

## Hasina accuses president

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when it resumes on February 2.

The party will strongly oppose the 'black law' in the House, she said. "We've so far submitted 36 notices seeking disapproval."

She pointed out that the president who earlier described custodial deaths as an extreme violation of human rights signed the indemnity ordinance in a hurry.

"The president could have sent the ordinance back. Furthermore, he did not do anything to check gross human-rights violations in the country."

The former prime minister also opposed the way Iajuddin was elected the president. "He was made the President after Badruddoza Chowdhury was forced to resign by a resolution of the BNP Parliamentary Party. It doesn't go with parliamentary democracy."

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has to shoulder responsibilities for all the killings in custody as she had ordered the army-led drive, she warned.

"The army did not come out of barracks on their own. The prime minister called them out and ordered them to kill," Hasina said. "In fact, the prime minister indemnified herself through the ordinance."

No official order brought the army out and no specific guideline was formulated for them to follow, she claimed. "There was no state of emergency to deploy

the army. There is a specific law for the armed forces, which could be applied to the undisciplined action of the disciplined forces."

Hasina regretted that the Business Advisory Committee, which decides on length and business of the session, at its meeting earlier in the day rejected all ten issues. The AL demanded general discussion on them in the House.

The issues include deaths in custody, the US tagging Bangladesh as a terror-risk country, price-hike of essentials and petroleum products, push-in by India, violence in the Union Parishad elections, deaths from cold, law and order and corruption.

Still, her party will try to raise the crucial national issues in the House, she told reporters.

Hasina also spoke about the issues like coalition government's diplomatic failure, political repression and crime.

She blamed the government for the US decision to put Bangladesh on the terrorism watch list and push-in bids by India.

The AL cannot support the thanksgiving motion on the presidential speech and will rather oppose it in the House, she said, making it clear that the AL boycotted the presidential speech but will take part in discussion to oppose the thanksgiving motion.

## UP elections results

**UNB, Dhaka**

Partial results of UP elections held on Saturday.

Rajshahi: Elections were held in nine unions of Godagari upazila. Five of the elected chairmen are BNP supporters, two AL, one Jamaat-e-Islami and one independent.

Khulna: Elections were held in 10 unions of Digholia and Fultola upazilas. Four of the elected chairmen are AL supporters, three BNP, two BJP and one independent.

Mymensingh: Elections were held in seven unions of Dhobaura upazila. Five elected chairmen are BNP supporters and one each AL and JP (Ershad).

Bogra: Elections were held in six unions of Adamdighi upazila. Among the unofficially elected chairmen, three are BNP supporters, two JP (Ershad) and one AL.

Pabna: Elections were held in five unions of Sadar upazila. Three of the unofficially elected chairmen are Awami League supporters and one each BNP and JP (Ershad).

Chuadanga: Elections were held in three unions of Jibonnagar upazila. Two of the elected chairmen are Awami League supporters and one BNP.

Kishoreganj: Elections were held in six unions of Hossainpur upazila. Three of the unofficially elected chairmen are from Awami League and one each from BNP and JP (Ershad).

Kurigram: Elections were held in five unions of Bhurungamari upazila. Four of the unofficially elected chairmen are JP supporters and one BNP.

Panchagarh: Elections were held in three unions of Tentulia upazila. Two of the unofficially elected chairmen are Awami League supporters and one BNP.

Rajbari: Elections were held in four unions of Goalunda upazila. Of the elected chairmen, two are Awami League supporters, one BNP and one independent.

Jhalakati: Elections were held in three unions of Kathalia upazila. Two of the unofficially elected chairmen are Awami League supporters and one independent.

## She came to vote, too

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A visit to nine of the 32 centres in three unions revealed high presence of female voters although many of them do not know names of all the candidates. Habibun Bibi, 70, of Kaetpara could only say that she has heard that Abul Bashar is a chairman candidate. She does not know more than that.

More than 300 police and 400

ansar were deployed yesterday at the polling centres of the three unions. No major disturbance during the ballot was reported till the end of balloting. Three young people were held for moving suspiciously around the polling centre, according to the Rupganj Police Station. Ajit Kumar Roy, duty officer of the Rupganj Police Station, said till 3:00pm things were running smoothly.

As many as 13 people were contesting for three chairman posts --three each in Rupganj and

Kaetpara union.

