

The army personnel who arrived in Barisal yesterday evening as part of winter exercise.

Up to 12 days?

exercises.

December 26. The army will return to barracks one or two days after the polling day. Meanwhile, army personnel reached sev-

eral district towns yesterday as part of their winter exercises. An army contingent camped at the district stadium yesterday, reports our Satkhira cor-

respondent. The army has come here for winter exercises, Satkhira deputy commissioner Anwar

Hossain Hawlader told newsmen. Troops arrived in Laxmipur town yesterday afternoon and camped at Mandari Bazar area under Sadar upazila. An officer of the army team said they went there for winter

Asked, CEC Rakibuddin said winter exercises of armed forces members have already started. That is why the army were out in many places. But it does not have any relation with their election duties.

The principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division, top level officials of security and intelligence agencies and returning offimeeting at the EC secretariat today, which will be chaired by the CEC.

The EC has also drawn up a five-day security plan for the polling centres which too will be finalised at the meeting at the National Economic Council (NEC) auditorium at 3:00pm today.

In the last parliamentary polls in 2008, the EC took special security measures for three days for polling centres in the plains, four days for hilly and remote areas and the army was deployed for 12 days.

10th parliamentary election, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Coast Guard, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and Armed Police and an election monitoring cell will be set Battalion (APBn) personnel will jointly act as mobile and striking forces.

deployed from January 1 to 7 across the counagencies. try as part of special security measures.

police, Ansar and Village Defence Party candidates are set to be elected uncontested.

cers from across the country will attend the (VDP) will be deployed in "general" polling centres and 18-strong teams in "important" centres in the metropolitan areas.

PHOTO: STAR

At centres outside the metropolitan areas, a 15-member team of law enforcers will be deployed at each 'general' and 16 'important' polling centre.

As for the hilly and remote areas, a 17 member team will be deployed in each 'general' polling centre whereas a 19-strong team will work in each 'important' centre.

The commission will also ask the Armed Forces Division to keep some helicopters According to the security plans for the ready during the polls so that election officials can use them in case of emergencies.

Besides, a law and order coordination cell up at the EC secretariat and at the returning officers' offices from January 1 to coordinate Besides, Rab and armed police will be and monitor the activities of law enforcement

Elections will be held in 146 constituen-Teams comprised of 17 members from the cies out of 300 on January 5 as a total of 154

Sporadic violence marks third day of blockade

STAR REPORT

Sporadic incidents of violence marked the last day of the 72-hour blockade yesterday as opposition men clashed with law enforcers, exploded crude bombs and carried out arson and vandalism across the country.

Meanwhile, at least 68 opposition leaders and activists were arrested by the joint forces during raids in Bogra, Meherpur and Feni districts.

In Satkhira, an assistant superintendent of police and officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station sustained injuries when Jamaat-Shibir activists locked in a clash with the joint forces at Raichpur around 9:30 am.

The clash erupted as the activists attacked the law enforcers when they were trying to remove logs from Alipur-Raichpur road, reports our district correspondent quoting OC Inamul Haque.

As the activists hurled handmade bombs and petrol bombs targeting the law enforcers, they opened fire on the activists in selfdefence that left a Jamaat man injured, said the OC.

The joint forces have arrested five Jamaat-Shibir men from the spot, he added.

In Jhenaidah, BNP and Jamaat-Shibir activists set fire to an Awami League office at Kotchandpur upazila around 1:00 pm,

In Sitakunda of Chittagong, blockaders set fire to three trucks and three covered vans on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Salimpur around 11:30 pm on Wednesday.

In Jamalpur, the opposition men vandalised five vehicles in Gatepar, Kompopur and Beltia areas between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon yesterday. However, Awami League activists from an

anti-blockade procession hurled brickbats at a branch office of Shahjalal Islami Bank. The incident happened at Jam-e-Masjid Road in the

In Sirajganj, blockaders set fire to two trucks and vandalised three others in Konabari area of the district.

In Natore, BNP men set fire to two battery-run auto-rickshaws while they were plying the roads in Hafrasta and Alaipur areas yesterday.

Gaibandha Sadar upazila and Sunderganj

Road communications between

and Shovaganj upazilas remained snapped for the third day as pro-blockade pickets dug up the Sunderganj-Shovaganj road at different places at Jhenia.

The opposition men also dug up roads connecting 15 unions in Gaibandha to snap road communications.

