

**Secret killings**  
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decomposed bodies with their hands and legs tied were found floating in the river or in some water bodies or beside the roads later," she said, expressing concern.

According to Odhikar, another rights group, 18 people disappeared in 2010, 14 of them being allegedly picked up by Rab, two by police and two by the detectives.

Though relatives of such victims often blamed law enforcement agencies, the agencies neither proved their innocence nor arrested anyone in connection with those disappearances and the subsequent killings, added Sultan, also a former caretaker government adviser.

"Instead of ensuring people's security, the police and the Rab remain under the control of some influential quarters," she noted, without specifying who those influential quarters were.

And even as the number of such incidents continues to mount, the government is taking no effective measures to stop those. Instead, she added, top government officials and law enforcers were issuing contradictory statements.

The ruling Awami League in its 2008 electoral manifesto pledged to stop extrajudicial killings and try those involved in such killings, said ASK Director (Investigation and Information) Nur Khan.

But during the tenure of the current government, he added, there have been allegations of extrajudicial killing against Rab.

Between January and December last year, 92 people were killed in "crossfire" with law enforcers, mostly Rab members, while 116 died in the custody of various law enforcement agencies, said the ASK report titled "Bangladesh Human Rights Situation Review-2011".

During the same period, 134 people were killed in mob beating while 206 journalists were repressed in the hands of the law enforcers and the ruling party men. These incidents demonstrate gross violation of law and worsening law and order, the report says.

Thirty-three women committed suicide failing to stand sexual harassment by stalkers and 23 others were killed by the perpetrators for protesting such harassment, while 1,346 women fell victim to rape and acid attacks.

The ASK director said the government imposed section 144 for 133 times mainly to thwart opposition programmes last year.

The government also failed to check border killing as 39 Bangladeshi were killed by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in 2011 alone, he said, adding that 30 more Bangladeshi were abducted and 64 injured in the border region during the same period.

The rights body in its report also criticised the trial process of the BDR mutineers.

It said Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) cannot function effectively to uphold human rights for lack of staff. Established on June 22, 2010, with a chairman and six commissioners, the NHRC has 28 staff against its need for 68.

**Govt may ask**

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Usually, 30 to 35 lakh tonnes of fuel is imported in a fiscal year. But it was 48 lakh tonnes in the last fiscal year and could hit 70 lakh tonnes in the current fiscal year, the official said.

According to the import policy 2009-12, private power plants can directly import fuel on government permission. In that case, the importer has to sign an agreement with the BPC mentioning the quantity of fuel in line with the Petroleum Act 1974.

The official said Khulna Power Company Ltd directly imports furnace oil on government permission.

Private companies have set up 16 rental and quick rental plants with a production capacity of 1,372MW electricity. All of them, except four, run on furnace oil, said the Power Division.

Another 19 plants with a generation capacity of 2,120MW electricity will go into operation next year in public and private sectors. Most of the plants run on furnace oil and diesel.

# 106 journalists killed in 2011

## Media rights body urges UN action

AFP, Brussels

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) called on the UN Saturday to take "drastic action" against governments of the most dangerous countries for media.

They made the call after 106 journalists and media personnel were killed in 2011.

The year 2011 was "another bloody year" for the media, the media rights body observed.

It blamed "governments' failure to uphold their international obligations for the ongoing violence targeting media".

In a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the IFJ called for effective implementation of international legal instruments to combat the prevailing culture of impunity for crimes against journalists.

"It is abundantly clear that deadly violence against journalists is not just a blip due to conflicts around the world but has become a regular cycle in many countries where journalists are hunted down, targeted and murdered by the enemies of press freedom," said the letter signed by Jim Boumelha, the IFJ president.

"In a situation where governments are in denial or indifferent to what has become a regular pattern of targeted killings of journalists, it is incumbent upon yourself and the United Nations to remind them of their responsibility to protect journalists," the letter reads.

The IFJ list of work-related media killings of 106 journalists and media per-

sonnel was coordinated with the International News Safety Institute. The figure is up from 94 killings recorded in 2010.

An additional 20 journalists and collaborators also died in accidents and natural disasters.

The deadliest region in 2011 was the Middle East and Arab World with 32 journalists and media personnel killed.

