Blockade hits border trade

FROM PAGE 1

The victim Atiqur Rahman, 22, was a truck helper who received injuries to the head by pro-blockade pickets in Noakhali on January 7. He died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital at 11:00am yesterday.

At least 18 vehicles were torched yesterday; nine of them were in Dhaka and adjoining districts, according to fire service and police officials.

In the capital miscreants torched vehicles at Gulistan's Golap Shah Majarm, Tejgaon's Nabisko Intersection, Bangshal's Nababpur Road, Mirpur-11, Karwanbazar, and in front of Bashundhara Residential Area

Two vehicles were torched in Tongi and three in Comilla and one each in Savar, Narayanganj, Tongi, Chapainawabganj, Manikganj, Gaibandha, Chittagong and Tangail, fire service officials said.

Protesting arrest of party leaders and confinement of party chief Khaleda Zia, the BNP has called a daylong hartal today in Bogra, Noakhali and Sunamganj.

Although launch service was normal yesterday, trains ran behind schedules fearing acts of sabotage on rail trakcs allegedly by pro-blockade pickets. The number of long route buses saw an increase, yet people had to suffer for want of vehicles in many districts.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday issued a circular instructing BGB authority to deploy its forces in 22 districts and Dhaka Metropolitan Police areas, said Habibur Rahman, a deputy secretary of the home ministry.

"49 platoons of BGB men will be deployed in 16 districts including Gazipur, Bogra, Chapainawabganj and Brahmanbaria and another 10 platoons in Dhaka Metropolitan Police

Stop violence

Dhaka Metropolitan Police lifted

the ban on political activities yesterday

morning, making it possible for the

A huge number of law enforcers

The PM said her government would

"Nothing can prevent the govern-

do everything necessary to protect

ment from taking steps to stop vio-

lence. We cannot let her [Khaleda Zia]

do whatever she wants. There is a limit

resist violence and terrorist activities.

return home from office any time.

Hasina also called upon people to

On the BNP chairperson's confine-

"Khaleda is not confined ... rather

ment, the PM said Khaleda is free to

cordoned off the venue, and frisked

each and everyone at the entrance.

ruling party to hold the rally.

people's lives and properties.

to tolerance," she said.

areas," he said, adding that BGB personnel in six other districts would be deployed if necessary.

Earlier on January 6, the ministry in another circular instructed the Ansar and VDP authorities to deploy their personnel along rail tracks, which were vulnerable to attack, in different dis-Unloading disrupted at land ports

At Sonamasjid Land Port under Shibganj upazila in Chapainawabganj, around 250 goods-laden Indian trucks remain stranded, reports our

Chapainawabganj correspondent. "Bangladeshi importers and Indian truckers have been suffering immensely for the disruption of port activities," said Nurul Bashir, assistant commissioner of Sonamasjid Land

Port Customs. During a visit to the port on Sunday, the Indian truckers showed this correspondent how their perishable goods like ginger, onions started rotting. They said these products should be

offloaded immediately. Meanwhile, Indian exporters have stopped sending trucks at the Sonamasjid land port following requests of Bangladeshi importers, sources said.

Nurul Bashir said due to the blockade the government was losing Tk 2 crore revenue every day from the port as no truck from India had come to Bangladesh in the last two days.

Benapole, the largest land port in the country, has counted losses worth Tk 19 crore only in the first three days since January 6, our Benapole correspondent reports.

Usually 300 to 400 trucks carrying goods leave the port every day whereas only 95 trucks left the port on January 6, 168 on January 7 and 308 on January 9, said Abdul Jalil, assistant director, Benapole land port authority.

she has held people hostage in the

name of blockade. Nobody will stop

her if she wishes to go back home,"

Hasina slammed BNP chairperson's

She termed Tarique a kulangar (black

"Khaleda went mad when the trial

It was a wrong political decision on

Khaleda's part to boycott the January 5

national polls, and she as well as her

party would have to pay for the mis-

"Why people would have to pay for

Hasina said her government com-

pleted one year yesterday and is head-

ing towards the right direction.

elder son Tarique Rahman for defaming

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

sheep), and said, "Like mother, like son."

of war criminals started." The trial will

continue and none will be able to

said the AL chief.

hinder it, she said.

take, said the PM.

Khaleda's mistake?"

The warehouses at the land port are also facing troubles in offloading imported goods since the space available for storing goods has already been occupied, he added.