Meanwhile, Gonojagoron Mancha, Gaibandha unit formed a human chain at DB road in the town, demanding a ban on the politics of Jamaat-Shibir and severing of diplomatic ties with Pakistan.

In Mymensingh, ruling Awami League men last evening torched over 10 shops and damaged some houses of BNP men at Tejpata market area under Gafargaon upazila as some opposition activists tried to block a road by felling trees.

Sardar Moazzam Khorram, convener of Jubo Dal Gafargaon unit, said around 200 AL activists set fire to the shops and vandalised some nearby houses around 6:00pm.

"Chhatra League and Jubo League activists carried out the attack. Around 25 BNP men were injured in the attack," he complained.

Abdul Hamid Mansur, member of Jubo League district unit, said locals along with some AL men launched the attack as the blockaders were causing suffering to people by

felling trees on roads. The opposition combine enforced the reports our district correspondent quoting blockade of roads, rail and waterways demanding cancellation of parliamentary polls schedule and election under a non-party polls-time government.

FOUR INJURED IN CITY

Four pedestrians were injured in three incidents of crude bomb explosions in the capital yesterday.

Tailors Md Sohag, 26, and Azim Biswas, 30, suffered injuries in their legs from splinters when cocktails were blasted in Bangshal of Old Dhaka.

According to the victims, a handmade bomb exploded on Abul Hasnat Road when they were crossing the area around 10:00am.

Private employee Shahnaz Qadir, 36, was wounded when a cocktail went off in a front of New Market around 7:45pm, while Nargis Parvin, a student of Begum Badrunnesa Govt Girls' College, was injured in front of Teachers Student Center at Dhaka University.

The four injured were receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Free treatment

more than Tk 1 lakh. Now we are in a big debt for nothing," lamented Shamsunnahar.

Their eighth grader daughter might be forced to give up her studies as the family was unable to get her admitted to ninth "She got an A minus in her Junior Secondary

Certificate examination. I could not study much because my father could not afford it. But we were hopeful we could get my three younger sisters educated," sobbed Prima, the eldest daughter of the family.

Khorshed is diabetic. Doctors say he would need at least four months to recover.

"He was burned on December 5. It has barely been a month and I have already borrowed a lot of money. I do not know how I will run the family next month," said Shamsunnahar.

The situation is more or less same for most of the families of the arson victims, who earn their wages on a daily basis.

Kamal, who was burned in Laxmibazar, has no-one to run his tailoring shop and had to leave it shut down.

told The Daily Star. His wife Polly had not yet paid the rent of

their tiny one-room house where the couple lives with two children.

must give me compensation," pleaded Kamal. Ten-year-old arson victim Shimul's father tion with Kamal yesterday.

"Are you here to help Kamal get any compensation? I want compensation for my son too. I am a rickshaw-puller who has been

grounded at this Burn Unit for more than a month. Doctors have said I need to stay more. My family is living completely on debt," he

"Three of my employees have quit because to the Burn Unit on November 30 and directed they were not sure if I would return or not," he the authorities to introduce free medication for

Until then, most of the patients' families

"Whoever is responsible for burning me than Tk 37,000 before they started getting free medicine.

Eight-year-old arson victim Sumi's mother ran to this correspondent during the conversa- also sees no bright future ahead. "I have got some help initially, but my daughter needs to take medicines for at least three years. I hope her fisherman father will be able to afford it," she added

Satkhira union

Journalists stay away from Agardari, considering it too dangerous. To get access, this Daily Star reporter on Wednesday afternoon had to pretend to be a friend of a local journalist who was on good terms with an Agardari Jamaat

The 8km ride on a rented motorbike to the union revealed what kind of difficulties the law enforcers had been facing. It was a trail of destruction from Kadomtola on the outskirts of the district town to the union. Jamaat and pro-Jamaat Islami Chhatra Shibir men had dug up the road in at least eight places and a large number of the roadside trees had been reduced to stumps. The air still had the smell of burnt tyres and logs.

The road was almost free of traffic. Just a few rickshaw vans, bicycles and motorcycles were on it. Yet one could not ignore the eerie feeling that people on the road were staring and trying to figure out who the two people were on the motorbike.

Around 4:30pm, the motorbike pulled over at the gate of Agardari Kamil Madrasa, even though the journalists were not supposed to meet the Jamaat leader there.