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# New Year gift

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about 22,13,66,383 copies of textbooks to some 3,12,13,759 students of primary, secondary and technical education schools and Ebtedayee and Dakhil madrasas. The distribution will continue for seven days, officials say.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid inaugurated the festival by handing over books to the students of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College at its Bailey Road branch in the capital at 10:00am.

Around noon, Nahid went to Motijheel Government Boys School and started the distribution. There, students from adjacent Motijheel Government Girls School also received books.

All the children were jubilant at getting books from a minister. They played drums and waved placards and balloons. Parents and teachers too joined the ceremony.

"I am very happy today [yesterday] getting new books," said Atiqur Rahman, a class-VII student of Motijheel Government Boys School. "We want to get books on time every year."

"Since the students are getting books on the very first day of the academic calendar, they would be encouraged to learn more," Harun-ar-Rashid, father of a schoolgoer, said.

The education minister on the occasion said the government had presented the students with this New Year gift despite many challenges.

He said the free textbook distribution reduces the anxiety of parents and students over getting books on time, makes students more attentive, cuts dropout rate and thus helps improve education quality.

Recent public exam results are the outcome of this initiative, he said, urging the students to study more. "It is you who can change the country."

Of the total books printed, over 10.35 crore copies of 56 subjects are for over 1.81 crore primary-level students, including those of English medium; 1.58 crore copies of 34 subjects for some 25.53 lakh Ebtedayee students, over 8.52 crore copies of 172 subjects for 84.23 lakh secondary and SSC vocational students and 1.66 crore copies of 54 subjects for 19.42 lakh Dakhil and Dakhil vocational stu-

# Caretaker must be on agenda

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on the occasion of its 33rd founding anniversary. Several thousand JCD leaders and activists attended the rally carrying portraits of Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman. The crowd spilled over into the adjacent thoroughfare causing traffic congestion in the area.

President Zillur Rahman invited BNP to join him in a dialogue he initiated on formation of the next Election Commission. BNP's dialogue with the president is scheduled for January 11 at Bangabhaban.

Khaleda at the rally made a blistering attack on the government for its "failures", saying the AL-led government could not implement its electoral pledges in the last three years, and people in the government have even forgotten many pledges.

Demanding elections to Ducusu (Dhaka University Central Students Union) and

student unions of residential halls, the leader of the opposition asked the Dhaka University vice-chancellor to create a congenial atmosphere on the campus so that pro-opposition students may use the campus freely.

"We did not allow Chhatra Dal to get involved in any wrongdoing when we were in power," she claimed.

The former premier said the country is now in an acute crisis, as corruption has spread all over the society "from palaces to villages".

"The parliament has become ineffective. The government made the administration partisan. People of BNP are becoming victims of secret killings. Rab is being used to suppress the opposition. Double standards are being maintained in the sector of law and judiciary," she said.

"The new committee of the organisation will be announced soon, but you have to give emphasis on

ideology rather than posts. Good, talented, loyal and dedicated leaders will be included in the new committee," she said accusing pro-AL student organisation Bangladesh Chhatra League of criminal activities.

Jamaat-e-Islami was a friend of AL when they were in a movement together for introducing the caretaker government system. "Jamaat was not a war criminal to them back then," she quipped.

She said people are now with BNP and that is why the government wants to eliminate her party, but none will

get any respite by making Jatiya Party the main opposition. "Ershad himself is anti-liberation. Check what was his role during the Liberation War," she said.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Khandakder Mosharrif Hossain, Amanullah Aman, and Fazlul Haque Milon also spoke among others, while JCD President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku presided over the rally.

Earlier, Khaleda inaugurated the programme by hoisting the national flag and releasing pigeons.

# Dr Kamal seeks caretaker for next 2 polls

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election commissioner (CEC) and election commissioners expires next month.

Dr Kamal mentioned that full text of the SC verdict on the caretaker issue is yet to be published.

"The court commented in favour of continuing the caretaker government system for the next two parliamentary polls," said Kamal, who led a 13-member party delegation at the dialogue.

Referring to massive rigging in the 1996 Magura by-elections to parliament during the then BNP-led

alliance government's tenure, the jurist said there are also other reasons for holding parliamentary polls under the caretaker system.

