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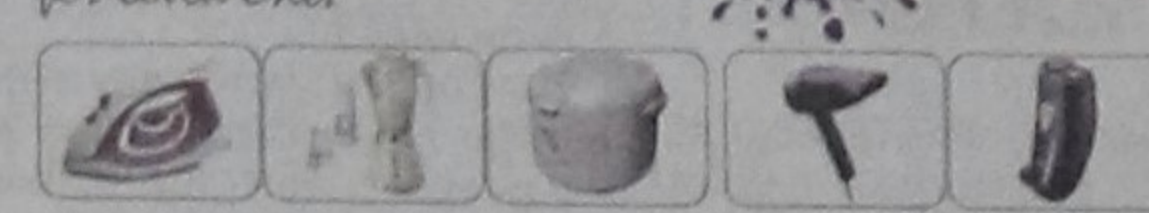
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## Suharto dies

AFP, Jakarta

Former president Suharto, who ruled Indonesia with an iron fist for over three decades, died on Sunday aged 86, his family and police said at a Jakarta hospital.

"Father has returned to God," Suharto's eldest daughter, Siti Hariyanti "Tutut" Rukmana, told reporters breaking down in tears.

"We ask that if he had any faults, please forgive them... may he be absolved of all his mistakes," she said.

His death came more than three weeks after he was admitted to hospital with heart, lung and kidney problems, although he had surprised his doctors by his resilience despite being in a critical condition.

His team of doctors said earlier Sunday that Suharto had suffered multiple organ failure overnight, and had been resuscitated but remained unconscious.

"Our former president HM Suharto has passed away around 13:10 (0610 GMT)," Dicky Sondani, the sub-district police chief, told reporters at the hospital.

Suharto was a ruthless dictator

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## INDIAN RICE IMPORT Deal to take -2 more weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The final details of the government deal to export 500,000 tonnes of rice from India to Bangladesh, at a price lower than US\$500 per tonne, might take two more weeks to complete.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty told reporters of this yesterday after attending a monthly luncheon meeting of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) held at a city hotel.

The Indian envoy said that the deal outlined sale of rice to Bangladesh at a cost below US\$500 per tonne through government appointed exporters only.

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## Two robbers beaten to death in Pirojpur

UNB, Pirojpur

Two robbers were killed in a mob beating at Madra village in Swarupkathi upazila Saturday midnight.

Police said a gang of robbers, numbering 10-12, swooped on the house of Nityananda at Pashchim Joushar village and looted cash and valuables at about 12:30am.

They hacked Nityananda's neighbour Gouranga Mandal, 38, with sharp weapon when he chased the gang, leaving him critically injured.

Later, the same gang looted cash and valuables from the house of Badshah Miah at Madra village.

But hearing shouts of the family members, the villagers rushed to the spot and caught two of the robbers while the others managed to flee the scene.

They beat them indiscriminately leaving them dead on the spot.

Identities of the deceased could not be known immediately.

On information, police rushed to the spot and sent the bodies to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Injured Gouranga Mandal was admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

## Prayer Timing

January 28

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-35	6-10
Zohr	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

## PAK TRIBAL BELT

## US pushes for greater role in fighting terror

## Top CIA agents make secret trip

AP, Washington

The top two US intelligence officials made a secret visit to Pakistan in early January to seek permission from President Pervez Musharraf for greater involvement of American forces in trying to ferret out al-Qaeda and other militant groups active in the tribal regions along the Afghanistan border, a senior US official said.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity given the secret nature of the talks, declined to disclose what was said, but Musharraf was quoted two days after the Jan. 9 meeting as saying US troops would be regarded as invaders if they crossed into Pakistan to hunt al-Qaeda mili-

tants.

The New York Times which first reported on the secret visit by CIA Director Michael Hayden and Mike McConnell, director of national intelligence, said Musharraf rebuffed an expansion of an American presence in Pakistan at the meeting, either through overt CIA missions or by joint operations with Pakistani security forces.

Pakistan has been under growing US pressure to crack down on militants in its tribal regions close to the Afghan border, a rugged area long considered a likely hiding place for al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and his top deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, as well as an operating ground for Taliban militants planning attacks on coalition

forces in Afghanistan.

