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# Mad rush to seaport

Exporters pay four times more for trucks to meet delivery deadline

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The Dhaka-Chittagong highway, considered the country's economic lifeline, witnessed a massive rush of trucks and lorries yesterday as exporters try to ship goods during the blockade-free weekend paying excessively high fare for transport.

The rush of trucks mostly carrying export-oriented ready-made garments to the port city from Dhaka and its adjacent areas, and lorries with imported goods from Chittagong created massive traffic jams on the highway, the worst being in Comilla.

The exporters and importers were in a rush to get their product to their destinations as they could not ship during the blockade fearing vandalism and arson attacks on the vehicles.

The fares have gone up manifold as demand for trucks and lorries on the same day increased, said David Hasanat, managing director of Viyellatex Group, one of the leading garment exporters.

He said he had paid Tk 78,000 for a truck

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



With holidays, hartals and blockades consuming the entire week, travellers and truckers had no option but to head out in the weekend, resulting in gridlocks on several highways. The photo was taken at Comilla Cantonment on Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

# BLOCKADE AGAIN FROM TODAY A break but full of hassle

HELEMUL ALAM

After remaining confined for three days, people in the city and elsewhere came out of their homes in droves to finish their pending jobs yesterday, before a fresh spell of blockade begins today.

The one day's respite, however, could not bring them much relief as many of them worried about the fresh 83-hour countrywide blockade from 6:00am today.

The BNP-led opposition alliance, whose 72-hour blockade ended at 6:00am yesterday, called the fresh blockade, demanding cancellation of the January 5 election schedule.

Throughout the day yesterday, the city saw heavy traffic at different points. The number of passengers in all the bus terminals in the capital was higher compared to other Fridays. But many train passengers had to suffer due to delay in schedule.

Many schools, colleges and universities remained open to hold pending examinations or classes. Banks were also open.

"We cannot bear the brunt of blockade or hartal any more. Our living, education, businesses are on the verge of collapse. We want an end to this suffocating situation," said Monir Ahmed, before boarding to a

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## An irony of fate

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

In a cruel twist of fate, Tajul Islam, who saved over 500 lives by helping a running train avert a deadly accident last month, lost his father to a train accident yesterday.

Ninety-five-year old Mohabbat Ali was crushed under the wheels of the escort engine of a Chittagong-bound train at Moutabari in Shahrasti upazila while he was crossing the rail lines around 7:30am, said Golam Mostafa, station master of Meher

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

# JAMAAT ATROCITY Hindus, AL men desert homes

SHARIFUL ISLAM, from Sathkira

Several hundred Hindus and ruling Awami League leaders of Sathkira have been fleeing their homes over the last few days in the wake of massive violence unleashed by Jamaat-Shibir men in the district.

Residents of at least eight unions in different upazilas of the district are the worst sufferers of the violence.

Bishwajit Sadhu, district unit president of Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Oikya Parishad, said around 200 to 250 solvent Hindu people from affected remote villages had left their homes and taken refuge in the district town, Khulna and the capital. Some had even moved to India through legal or illegal means.

He said they were yet to prepare a list of the affected people.

The people of the minority community are fleeing, as their houses came under attacks by Jamaat-Shibir men who have been engaged in clashes with law enforcers since the International Crimes Tribunal awarded death sentence to Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

# PEOPLE IN NILPHAMARI Still reeling from Jamaat shock

SOHEL PARVEZ and EAM ASADUZZAMAN

What took him a decade of hard work and perseverance to accomplish was burnt to ashes in a matter of minutes.

Hours before the execution of war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah on December 12, a group of Jamaat-Shibir men burnt down Abu Sayeed's shop, the only source of his income.

Yet, almost a week later, he was too scared to speak out against the perpetrators who had torched his spare parts store along with about 70 more at Kacharibazar in Laxmichap of Nilphamari.

Standing on the ruins of his store on Wednesday, Abu Sayeed recalled what he saw that night.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## MOLLAH RESOLUTION Not meant to interfere

Says Pakistan DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The resolution passed in Pakistan National Assembly was not meant to interfere in Bangladesh's internal affairs, a spokesperson for the Pakistan foreign office said yesterday.

"What is happening in Bangladesh is essentially its internal matter. By passing a resolution, our parliament did not mean to interfere in the internal affairs of another country," Tasnim Aslam, the spokesperson, said during her weekly press briefing at the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Ershad sticks to his 'no'

Blasts at Zafar's council STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad has reiterated that his party will not budge from its decision to boycott the 10th parliamentary elections, JP Presidium Member GM Quader said, quoting the party chief.

Quader, also the younger brother of Ershad, told this to The Daily Star after visiting the JP chief at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday morning.

"Some media reports stated contradictory stances within the party over its participation in the polls. These are not correct. I am still firm on my position of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A shaken Kazi Zafar sitting down after unknown criminals exploded two homemade bombs inside the Jatiya Press Club auditorium where the Jatiya Party leader was holding a council of a faction of the party yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## BNP leader shot dead in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A BNP leader was shot dead by a gang of unidentified criminals and the supporters of the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Be young with Japanese plant

NISHIHARA, Japan

Sweet tropical smells drift through Shinkichi Tawada's laboratory as he stirs an amber liquid that he believes could be the secret behind the historic longevity of people in southern Japan.

The elixir is an extract from a plant known locally as "getto", and he says



SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

**ONLINE POLL**

Do you agree with Gonogajoron Mancha's demand for suspension of diplomatic ties with Pakistan?

Yes (27%)  
 No (73%)

TOTAL VOTES: 456

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you think the law enforcement agencies would be able to provide people with safety as the 10th parliamentary election approaches?

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