The Election Commission alone will not be able to hold free and fair elections without this system, he added.

On appointment of the next CEC and ECs, Dr Kamal, who is one of the framers of the country's constitution, said it can be done in three ways.

"The president may appoint any one he wants, (or) a law can be enacted in line with the constitution

under which a search committee will be formed or the president can take some names from all concerned and select them.

"Asked if his party would support reappointment of the incumbent, the Gonoforum chief said, "We will submit names if the president wants us to do so."

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# Road crash

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left his Uttara residence in the capital with his family Saturday night to attend the namaj-e-janaza of one of his maternal uncles.

When their car reached Nautola around 5:00am, the driver lost control over the steering and the car fell into the pond, said locals. All of them in the car died.

When people were going to a nearby mosque to say Fajr prayers, they saw the floating car and called for help through a loudspeaker of the mosque.

Locals then recovered the bodies and informed Sonaimuri police of the incident.

Humayun Kabir, officer-in-charge of Sonaimuri Police Station, said they handed over the bodies to relatives of the deceased.

He was briefing newsmen at his ministry's conference room at 1:30pm.

Ameen inaugurated the distribution at Motijheel Ideal Government Primary School around 11:00am.

He asked journalists to inform the ministry and other offices concerned if anyone does not get textbooks.

In reply to a question, AKM Abdul Awal Majumdar, secretary of primary ministry, at the briefing said punitive action will be taken if anyone asks money for the books.

In the wake of recurring textbook crisis in previous years, the government in 2009 took the decision of free book distribution at both primary and secondary levels.

He said the free textbook distribution reduces the anxiety of parents and students over getting books on time, makes students more attentive, cuts dropout rate and thus helps improve education quality.

Recent public exam results are the outcome of this initiative, he said, urging the students to study more. "It is you who can change the country."

Leaders of both the parties should think about people's suffering and find out a solution, she added.

Last week, a mass rally of the ruling Awami League-led grand alliance at the same venue kept traffic movement suspended for hours in most parts of the capital.

Hasina said 2,900 megawatts of electricity had already been added to the national grid, and the government planned to construct three coal-fired power plants soon to reduce dependency on fuel-run plants.

His classmate Sunayen Tousif underwent surgery on his broken hand, he added.

Sunayen said the attackers entered his room at Nazrul Islam Hall and beat him up with sticks at about 1:30pm on Saturday.

On Wednesday, Tousif and several senior students were still on the premises till 1:30am. They closed off all the gates except the main entrance to the university auditorium, said sources.

The concert was organised as part of a farewell for the university's 2006 batch to which Tousif belongs.

The scuffle was the reason behind the assault on Tousif, said sources.

On Saturday, the protesters confined Buet Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Habibur Rahman and director of the Student Welfare Council Aminul Islam to their offices for hours.

His left hand broken, Tousif has been receiving treatment in the capital's Square Hospital. He also received injuries on his leg and other parts of the body, said sources.

Following the incident, Aminul Islam tendered his resignation to the pro-vice chancellor yesterday evening.

The VC said the university would bear the costs of the victim's treatment.

The teachers will not take any classes in line with yesterday's decision, he added.

At one stage, some 20 BCL activists got on the programme stage and submitted a memorandum to UGC Chairman AK Azad Chowdhury, who was present there as chief guest.

Considering the BCL memorandum, the UGC chairman in his speech labelled the VC as a liar alleging that the administration is involved in corruption.

His speech sparked protests and criticism among students and teachers. Terming it 'beyond the bounds of decency', several teachers expressed their grievances to The Daily Star.

A reliable source said the BCL activists created the incident as part of a conspiracy by some teachers to force the VC to quit.

The government is having difficulty feeding its fuel-run power plants (see related story on page 20).

The demand for fuel oil has risen to 68 lakh tonnes in the current fiscal year, which was 48 lakh tonnes in the last fiscal year, as Bangladesh is importing a huge amount of oil for rental and quick rental powerplants.

The energy adviser, however, said higher power production was contributing to economic growth.

State Minister for Power Muhammad Enamul Huq, Power Secretary AK Azad and Power Development Board Chairman ASM Alamgir Kabir were present at the briefing.

Officials say the government