In the Rupganj Union, Md. Mujibar Rahman (pineapple), Islamuddin Bepari (chair) and Abu Hossain Bhuiyan (umbrella) were fighting for the chairman post. Nuruzzaman Khan (umbrella), Rafiqul Islam (chair) and Abul Bashar Tuku (pineapple) are the contenders in Kaetpara Union.

But in Daudpur Union seven candidates are in the race. They are Moazzem Hossain (umbrella), Sharif Ahmed (pineapple), Md. Asaduzzaman (winnowing fan), Zahurul Islam (wheel), Tofazzal Hossain (candle), Mostofa Kamal (chair) and Shahadat Hossain Akhand (butterfly).

Abu Taleb Patawari, presiding officer of the Kaetpara Community School Polling Centre, said till 2:00pm he did not see anything unusual during the polling.

## Robbers swoop on fish, vegetable traders in Hazaribagh area

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Fish and vegetable traders have become a target of robbers in the Hazaribagh embankment area.

They come from suburban villages to buy merchandise on the wholesale market at Swarighat, Nawabganj and Rayerbazar in the city.

The robbers swoop on them mostly on the Hazaribagh embankment between 5:00am and 8:00am.

Robbery is on the rise after pullout of the army, said traders and locals.

Nitai, a fish trader from Basila village, was robbed of Tk 3,800 on the Hazaribagh embankment in the early hours of yesterday.

"I run my family with the earnings from fish trading. ... now I have lost all," sobbed Nitai.

Several organised gangs are involved in robbery, said sources. Hazaribagh police also confirmed such incidents.

## 30 abducted fishermen rescued from Sundarbans

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Thirty Bangladeshi fishermen abducted on Thursday morning allegedly by Indian pirates from Malancha canal in the Sundarbans were rescued on Friday afternoon.

Forest guards rescued the fishermen from Palokati canal after an hour-long gunfight with the pirates.

The forest guards led by Kadamtala station officer entered the Palokati canal in the guise of fishermen and surrounded the hideout of Indian pirates where Bangladeshi fishermen were held hostage.

Sensing presence of forest guards, the pirates opened fire. Forest guards returned fire. After an hour-long gunfight between the two sides, the pirates retreated and fled into deep forest leaving abducted fishermen in the hideout, unhurt.

Both sides fired at least 60 rounds of shots, forest office sources said.

The rescued fishermen were handed over to Shyanagar police station of Satkhira district Saturday afternoon.

## Maoists kill Nepali police chief, wife

**REUTERS, Kathmandu**

Suspected Maoist rebels shot dead the chief of Nepal's anti-rebel police force and his wife on the outskirts of Kathmandu early yesterday, police and officials said.

Krishna Mohan Shrestha, inspector-general of the Nepal Armed Police Force set up two years ago to fight a Maoist insurgency, is the most senior police officer killed in the Himalayan kingdom since 1996 when the rebels launched a revolt to overthrow the constitutional monarchy.

Police said Shrestha and his wife were killed while taking a morning walk near their home in the up-market Patan area, seven km from the center of the capital.

Shrestha's bodyguard was also killed in the attack, which involved at least three gunmen, police said, adding that thick fog enshrouded the area at the time.

An emergency meeting of Nepal's interim cabinet condemned the attack and authorities said they had launched a massive search for the attackers.

No group has claimed responsibility for Shrestha's killing, but Pandey said Maoist guerrillas are suspected.

## BGMEA polls

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short by a Oikya Jote leader.

The Oikya Jote supporters shouted at the voters to go back and said elections would not be held.

A little later, some Oikya Jote supporters allegedly led by Zainal Abedin Faruk swooped on the BGMEA leaders and supporters of the opposite panel.

At the Chittagong BGMEA office, police posted a notice which said, "Law and order may deteriorate in the context of the High Court order and so the election cannot be held."

Sources said a faction of garment owners belonging to the Oikya Jote supported the government move to postpone the election and tried to stop election board member ASM Naim from entering the office.

Naim forced his way into the office, summoned leaders of both sides and asked them to apologise for their behaviour. Later, Naim stopped the polls after having a word with the chairman of the BGMEA election board in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, till filing of this report at 10:00pm last night, the BGMEA could not fix a fresh date for holding its polls.

BGMEA Election Board Chairman Anisuzzaman said a new date would be announced soon.

Meantime, some garment exporters could not obtain 'utilisation declaration' (UD) to export their goods because of theiasco.

## Police act

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off the polls due to police intervention.

Earlier on Saturday, the Appellate Division upheld a High Court ruling that the elections should be held as per schedule.

However, the police ignored the order and sealed off the BGMEA offices in the capital and Chittagong, forcing suspension of the polls.

Barrister Mahmud also told the court that Chittagong police had issued a notice saying, "In the context of the High Court order, law and order may deteriorate. So, we are stopping the election."

The submission over, a High Court judge commented, "Where are our police leading us to?"

The court also summoned a sub-inspector of Chittagong police to appear in person before the court on February 1 to explain the content of the notice.

## HC asks govt

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reputation.

Professor Muntasir Mamun and Awami League leader Shafi Ahmed

also filed writ petitions for compensation. However, the court is yet to give any order on their petitions.

All the three -- Kabir, Mamun and Shafi -- were arrested on December 8 last year on suspicion of anti-state activities. All of them were recently freed on High Court orders.

## Sony murder

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Khan Mukti, have been absconding since the incident.

The court framed charges against the absconders in absentia.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police submitted a charge sheet against Mukti and 14 others on January 4.

Sony, a student of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), was killed on the BUET campus during a gunfight between two factions of JCD, the ruling BNP's student front, on June 8, last year.

BUET Security Officer Golam Kuddus Khan filed a murder case with the Lalbagh Police Station saying that Sony died during crossfire when the JCD factions were engaged in a gunbattle.

The two factions -- one led by Mukti and the other by Tagar -- clashed over establishing dominance on the campus and tender manipulation.

Special public prosecution Abdul Latif Talukder appeared for the state.

## Dhaka asks Delhi

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high commissioner that "the people and the government of Bangladesh have been observing the development with utmost seriousness".

Meantime, our Khulna correspondent adds: Over 4,000 Indian Muslims brought from different slums of New Delhi and Mumbai have been assembled at different BSF camps close to the Jessore border for push-in.

The sector commander of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and other senior officials visited the strategic border points yesterday to assess the situation.

The BDR and BSF troops are on high alert at Sadipur border.

An uneasy calm is prevailing along the border at Jessore, Satkhira and Jhenaidah districts after the BSF tried at least 13 times to push in people since Saturday night.

Meantime, the BSF denied any push-in attempt, the BBC Radio reported last night.

AK Agarwal, deputy inspector general of the BSF, said said none has been pushed back as well.

However, he said 'those who were stranded at the no man's land went back to their home in Bangladesh'.

# Road accidents kill 5 in Comilla, Pabna

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Five people were killed and 15 injured in separate road accidents in Comilla and Pabna districts yesterday.

Of them, three were killed in Comilla and the rest two in Pabna.

In Comilla, three people were killed and 12 others injured in a head-on collision between a truck and a microbus on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in Daudkandi upazila yesterday morning, according to UNB.

Two of the dead were identified as microbus driver Abdur Rashid, 30, and passenger Siraj. The unidentified deceased was also a microbus passenger.

Police said the accident took place on the Biswa Road at about 8:00 am when the Dhaka-bound microbus from Sitakunda collided with a sand-laden truck, leaving 15 people injured.

The injured persons were rushed to nearby Gouripur hospital where

Rashid, Siraj and the unidentified man died.

A case was filed with Daudkandi police.

In Pabna, two persons were killed and three others injured in a traffic mishap on Pabna-Nagarbari road near Chargobindapur Bazar in Sujanagar upazila.

The dead were identified as Beauty, 12, student of Dulai High School in Sujanagar upazila and van puller Mohammad Ali, 25, of Dulai village.

Police said the accident occurred at about 10:30 am when a Pabna-bound bus from Sirajganj hit the van, killing Beauty and Ali on the spot.

One of the injured, Lovely, was admitted to the upazila health complex.

Local people put up a barricade on the road after the accident, disrupting traffic for nearly two hours.

A case was filed with local police station.

## Indemnity ordn

**FROM PAGE 1**

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar began business amid sweeping security measures around an illuminated Sangsad Bhaban and its surrounding.

Sircar assured the House in a short opening speech that he would run the affairs impartially and picked a five-member panel of chairman to preside over the session should he himself and his deputy remain absent.

Abdul Mannan Talukder (Sirajganj- 3), Golam Mohammad Siraj (Bogra-2), Moshir Rahman (Jhenaidah-2), Dewan Farid Gazi (Habiganj-1) and Mohammad Mojibur Rahman (Lalmonirhat-2) are the panel members.

He also moved obituary references at the death of nine former MPs of the Pakistan National Assembly and East Pakistan Provincial Assembly, a condolence motion in memory of nine members of the provincial assembly, which the House adopted unanimously.

The obituary references were adopted at the death of former national assembly member of Pakistan and member of JS Principal Humayun Khaled, ex-provincial assembly member and Language Movement activist Kazi Rokonuddin Ahmed, former provincial assembly members A.K. Shamsul Alam and Feroj Ahmed Chowdhury, ex-minister and MP M. Mansur Ali, ex-MPs Moksed Ali, Fatema Chowdhury Paru, G.M. Abdul Haq and Mohammad Atiq Ullah.

The House also kept a one-minute silence and prayed for the deceased. Foreign diplomats, heads and representatives of UN bodies, donor and international agencies, high civil and military officials were among the invitees to the winter evening ceremony.

## DMC teacher

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issued against him on December 21.

The warrant was issued after he allegedly led a group of students to vandalise the offices of DMC Principal Professor Tofael Ahmed and some other doctors.

Following the incident, the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) suspended the membership of Dr Javed, also vice-president (VP) of disbanded Dhaka Medical College Students' Union (DMCSU). The BMA also formed a six-member probe body to investigate the incident.

Dr Javed came back to the DMC campus after getting bail on January 20.

After yesterday's procession, the JCD leaders threatened Dr Mizan for his 'role in implicating Javed' in the case for vandalising the rooms.

Police were deployed at the office of the principal and the forensic department yesterday afternoon following the threats.

# BOI chief

**FROM PAGE 12**

the other internal factors which frustrate existing investors and discourage prospective ones," Waliur observed.

The BOI executive chairman, however, said the FDI from the US depends on the government's policy on whether or not it would export gas.

Other than power and energy, the US investment in manufacturing sector is very meagre, the BOI chairman pointed out.

To increase the FDI flow, Waliur said, the government has taken steps for improving the country's image abroad. Besides, a Bangladesh investment and trade centre would be set up at the Dubai International Trade Centre very soon to display Bangladeshi products, he said.

At least 15 companies would get spaces at the centre for permanently display their products, he told the FICCI members.

The BOI chairman also said the government took specific plans and programme to bring \$1 billion in investment in the country by 2006.

## Power play

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Moniruzzaman and Anisul Huq, and the Oikya Jote led by Fazul Azim.

Sammitlo Parishad and Forum participated in previous elections as rivals but forged an alliance this time around.

On the other hand, Fazul Azim, who is leading the Oikya Jote, participated in the last general elections on BNP nomination but could not win. Several other candidates of the Oikya Jote are also BNP leaders.

Azim happens to be a relative of a senior official at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The same official is a close relative of the prime minister.

To gain support from the PMO, the Oikya Jote tried to portray the Sammitlo Parishad Forum as a panel of the Awami League.

Azim persuaded the commerce ministry to issue an order postponing the polls.

Later, the BGMEA went to the High Court challenging the commerce ministry postponement order. On January 18, the court stayed the order for two weeks.

On January 25, the Appellate Division upheld the High Court stay order, paving the way for the election to be held the next day.

On the same day, two garment owners obtained injunction on the elections from the lower court.

They contended that the BGMEA had taken Tk 25,000 from each panel to hold a joint procession meeting, which should have been held before the polls.

## Enam, Shuvra

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Faruq later died in police firing while allegedly trying to make a getaway.

While in custody, Shuvra was served with an order of detention under the Special Powers Act. The detention was later declared lawful by the High Court.

Another bench of the High Court yesterday ordered the government not to arrest or harass Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Majma, general secretary of Dhaka City Awami League, without due process of law. The court also issued rule upon the government in this regard. The order came upon a petition filed by Maya.

