

BSF kills 1, abducts 6

STAR REPORT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi youth in Chapainawabganj and abducted six farmers in Kushtia yesterday.

The dead is Rubel, 30, son of Akkas Ali under Godagari upazila of Rajshahi, while the abducted farmers are Alamgir Hossain, 36, Rintu, 24, Anwarul Hossain, 27, Ripon, 24, Samsul, 36, and Asadul, 25.

The UNB quoted local people as saying that the Indian border guards of Char Renuka camp opened fire on Rubel when he was crossing Poladanga border under Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila at around 2:30am to visit his relatives at Lalgola in India. He died instantly.

Confirming the incident, 39 Rifles Battalion Commander Lt Col Akter Hossain said a protest letter was sent to the BSF authorities demanding return of the body.

Our Kushtia correspondent reported that the BSF picked up the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

PROTHOM ALO ROUNDTABLE

# Top ex-army men for purge of political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several former top army officials yesterday stressed the need for a thorough purge of political parties with emphasis on stopping their criminal activities and corruption, and depoliticisation of the public institutions to make them functional for democracy.

Strongly opposing the idea of keeping the state of emergency in effect for too long or instituting a martial law in the country, they said at a roundtable in the capital that the political parties will ultimately rule the country to fulfil the people's expectation.

The former army officials suggested utilising expertise of the armed forces for correcting the voter roll, making voter identity

cards, recovery of illegal firearms and for stopping the use of black money during elections, as they were deliberating on what to do next against the backdrop of the prevailing state of emergency 'declared following a grave political crisis that threatened national security and economy'.

Hailing the role of the army during natural calamities and in strengthening democracy in other countries, the speakers asked them to show patriotism in creating a congenial atmosphere for holding the next general election and for strengthening democracy.

The vernacular daily Prothom Alo organised the roundtable titled 'The State of the Country: State of Emergency and the Imperatives' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

"While the country was advancing towards a civil war like situation following confrontations and bloodshed due to the two political alliances locking horns, the armed forces successfully took some steps to rein in the situation," said moderator Motiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo.

Some of the participants suggested that the army should stay in the field until the necessary tasks are done, may it be for six months or a year, before holding the parliamentary election and handing over of power to elected representatives.

Regretting the failure in developing a true democratic culture since restoration of democracy in 1991, security analyst Brig Gen (ret'd) Sakawat Husain said

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## JCD man dies 14 hours after release from army custody

UNB, Sherpur

An activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Nakla upazila unit, detained by army on Thursday night, died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital after 14 hours of his release.

The dead, Mazharul Islam Ranju, 32, was the younger brother of Sherpur town BNP President Mokhesur Rahman Tara.

Local and family sources said an army team picked up Ranju from his in-law's house at Kacharipara in the district town at 11:00pm on Thursday and took him to their camp.

Ranju was released at 4:00pm on Friday in a "critical condition". He was immediately admitted to Nakla Upazila Health Complex with respiratory problems.

Later, Ranju was shifted to Mymensingh Medical College

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Army personnel install a temporary bridge over the river Turag near Tongi on the outskirts of the capital as part of the preparations for Biswa Jitema which starts on February 2.



PHOTO: STAR

Employees of roadside flower shops, which Rajuk tore down at Shahbagh intersection in Dhaka yesterday, sleep on the central reservation of the road keeping beside them the flowers and bouquets they managed to save.

## Joint forces pick up 2,214 more, seize 26 firearms

STAR REPORT

The army-led joint forces rounded up 2,214 people including several local leaders and activists of BNP and Awami League (AL) and their front organisations from different places during the 24 hours ending at 6:00pm yesterday.

Navy personnel recovered 13 firearms and 200 bullets from a house in Moheshkhali upazila yesterday morning while the joint forces recovered 13 more firearms during their drives.

Of the arrestees, 25 are fugitive convicts, 1,059 facing arrest warrants and the rest are accused in different cases, said a press release

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

# US congress set to be counterweight to Bush

AFP, Washington

The new Democratic-controlled US Congress is trying to reassert itself as a counterweight to President George W Bush as it looks for ways to chip away at the president's prerogative to conduct foreign policy, especially in the case of Iraq.

Democrats have been in control of the Senate and the House of Representatives since January 4, thanks primarily to the unpopularity of the war in Iraq, a sentiment that allowed them to win the November 7 elections.

On Wednesday, they opened debate in the Senate on a draft resolution that declares that sending combat reinforcements to Iraq

would run counter to national interests.

The resolution is not binding, but by winning support of a handful of influential Republicans, its drafters hope to demonstrate President Bush's increasing isolation on the subject.

The White House, which for the moment repeats that nothing will force it to back down on Iraq, does not try to conceal its concern.

Its main argument, which aims to stave off defections by more top Republicans, holds that a vote against a new Iraq strategy announced by Bush earlier this month would end up encouraging the Iraqi insurgency and further weakening the Iraqi government.

In the end, Democrats, who recognise that their initiative will not affect Bush's decision to deploy an additional 21,500 troops to Iraq, plan to take more effective measures, at least to reassure their own political base.

US Senators Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and Christopher Dodd -- all declared or presumed 2008 presidential candidates -- have introduced bills calling for capping the US military presence in Iraq at levels that existed at the beginning of the year.

A debate on war funds that is expected to take place in February could also allow Democrats to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Rejoinder, our reply

The Ministry of Education in a rejoinder to a report titled "Move on to recruit 782 in education project on political ground" published in The Daily Star on January 9 said "the report appears to be misguiding, untrue and distortion of facts".

