

# Iran will pursue its nuclear rights

Says Khamenei

AFP, Tehran

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said yesterday that Iran would not refrain from its right to use nuclear technology, shrugging off a UN resolution against its controversial atomic plans.

"The Iranian nation undoubtedly will not refrain from their right (to nuclear energy) and the country's officials do not have the right to refrain from the nation's right," Khamenei said in a speech on state television.

On December 23, the United Nations Security Council imposed its first ever sanctions on Iran over Tehran's failure to heed calls to suspend uranium enrichment, a process that can be used both to make nuclear fuel or a nuclear bomb.

Iran vehemently denies charges that it is seeking nuclear weapons.

insisting that it wants to enrich uranium only for peaceful energy ends.

In his speech Khamenei also warned against what he called a US-UK-Arab alliance against Iran.

"If the Americans, British and one or more Arab countries sit down and discuss Iran's nuclear energy to see whether not to allow it or approve it or relieve Israel's concerns in this regard, this would be a political mistake" by Islamic governments, he said.

"Islamic countries' statesmen, especially those in the region, should know that Islam's glory and the Islamic republic's power is a support for them," Khamenei said.

"The occupying Zionist regime always blackmails the United States, and in return it blackmails some Arab governments. If these governments rely on a great power

they will never have to be blackmailed."

He warned Arab nations to beware falling into a trap.

"This alliance, with the cooperation of two dirty and sinister governments, is against a nation that Islam is proud of -- a nation that has sacrificed a lot. Therefore Arab countries must be careful about this dangerous trap."

Monday's broadcast showed Khamenei to be in apparent good health, scotching rumours that surfaced Thursday on a US neoconservative academic's website that he had died.

On Sunday the foreign ministry dismissed the rumours, saying Khamenei was "in good health".

Khamenei, 67, who has the final say on foreign policy and military matters, has been Iran's supreme leader since 1989.

## 2 BNP leaders expelled

BSS, Rajshahi

Two local BNP leaders were expelled from the party on Sunday for violating party discipline.

According to the BNP sources, Abu Sayeed Chand, Charghat thana president, and Zakirul Islam Bikul, Charghat Pourasabha general secretary, are contesting in the next general election as 'rebel' candidates defying the party central committee decision.

District BNP President Azizur Rahman told BSS that the two leaders were expelled from their respective posts and their primary memberships were cancelled for their activities against the party's constitution and violating the party discipline.

He said the decision was taken as per instruction of BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

## Chinese team calls on Foreign Secy in-charge

UNB, Dhaka

A six-member delegation of Shanghai Institute of International Studies (SIIS) called on Ambassador Md Touhid Hossain, Foreign Secretary in-charge, at the foreign ministry conference hall yesterday.

During the meeting, the two sides expressed their satisfaction over the excellent bilateral relation that exists between China and Bangladesh.

They also discussed issues related to the possibility of increasing exports from Bangladesh to China, the possible role of China as an observer of Saarc, security related issues, China's role in the region as an emerging economic power and Bangladesh's stand on peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Yu Xintian, president of SIIS led the delegation.

Other members of the delegation were Zhao Gancheng, Sr Fellow and Director of South Asia Studies, Shao Yuqun, Director of International Exchange, Wu Yongnian, Sr Fellow of South

Asian Studies, Qiang Ziaoyun, Deputy Director of Russia and central Asia Studies and Zhang Yao, Deputy Director of Russia and central Asia Studies.



PHOTO: STAR

Commuters scramble to get on a minibus at Shahbagh in the city yesterday as only a few buses plied the city streets during the blockade programme enforced by Awami League-Led grand alliance.

# Cops show zero tolerance

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hotels in and around the troubled spots and beating them indiscriminately. Many of the victims claimed themselves innocent.

Ninety people were arrested from different places in the capital on the second day of the blockade.

The grand alliance comprising AL-led 14-party, Jatiya Party (JP), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), a faction of Islami Oikya Jote and Islamic Front Bangladesh called the blockade demanding resignation of Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of chief adviser, and announcement of a new schedule for the general election after 'proper updating' of the voter list.

Military vehicles mounted with automatic weapons patrolled the streets of the capital and elsewhere yesterday. Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) were deployed in different places but they did not get involved in clashes with pickets.