Several US presidential candidates have hinted they would support unilateral action in the area.

In a Jan. 11 interview, Musharraf told The Straits Times of Singapore that US troops would "certainly" be considered invaders if they set foot in the tribal regions. "If they come without our permission, that's against the sovereignty of Pakistan," he said. "I challenge anybody coming into our mountains. They would regret that day."

South Waziristan is a semi-autonomous region where the central government has never had much control. It is home to scores of al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters,

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PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Phone booths installed in a shed at the GPO in the capital remain unused since most people now find it convenient to use cellphone. The photo was taken yesterday.

## NIKO CASE

## ACC seeks to quiz Moudud, Mosharraf Bribery charges pressed against Taimur

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday sought permission to interrogate detained former law minister Moudud Ahmed and former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain at the jail gate in connection with Niko case.

Meantime, ACC pressed charges against detained former Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) chairman and BNP leader advocate Taimur Alam Khandaker in connection with a Tk 25 lakh bribery case.

Besides, hearing of the case against detained former housing and public works minister Mirza

Abbas for possession of huge local and foreign currencies was adjourned until January 31 following a time petition by defence lawyers.

## NIKO CASE

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) AKM Enamul Haque fixed today for the hearing on the petition to interrogate Moudud and Mosharraf. The petition was submitted by ACC Assistant Director SM Shabbir Hossain, the investigation officer (IO) of the case.

Earlier on December 30 last year, detained former premier Khaleda Zia, Moudud and Mosharraf were shown arrested in the case following a petition by the IO.

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## Obama routs Hillary in S Carolina

AP, Columbia

Barack Obama routed Hillary Rodham Clinton in the racially charged South Carolina primary Saturday night, regaining campaign momentum in the prelude to a Feb. 5 coast-to-coast competition for more than 1,600 Democratic National Convention delegates.

"The choice in this election is not about regions or religions or genders," Obama said at a boisterous victory rally. "It's not about rich versus poor, young versus old and it's not about black versus white. It's about the past versus the future."

The audience chanted "Race doesn't matter" as it awaited Obama to make his appearance after rolling up 55 percent of the vote in a three-way race.

But it did, in a primary that shattered turnout records.

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## Bill, Melinda Gates grant \$5.2m to help dairy farmers

UNB, Dhaka

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has allocated \$5.2 million grant to CARE Bangladesh for strengthening the dairy value chain in Bangladesh to increase the productivity of small-scale dairy farmers and link them to the formal dairy market.

Bill Gates, co-chair of the foundation, at a press conference at the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland on January 25 announced the funds for the over four-year "Strengthening Dairy Value Chain (SDVC) Project."

President and CEO of CARE International Dr Helene D Gayle, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) Amos Namanga Ngonzi and President of World Bank Robert B Zoellick, among others, were present.

CARE will provide the grant to the landless and small-holder farmers with the opportunity to

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## ACC sues Maruf Nizam for hiding wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday sued BNP leader Maruf Nizam and former principal officer of Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) Captain Habibur Rahman and his wife Kohinur Sultana on charges of amassing illegal assets and concealing information regarding their earnings.

ACC Deputy Director Abul Kalam Azad and Assistant Director Jahangir Alam lodged the cases separately with the Doublereaming Police Station yesterday, ACC sources said.

Maruf Nizam is the brother of Sarwar Jamal Nizam, detained former BNP lawmaker from Anwara constituency. In his wealth statement submitted on September 25 last year, Maruf failed to produce documents against assets worth over Tk 23 lakh. He also concealed information regarding assets worth over Tk 8.2 lakh in his statement.

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PHOTO: STAR

Workers of Dhaka Wasa while doing their job have rendered this alley in East Manipur virtually unusable for pedestrians, not to mention vehicles. Two passers-by are seen trying to avoid the muck the workers dug up yesterday.

## 14 VIPs 'overstay' at BSMMU prison cell

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Out of 19 VIP inmates having treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) prison cell, 14 are allegedly overstaying.

Sources said the 14 inmates have been overstaying at the prison cells convincing hospital authorities and doctors concerned that they are sick. The jail authority is considering taking them back to jail and admit other prisoners there who need treatment.