Aminul Haque, vice president of Benapole Importers and Exporters Association, said: "The port is now facing traffic congestion due to poor delivery facilities as importers are not being able to unload their goods. With assistance from law enforcement agencies, though, a few trucks carried goods to their destinations."

Though the Benapole port has capacity for accommodating 38,000 metric tonnes of goods, it has already stored 50,000 metric tonnes as of yesterday while 100 more Indian trucks are still waiting to be unloaded, said sources.

Pickets set fire on an onion-loaded truck in Malonchi area of Jessore early yesterday. None was injured in the incident.

land port in Dinajpur are also facing similar setbacks in the face of the countrywide blockade, reports our Dinajpur Correspondent. Port officials in Hakimpur upazila

Import activities through the Hili

of Dinajpur said nearly 245 trucks with imported goods could not be offloaded for space shortage. Usually 140 to 150 trucks enter the

country every day through the port, but the number has gone down to 40 to 50 which is likely to decrease further, they said.

Mohibul Rahman Bhuiyan, assistant commissioner, Hili Land Port customs, said achieving the revenue target would not be possible if such blockade continued for long.

At least 17 trucks and one bus were torched in the last three days. Of those, 10 trucks were torched in Dinajpur alone and seven in Joypurhat, police sources said.

AL spokesman Syed Ashraf said the next parliamentary polls would be held with Sheikh Hasina at the helm, and BNP's existence would be at stake

AL presidium member Syeda Sajeda

It was addressed by, among others, AL leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Matia Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Mahabubul Alam Hanif, MA Aziz and

They criticised Khaleda and her son Tarique. Some of them demanded that

Ruling party leaders, activists and supporters started pouring into the venue around 12:30pm, defying the ongoing blockade by the BNP-led 20party alliance.

if it boycotts that election.

Chowdhury presided over the rally.

Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya.

Tarique be brought back and put on trial.

Transport workers

FROM PAGE 1

Biswa Ijtema.

Rangpur and Tk 1,600 for that from Dhaka to Chittagong. As our buses are not operating now, we pay Tk 200 daily to our drivers as khoraki [daily food money]," said Mosharraf Hossain, manager of Hanif Paribahan.

Officials of another operator Shyamoli Paribahan said they paid Tk 200 daily for food only when a driver or helper from a district got stranded

in another district. Ena Paribahan running on Dhaka-Mymensingh route pays Tk 100 to each driver as food money if its buses are

not operated. But most other services on the same routes hardly pay its workers in such situations, says Saiful Islam, membersecretary of Dhaka-Mymensingh route

transport workers union.

Cameroon

attacks

AFP, Yaoundé

located.

on any casualties.

and Cameroon.

the insurgency.

Boko Haram

military base

Nigerian Boko Haram Islamists

military base in northwest

area, the official sources said.

launched an attack yesterday on a

Cameroon, forcing many to flee the

"As soon as people heard the first

gunfire they fled the city" of Kolofata,

a local Cameroonian source told AFP.

"The gunfire was very heavy," said

the source, adding that the military base

and local government premises are also

Police confirmed the attack but

there was no immediate information

towns and villages in northeast

Nigeria in the last six months and

now reportedly controls the border

areas of Borno state with Niger, Chad

The territorial gains have led to

fears of a total loss of government

control in the region and Nigeria's

President Goodluck Jonathan has

been criticised for his failure to end

Boko Haram has seized dozens of

is in an area where police, elite army,

and helpers operate the buses on a yesterday afternoon. daily contract basis. "I have to pay Tk 2,600 daily to the

owner. We [driver and staffs] share the rest of the money we earn. If we cannot operate our bus, we have no income," said Miraj Hossain, who operates a bus on Gabtoli-Jatrabari route.

The situation is no different with truck and covered van workers.

A truck or covered van driver gets around Tk 1,700 for a Dhaka to Chittagong trip and around Tk 2,200 for a Dhaka to Rajshahi trip.

"We have kept our vehicle inside the terminal since the blockade started and we are not getting any money," said Aziz Mia, a covered van driver, who was talking to The Daily Star in

In the capital, most of the drivers the capital's Tejgaon truck terminal Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan

> Shramik Federation General Secretary Osman Ali demanded the owners' cooperation and sincerity to resolve the miseries of the transport workers. Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity

Secretary General Khandaker Enyet Ullah said they had a plan to push the owners on behalf of their association to ensure at least food money for all workers in such a situation.

There are around 2 lakh buses and goods-carrying vehicles running across the country, says Abul Kalam, vicepresident of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity.

The workers federation claims there are around 40 lakh road transport workers across the country.

Black box found

FROM PAGE 16

search and rescue agency. "So we will use air bags to lift it. This will be done tomorrow (today)."

The black boxes contain a wealth of data that will be crucial for investigators piecing together the sequence of events that led to the airliner plunging into the sea

Supriyadi said the wreckage indicated that the plane likely "experienced an explosion" before hitting the water due to a significant change in air pressure.

He said the left side of the plane seemed to have disintegrated, pointing to a change in pressure that could have caused an explosion.

Supporting this possibility, he added, was the fact that fishermen in retrieved from the Java Sea and the area had reported hearing an explosion and saw smoke above the water.

But another official disputed the likelihood of a blast. "There is no data to support that

kind of theory," said Santoso Sayogo, an investigator at the National

Transportation Safety Committee. The flight data recorder was brought by helicopter to Pangkalan Bun, the

southern Borneo town that has been the base for the search effort, and then flown to Jakarta for analysis.

head of the transport safety committee.

The black box looked to be in good condition, said Tatang Kurniadi, the

Investigators may need up to a month to get a complete reading of the

"The download is easy, probably one day. But the reading is more difficult ... could take two weeks to one month," the NTSC's head investigator, Mardjono Siswosuwarno, said.

Over the weekend, three vessels detected "pings" that were believed to be from the black boxes, but strong winds, powerful currents and high waves hampered search efforts.

Dozens of Indonesian navy divers took advantage of calmer weather yesterday to retrieve the flight recorder and search for the fuselage of the Forty-eight bodies have been

brought to Surabaya for identification. Searchers believe more bodies will be found in the plane's fuselage. Relatives of the victims have urged

authorities to make finding the remains of their loved ones the priority. "I told our soldiers that the search

isn't over yet," Armed Forces chief General Moeldoko told reporters. "I am sure the remaining victims are in the body of the plane. So we need to find those."

Indonesia AirAsia, 49 percent owned by the Malaysia-based AirAsia budget group, has come under pressure from authorities in Jakarta since the crash.

Do hartal

FROM PAGE 5 convicted for war crimes, and the party enforced 30 days of shutdowns

in the last two years protesting those verdicts. Yesterday the notice was issued to Azharul's counsel Tajul Islam,

Jamaat's Acting Ameer Moqbul Ahmed, Acting Secretary General Shafiqur Rahman and Nayeb-e-Ameer Mujibur Rahman, Shibir's President Abdul Jabbar and Secretary General Atiqur Rahman. The notice came after the prosecution filed a contempt of court peti-

tion against the six and Jamaat as a party, for issuing those statements and calling hartal. The statements were "offensive" to the tribunal. The court, however, crossed off

Jamaat's name from the list of those served the show-cause notice.

Tajul on December 30, 2014 said the "evidence" produced by the prosecution, upon which the tribunal handed death to his client was "rubbish". Meanwhile, the tribunal-2 deferred

the recording of testimony of first prosecution witness to January 21 in the war crimes case against Mahidur Rahman and Afsar Hossain alias Chutu.

Logs used FROM PAGE 16

timber being used by the workers for cooking food.

Another brick kiln, ARC, is operating in the same area. Contacted, Mahmudul Alam, its owner, admitted that the kiln was illegal.

"We are not getting the clearance certificate from the DoE. And without it, it is impossible to obtain the licence," he said. Every year in winter, the illegal kilns

start to operate, but a little has been done to shut those down, say locals. Toxic emission from the kilns is

posing a great threat to the nearby

environment and its habitants, said Khaled Misbahuzzaman, professor of Chittagong University's Forestry and Environmental Science Department. Following a report of The Daily Star last year, the DoE fined KML-2

Tk 5.5 lakh. The KML-1 was also fined in 2010 The kiln authorities went to the High Court after the DoE served them a

notice as well. Later, the HC put a stay order that was extended five times to end in May last year. A case filed against ARC in the same year is still pending with the

environment court. Deputy Commissioner Mesbah Uddin said, "We have heard about the writ. Considering the matter, we will carry a drive to evict the kilns soon."

Chittagong Divisional Coastal Forest Officer RSM Munirul Islam said they would take action if the kilns were found to have burnt trees.

Hit by bridge

FROM PAGE 16

"The victims probably did not see the girder coming because of the thick fog. Three of them died on the spot, he said.

Sources said the train was carrying extra passengers on its roof due to the rush of Biswa Ijtema-returnees amid the ongoing blockade by the BNP-led 20-party.

Such tragic accidents are quite frequent as the girders are too close to the rails on the bridge, reports our Pabna correspondent.

General Railway Police recently took some special measures to prevent such accidents, said Mosharraf Hossain, divisional railway manager (Pakshey division).

"Whenever there is a huge passenger rush, trains are stopped near the bridge and the passengers on the roofs are alerted by blowing whistles.

"While crossing the bridge passengers on the roof have to lie down. The victims might have fallen asleep when the mishap happened," he said A five-member committee was

formed to investigate the incident, Mosharraf added. After the accident, the relatives

who were also travelling with the victims on the roof took the bodies to Chapainawabganj, said police.

Sundarbans

3:00pm on Sunday and caught Ranga,

FROM PAGE 16

said Shikder Akkas Ali, officer-incharge of Paikgachha Police Station, who led the drive. As per his confessional statement,

the law-enforcers then along with Ranga went to Kumkhali village in search of his firearms and aides around 2:30am yesterday. Sensing the presence of the law-

enforcers, Ranga's men opened fire. The law-enforcers fired back, triggering a "gun battle" with the criminals, Akkas said. After 45 minutes of the "gunfight" Ranga was found dead. However,

others managed to escape, he said. The police official claimed that two arms, 12 cartridges, one magazine and

two sharp weapons were recovered from the spot. Ranga was wanted in 23 criminal cases, including murder and robbery,

at different police stations, according to Akkas. The body was sent to Khulna Medical College Hospital morgue for

an autopsy.

Sea monster

FROM PAGE 16

species of ichthyosaur, an extinct group of marine reptiles that dominated the oceans of the Jurassic Period.

Scientists have named it Dearcmhara shawcrossi, after Brian Shawcross, the amateur collector who donated the specimen to Glasgow's Hunterian Museum, and the Gaelic word for marine lizard, dearcmhara pronounced "jark vara".

The fast-swimming reptile grew to be about 14 feet long from snout to tail and was armed with an array of sharp teeth. It lived in the warm, shallow seas around the coast of what is now Scotland and fed on fish and possibly smaller reptiles, said Steve Brusatte, a palaeontologist at the University of Edinburgh. "During the time of the dinosaurs,

the waters of Scotland were prowled by big reptiles the size of motor boats.

Their fossils are very rare, and only now for the first time we've found a new species that was uniquely Scottish," Dr Brusatte said. "It looked particularly peculiar to us

and when we compared it to other fossils it was clear that it was a different ichthyosaur to anything that we had been seen before. It's not the most beautiful fossil in the world but we realised it was an unusual specimen." Though the fossil is incomplete and includes only four bones of the animal's

features, such as a triangular bony projection on one of the bones of its forelimb for other ichthyosaurs.

of Europe and North America.

Govt speeds up dredging

in the Shela river on December 9 last The 31-kilometre-long channel,

which was introduced in 1974, started losing its navigability more than a decade ago due to lack of maintenance. Finally, the channel was closed in 2011 and vessels were forced to take an alternative route through the Shela in the Sundarbans. According to BIWTA officials, at

must be dredged to make it fit for river transport. The BIWTA in June last year tried to dredge the channel, but the move saw little headway as, according to offi-

cials, the equipment required to that

least 22 kilometres of the channel

end did not arrive in time. BIWTA Chairman Samsuddoha Khondaker told The Daily Star they had taken a Tk 200 crore project to dredge and remove 10 million tonnes of silt.

Besides, the WDB has moved to dredge five canals connected to the main channel to ensure free flow of tide water. 'We have already completed the

tender submission process. The dredging is scheduled to start within next week," Mainuddin Ahmed, executive engineer of WDB in Bagerhat, told The Daily Star. The Bagerhat district administra-

shrimp enclosures and other barriers at entry points of around 31 canals directly connected to the main chan-"If these barriers were not removed, tide water will not be able to enter the

Mongla-Ghasiyakhali channel. As a

tion has already started removing

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan, Water Resources Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud and top-ranked government

nor any public representatives discussed the matter with us. A few days ago we suddenly saw that excavators were digging our land," said Krishnapada Halder, who claimed to have lost around four bighas of land.

allegations and said he had discussed

Around 42.57 acres of land would

FROM PAGE 16 shooting attack on the political weekly Charlie Hebdo, known for its satirical

Meanwhile, Pope Francis yesterday slammed "deviant forms of religion' following deadly attacks by Islamist around the world a third world war.

become enslaved, whether to the latest fads, or to power, money, or even deviant forms of religion," he said, laying the blame on "a culture of rejection" which leads to "the breakdown of society and spawning violence and

Holy See in Vatican, reports AFP.

bers are working on an eight page issue due to come out on Wednesday with a one-million copy print run. Its lawyer, Richard Malka, told France Info radio there would be caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad.

"Synagogues, Jewish schools, but also mosques will be protected Manuel Valls told BFM TV.

likely accomplices. The Turkish government confirmed that the female companion of the supermarket attacker had entered Syria on Jan 8 from Turkey, having arrived in Istanbul several days before the killings, reports Reuters.

on Sunday encouraged French Jews to emigrate to Israel - and Palestinian to visit the supermarket yesterday.

be very difficult," said Deputy Commissioner of Bagerhat Jahangir

to oversee the progress of dredging activities. "We have sped up the dredging with a view to reopening the channel as early as possible. We hope to restart

the government had started digging their land without any discussion with "Neither any government officials

Chairman Rafiqul Islam denied the

France deploys

attacks on Islam and other religions.

militants in France and dubbed the

death.

Charlie Hebdo's remaining mem-

because in the past few days there have been a number of attacks against mosques," French Prime Minister Valls said police were searching for

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Cameron, who was holding an emergency security meeting of his cabinet yesterday, and Italian Prime Minister

skeleton, the researchers identified unique

vessel movement through this route by June," Shajahan Khan told reporters during his visit. LAND ACQUISITION COMPLAINTS

them.

However, Union Parishad

the issue with the villagers. Lawmaker Talukder Abdul Khaleq reportedly scolded those who demonstrated last week and told them that he

"never-ending spread of conflicts" "Losing their freedom, people

"We see painful evidence of this in the events reported daily in the news, not least the tragic slayings which took place in Paris a few days ago," he said in his yearly speech to the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the

Matteo Renzi were among 44 foreign leaders marching with French President Francois Hollande on Sunday. Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu - who

President Mahmoud Abbas were also present and walked just a few steps from one another. Netanyahu was due With growing calls for a compre-

from a beating and being raped with a broomstick, the ministry said.

its population of 800,000 Rohingya as illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and denies them citizenship.

was a citizen of that country.

Myanmar's embassy in Riyadh said that without seeing her passport, it could not confirm whether or not she

connecting muscles that were not seen in During the Jurassic Period, much of Skye was underwater but connected to the mainland. Britain was part of a large island positioned between the great land masses

officials visited the channel last week

Around 50 Hindu families of Ranjaypur village under Perikhali union of Rampal upazila alleged that

Talking to reporters, more than a dozen Hindu people made the similar

would arrange due compensation for

be acquired, according to BIWTA offiresult, maintaining its navigability will cials.

> there had been security failings given that the three gunmen were known to intelligence services, Valls and main opposition leader Nicolas Sarkozy

> agreed on a bi-partisan parliamentary

Valls also said the government had

commission into the attacks.

begun studying ways to strengthen the fight against "homegrown terrorism". France beefed up anti-terrorism legislation last year to prevent its nationals traveling to Syria and Iraq. The prime minister said one proposal being studied was to isolate

radical Islamists from the rest of the

prison population as repeated cases showed individuals were susceptible to radicalization in jail. "There is a lot of work to be done in

the prisons. It's a priority," Valls said.

Saudi says Myanmar female child-killer executed

AFP, Riyadh

killer, bringing to seven the number of death sentences carried out this year in the conservative Muslim kingdom. After a trial, Layla bint Abdul Mutaleb Bassim was executed for killing her husband's daughter Kalthoum bint Abdul Rahman bin

Ghulam Gadir, aged six, the interior

ministry said, quoted by the official

Authorities identified Bassim --

Saudi Press Agency.

Saudi Arabia said yesterday it

beheaded a Myanmar female child-

executed in the holy city of Mecca -- as holding "Burmese nationality", using British Prime Minister David the former name for Myanmar, but did not specify if she was from its Rohingya Muslim community. The child, also "Burmese", died

> The United Nations describes Rohingya as one of the world's most persecuted minorities. Buddhist-majority Myanmar views

hensive investigation into whether