The rejoinder signed by deputy secretary (Dev-2) of education ministry said that the recruitment process of Secondary Education Sector Development Project (SESDP) would be completed by March-April 2007 and not by

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Correction

Former minister Major General (ret'd) M Majid-ul-Haq has sent a rejoinder to a report published in The Daily Star on January 17 under the headline "BNP beefs up standing body" that said he had been released from the BNP National Standing Committee in 1996.

He contradicted The Daily Star report and said, "I had voluntarily resigned in 1996 on issue of principles regarding organisational matters."



## Nagorik body for creating proper poll atmosphere

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nagorik Committee 2006 has once again called for creating an atmosphere conducive to a free, fair and acceptable election at an early date.

The committee at a meeting at Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) dialogue room yesterday reviewed its work involving campaign for clean and competent candidates, preparation of Bangladesh Vision 2021 and implementation of political and electoral reforms.

The committee emphasised articulation and implementation

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

# BNP wants poll timeframe

### Vows to go for movement for elected govt if need be

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leaders yesterday unequivocally said the caretaker government must clearly declare a time frame for holding the ninth parliamentary election. They also vowed to go for a movement, if necessary, for an elected government.

"The caretaker government must clear what they meant by saying that the election will be held in 'due time'," former law minister Moudud Ahmed said at a discussion at the Institution of Diploma Engineers at Kakrail.

"They should declare a specific time frame for holding the election," Moudud said, adding, "Things cannot go like this for an indefinite period."

The meeting and a milad mahfil were organised to mark the 71st birthday anniversary of founder of BNP, late president Ziaur Rahman.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan chaired the meeting. Party Chairperson Khaleda Zia was present among the audience.

At the discussion Moudud asked the present government to make clear whether the present government is an interim or a caretaker one.

"The spirit of the constitution is to hold the election within 90 days," he said, adding, "If needed, the chief adviser can stay in his post for a few more days."

Moudud said, "Those who say

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

# Pledge to free world of injustice

### SWF meet starts in Nairobi

SHAKHAWAT LITON, from Nairobi, Kenya

The seventh World Social Forum (WSF) meeting began yesterday in Nairobi, Kenya, with the objective to make the world free from injustice and all kinds of repression.

The World Social Forum, 2007 meet was kicked off at a casual ceremony in Uhuru Park of Nairobi where social activists, networks, coalitions and other progressive forces from Asia Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, Europe and all corners of the African Continent participated.

The organising committee of the summit claimed over 100,000 participants were joining the six-day meet. They said, "The WSF, 2007 has brought the world to Africa."

The organising committee also said over 1,000 participants will be in Moi International Sports Centre Kasarani, the official venue for the programmes of the meet.

The WSF, dubbed an anti-globalisation forum, will raise their concerns once again by organising cultural resistance, celebrations, panels, workshops, processions in the meet.

The WSF that started in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001 has become one of the annual events that work against the negative consequences of globalisation, said a participant.

"It is the greatest assembly of citizens with diverse backgrounds," Toufiq Ben Abdullah, member of the organising committee of WSF, 2007 said.

The WSF is considered an open

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## AL demands fresh list of criminals for arrest drive

UNB, Dhaka

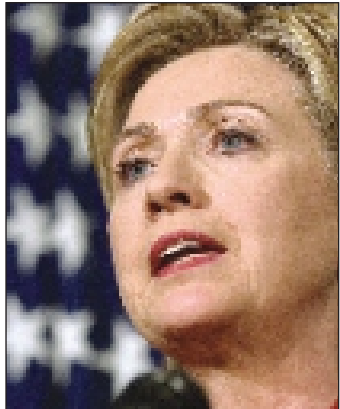
Awami League (AL) Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday urged the members of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies to prepare a fresh list of criminals by collecting information from across the country and then launch a drive to arrest them.

"It seems that the caretaker government is conducting its drive against criminals on the basis of the list prepared by the immediate-past BNP-Jamaat coalition government," he said.

Quader was talking to journalists on behalf of AL President Sheikh Hasina when the family members of slain Chhatra League leader Mizanur Rahman Tuhin met the party chief at AL's Dhanmondi office. He said BNP-Jamaat cadres killed Tuhin on January 7.

Kader alleged that the alliance

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



## Hillary takes first step in presidential race

AFP, New York

Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton yesterday took the first step toward a 2008 White House bid that could make her the first woman president of the United States, she

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

## Couple killed in wall collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A factory wall collapsed in Tongi industrial area yesterday and left the parents dead and their three children injured.

The dead were identified as Mohammad Siddiq, 45, and his wife Zohora, 40. The injured are Rawshan Ara, 16, Rokasana, 10, and Sajib, 8.

The incident occurred when a wall of a spinning factory owned by Jaber and Jubair Group collapsed

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Prayer Timing		
January 21		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-43	5-47
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Khorshed, an 11-year-old self-proclaimed pir (spiritual leader), wrapped in a rug lies at Shahbagh Police Station in the capital yesterday. He allegedly ordered his followers to attack a photojournalist on Thursday. Story on page-2.

## DEMOLITION DRIVE 20 injured as locals clash with cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police faced resistance by illegal occupiers while they were trying to demolish illegal structures in the city's Uttara area yesterday.

Police fired rubber bullets and charged batons to bring the situation under control. At least 20 people, including two policemen, were injured during chase and counter chase between police and illegal occupiers.

Sultan Mahmood of Sector-11, Road no-6, Plot no 22 complained that police, headed by a magistrate, tried to evict him from his house though legal documents were shown to them.

The police went inside the house and tortured the inmates as they refused to leave their possession,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