According to sources, the jail authorities have already prepared a list of the prisoners who need special treatment facilities. They are: Arafat Rahman Koko, younger son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, former minister Tariqul Islam, former state minister for home affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, Khulna City Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Mizanur Rahman.

Inspector General of Police (IGP-Prisons) Brig Gen Zakir

Hassan told The Daily Star, "We think that all the 19 prisoners do not need such facilities anymore. Therefore, we contacted the BSMMU authorities to have those prisoners who are not that sick discharged."

"We are trying our best to take them back to jail. If the hospital does not discharge them, we cannot force them," he said, adding, "Many of the prisoners have been lingering their stay in the prison cells unduly."

The IGP-Prisons said, "Due to their overstay, other seriously sick inmates are being deprived of their right."

DIG-Prisons Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique yesterday said, "We went to BSMMU to discuss the matter today (Sunday) and tomorrow we would go there again to finalise the issue."

Sources said the VIP prisoners had been overstaying at the BSMMU's prison cells unduly in the name of various fake sickness.

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## Djokovic clinches Australian Open

AFP, Melbourne

Tennis hot property Novak Djokovic broke through for his first Grand Slam triumph with a dramatic four-set victory over unseeded Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga at the Australian Open on Sunday.

The 20-year-old third seed

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## KIBRIA MURDER AL demands fair probe, justice

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) leaders yesterday urged the caretaker government to fairly investigate the terrorist attacks and killings including the murder of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria.

The killers of Kibria and masterminds of the August 21 grenade attacks on an AL meeting on Bangabandhu Avenue are yet to be brought to justice, said AL Presidium Member Abdur Razzak at a discussion marking the third death anniversary of Kibria.

"It was a public question as to why the state has failed to unearth the culprits."

Razzak said the terrorists and their godfathers could not be arrested during the previous BNP-Jamaat regime as "top men of that government were the masterminds of the brutal attacks".

"Now people hope that the caretaker government will fairly investigate the terrorist attacks and killings," he said.

Razzak demanded that investigation report of the grenade attack and Kibria's killing be published. Kibria was assassinated in a grisly grenade attack in his hometown in Habiganj on January 27, 2005.

AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed, Organising Secretary

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## Emergency should be lifted at the earliest BEI discussion told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state of emergency should be withdrawn at the earliest, allowing space for political activities, international relations analyst Professor Imtiaz Ahmed said yesterday.

Following the presentation of a report titled "State of Democracy in South Asia" at a discussion organised by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) in the capital, Prof Ahmed also told journalists that if the emergency is not withdrawn or political activities are not allowed, the people might be impatient and its consequences might be complicated.

Prof Ahmed, a teacher of International Relations at Dhaka University and the coordinator of

the study on the State of Democracy in South Asia, said the caretaker government does not have much time to meet its challenges and therefore it should first relax the rules of state of emergency and then withdraw it.

Commerce and Education Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman was the chief guest of the programme while noted economist Professor Rehman Sobhan and Dr Rounaq Jahan, professor of Columbia University, took part at the discussion presided by BEI President Farooq Sobhan.

"Military intervention is not favourable for the progress of democracy," said Prof Ahmed, recommending the formation of

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## Garment worker murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was murdered in Pallabi area of the capital in early morning hours yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mazharul Islam Munna, 40, from Madaripur, a resident of Chandpura Khejurbagan at Ashulia.

The victim was an iron operator of Babylon Garments at Ashulia. On Saturday night, Munna went to visit his elder brother Momen, caretaker of a house at Mirpur Section 11 in Pallabi, said police.

As Munna got into an altercation with a man named Alamgir over sharing a room, Alamgir at around 1:00am hit Munna in the head with a wooden stick, killing him on the spot, said Sub Inspector Salam of Pallabi Police Station.

Munna's brother retrieved his body after breaking open the door of the room where he also found Alamgir.

Alamgir was later handed over to the Pallabi police and a case was filed in this connection.



PHOTO: STAR

Cold wet weather coupled with a No-3 cautionary signal left the Patenga beach in Chittagong devoid of tourists yesterday.