

## Annan alarmed at spread of political violence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations and Britain have expressed concern over widespread political violence in Bangladesh and urged the interim administration to act neutrally to end the crisis and pave the way for a free and fair election.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan is concerned about widespread political violence related to the forthcoming national elections in Bangladesh and the transitional arrangements, according to a release.

"The secretary general hopes that efforts by President Iajuddin Ahmed, who named himself head of a caretaker government, to consult with the main political parties to find a way out of the present crisis will bring about the desired results," his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said in a statement on Monday.

"The secretary general has appealed to the major political forces in Bangladesh to work together to find a common ground for the elections, acting in the interest of democracy and the welfare of the entire nation," the statement added.

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## LDP seeks removal of CEC

Places 8-point demand to CA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leaders yesterday met chief adviser to the caretaker government Iajuddin Ahmad and placed an eight-point demand that includes removal of the chief election commissioner (CEC) and other officials appointed on political consideration.

The chief of the interim government assured the LDP delegation led by its president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury of sincere efforts to carry out his duty properly as the chief of caretaker government.

"Iajuddin Ahmad assured us of carrying out our logical and proper demands", LDP president

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## Citizens group asks Iajuddin for neutral admin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of eminent citizens yesterday urged President Iajuddin Ahmed, also the chief adviser of the caretaker government, to perform his duty neutrally keeping aside any kind of sympathy or dislike towards anybody as per the oath taken by him.

"We hope that the president will remain completely free from showing any kind of direct or indirect favour or disapproval to any person, party or alliance," a press statement issued by the citizens' group said.

The citizens who made the appeal are - Prof Muzaffar Ahmed, ASM Shajahan, M Hafiz Uddin Khan, AHM Noman, Badiul Alam Majumdar, Mohammad Jahangir,

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# 5 more killed, 50 hurt in political clashes

STAR REPORT

Five more people were killed and more than 50 injured in clashes yesterday as countrywide political violence continued for the fifth consecutive day.

Of the dead, three were Awami League (AL) activists and two from BNP.

The victims are Akkas Ali, 65, vice-chairman of AL's Namita union unit in Jhenidah, Motahar Hossain, 45, an AL activist of Borhanuddin upazila in Bhola, Kena Ram Das, 23, AL activist of Debhata upazila in Satkhira, Rabiul Islam Rubel, 32, a BNP activist in Nilphamari and Elahi Sarder, 40, a BNP activist of Sreepur in Magura.

In Nilphamari, a clash between two rival groups of BNP left Rubel dead at Kashiram Belbukur village Monday night. Fatally wounded in the clash, Rubel died on way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, reports UNB.

A dozen others injured in the

clash were admitted to local hospitals.

In Jhenidah, BNP activists stabbed Akkas on his way to village Surjadia of Moheshpur upazila on Monday night. He died at a local hospital in the early hours yesterday.

Local AL blamed BNP for the killing as the attack was led allegedly by a BNP cadre Budo. But police said Akkas was killed following a land dispute.

Motahar Hossain, who sustained bullet wounds in a gunfight between AL and BNP at Mozom Bazar in Borhanuddin upazila in Bhola on Sunday, succumbed to his injuries at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital Monday night.

Meanwhile, 10 people were injured in a clash between AL and BNP activists in Borhanuddin upazila on Monday night. At least 15 shops were damaged during the clash.

Kena Ram, who was injured in an attack by the BNP activists on

October 29 at Parulia in Debhata upazila of Satkhira, succumbed to his injuries at a Khulna hospital yesterday.

In Patuakhali, 20 AL and BNP activists were arrested from Boga Bandar in Bauful upazila yesterday morning following a clash between the two rival parties on Monday night that left 15 people injured and eight shops ransacked.

In Bogra, three people were injured when Jatiyatobadi Jubo Dal activists attacked a rally of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) in the town yesterday evening.

In Jamalpur, at least 10 people were injured and 12 houses ransacked in a series of clashes between the BNP and AL activists at Bhabanipur in Sarishabari upazila yesterday.

In Magura, BNP activist Elahi Sarder was killed in a clash between the BNP and AL activists at village Dosatina in Sreepur upazila yesterday evening.



A tree branch and a bamboo are all there is to warn passing vehicles and pedestrians of the danger on Mirpur Road at Sheorapara in the capital.

PHOTO: STAR

# Country coming to life after forced slumber

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Life in the city seems to be getting normal again as Awami League (AL) led 14-party combine has suspended its agitation programmes following President Iajuddin Ahmed's swearing-in as the chief adviser of the caretaker government.

The private and public enterprises began operating yesterday while import-export through land and seaports were in full swing. Attendance at the government offices including the secretariat was on the rise with the officers and employees returning from the long Eid vacation.

Many markets and roadside shops in the capital opened shutters yesterday. Some are still closed but that is a normal practice

after Eid bonanza. The holidaymakers who had been stranded in different places during the Dhaka siege programme have begun to return to the city with resumption of inter-district buses, trains and other transport services.

The inter-district bus terminals at Mohakhali, Gabtoli and Saidabad were crammed full of buses coming from and leaving for different districts yesterday. The train services too were becoming normal.

Most of the small and medium-sized enterprises went about their businesses for the first time after Eid.

The eerie silence that ruled the city streets was dissipating with the increasing number of private vehicles coming out of about a week's slumber. As the people came out for

day's business and bus services on different routes resumed, Dhaka yesterday got back its usual look.

Many of the city dwellers who have literally been confined to their houses for the last several days heaved a sigh of relief as AL and its allies withdrew their blockade programmes. The announcement seems to have diminished public fear for violence, even if for the time being.

The stock exchanges started transactions from yesterday and those at the commercial banks were also normal.

