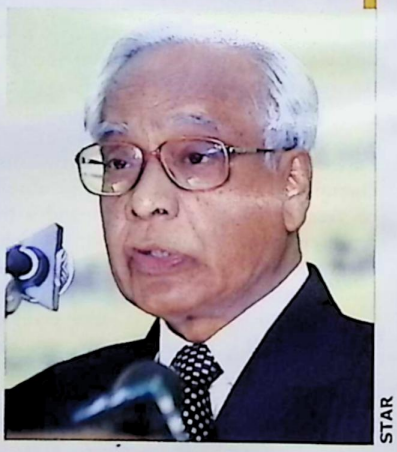
A cold wave spreads across Bangladesh during the first week of January, resulting in alarming fatalities due to exposure and other cold-related diseases. Bangladesh's northern districts are the most severely hit and children and elderly are the most effected, as the death toll reaches over 150, and thousands seek treatment from local medical services.



AFP



On January 3, Awami League-led grand electoral alliance announces it will boycott and resist the parliamentary election set for January 22, alleging that all the electoral preparations by the caretaker government so far have been for "stage-managing the next election in favour of BNP-Jamaat-led four-party alliance." The AL commence a 72-hour blockade on January 7, demanding the postponement of the election date, a redrawing of the voter list, and a newly appointed caretaker government. The blockade is marked by clashes between law enforcement officers and AL members and demonstrators.



STAR

On January 11, President Iajuddin Ahmed resigns from the post of chief adviser to the caretaker government, declaring a state of emergency in the country amid a growing political crisis over election. Nine advisers to the caretaker government also resign from their posts while Justice Fazlul Haque, the senior-most among the advisers, takes charge as acting chief adviser. Besides suspending all fundamental rights as described in the constitution, the authorities impose a six-hour curfew, from 11:00 pm to 5:00 am.



The credibility of the January 22 polls is publicly questioned by the international community as the Ambassador and Head of Delegation of European Commission to Bangladesh, Dr Stefan Frowein, and a team from the United Nations Development Program both state that without the participation of all the political parties, the elections cannot be considered acceptable.