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"The attackers will not be spared. Necessary action will be taken against them."
HOME MINISTER ASADUZZAMAN KHAN ON THOSE WHO ASSAULTED DUCSU VP NURUL HAQUE NUR AND HIS SUPPORTERS

"Christmas reminds us that God continues to love us all, even the worst of us."
POPE FRANCIS AT CHRISTMAS MASS IN VATICAN PAGE 8

"I guess there's a sense of romance about being involved in the Boxing Day Test ... at the same time it's about removing a little bit of that and bringing the focus back to cricket."
NEW ZEALAND CAPTAIN KANE WILLIAMSON PAGE 14

The curse of contamination

Locals suffer in silence as industries keep polluting Tongi waterbodies

PINAKI ROY

The water was once so clear that you could see the bottom of the Turag canal. Locals would even drink from it.

Now what one would find there is black liquid, and it smells so bad that it is hard even to stand beside it, said Tara Mia, an elderly from Barabari village along the canal.

"We used to catch fish in this canal and also the Chankirtek Beel nearby. But now you won't even get a frog in this water," he added.

"Since industries sprang up in the area, the colour of the water changed and our sufferings began," said the 70-year-old, sitting in a tea stall.

Two more locals -- Shamim Hossain and Masudul Billal -- joined in with their observations.

Sometimes, they said, the stench wafting from the banks of the Turag canal flowing through Shukundirbag village, is suffocating.

"Now we are habituated to this. But if relatives come, they cannot take the stench as well as the mosquitoes -- there are lots of them," said Shamim, a youth from Hyderabad village.

In a visit to Tongi in Gazipur this month, this correspondent observed that garments washing plants and textile units in Gazipura area and industries located in Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) area are discharging liquid waste into streams, canals and other waterbodies.

The untreated liquid waste from the industries, as well as sewage from Tongi municipality area stream into the Turag river through the canal, also named Turag, affecting people's lives and livelihoods.

People from Gazipura, Barabari, Kunia, Baghailkur, Shukundi, Nimtali, Ershadnagar, Banamai, Duttapara, Harbait, Baigertek, Hyderabad and Mazukhan are suffering due to this pollution.

Starting from Gazipura village, the canal is bringing polluted water through the Barachak Beel and down to the Turag river near the Majukhan bridge in the Nimtali area. All these villages are located on the banks of the canal.

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Pitch black water of a canal that empties into the Turag river at Shahjadpur in the industrial area of Tongi, Gazipur. Inset, water containing untreated discharges from dyeing and other factories flows to nearby cropland.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN, PINAKI ROY

ATTACK ON NUR

DU proctor blamed for 'theft' of video clip

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad leaders yesterday said the Dhaka University proctor was responsible for the disappearance of CCTV footage from Ducusu building where Nur and other leaders of the platform came under attack on Sunday.

The CCTV footage had been stolen as Proctor AKM Golam Rabbani was trying to save Chhatra League leaders, Rashed Khan, joint-convenor of the platform, told a press conference in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The leaders demanded resignation of the proctor.

There are nine CCTV cameras in and around the building. The storage devices were in the room of Ducusu Administrative Officer Abul Kalam Azad.

Azad earlier told The Daily Star that the monitor and the computer had been stolen from his room.

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Don't want repeat of last 3 city polls

Mahbub Talukdar says on DCC polls
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar yesterday said he did not want the upcoming polls to two Dhaka city corporations to be like the ones held in Barishal, Gazipur and Khulna city corporations last year.

"Experience of holding elections to the three city corporations [Barishal, Gazipur and Khulna] was not pleasant for me at all, Mahbub said, adding that he did not want to see a repetition of such elections in the case of Dhaka north and south city corporations polls to be held on January 22.

He made the comments at a training programme for returning and assistant

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City polls may thaw political chills

AL, BNP, JP start selling nomination forms; Taposh buys form for DSCC mayor post; selection of candidates Dec 28

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and RASHIDUL HASAN

The country's politics, which has mostly been in a hiatus since the last general election a year ago, is likely to heat up ahead of Dhaka north and south city corporation polls on January 30.

The BNP, the Left Democratic Alliance (LDA) -- a combine of eight left-leaning parties -- and several Islamist parties boycotted the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) mayoral by-polls in February and the staggered upazila elections in March-July, alleging irregularities in the December 30 national election. They said no free and fair polls were possible under the current Election Commission.

Many of these parties, however, have decided to join the city polls, saying it was part of their movement against the Awami League-led government.

And yesterday offices of these parties came to life by starting the sale of nomination forms for the elections.

The BNP began selling nomination forms to its leaders seeking to vie for ward councillor posts. It would sell nomination forms to the mayor aspirants from today.

The AL and the opposition in parliament Jatiya Party also started the sale of nomination forms yesterday.

AL lawmakers Fazle Noor Taposh and Haji Selim collected forms for contesting the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) mayoral polls. Current mayor Sayeed Khokon did not show up on the first day of the sale yesterday.

The left parties were yet to decide whether they would go to the polls, but insiders said the LDA may not join the election as a combine. Rather, it will allow its components to take part in the polls individually.

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday said they hoped the city polls would be competitive and participatory.

He made the comment while addressing a training programme organised for the election's returning and assistant returning officers at the capital's Election Training Institute.

The CEC asked the election officials to act within the law and not to consider any candidate's political affiliation while taking any steps. "You should treat all candidates equally."

On December 22, the EC announced the schedule for the DNCC and the DSCC elections. The last date for submitting nomination papers is December 31 and the last date for withdrawal

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COLD-RELATED DISEASES 5,945 fall ill in last 24 hrs

Met office forecasts cold, foggy weather for next few days
STAR REPORT

Amid an outbreak of winter illnesses, at least 5,945 people took treatment at government facilities in the 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday.

This has been the highest since the mild cold wave began on Thursday, according to data from the Directorate General of Health Services.

Met office forecasts continued cold and foggy weather for several days with rainfall in several regions of the country, followed by another cold wave from Saturday.

Flights and river traffic were disrupted in some places due to dense fog yesterday.

Of the people who took treatment yesterday, 967 were admitted to hospitals with acute respiratory infection, 2,059 with diarrhoea, and 2,919 with fever, eye inflammation, skin diseases, jaundice and other conditions, officials said.

Meanwhile, cold-related ailments reportedly caused 44 deaths across the country between November 1 and December 24, officials said. Khagrachhari and Panchagarh recorded 10 deaths each.

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ALLEGATIONS AGAINST COPS

HC for quick probe, action

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The inspector general of police needs to take necessary measures to ensure quick probe into allegations against law enforcers and actions against those found guilty, the High Court has observed in the full text of a verdict.

"While conducting daily judicial proceedings, we often notice that various allegations are brought against the law enforcers, including local police officers in different areas, and the victims lodge written complaints with the office of inspector general of police. But the allegations are not disposed of quickly," the HC said.

"The court also firmly believes that the IGP would make the functions of IGP Complaints Monitoring Cell more effective and speedy."

In November 2017, Police Headquarters opened a complaint cell under IGP so that anybody can lodge complaint against misdeeds and mismanagement of the law enforcers.

People can lodge their complaints by calling from cell phones or by sending emails to the complaint cell, which will remain open round the clock.

The bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman made the observation in its full judgment on a writ petition filed challenging the alleged manipulation of the first information report in labour leader Nurul Islam murder case in Rajshahi.

It delivered the short verdict on the petition on December 1.

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195th Branch Opening

North Gulshan Branch

www.ucb.com.bd

UCB is now at North Gulshan, Dhaka

UCB with its 195th Branch, is going to start the journey from today, 26 December 2019 at North Gulshan, Dhaka. We look forward to serving you with all modern banking facilities. We cordially welcome you to our new branch to experience the difference.

Mr. Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Land, Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh will inaugurate the branch as Chief Guest.

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