A teenaged boy in a long panjabi and lungi appeared and asked the local journalists who

they were. "I am a journalist ... I came here with my friend to meet a teacher of the madrasa," said the local journalist. But the boy interrupted him as soon as he had said, "I am a journalist".

"Are you from Prothom Alo [the leading Bangla daily]?" he said.

The local journalist then gave a copy of his

Sensing things could get out of hand, the two

paper which the boy and a few other people there began to scrutinise.

journalists left on the motorbike. The madrasa had been used as the hideout of

Jamaat leaders on the run as the law enforcers had difficulties reaching it since the war criminal Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee was

sentenced to death way back in February. Lt Col Enamul Arif Sumon, commanding

officer of Rab-6 in Khulna, shed some light on the difficulties the law enforcers faced in

Agardari. He said whenever law enforcers tried to launch a drive, Jamaat-Shibir men signalled their people, who announced through mikes at mosques that Agardari was under attack.

They come rushing, exploding homemade bombs and crackers and put up resistance. "Militant organisations use such tactics," he said. He claimed that many of the Jamaat and Shibir men were involved in smuggling, like members of militant organisations often do.

The Rab official said Jamaat-Shibir men dig up roads and place large logs to prevent the law enforcers from reaching there. By the time the law enforcers clear the road, they get surrounded by Jamaat-Shibir men, even from behind.

dren on the front rows to use them as human shields as they hurl bombs and brick chunks from behind, Enamul said. Lt Col Enamul said when he was conducting a

Jamaat-Shibir men place women and chil-

drive in Agardari recently, people surrounded him and began chanting, "Amra shobai Talebani" (we are all Taliban).

The Daily Star reporter was able to meet the Jamaat leader of Agradari but could not ask any questions in order to keep his cover.

When the local journalist asked who had attacked the Hindus of the locality, the Jamaat leader, just like any Jamaat leader, claimed that he did not know and that Jamaat men were not involved. He claimed to have heard about the incident much later.

Yesterday, the opposition-called blockade went off rather peacefully in Satkhira, with Raispur being the exception. There, police tried to stop the Jamaat-Shibir

men from digging up a road but the opposition activists began hurling homemade bombs at the law enforcers. Police retaliated with gunfire that left one person injured.

Between Sunday and yesterday, police had arrested 54 people in connection with the violence.

Both Shimul and Kamal were burned on November 10. The prime minister paid a visit

the arson victims.

had to spend a lot for medicines. Arson victim Munia's family had spent more

Injured in Jamaat Attack

Jubo League man dies after 9 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Jubo League activist lost his battle for life at a hospital in Chittagong city yesterday, nine days after he was critically injured in a Jamaat-Shibir attack in the district's Satkania upazila.

Abdul Jabbar, 25, a member of the upazila's Janar Keuchia union unit Jubo League, died in Holy Crescent Hospital's intensive care unit (ICU) around 11:00am, said Abdul Mannan, the victim's eldest brother.

Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat, went on the rampage in different areas of Satkania upazila at night on December 10 when the news broke that Jamaat leader Quader Mollah would be executed on that night, he said.

Jamaat-Shibir men indiscriminately hacked Jabbar and ransacked his house at Madarbari village in the upazila as Jabbar was involved with Jubo League, the youth body of the ruling Awami League, said Mannan, who managed to escape from the house during the attack.

Mannan rushed to the nearby on-duty police team in Keranirhat area and informed them about the attack, but the police did not pay any heed to him, he alleged. Jabbar was admitted to Chittagong Medical

College Hospital, and later he was shifted to the private hospital on Wednesday as his condition deteriorated, Mannan added. Dr Hasan Khayer, on-duty doctor of ICU of

the private hospital, said Jabbar sustained severe head injuries and his brain had swollen. He was kept on life support. AKM Hafiz Akhter, superintendent of

Chittagong police, said police could not go to the village due to problems in different areas, especially on the highways, of the upazila on that night.

He, however, said police will take action against those involved in the attack.

AL to win, Bangladesh to lose FROM PAGE 16 violence in the run-up to the vote. The latest deaths

came after the execution on December 12 of Abdul Quader Mollah, a leader of Jamaat-e-Islami. He was convicted, by a "popular but deeply flawed" tribunal, of war crimes during the Liberation War, 1971, reads the article.

