one Indian citizen who, along with his brother, wanted to travel to Bangladesh this month. But due to the "mistake" in one of their visas, the siblings had to return home from the border.

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## A dog's deed melts hearts

ANWAR ALLI, Rajshahi

A stray dog stood guard near a human baby wrapped in a piece of cloth and waited until it drew people's attention.

Alive or lifeless, the body seemed delicate to the creature. It had dragged the baby with care from a ditch and put it down on a sidewalk in front of the district's central library on Thursday afternoon, said Fazle Rabbi, a resident of the area.

Being curious about what the dog was protecting, people gathered around and found to their astonishment that it was a premature baby. Some of them then began inquiring whether it had life and informed the police, Rabbi said.

As the matter sank in, people became emotional and began praising the dog for

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## Russia sanctions may be scrapped

Hints Trump; US Senate intel panel plans probe into election hacking

AFP, Washington

President-elect Donald Trump has hinted that he may lift sanctions on Russia and won't stand by the "One China" policy unless Beijing improves its currency and trade practices.

Trump told The Wall Street Journal in an interview published Friday that he would keep intact "at least for a period of time" sanctions President Barack Obama's administration imposed on Russia last month over Moscow's alleged cyberattacks to influence the US election.

But, if Russia helps the US on key goals such as fighting violent extremists, Trump suggested he may scrap the punitive measures altogether.

He also said he was prepared to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin after taking office January 20.

His comments came as US senators launched a probe into Russian spying,

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## FORMATION OF EC President 'highly likely' to form search committee

PARTHA PRATHI BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

A search committee is likely to be formed to constitute the next Election Commission (EC), which would conduct the parliamentary elections in 2019.

President Abdul Hamid might form the committee after wrapping up talks with political parties on the formation of the EC, said a highly placed source at the Bangabhaban.

The President's Office on Thursday invited eight more political parties to the Bangabhaban for talks. The dialogue will end on January 18.

Talking to The Daily Star, the president's Press Secretary Joynal Abedin said this would probably be the last round of talks.

In 2012, the then president Zillur Rahman formed a search committee to constitute the EC after holding talks with 23 registered political parties.

The tenure of the incumbent EC expires next month. President Hamid started talks with political parties on December 18 last year for forming the new EC through consensus.

The BNP suggested that the president should form a search committee and it recommended some names for selection of committee members.

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## HAWKERS HALT TRAFFIC



Closing one side of the street, hawkers in Gulistan and GPO areas hold a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday protesting the decision of the Dhaka South City Corporation to not allow any hawkers to trade in the areas using their makeshift stalls from today. The DSCC, however, would allow them to trade after office hours and during the weekends. The closed makeshift shops in GPO area, left, and Gulistan area, right, after the hawkers left for the rally around 1:00pm. The hawkers want their rehabilitation first.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



## Shape up or ship out for Kolkata cops soon?

TIMES OF INDIA

It's time, it seems, for Kolkata policemen to tighten their belts and pull that paunch in. Potbellied men in whites may soon have to shape up or ship out.

In response to a PIL filed earlier this week, a high court division bench on Friday asked the state government to prepare and submit a report on the 'physical and mental fitness' of Kolkata policemen.

Once likened to the Scotland Yard, the city police force indeed left much to be desired in terms of their physical attributes that weren't exactly conducive to chasing criminals, the court observed. The report has to be ready within four weeks.

Overweight constables, waddling clumsily with a stick, pulling their trousers up to prevent them from sliding from under their bellies have been as much a part of the Kolkata canvas as political agitations. Over the years, they have been made fun of, chided for being slow and unfit and taken to be a symbol of the sloppy administration that they represent. They have been allowed to grow out of size and never trained to be disciplined and athletic, it has been alleged. Kolkata Police, critics say, is harsher on passers-by than goons and criminals who create trouble.

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