At different landports, hundreds of trucks that had been stuck on both sides of the border started loading and unloading goods

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## CA given enough time to do the 11 major tasks

Hasina tells Butenis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) yesterday told the US Ambassador in Dhaka that the timeframe given to President and Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Iajuddin Ahmed is enough for carrying out the 11 urgent tasks to prove his neutrality.

During the meeting with AL President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadeh residence, US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis discussed the changed political scenario in Bangladesh following the transfer of power to a caretaker government.

Emerging from the meeting that lasted for about an hour, Butenis told journalists that she had thanked the AL president for giving the chief of the caretaker government Iajuddin Ahmed an opportunity to prove his

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## Wedding car bomb kills 15 in Baghdad

30 bus passengers kidnapped

AFP, Baghdad

A car bomb blast ripped through a wedding party in north Baghdad yesterday, killing 15 guests -- including four children -- and wounding 19 more, a security official said.

An interior ministry official said the blast targeted a wedding convoy at dusk in Ur, a mainly Shia residential district on the outskirts of Sadr city, which one day earlier was also the scene of a deadly bombing.

"A terrorist left a car parked on the street corner and, when the bridegroom's family arrived in a convoy, he set off a bomb," he said.

A defence ministry official confirmed the blast, but said the attack was thought to have been a suicide bomb rather than a remote-controlled device.

Baghdad is in the grip of a deadly sectarian conflict between rival Sunni and Shia factions which kills scores of people every day, despite a security operation involving 15,000 American and 40,000 Iraqi troops.

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## Nagorik Committee urges CA to reconstitute EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Nagorik Committee 2006 yesterday urged the chief adviser to the caretaker government to implement the committee's recommendations regarding reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC) and correcting the electoral roll for the upcoming general election.

The committee at a meeting held at the CPD dialogue room in the capital observed with great concern that doubts have arisen in the mind of citizens about observance of the constitutional steps and transparency in the process of appointment of the chief adviser.

In the present circumstances it is extremely important that the president and the head of the caretaker government will perform his functions in the most transparent manner to evoke confidence in

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## Verdicts in 3 cases against Col Faruk likely today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court is scheduled to deliver today the verdict of three cases filed ten years ago against Lt Colonel (dismissed) Syed Faruk Rahman -- also condemned in the Bangabandhu murder case. Judge Monzurul Bachhid of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court will pronounce the judgement of the cases at 11:00am in a building adjacent to the Dhaka Central Jail specially set up for the purpose, court sources said.

The cases -- one under the Arms Act, one under the Special Powers Act and the other under the Explosive Substances Act -- were

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A section of the people who were picked up and put behind bars at Lalbagh Police Station yesterday as the Dhaka Metropolitan Police continue to arrest people in the name of restoring peace in the capital.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

# DMP drive brings back mass arrest memories

Over 2,000, mostly innocent, arrested in 2 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) picked up over 2,000 people in their drive to restore peace in the city during the last two days, reviving memories of mass arrest by the immediate past BNP-led alliance government.

However, the drive created panic among small-earning innocent people and activists of Awami League (AL)-led 14-party alliance, as mostly they were the ones who were picked up. These people were allegedly harassed at the police stations and later at the lower court by brokers.

Even though the number of people picked up was more than

2,000 in last 48 hours, police placed 483 and 170 people before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) on Monday and yesterday.

Most of those who were picked up allegedly managed to obtain their release by paying bribes at the police stations while the rest, who were sent to court, were seen bargaining with brokers on the CMM court premises in a bid to obtain release orders.

A number of 14-party men were also seen busy at the court trying to get release orders for their party-men.

HARASSMENTS

A police team on Monday picked up

Sumon Mohammad, 15, who sells chicken on the streets of Moulaibazar in Lalbagh, in front of his house in Shahidnagar.

His mother Moina Begum had sent Sumon, the lone earner of the family, to get some bread and banana Monday night, as the family had no food at home.

"They [police] demanded Tk 1,000 for his release," Moina told The Daily Star, adding that it drove her crazy as she had no money.

She could only manage Tk 70 from a neighbour and offered the amount to the police team, which only angered them, she said.

Sumon received a beating at the

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# 2 killed, 30 hurt as train derailed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two people were killed and 30 others were injured when six compartments of a Dhaka-bound passenger train derailed at Sitakunda in the district early yesterday.

The accident, which occurred at a rail crossing near the Sitakunda Rail Station sometime after midnight, killed the two on the spot as the derailed compartments fell over them. One of them was identified as Jhulan Das, 45, the gate-man of the crossing. The other unidentified man reportedly came from Laksham by Sagarika Express, sources said.

Even after the accident, the Dhaka Mail sped off along with 12 other compartments to Baratakia Rail Station, some 15 kilometres away from the spot, as the engine

driver could not realise the incident, sources said.

The stranded passengers were sent to Dhaka by another train, Tuma Nishitha, after two hours, while the injured passengers were given primary treatment at a local hospital.

A rescue train from the Pahartali Rail Station reached the spot and removed three of the derailed compartments as of yesterday afternoon.

Movement of trains including passenger trains Tuma Nishitha and Udayan Express and a container-loaded train was delayed for nearly three hours due to the accident.

A four-member committee led by Divisional Transportation Officer (DTO) Mokhsedul Arefin was formed to probe the accident.

## Pro-AL, BNP staff demonstrate at Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tension kept mounting at the Bangladesh Secretariat as the pro-Awami League (AL) and BNP officials and employees continued to stage demonstrations in a display of power.

Besides, the officials deprived of promotions, made OSDs or allegedly harassed during the last five years have started coming to the

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Prayer Timing		
November 1		
	Azan	
Fajr	4-55	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-34
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Former president Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, centre, leading a team of newly floated Liberal Democratic Party members, meets Chief Adviser of the caretaker government Prof Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID