



**REMEDY FOR BLOCKADES**  
FBCCI may take legal actions against those who call blockades

PAGE B1

**MANIPURI MOMENTS**  
Prominent dance institution Nritya Nandan celebrates its silver jubilee

PAGE 9

**PETRAEUS-PAULA SCANDAL**  
Ex-CIA boss is facing criminal charges over sharing classified material

PAGE 8

## BLOCKADE ENTERS SIXTH DAY

# Railway struggles to keep schedule

Most trains depart, reach late; another train derailed as tracks uprooted; 31 vehicles torched; injured teacher dies

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Railway is going through a schedule collapse. Over half its trains ran hours late yesterday as alleged pro-blockade pickets continued sabotaging rail lines.

On the fifth day of the BNP-led combine's blockade, there were sporadic incidents of violence across the country and a schoolteacher who was injured on Friday died of his injuries.

At least 31 vehicles were torched; 13 of them were in Dhaka, according to fire service and police officials.

In Comilla, alleged supporters of the BNP-led 20-party alliance cut off a segment of the rail lines, causing Godhuli Express travelling to Chittagong from Dhaka to derail at Nangalkot around 5:15am.

Rail communications between Dhaka

and Chittagong and between Chittagong and Sylhet remained snapped until 11:30am.

Express trains Mahanagar Pravati, heading for Dhaka from Chittagong, and Mahanagar Godhuli, heading for Chittagong from Dhaka, had to be cancelled, leaving thousands of passengers stranded at stations.

The locomotive and a carriage of Godhuli went off the lines, said Anwar Hossain, stationmaster of Nangalkot.

Abul Khayer, driver of the train, said a serious accident was averted as he was doing only 40kmph.

The derailment happened just three days after the authorities had decided to beef up security for trains during the non-stop blockade.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Workers try to put the Mahanagar Godhuli Express back on the lines after the train derailed as the Dhaka-Chittagong rail lines were sabotaged allegedly by pickets in Comilla yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

# No phone call to Khaleda

BJP chief confirms it to state news agency, 2 pvt TV channels; Tarique's aide sent fake US statement on Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India's Bharatiya Janata Party President Amit Shah has denied having any phone conversation with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

According to Bangladesh's official news agency BSS, Amit Shah rejected BNP's claim that he had called Khaleda and inquired about her health on Wednesday night.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

# 11 public medical colleges opened

5 of the new ones to be run by army

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday inaugurated the academic activities of 11 new public medical colleges, aiming to fulfil the country's huge demand for physicians to provide better medical services to its people.

The premier launched the new medical colleges through videoconferencing from her official residence Gono Bhavan.

Of the 11 public medical colleges, six are government medical colleges located in

Sirajganj, Tangail, Manikganj, Jamalpur, Patuakhali and Rangamati while the rest five are army medical colleges located in Rangpur, Jessore, Chittagong, Comilla and Bogra.

Speaking on the occasion, the PM urged the country's physicians to extend their hands with the real mentality of serving people.

Termining healthcare services as a basic right of the people, she said, "The aim of physicians has to be serving people, not only earning money or making own fortune."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

# Another face-off?

After AL, now 20-party plans to hold rally in Dhaka tomorrow; Khaleda passes eight days at office, won't go to Ijtima venue today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led alliance wants to hold a rally in the capital tomorrow and announce tougher anti-government programmes from there, BNP insiders said.

The ruling Awami League too is set to hold a rally in the city tomorrow to mark the homecoming day of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, though an indefinite ban on rallies and demonstrations in the capital is in place.

"Madam [Khaleda Zia] is considering holding a rally in front of the BNP's Nayapaltn central office on Monday. In that case, the opposition alliance will relax its ongoing blockade programme from tomorrow

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

## BURDWAN BLAST

# India's NIA arrests JMB operative

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) yesterday arrested Rezaul Karim, an alleged operative of banned terror outfit Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), in connection with the Burdwan blast case.

Karim, who had a bounty on his head, was arrested from the Indian state of Jharkhand where he had been hiding since the blast on October 2.

According to an NIA statement, he was an active member of the JMB and was "engaged in manufacturing and transporting bombs to different locations".

"Since the time of the incident, he had been absconding to evade arrest," it said.

After the blast, accused Abdul Hakim, who was injured in the explosion, had called up Karim for help and evacuation, said the statement.

The NIA and the West Bengal police recovered 39 bombs, which were similar to those exploded in Burdwan, from his house on Badshahi Road in the district.

The NIA is hopeful that Karim's interrogation may provide fresh leads and evidence for the investigation. So far, 12 people have been arrested in this connection.



Shafia Begum cries by her son Abul Kalam at DMCH burn unit yesterday. Kalam, a car driver, was injured in an arson attack at Moghbazar intersection in the capital Friday night.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## ARSON ATTACK DURING BLOCKADE

# Victims want justice

SHAHEEN MOALLAH and AKRAM HOSEN

Abul Kalam opened his mouth and tried to speak but all that he could manage was a rasping, incomprehensible sound.

A victim of Friday's arson in the capital's Moghbazar, the 26-year-old was fighting for life at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

A petrol bomb, hurled at the car he drives for a living, has burnt 33 percent of his body, including his face, throat, hands and chest.

"Our political leaders don't know what it's like to be burnt in an arson attack. They probably would have

refrained from inflicting so much pain on innocent people had they ever fallen victims to arson attack," Jahanara Begum, elder sister of Kalam, said.

Kalam is one of the five victims who had been seriously burnt in arson attacks on vehicles during the nationwide blockade enforced by the BNP-led combine since January 6.

Most of the victims belong to the lower echelon of society and, sadly, many families could not come to attend them at the burn unit due to the ongoing blockade.

"Where shall I seek justice for my misfortune? Who should I hold responsible?" Jahanara kept asking

people who had no answer.

Fearful that the car may have got stolen if left unattended, Kalam was sitting inside it, waiting for his employer to return from a programme at a building nearby, when the attack took place around 11:00pm on Friday.

Making a tremendous effort, Kalam said he jumped out of the car immediately after the bomb was thrown. "But my clothes already caught fire and I could not see anything."

In another arson attack on a bus near Farmgate around 7:00am yesterday, Amulya Barman, 40, was seriously burnt when a patrol bomb

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

# Akheri Munajat of Ijtima today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

The first phase of Biswa Ijtima, the second largest Muslim congregation of the world, concludes today through the Akheri Munajat seeking spiritual wellbeing and welfare of the Muslim Ummah.

The Munajat will be offered by Indian Islamic scholar Mawlana Saad between 10:00am and 11:00am, organisers said. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims have gathered at the Ijtima venue on the Turag river in Tongi of Gazipur, defying the nonstop blockade enforced by the BNP-led alliance.

Around 5,000 foreigners from 50 countries have joined the three-day long first phase of the Ijtima that started on Friday. The second phase will begin on January 16.

Several devotees yesterday said they defied the blockade as they believed earthly obstacles should not be a barrier to seeking the holy path to Allah.

Gazipur police said they would take additional security measures prior to the Munajat. Around 12,000 law enforcers are already deployed there forming a five-layered security net.

SPECIAL TRANSPORT SERVICES

Bangladesh Railway sources said special train services from Tongi Railway Station will be available on Tongi-

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

# 4 Bangladeshi workers die of suffocation in Lebanon

UNB, Dhaka

Four Bangladeshi workers died from suffocation as a result of faulty heating in their room in a mountainous region north of Lebanon.

The four were found dead on Saturday in the Dinniyeh region, according to a report of AP.

The Middle East has been hit hard with a severe winter storm since Tuesday, affecting tens of thousands of Syrian refugees living in tents around the region.

The latest deaths raise to seven the number of people killed by the weather in Lebanon since Tuesday, including three Syrians.

Activists say several people died in Syria as well because of the storm.

## BOKO HARAM ATROCITIES IN NIGERIA

# 2,000 feared killed in deadliest attack

Girl, 10, blows herself up in crowded market killing 19 yesterday

AGENCIES

Boko Haram militants opened fire on northern Nigerian villages, leaving bodies scattered everywhere and as many as 2,000 people feared dead, officials said.

During the raid that started January 3, hundreds of gunmen seized the town of Baga and neighboring villages, as well as a

multinational military base. Attacks started at dawn and continued throughout last weekend, according to residents.

"The attack on Baga and surrounding towns looks as if it could be Boko Haram's deadliest act," Amnesty International said in a statement.

Meanwhile, two explosions rocked

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1