On December 16 Bangladesh celebrated Victory Day, the end of the war. But hopes that Bangladesh might come to terms with its violent birth without spilling more blood have evapo-

Hasina's unpopular government has lost control of large parts of the country. The main opposition BNP, led by Sheikh Hasina's nemesis, Khaleda Zia, conducts its politics in the streets. It has been calling one general strike after the other, crippling the transport system and the economy. Its ally, Jamaat, is fighting for its sheer survival. Its hooligans, known for punishing political foes by cutting their tendons, now engage in outright murder.

The security forces have responded with live fire. On December 16 they killed five Jamaat supporters in Satkhira, a district that, like many Jamaat strongholds, borders India. In the north, members of Jamaat's youth wing have burned down homes and shops owned by members of the Hindu minority. League cadres have fled the countryside to the capital, Dhaka.

People close to the prime minister say she is determined to see death sentences carried out on the entire Jamaat leadership. Few credit the judiciary with independence. Foreign notables such as the UN's secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, and America's secretary of state, John Kerry, have asked Sheikh Hasina to stop the executions. But compromise is not her style, the journal

She won a landslide election victory five years ago. In 2011 the constitution was amended to get rid of a provision, introduced in 1996 because of the chronic mutual distrust between the two big parties and their leaders, for neutral caretaker administrations to oversee elections. Sheikh Hasina did not deliberately set out to become an absolute ruler.

But that is a likely consequence of the

amendment. Ever since, the government has weighed the pros and cons of an uncontested

election.

The biggest disadvantage is that the poll will be an obvious sham. Of 300 elected parliamentary seats, 154 will be uncontested. The BNP and 17 of its small allies are joining the boycott. The government has detained in hospital and seems poised to exile Mohammad Hossain Ershad, a former dictator and the leader of Jatiya, the third-largest party, for its boycott. The nextbiggest party, Jamaat, has been banned from taking part on the ground that its overtly religious charter breaches Bangladesh's secular

constitution. At least the Awami League will win. Whatever happens on January 5, there will be enough MPs for parliament to swear in Sheikh Hasina as prime minister. The result may lack legitimacy at home and abroad. Yet India, Bangladesh's giant neighbour and the only foreign power that could have swayed the decision to go ahead with a vote, chose not to intervene.

However, India's decision to give its implicit backing to an election with a predetermined result (a concept pioneered by HM Ershad in the 1980s) may prove short-sighted. Anti-Indian sentiment in Bangladesh has already surged. And as conflict worsens, India's ally, the Awami League, risks being seen as anti-Islamic. Backing Sheikh Hasina's power grab is likely to give India the opposite of what it wants: a more radical and less secular Bangladesh.

The army is not keen to step in, as it did to back an unelected "technocratic" administration that ruled for two years from January 2007, after Khaleda Zia tried to hijack an election. Nor will foreign powers tacitly back a coup as they did then. So fighting could drag on for months. Eventually, as even some League politicians concede, a proper poll will have to be held.

According to an opinion poll, only 30 percent of Bangladeshis want the generals to take over. And remarkably, if they did and held another election, only one-third would want the two "battling Begums" barred from politics. Badly as they serve their country, it cannot seem to do without them.

SP jailed

FROM PAGE 20

Kamal, then SP of Habiganj, was serving as the SP of Saidpur Railway in Nilphamari. The court acquitted another accused, Sub-

Inspector Md Wahed Miah, as the charge

brought against him was not proven. Judge Md Motahar Hossain of the Special Judge Court-3 handed down the verdict in the

presence of the two accused, who were on bail. The court cancelled the bail of Kamal, and sent him to jail with conviction warrant. The court also fined the convict Tk 30 lakh, and directed the authorities concerned to realise the

amount from his property. Of the amount, Tk 5 lakh will go to the government treasury, and the complainant of the case will receive Tk 25 lakh, the court

directed. According to the case statement, police detained Salahuddin Ahmed, owner of SA

Paribahan Ltd., along with his staff in Habiganj on Dec 22, 2002. They were carrying Tk 20 lakh with them on the way to Sylhet. Being asked why they were arrested, Kamal, the

then SP of Habiganj, told them they were arrested for security reasons. The police forcibly took the money and never returned it to its A total of three cases were filed against

Salahuddin under the Money Laundering Prevention Act, Narcotics Control Act, and Women and Children Repression Prevention Act. The police also demanded Tk 30 lakh for the release of Salahuddin.

After being released from jail, Salahuddin filed a case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on November 20, 2003 against Kamal and Wahed for trying to secure Tk 50 lakh in bribe by detaining him and his staff.

The court framed charges against the two on