



PHOTO: STAR/FOCUS BANGLA

1. Performers of the grand alliance rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital leave their musical instruments on the street after police swooped on the rally ahead of their Bangabhaban siege programme yesterday. 2. Police drag a boarder from a residential hotel on DIT road in the capital during their clash with grand alliance supporters. 3. Law enforcers guard the empty Gulistan intersection in the capital. 4. Grand alliance activists halt and vandalise an intercity train in Joypurhat. 5. Grand alliance supporters wave to an army man on patrol at Paltan in the capital. 6. Blockade activists throw brickbats at law enforcers from an alley at Fakirpul in the capital following their clash with police. 7. Police lob teargas shells and throw brickbats at the grand alliance activists gathered before Awami League's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue. 8. An injured grand alliance activist on Bangabandhu Avenue. 9. A policeman shoots a teargas shell at demonstrators at an alley at Fakirpul in the capital.

# US jets strike Qaeda targets in Somalia

**'Many dead'**

REUTERS, Mogadishu

Many people died in a US air strike on a southern Somali village occupied by Islamists believed to be sheltering at least one al-Qaeda suspect, a Somali government source said yesterday.

"I understand there are so many dead bodies and animals in the village," the senior source told Reuters.

In the first known direct US intervention in the Somali war that began over Christmas, an AC-130 plane rained gunfire down on the southern village of Hayo late on Monday.

"The Americans are saying an al-Qaeda member heading operations in east Africa is among the Islamists there," the source said. He did not know the man's name or whether he died.

Hayo is in the southern tip of Somalia between Afmadow and Doble, areas where Ethiopian and Somali troops chased the Islamists' last remnants after ending their six-month rule of Mogadishu and most of southern Somalia in a two-week assault.

Used by the US military in

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the order they received the papers of their bails.

Over 260 out of 300 arrestees, who were granted bail on Monday, were released yesterday, he added.

On Monday, eight Dhaka metropolitan magistrates granted bail to those who were arrested in connection with cases filed against them with different police stations in the capital.

Six Dhaka metropolitan magistrates yesterday granted bail to over

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## Security alert for UN staff in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

The United Nations (UN) has put Bangladesh in phase-1 cautioning its international staff to travel in the country with precaution and security clearance in the wake of current political turmoil over the general elections.

The UN Department of Safety and Security, in an advisory issued on Monday, said the phase-1 (precautionary) is in effect for the entire country including capital Dhaka.

"Upon arrival in Dhaka all international staff assigned to Bangladesh should contact UN security unit to obtain security briefing," the advisory said.

It also said no travel to the phased areas should be undertaken without security clearance from the designated official.

## Bangabandhu's homecoming day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The historic homecoming day of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be observed today.

Bangabandhu returned to independent Bangladesh on this day in 1972 from a jail in Pakistan. He was imprisoned soon after Pakistani occupation forces' crackdown in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) on March 25, 1971.

Pakistani army arrested Bangabandhu from his Dhanmondi residence and sent to a West Pakistani jail.

After a nine-month Liberation War, the nation achieved victory on December 16, 1971, and the then Pakistani authorities were eventually compelled to free the founding father of Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, the Awami League (AL) and its front organisations

## 'O', 'A' LEVEL EXAMS BEGIN TODAY Volatile politics worry 5,000 examinees

SURAJNITH DEABNATH

Some 5,000 'O' and 'A' level examinees sit their exams beginning from today with fears that they might not be able to attend all of them, as the exams may coincide with the political programmes like hartal or hartaal.

Although exams are kept outside the purview of blockade, many O and A level examinees expressed their concern over not being able to attend the exams that will continue till 29th. These exams will be held simultaneously at different exam centres of Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Rajshahi along with the rest of the world.

Examinees fear that they will face serious troubles reaching the exam venues in due time as the exam time at 11:30am and 4:30pm are the time when clashes, chases and counter chases between picket-

ers and law enforcers usually occur during political programmes accompanied by damaging of vehicles.

