

# Opponents wanted to deprive people of voting rights

Says Workers Party chief Rashed Khan Menon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The people who called for postponement of the January 5 elections had wanted to deprive the people of their voting rights, Post and Telecommunications Minister Rashed Khan Menon said yesterday.

The Workers Party chief, who was elected uncontested from Dhaka-8 without any votes, made the remarks at an event in front of the party office in the capital to congratulate five of his party leaders who became lawmakers in the 10th national elections.

The government that will be formed tomorrow

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# 3 hurt in gunfight between cops, muggers in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mugger and two policemen were injured in a gunfight between law enforcers and a gang of muggers in CRB area of Chittagong city yesterday.

Police recovered a shotgun, a knife and five rounds of cartridges from the spot.

The injured mugger, Md Arsel, one of the prime accused in a police murder case, was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital while the injured constables -- Kader Mostafa and Hamid Sharif -- were admitted to a police hospital.

On information that Arsel was organising his gang, police conducted a drive in CRB area at 12:30am, said Additional Deputy Commissioner of

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# JU vacation begins Tuesday

JU CORRESPONDENT

Jahangirnagar University will go on an eight-day vacation for winter and holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi from Tuesday, read a press release.

Classes and examinations will resume on January 22 while the administrative activities will resume on Thursday after a two-day holiday. Dormitories will remain open during the vacation, it added.

# China for talks

FROM PAGE 1

relations might be cut off," the former army chief said quoting Khaleda.

The Asian superpower also expressed concern, especially over the sovereignty of Bangladesh and its security due to the present political unrest, said meeting sources.

Li Jun further said instability might hit Bangladesh if democracy is hindered. And in that case, the country might be into an economic and social crisis.

# UK to continue

FROM PAGE 16

people of Bangladesh. We continue to support the poorest and most marginalised people in Bangladesh as part of our global effort to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals."

The statement came amid speculations running rife that the UK might curtail its aid for Bangladesh because of the political situation surrounding the January 5 national polls.

Quoting a spokesperson at the UK High Commission in Dhaka, London-based newspaper The Telegraph on January 10 reported that two programmes of UK Aid -- costing more than £55 million -- could lose part of their future funding in light of the current "political situation" in Bangladesh.



The grocery store of a Hindu man was reduced to ashes near the Sarbojanin Kali Mandir at Kamalapur village in Narail sadar upazila after unidentified miscreants carried out an arson attack somewhere between late Friday and early yesterday. The victim, Mrittunjay Biswas, said there were goods worth over Tk 1 lakh, and the shop was the only means of his income. Narail District Council Administrator Subhash Bose said more than 80 percent of voters from this Hindu-populated village cast their ballots in the January 5 national elections. Police started patrolling the area to protect them against any future violence.

PHOTO: PONUEL S BOSE

# Malaysia to start crackdown on illegals Jan 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia is planning to launch a nationwide crackdown from January 21 to find out foreign nationals who have entered the country illegally, said Malaysian Home Minister Zahid Hamidi Thursday.

He announced this while addressing a ceremony to launch high-tech, security-enhanced identity cards for more than 2 million foreign workers, Malaysian local media reported.

The cards with embedded chips will contain the workers' employment details and biometric thumbprint, and will be colour-coded according to the sector of work for easy identification.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Peninsular Manpower Department Director General Mohd Jeffrey Joakim instructed all the employers to have their foreign workers registered with the department within 14 days from the date of employment, or face a fine of nearly up to Malaysian ringgit 10,000.

While contacting Bangladeshi High Commission in

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# Land revenue gets boost in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The amount of collected land revenue has increased in Barisal district by around Tk 9 crore to Tk 78.87 crore last year compared to the previous year, according to officials.

The revenue got a boost as the authorities realised fees which were earlier evaded by changing the categories of land in papers, they told The Daily Star.

A total of Tk 69.52 crore of revenue was collected from registration of 52,274 deeds for purchasing and selling land in 10 upazilas in 2012.

The amount increased to Tk 78.87 crore through registering 48,636 documents in 2013, said Abu Talib Khan, Barisal district land registrar.

Asadul Islam, Barisal sadar upazila land registrar, said 10,542 documents in 2009 and 15,048 in 2010, 15,048 in 2011, 17,361 in 2012, and 15,691 in 2013 were registered in the sub-registrar office.

Ashafur Rahman, Barisal sadar upazila assistant commissioner of land, said revenue was fixed on the basis of valuation of land in terms of its categories and locations.

Both the sellers and buyers have jointly collaborated to evade taxes by changing categories of agricultural land into wetland, housing land into agricultural land while transferring the ownership of land, he added.

Acknowledging the fact, Ashafur said from April 2013 to November 2013, his office collected Tk 18.68 lakh out of Tk 25.4 lakh by disposing of 122 out of 137 cases of alleged stamp deficit in the sadar upazila.

At least Tk 50 core of revenue has been evaded in the last ten years, the official estimated.

# Anomalies found in voter lists of Gaibandha-1, 2 constituencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has found anomalies in voter numbers of Gaibandha-1 and 2 constituencies where elections will be held on January 16.

Voting of 54 polling centres of Gaibandha-1 and 80 centres of Gaibandha-2 were postponed due to violence during the January 5 elections.

The then returning officer on January 5, the day when the election was held, sent a letter to the EC informing that there were 1.38 lakh voters in the postponed 54 polling centres of Gaibandha-1 and 2.24 lakh voters in postponed 80 centres of Gaibandha-2. But the district election officials yesterday sent a letter to the commission that the number of voters in the postponed 54 centres is 1.58 lakh in Gaibandha-1 and 2.26 lakh in 80 centres in Gaibandha-2.

The commission scrutinised the statistics and found the latest figure correct. Finally, the commission has decided to print ballot papers in accordance with the latest figure, said EC officials.

The EC also postponed elections in six other constituencies--Dinajpur-4, Kirigram-4, Bogra-7, Jessore-5 and Laxmipur-1--due to violence.

# Road crashes kill five

CITY DESK

Five people were killed and 10 others injured in road accidents in the country yesterday.

Our staff correspondent reports, a woman was killed when a bus hit her soon after she got down from another bus near Labaid hospital in the capital's Dhanmondi last evening.

The deceased was Sufia Begum, 55, a resident of Hazaribagh area.

Police seized the bus while the driver managed to escape.

Our Chittagong correspondent adds, Harunur Rashid, 35, of Muhuripara in the port city, died after an oncoming truck rammed his motorbike at Muradpur in the city.

Meanwhile, Ezhar Miyan, 45, of Chaktai area, was killed and two other persons were injured as a passenger vehicle carrying them flipped over at Chandgaon on Bahaddarhat flyover.

In another accident, seven people, sitting at a roadside shop, were injured as a pick-up van hit them due to poor visibility in thick fog at Bhaiyar Dighir Par in Patiya upazila yesterday.

The injured were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Our Narail correspondent adds, Sazzad Alom Tipu, Narail district correspondent of SA TV channel and the daily Jangtor, was injured as a truck hit his motorbike while at Rampur in Narail-Lohagara road.

He was shifted to Jessore Medical College Hospital from Lohagara Health Complex.

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Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jun calls on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the capital last evening. She went to the office for the first time in two weeks after being virtually confined to her residence by the government since December 29.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

# Open dialogue

FROM PAGE 1

"The world is watching Bangladesh. As a strong supporter of our important bilateral relationship, I again urge renewed negotiations that will lead to free, fair, peaceful and inclusive elections and an immediate end to politically motivated violence," he said.

Menendez asked both the leaders to end the current deadlock to reaffirm their commitment to improving labour conditions in Bangladesh garment industry.

"The current political stalemate could destabilise the country and have long-term negative implications for the democratic process and economic prospects for Bangladesh. The people of Bangladesh deserve a durable, transparent and credible political process through which they can choose their future leaders," he wrote in his letters.

The senator strongly condemned the violence and unrest during the pre-election period and on the election day.

"Under no circumstances is violence an acceptable and legitimate expression of political views. The street

violence must stop immediately and parties must have political space to peacefully express their views."

He said Bangladesh was a valued partner of the US and bilateral trade between the countries now tops \$ 6 billion annually. US companies had made significant long-term investments in Bangladesh, he added.

"US relations with the people of Bangladesh have never been stronger and we partner on an increasingly wide array of common interests," the letters read.

The senator further said the current political deadlock and the associated violence significantly threatened US-Bangladesh common achievements and the potential for continued progress on a range of issues such as counterterrorism and counter-piracy, the mitigation of natural disasters, poverty alleviation and food security.

According to him, the ongoing political deadlock has had serious economic consequences and will further weaken the confidence of international investors.

He said, "To end this downward spiral, I strongly urge you to begin negotiations on new elections that are free, fair, peaceful and inclusive."

Menendez mentioned that both the countries are also working together to improve labour conditions in Bangladesh. "While some progress has been made on fire and building safety, much more remains to be done and I still have serious concerns regarding the organising environment for workers."

Termining the current period "tenuous", he urged both the leaders to publicly endorse the commitments to worker safety and labour rights embodied in the Generalised System of Preferences Action Plan.

The senator also requested Hasina and Khaleda to work closely with the US and the international community to empower workers and bolster the confidence of international investors and consumers in Bangladesh's garment sector.

# JCD leader

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Kalabagan police detained the trio on January 6 when they were blasting crude bombs on CR Dutta road during a countrywide hartal, the DB official said. A case was then filed with Kalabagan Police Station accusing them of blasting bombs.

They were shown arrested in the case linked with the Bangla Motor incident after Nayan and Anup had confessed their involvement, according to DB sources.

Nayan, riding a red-coloured Pulsar motorbike driven by Anup, hurled a petrol bomb at the police-requisitioned bus hours after the BNP-led alliance's 83-hour blockade ended that day, Monirul said.

Constable Ferdaus Khalil was burnt to death on the spot while another constable and driver of the vehicle were injured.

DB police, however, did not say as to how Zubayer had been involved in the incident.

Quoting one of the arrestees, Monirul said they had committed the attack as per instructions by two JCD

central leaders, while standing nearby, a BNP leader observed the whole thing.

Through a rickshaw-puller, a JCD central leader provided Nayan and Anup with the bomb. They had also received money from a former BNP lawmaker who assured them of being rewarded with posts in the JCD metropolitan and private university committee units.

The trio along with another accomplice, Rasel, who has been on the run, were also involved in the attack on a running public bus at Paribagh, Monirul said.

The incident left private service holder Shahina Akhter and fruit vendor Farid Miah dead and another passenger injured.

The four had been given two petrol bombs and ordered to hurl those at the residence of the Dhaka University vice-chancellor, said the DB joint commissioner.

Failing to do so amid tight security, they left the area and took position near the Paribagh overbridge. Nayan and Rasel then hurled the bombs at the public bus.

# Trapped on highways

FROM PAGE 1

the Bangabandhu Bridge area at Bhuapur upazila of Tangail to Chandra in Kaliakoir upazila of Gazipur.

Visiting the highway at 3:00pm, a correspondent of this newspaper saw hundreds of vehicles stuck at different places on the two-lane highway.

Private employee Ismail Hossain took a bus of Desh Travels from the capital's Kalabagan at 7:00am for Chapainawabganj. He reached Tangail at 2:30pm, which is usually a three-hour trip.

Mokhlesur Rahman, helper of the Pabna-bound Ishwardi Express, said his bus left Dhaka at 11:30pm on Friday and reached Tangail at 10:30am yesterday.

Ovijit Ghosh of Bhuapur upazila said he along with nine others started for Tangail from Dhaka by a microbus at 10:30pm on Friday and reached their destination at 6:30am last morning.

"Our microbus got stuck at Chandra, Kaliakoir, Mirzapur, Kurni, Dhalla, Pakulla, Natiapara, Karatia and Ashkepur areas due to huge tailbacks of hundreds of vehicles," mentioned Ovijit.

Talking to The Daily Star, Tangail Superintendent of Police Saleh Mohammed Tanvir said the traffic congestion was created due to a heavy rush of buses and goods-laden trucks on the narrow highway.

"The situation was improving since the afternoon as

stranded vehicles started running on both directions," he added.

Our Gazipur correspondent reports: Huge tailbacks were seen on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway and other roads of the district for the second straight day yesterday.

A one-kilometre long tailback was created near the Chandina intersection throughout the day. In the evening, there were gridlocks at different points of the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, including one near the Joydevpur roundabout.

Hundreds of vehicles were stranded on either side of the Tongi-Joydevpur road last night.

Our Comilla correspondent adds: Vehicles, including a large number of goods-laden trucks, plied intermittently on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway throughout the day yesterday.

There was a long queue of goods-laden trucks, covered vans and lorries in the five kilometre stretch of the road between Kalakachua to Comilla Cantonment.

On an average, 30,000 vehicles ply the highway everyday, but there were a lot more yesterday.

Apparel traders are facing difficulty in sending goods to Chittagong port and bringing raw materials from the port due to blockades. Many of them chose Friday and Saturday to do the job.

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