


BE SAFE

BSRM

BUILT SAFE!  
BUILT WITH EMF TESTED BSRM XTREME!  
BUILT TO LAST!



MAYOR MOHAMMAD HANIF FLYOVER, JATROBARI

www.bsrm.com

BSRM Xtreme  
Feel safe with Xtreme Inside

TRANSCOM DIGITAL



Only @ Tk. 8,317  
Up to 6 EMI  
@ 0% Interest  
MRP: Tk. 49,900

32" 32EH4000

Find us on Facebook  
www.transcomdigital.com

TRANSCOM DIGITAL

Confirmed Gift  
8GB Pen Drive OR HDMI Cable

No Additional Charge For Purchases Using Cards

For More Information: 9855366-8, 01712-665463

# JAMAAT: FEB 15 & JAN 5 Then with AL, now with BNP

SHAKHAWAT LITON

If one wants to draw any similarity between the two so-called one-sided parliamentary polls -- the one of February 15, 1996, and the one to be held today -- it will be spotted in the solid stance of the Jamaat-e-Islami against both the elections.

Though it waged movements against both the polls for establishing non-partisan poll-time governments, the Jamaat this time has one more agenda, a very loud and clear one. And that is shielding its war crimes defamed leaders from the ongoing trial process.

In 1996, the party was on the streets alongside the Awami League, Jatiya Party and others. In that movement, the AL had played the key role in waging a determined agitation to foil the February 15 election held under the then BNP-led government.

The AL enforced a 48-hour countrywide hartal before election day. Their activists snatched away ballot papers and ballot boxes in many districts including Barisal, Tangail, Netrakona, Pabna and Nilphamari. They also set polling stations on fire in some districts.

The violent protests on polling day had left at least 10 people killed. Voting in more than 2,800 polling stations in 59 districts had to be suspended due to the opposition's protests.

Once the polls were over, the AL launched a non-cooperation movement.

It was the AL that led the agitation all along, forcing the then BNP-led government formed through the February 15 election to step down on March 30, 1996. Before the dissolution of the then parliament, the BNP amended the constitution through introducing a caretaker government system that would preside over a fresh general election.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Ansars and policemen take electoral materials to their designated polling station yesterday from the temporary Election Commission office setup at a community centre in Lalbagh of the capital.

PHOTO:  
RASHED SHUMON

## Zafar Iqbal slams media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned writer Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal yesterday came down heavily on a section of the media for their stand against holding the 10th parliamentary elections amid a boycott by the main opposition party.

The news organisations along with the civil society members have talked about the importance of deferring the January 5 polls and holding dialogue among the rival political parties. But nobody is saying that violence has to be stopped immediately, he

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



CALL TO POSTPONE POLLS

## Civil society stance comes under fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of economists and experts yesterday slated some civil society organisations for urging the Election Commission to postpone the January 5 parliamentary elections.

Their criticism came at a discussion on the current political situation in Bangladesh, organised by Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) at the city's Lake Shore Hotel.

A week ago, four leading development organisations and think tanks had expressed concerns over holding of the elections amid a boycott by the main

opposition party, and urged the EC to postpone the electoral process considering the worsening law and order.

The December 28 meeting of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Ain o Salish Kendra, Shushashoner Jonnyo Nagorik and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) at the same venue had called for immediate cessation of violence and drawing a roadmap to inclusive elections by formulating an acceptable package solution through further discussion among the major political parties.

Speaking at the discussion yesterday, former Bangladesh Bank governor Mohammed Farashuddin said some quarters have called for

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

## KHALEDA'S HOUSE Two Indian reporters denied entry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers last night barred two more foreign journalists from entering BNP chairperson's Gulshan residence that has added to a speculation that Khaleda Zia is under house arrest, though the government has dismissed it.

Two reporters -- one each from NDTV, a Delhi-based news channel, and Aajkaal, a Calcutta-based Bangla newspaper -- could not enter the opposition

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Int'l recognition a big challenge for new govt

REZAUL KARIM

The government to be formed through today's parliamentary elections will face a strong challenge to get the recognition from a large part of the international community.

Talking to The Daily Star, diplomats of several countries have noted with disappointment that the 10th parliamentary polls will not restore peace and stability in the country as the two major political parties have not yet reached any consensus to ensure a free, fair, credible, non-violent and inclusive election.

They are also critical of the uncontested election of lawmakers in more than half of the 300 constituencies.

The government which will be installed through such an election

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Supporters of the opposition-called hartal vandalise a train stationary at the Ishwardi Railway Junction yesterday morning.

PHOTO:  
BANGLAR CHOKH

## VOTING INFORMATION Most voters in the dark

WASIM BIN HABIB

Many voters in Dhaka city did not know where to go to vote and, in some cases, who the candidates were even a day before the one-sided elections, as the contestants in many constituencies have failed to reach out to their voters.

Ahead of the hotly contested elections in the past, candidates went from door to door asking for votes and giving the constituents voter slips with voters' serial numbers and the names of polling centres. The voters used to get the slips several times.

This time, however, things are quite different. Many voters said they did not get any voter slip. The candidates have failed to engage in hectic electioneering the city dwellers have been witnessing for decades.

"No one has come to us with any slip. We don't feel as interested to cast our ballots because we don't know where our polling station is," said Wares Rahman, a resident of

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## POLLING CENTRES CEC worried at arson attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad has expressed concern over torching polling stations at different places in the country.

"We are worried like you. We have directed the security forces to keep alert

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PRAYER TIMING			January 5
Fajr	5:30	Azhan	6:05
Zohr	12:45	Jamaat	1:15
Asr	4:00		4:15
Maghrib	5:30		5:35
Esha	7:00		7:30
Source: Islamic Foundation			

## BCL RALLY ATTACKED IN PABNA

# 25 hurt in gun battle with BNP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 25 people were injured in an hour-long gunfight prompted by an attack by BNP men on a Chhatra League gathering in Ishwardi upazila yesterday.

The attackers also vandalised 50 business establishments, including five banks and three ATM booths in Station Bazar area, and a train in Ishwardi rail station.

Of the injured, 17 have been admitted to Ishwardi upazila health complex.

Fairuz Parvin, emergency medical officer of the health complex, said the wounded were mostly bullet hit and that the condition of five of them was critical.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## 'Kill me please' Burnt fruit vendor cries in pain, agony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Patients at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) were in pain as sorrow, anger and fear of uncertainty filled its air yesterday.

"Kill me please. Living like this is too painful," 48-percent burnt Farid Miah was saying repeatedly in a pleading tone to his son Swapan and any nurse or medical staff nearby. Tears were rolling down his cheeks.

A fruit trader, Farid had fallen victim to an arson attack on a bus Friday morning in front of Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the capital.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

The Daily Star



Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you think the post-election situation will be more critical?

Yes (63%)

No (37%)

TOTAL VOTES: 283

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think January 5 election will see good voter turnout?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT

www.thedailystar.net

GET NEWS AS IT HAPPENS

Subscribe to

The Daily Star

BREAKING NEWS ALERT

Register at:

2222  
REGISTRATION FREE

For Registration,  
SMS Start<Space>Br & Send it to 2222

\*\*Taka 2.00+15%VAT per SMS  
\*\*GrameenPhone & Airtel subscribers only