## Condensed milk

**FROM PAGE 1**

Star Ship brand while Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud appeared for Danish Condensed Milk Bangladesh Limited, producing Danish brand milk.

The BSTI on January 23 cancelled licenses of four condensed milk plants, banning production and marketing of their products for being potentially hazardous to health. The decision was taken at a review meeting of the Ministry of Industries with Industries Minister MK Anwar in the chair.

The decision came after BSTI chemists found traces of vegetable fat, which might cause stomach disorder, instead of milk fat.

"According to the BSTI Ordinance, the institution has no power to ban any product and stop production of any plant," said Rokonuddin in his argument.

If the government wants to ban an item and stop its production, the company should be given two months' time and the order has to be gazetted, he added.

# UP polls: 100 hurt

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Mohammad Khan, the chairman candidate, and his supporters tried to take control of the Kazir Chawla High School centre at around noon.

As agents for three other candidates protested his presence, police picked him and his two supporters up, triggering commotion in and around the centre.

The law enforcers first resorted to batons and then opened fire to disperse the troublemakers. Four people, including the son of the chairman candidate, were injured.

The authorities later suspended polling at the centre.

In Gaibandha, police also took to shooting when a group of unruly youths forced their way into the Jaripur Primary School centre at Gobindaganj upazila and snatched ballot papers. Polling was suspended after the incident.

At Katabari union, supporters of a chairman candidate snatched ballot books from the Ferusha Government Primary School centre.

They also vandalised the centre before law enforcers opened fire to drive them away.

Three people, including the candidate, were arrested and a case was filed under the Speedy Trial Act.

# Ensure people's rights

**FROM PAGE 12**

The opening session of the New Year was witnessed by foreign diplomats, chiefs of three services and senior civil and military bureaucrats from their seats in the VIP galleries. Speaker Zamiruddin Sircar chaired the sitting that began with the recitation from holy Quran.

In his 28-page written speech, the president highlighted the successes of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's 15-month-old government and its development plans for the socio-economic sectors.

Referring to various national issues, he urged the members of parliament to work out appropriate solution to national issues through consensus build on mutual trust.

In an oblique reference to the opposition for its certain remarks at home and abroad, President Iajuddin Ahmed called upon all irrespective of party affiliation to attach highest priority to national interest by nourishing fair intentions and balanced respects.

"This motto should be the guiding force for all those who aim at national development," he said. "Exasperation, desperation or sentimental trip should not lead us to speak or do anything that stands to hurt the interest of our nation or tarnish its image."

Speaking on the tricky issue of law and order, he said the government had to tackle the situation

# Promotion commotion

**FROM PAGE 12**

Previously, the government abolished the ten per cent ceiling for contractual appointment at the secretary level that allowed the government to give 23 secretaries service extension.

Sixty-one posts are designated for additional secretary, 29 of them are vacant and a dozen on contract, said sources in the Bangladesh Secretariat.

The SSB in August last year recommended promotion of ten joint secretaries to additional secretary, but the government has not yet approved.

A good number of joint secretaries, who were made officers on special duty (OSD) after the BNP-led alliance assumed power, did not get any posting yet.

## SC rejects

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Sayeed Ahmed and Justice Md. Fazlul Haque.

The court rejected the government's 14th appeal for time extension to implement the 12-point court directions on November 19 and issued the order yesterday.

Attorney General AF Hasan Arif, Additional Attorney General Fida M Kamal and Deputy Attorney General Borhan Uddin moved the court on behalf of the government.

The court scheduled the next hearing on the matter for April 27.

working in an extremely adverse environment, both nationally and internationally.

"Government has taken special care to improve the law and order situation and control crime," the president said, adding that the Speedy Trial Law, 2002 and Speedy Judicial Tribunal Ordinance, 2002 have been promulgated to restore peace and order by containing crime and to protect people's life and property.

Referring to the just-concluded army-led joint operation, he said it was conducted by the members of the armed forces, BDR, police and Ansars for significant improvement of the prevailing law and order situation in the country.

The president said that during the joint operation, criminals, owners of illegal arms, convicts, fugitives and professional killers, irrespective of party affiliations, were rounded up.

He expressed satisfaction that at present "there is almost no criminal activities in offices, courts, mills, factories, roads, markets, business centres, villages and neighbourhoods."

He said the Rapid Action Team (RAT) had