Most shops and business establishments remained closed, and no classes were held in educational institutions in the city yesterday. A small number of BRTC buses, minibuses, human haulers and CNG-run three wheelers were also seen plying in the capital.

The capital virtually remained cut off from the rest of the country due to the blockade.

Pickets set afire two CNG-run autorickshaws and an auto-tempo at Sadarghat, Senpara and Khajurabagan and damaged several more in different areas of the city. The blockaders also set fire to a minibus in front of Jahangirnagar University.

During three-hour long clashes in Chowkbazar area of Lalbagh, Water Works Road and Swari Ghat Road turned into a virtual battle field. At least 20 blockaders and five policemen were injured in the clashes.

Police fired more than 50 tear-gas shells, 400 rounds of rubber bullet and shotgun bullets on grand alliance supporters. And the latter retaliated by blasting more than 30 home-made bombs and throwing brickbats at police from alleyways.

Panic gripped the area as the blasts shook the old buildings in the densely populated locality in Old Dhaka. Residents and shop owners were seen moving for safety. The clashes erupted as police barricaded a procession led by the AL leader Haji Selim at

Chawkbazar crossing at 11:55am.

At one stage of the clashes, police ran out of ammunition and a police pick-up van rushed to the spot with more supply.

In Keraniganj, at least 70 people including two policemen were injured when the grand alliance activists clashed with police and BDR personnel at Kadamtai crossing and Ambagicha yesterday morning.

Witnesses said police and BDR personnel charged batons on a peaceful alliance procession from Aganagar area at around 11:00am.

Following this, the demonstrators started hurling brickbats on the law enforcers leaving two cops wounded. The activists also ransacked and then set fire to two toll collection rooms of the nearby second Buriganga Bridge.

Police later fired teargas shells and rubber bullets to fight back the activists, triggering the nearly two-hour clash that broke out at about 10:30am.

At around noon, army troops in two vehicles rushed to the spot, and the blockaders left the place.

At Malibagh, violence erupted as police tried to intercept an AL procession towards Malibagh crossing from Shantiganar. When police swooped on the procession with batons, the participants dispersed into the adjoining alleys.

Police chased the activists and indiscriminately baton-charged anyone found there. A number of people were seriously injured.

Police also fired at least 100 rounds of rubber bullet at the crowd and arrested at least 10 from the spot.

Meanwhile, police attacked and injured 14 protesters when they tried to break the barricade at Noor Hossain Square yesterday morning. They dispersed the gatherings and arrested seven persons from there.

Following the police action, AL leader Matia Chowdhury and Chhatra League leaders and activists lay down on the street protesting this.

The protesters regrouped on the spot again and started their programme. Folk singers rendered parody to inspire the activists. Tension grew again in the afternoon as more than 2,000 police gathered at Gulistan crossing with a water canon vehicle. Policemen in another vehicle asked alliance supporters through

microphone to leave the area.

Police later requested the grand alliance leaders to leave Bangabandhu Avenue by 3:00 pm. Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, general secretary of City AL, then asked the protesters to end their programme by 3:30 pm. And accordingly, they left the area.

Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports, all long-distance vehicles remained off the streets while delivery of containers to and from Chittagong port was seriously disrupted aggravating the container congestion further.

Despite having arrangement for army protection for delivery of bulk cargo through the waterways, only a few importers showed up to clear their containers.

As opposed to the usual daily delivery of around 1000 TEU, a total of 134 containers -- 55 by road and 79 by cargo trains -- could be delivered from the port in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

During this time, 1046 containers could be offloaded and 931 containers loaded on different vessels anchoring at the port jetties.

A total of 20,556 TEU containers remained piled up at the port designed for 14,500 TEU.

Besides, nine vessels with 2,019 containers berthed at different jetties of the port while twenty vessels were waiting at the outer anchorage carrying another 10,700 TEU containers till yesterday.

Our Staff Correspondent in Bogra reports: At least 20 activists of the AL and BNP were injured as the arch rivals locked in clashes, and police baton charged them on the second day of the blockade in Gabtoli and Shibganj upazilas of the district.

BNP activists set afire an AL office at Shibganj and an arch made of boat at Gabtoli, and attacked AL loyalists to prevent them from blocking Bogra-Joypurhat road yesterday morning.

Our correspondent in Khulna reported that at least eight people were injured in a clash between police, and AL activists and leaders near Khulna railway station in the yesterday morning.

The clash erupted when police clubbed activists of AL, Jubo League and Samrak League when they tried to halt a Benapole bound train. Police arrested three from the spot.

## Nine launches fined in Chandpur

BSS, Chandpur

Nine passenger launches were fined Tk 53 thousand on Saturday for violating the existing laws.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) sources said a mobile court headed by Magistrate Akhtaruzzaman conducted raids on the vessels at Chandpur Launch Terminal and found them carrying passengers three times higher than their capacity.

The mobile court judge fined the owners of the launches on the spot for violating the existing rules.

The launches fined are: MV Paishar Hat, MV Agradut, MV Nabik, MV Parapar, MV Parabat-10, MV Eagle, MV Raf Raf, MV Zam Zam, MV Abe Zam Zam and MV Tutul.

BIWTA officials told this correspondent that the mobile court will continue in the coming days.

# India to launch latest space rocket

AFP, Bangalore

India will launch a rocket into outer space Wednesday carrying four payloads including a capsule recovery experiment meant for future manned missions, top officials said yesterday.

The Indian Space Research Organisation said the rocket will also put into orbit a 680-kilogramme (1,496 pound) remote sensing satellite named CARTOSAT-2, along with an Indonesian earth observation satellite and another one from Argentina.

"Preparations are going on as planned," Madhavan Nair, chief of the space agency told AFP. "The formal countdown has started today for the January 10 launch which is fixed at 9:23 a.m. (around

0353 GMT)." "The main focus is on the CARTOSAT which is fitted with high resolution cameras, and on the space recovery project. This is the first time we are planning to bring back a space capsule to earth after launching it," Nair said.

"A lot of new technologies have gone into it. It will perform experiments in microgravity conditions and then it will be de-orbited and recovered from a precise landing spot. This technology will help us in future manned missions," he said.

Nair said the 550-kilogramme capsule, which will be in orbit between 13 and 30 days before it splashes down in the Bay of Bengal, 140 kilometers (89 miles) east of Sriharikota from where the rocket is slated to blast-off.



PHOTO: STAR

Garbage piling up on the Tongi Bridge finds its way to Turag river beneath through an uncovered portion of the bridge, polluting the river.

## Joyonti's death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Joyonti Reza, an architect and a teacher of Australian International School, says a press release.

Joyonti, daughter of freedom fighter and journalist M Sadekin, was allegedly killed by her husband Azam Reza at his house at Banani.

As the murder was proved, Judge AR Masud of Speedy Trial Tribunal-4, Dhaka gave death sentence to Azam Reza in January, 2005, which is still pending with the High Court, the press release added.

Family members of Joyonti demanded immediate implementation of the verdict.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held and orphans will be fed today.

# WEATHER TODAY

## Dry weather to prevail

UNB, Dhaka

Dry weather will prevail over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may also occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog elsewhere over the country during late night until morning, said Met Office.

It said mild cold wave is sweeping over Rajshahi divisions and the regions of Tangail, Faridpur, Jessore, Chuadanga and it may continue.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Country's highest temperature 25.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 7.6 degree Celsius at Iswardi.

**The sun sets in the capital at 5:28pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.**

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature	Humidity in percentage	in celsius	
	Max	Min	Morning Evening	
Dhaka	23.0	12.2	94	69
Chittagong	25.0	13.9	98	83
Rajshahi	25.2	07.8	69	52
Khulna	24.0	12.0	100	59
Barisal	24.4	11.5	100	76
Sylhet	21.6	14.7	91	89
Cox's Bazar	25.5	15.8	93	65

## Army distributes warm clothes among cold-hit people

UNB, Dhaka

The Armed Forces yesterday started distributing warm clothes among the distressed people suffering from the cold wave in different parts of the country.

An ISPR release said they started the programme from Balurghat near the Dhaka Cantonment in the morning.

Distribution of blankets and warm clothes available from the Chief Adviser's relief fund and its own sources will continue in Dhaka, Bogra, Jessore and Rangpur regions.

The 11 Infantry Division has contributed 10,000 blankets and 6,150 warm clothes, 55 Division 6,450 blankets and 6,774 warm clothes and 66 Division 14,165 blankets and 16,000 warm clothes. All these clothes have been dispatched yesterday by air to Bogra, Jessore and Rangpur regions.

# All doors shut on solution

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has no business other than holding the January 22 election," a spokesperson of the president said Sunday night clearly quashing all hopes for an all-party election.

Sources said the caretaker government retreated from its move of seeking the Supreme Court's advice after BNP leaders during a meeting with three advisers had rejected the idea outright and rather asked the government to concentrate fully on the January 22 poll.

After getting BNP's view on the matter, Iajuddin Ahmed discussed it first with Supreme Court Registrar Fazlul Karim and later with former chief election commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf and Open University Vice-chancellor also a law professor Ershadul Bari in Bangabhaban in the evening.

Asked about the latest move of the advisers, one of them said preferring anonymity, "Our move was for referring to the Supreme Court the matter of holding the election past the constitutional timeframe, if both the major political alliances had agreed."

"We did not feel the need to meet the Awami League-led camp as the other major alliance [BNP-led] had already rejected the idea outright," he said.

"The three-member team of advisers termed their meeting with Mannan Bhuiyan as a courtesy call as no positive result came out of it," the adviser added.

Even the president's Sunday night's statement, which was released through his spokesperson, echoed the BNP secretary general when he was quoted as saying, "If there is any political problem, the next elected government will get the opportunity to resolve it."

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan had expressed the same view while briefing newsmen on Sunday, ending the crucial meeting with the advisers to the interim government.

The president's spokesperson said the caretaker government had made all efforts until the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers to find a solution. The election schedule was changed four times and the polling date was fixed at the end of the 90-day time

limit as stipulated by the constitution, he said.

After a green signal from Chief Adviser Iajuddin for talks with the rival political alliances, advisers Mahbubul Alam, Shoaib Ahmed and Shafiqueul Haque Chowdhury met BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Before going to the meeting, Adviser Shafiqueul Haque Chowdhury told reporters that they were assigned by the chief adviser to break the crisis and to find ways to bring all parties to the poll.

Adviser Dhiraaj Kumar Nath yesterday said the initiative was taken to extend the timeframe for the poll. He however alleged that politicians did not cooperate with the caretaker government although they had said they would.

Meanwhile, the advisers are unhappy with the chief adviser's reluctance to discuss the crisis in a full-fledged meeting of the council of advisers.

"The president and chief adviser did not call any meeting to discuss the matter with our advisers since Awami League-led grand alliance had announced a boycott of the election," said an adviser. He said

## Schoolgirl killed in police misfire in Chuadanga

UNB, Chuadanga

A stray bullet from a police gun killed a schoolgirl at Satgari in the municipal area of the district town yesterday.

Local sources said Samapti Khatun, 12, a class-six student of a local school, died on the spot when the misfire struck her at noon.

Police said a bullet from a policeman's rifle was misdirected during firing practice at Satgari Chandmari ground.

The killing sparked strong protests as the local residents staged demonstrations. Senior police officials rushed to the scene and calmed down the public fury.

## Naga rebels attack rival camp: 2 dead

REUTERS, Guwahati

A Naga rebel faction attacked a camp housing the head of a powerful rival faction in the northeastern state of Nagaland yesterday and one militant was killed, police and rebels said.

They said rebels belonging to the Khaplang faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-K) attacked the main camp of the Issac and Muivah faction (NSCN I-M), near Dimapur town in Nagaland state.

NSCN I-M Chairman Issac Chishi Swu and his wife, who arrived in India on a rare visit from Bangkok this month, were in "Camp Hebron" and both were safe, a senior intelligence officer said by phone from Kohima, Nagaland's capital.

## Abducted AFP photographer freed in Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

AFP photographer Jaime Razuri was freed in the Gaza Strip on Sunday nearly a week after being abducted by masked gunmen in the latest foreigner kidnapping in the volatile territory.

Palestinian security forces handed over the 50-year-old Peruvian to AFP representatives at Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's compound in Gaza City just before 1800 GMT.

## Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Abdul Wahed Chowdhury, former additional secretary of the Ministry of Public Works, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at his residence at Uttara in the city yesterday at the age of 70, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three daughters, a son and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Wahed also served as deputy secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and joint secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

# DHAKA TODAY

## Conference

Odhikar organises a three-day conference on 'Transparency in election process' with Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, chairman, Anti-corruption Commission, as chief guest. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre. Time: 9:00am.