Leaders of grand alliance have threatened that they will announce a series of tougher agitation programmes including blockade, hartal and siege programmes from their today's grand rally at city's Paltan Maidan. Meanwhile, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has already called continuous blockade from January 12 to 22.

In the face of this current volatile political situation, many examinees are gripped by anxiety, severe psychological stress and nervousness, which are making it hard for them to concentrate on their studies. Many examinees said they might lose six months if the opposition enforces even a consecutive two-day hartal.

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## Huda critical of diplomats' role over polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior Vice-chairman of BNP and former communications minister Nazmul Huda criticised the foreign diplomats' role ahead of the ninth parliament elections.

He termed their role "an interference in our domestic affairs". They provoked the violation of human rights and the constitution of Bangladesh, Huda alleged in a statement last night.

Huda, also the founder of Bangladesh Manobhadrak Bastobayan Sangstha (a human rights organisation), further alleged that the ambassadors of US, UK and states under the European Commission have been mounting pressure on politicians to change the election date, which would violate the constitution.

It is virtually interfering with the politics in Bangladesh, he said.

A number of political parties are holding Bangladesh's human SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## One-party poll to raise credibility question EU, Canadian envoys say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The credibility of the upcoming polls will be questioned both at home and abroad, if it is held without the participation of all the major political parties, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of European Commission to Bangladesh Dr Stefan Frowein said yesterday.

At a separate function, Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Barbara Richardson stated the same view yesterday adding that the Canadian government is concerned over the current political situation in Bangladesh.

The European Union (EU) is reassessing the operation of its election mission to Bangladesh in light of the recent developments, but will monitor the situation closely, Dr Frowein said. He was speaking as the special guest at the inaugural session of a 3-day conference on

'Transparency in the Election Process' organised by Odhikar at Spectra Convention Centre in the capital.

European Public Law Centre (EPLC), Organisation of Development Programme for the Under Privileged (ODPUP) and Bangladesh Centre for Communication Programmes (BCCP) co-organised the conference financed by the European Commission to Bangladesh.

Expressing concern over the consequences of the present political crisis, Dr Frowein observed that it is more important than ever for the civil society to play an active role to search for a national solution that commands agreement of people.

The situation must impel all stakeholders in the election SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



The wreckage of a CNG-run microbus at a filling station in Jatrabari in the capital after its gas cylinder exploded yesterday while refuelling.

## Thugs demolish 50 homes of indigenous people in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 250 landless people, mostly indigenous people, are passing their days under the open sky amid the continuing cold wave in Dinajpur after miscreants dismantled and torched their homes on Sunday night.

The incident took place at Amoir under Dinajpur Sadar upazila where at least 50 minority families had been living on government khas land for the last nine months, Dinajpur police sources said.

Sources said a gang of unidentified armed miscreants on Sunday night swooped on them and dis-

mantled their houses. They later set fire to the houses, which were made of straw and clay. Sulaf Murmu, a victim, said the gang had 40-50 members.

During the attack, at least five people were injured and they are SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## JAN 22 POLLS Fema, Janipop urge govt to ensure all-party participation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two leading election monitoring organisations yesterday urged the caretaker government to ensure participation of all political parties in the next national elections where citizens will have multiple choices in selecting their representatives.

Emphasising a fully participatory election, Jatiya Nirbahan Porjobjekhan Parishad (Janipop) and Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (Fema) chiefs in a joint statement said the election should be meaningful leading to resolution of conflict rather than its intensification.

Both organisations also expressed their extreme disappointment that a large number of SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

## Correction

Our yesterday's story headlined "6 secretaries transferred: No cabinet secy for over a month" contains a wrong information. The intro says "...the post of the cabinet secretary still remains vacant for more than a month," which is not true. We regret the inadvertent error.

### Prayer Timing

	January 10	
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-36	5-40
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation