

RECOVERY OF ARMS

# Joint forces swing into action soon

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Joint forces will launch a massive drive to arrest criminals and recover illegal firearms to improve law and order ahead of the January 22 parliamentary elections.

Armed forces, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), police, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Ansar will start the drive in four to five days on the basis of list of criminals prepared by police and the Rab, sources said.

For the first time after formation on March 26 in 2004, the elite Rab will be engaged to ensure a peaceful atmosphere for holding a free and fair election alongside the armed forces, police, BDR and Ansar, sources said.

The Election Commission (EC) arranges a high level meeting at the EC Secretariat tomorrow to discuss ways of the special drive and work out a coordinated plan among the law enforcement agencies and the armed forces.

Chiefs of the army, navy and air force, top brass of police, Rab, BDR, Ansar and coastguard and heads of intelligence agencies will participate in the meeting to review the law and order situation ahead of the polls. Seven secretaries including the cabinet and home secretaries will also attend the meeting.

The participants will try to find out coordinated plans to keep law and order under control while the EC will give them guidelines with

the focus on ensuring security to voters, EC secretariat sources said.

Sources in the police and Rab said they had earlier launched a drive to arrest criminals, especially those possessing illegal firearms but their drive did not get any momentum as the law enforcers had to remain busy in checking political violence.

Rab sources said their intelligence unit has already prepared a list of over 1000 criminals across the country. Besides, police stations across the country have their own list of criminals.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner ABM Bazlur Rahman recently said there are

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PHOTO: STAR

Devotees attend the Christmas service at a Kakrail church in the capital yesterday.

## Candidate list of AL, allies finalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League yesterday finalised nominations of all the candidates of the party and its allies.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina in a letter to the candidates asked them to submit their nomination papers today at the election office in their area.

The names of primarily selected candidates are:

**Rajshahi Division**  
Panchagarh-1 Najmul Haque Pradhan (JSD), Panchagarh-2 Nurul Islam Sujon, Thakurgaon-1 Romesh Chandra Sen, Thakurgaon-2-Mohammad Dabirul Islam, Dinajpur-1 Monoranjan Sheel Gopal, Dinajpur-2 Shatish Chandra Roy, Dinajpur-3 Iqbalur Rahim, Dinajpur-4 Mahmudul Islam, Dinajpur-5 Advocate Mustafizur Rahman Fizar, Dinajpur-6 DrAzizul Haque.

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## Iran's N-drive linked to looming oil crisis

Reveals US study

AFP, Washington

Iran's nuclear ambitions are motivated not just by a desire for regional supremacy but by a potentially devastating crisis in its oil industry, a US researcher said in a report made public yesterday.

Iran's image is of a muscular oil producer with plentiful reserves, but

in fact it could soon face its own energy crunch owing to failing infrastructure and lack of investments, Roger Stern at Johns Hopkins University said.

Writing in the respected Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States, the professor of geography

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## Outlaw killed in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A commander of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) Lal Pataka faction was killed in a 'shootout' with police at Sukurkandi village under Gangni upazila in Meherpur early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Selim Babu, 35, son of Abdul Gani of Chandpur under the same upazila.

According to Gangni police, a team of police acted on a tip off and raided Sukurkandi cemetery at around 4:00am where members of the outlawed party were holding a meeting.

The police cordoned the cemetery and called on the criminals to surrender. The outlaws ignored the call and triggered an hour-long gunfight as they opened fire on the law enforcers, police said.

Selim Babu was found dead on the scene after the shootout was over while his accomplices managed to flee, claimed police.

Police recovered a firearm and three bullets from the spot.

Selim was accused in different cases including four for murder filed with Gangni and sadar police stations in Meherpur, police added.

Prayer Timing		
December 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-27	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

BOAT PURCHASE CASE

## SC hears Ershad's leave to appeal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The vacation bench of the Supreme Court will hear today former president HM Ershad's leave to appeal against his conviction in the Japanese boat purchase case.

Besides, three lawyers may file today a petition seeking review of the SC stay order on submission of vital information of the election candidates to the Election Commission.

Ershad, a convict in the Japanese boat purchase scam case, on December 19 secured permission from the Supreme Court to

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# Shah Moazzem, others join BNP

UNB, Dhaka

Some Jatiya Party (Ershad) central leaders, led by presidium member and former deputy prime minister Shah Moazzem Hossain, yesterday joined the BNP.

Other central leaders, who joined the BNP, are JP presidium members Syeda Razia Foez, Mansur Sarker and Ismail Hossain Bengal, and joint secretary general Khalilur Rahman Chowdhury.

On behalf of the newcomers, including some former MPs and

several thousand JP activists, Shah Moazzem Hossain presented a bouquet to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at the joining ceremony at a playground close to Hawa Bhaban.

Addressing the function, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia cautioned that conspiracy is going on against BNP, its allies, election and the country. She urged the people to remain alert against the conspiracy to maintain peace, development and progress initiated by the immediate past coalition government.

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