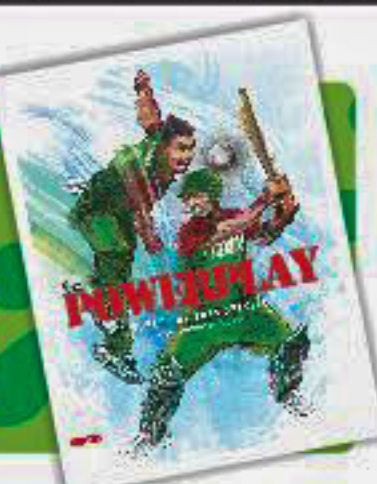




POWERPLAY
Is vanishing from the stands powerfully and only a few copies are left, **SO HURRY UP**



FARMERS IN TROUBLE
Political turmoil has pulled them into dire straits

PAGE B1

THE NUCLEAR TALKS
Iran's Khamenei says no deal is better than a bad deal

PAGE 8

Fix politics to save economy

Worried businesspeople speak against hartal, blockade; BNP holds govt responsible for crisis

BUSINESSPEOPLE DEMAND

Immediate end to blockade, violence

Enactment of laws to ban strikes, blockades

Waiver of bank interest rates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Businesspeople took to the streets all over the country yesterday, denouncing the ongoing violence that claimed at least 68 lives and inflicted serious damage on the economy in the last one month.

They formed human chains and staged sit-ins in the capital and elsewhere simultaneously for 15 minutes from 12:00noon, seeking an immediate end to the crisis to help save the economy.

They sang the national anthem, waved the national flag and chanted a slogan "Save the Country, Save the Economy".

The Federation of Bangladesh

Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the apex trade body of the country, led the protest programmes. The biggest one was held in the capital's commercial hub Motijheel where leaders of the FBCCI and its affiliated bodies stood in line in front of the chamber building for 15 minutes.

"We don't want destructive politics. We want to get out of this situation as the country's supply chain has been seriously disrupted due to the ongoing violence," said FBCCI President Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed.

With sectors including garment, agriculture and transport bearing the

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MEDIUM-SMALL RETAIL BUSINESS 70pc sales gone with blockade



There's a high risk that many small and medium businesses will fail to repay their loans as their incomes have dropped.

SA QUADER KERON
chairman, Bangladesh Shop Owners Association



All the good numbers of the economy will not remain good if the situation lingers. The economy is stagnating.

SHAH ALAM KHANDAKER
secretary gen, Bangladesh Shop Owners Association



My father always worries that I may come under petrol bomb attack. But I've to sell coconuts to run the family even if my life is at risk.

MD SOHAG,
a street vendor at Motijheel



I don't know how I'll pay this month's shop rent and staff salaries.

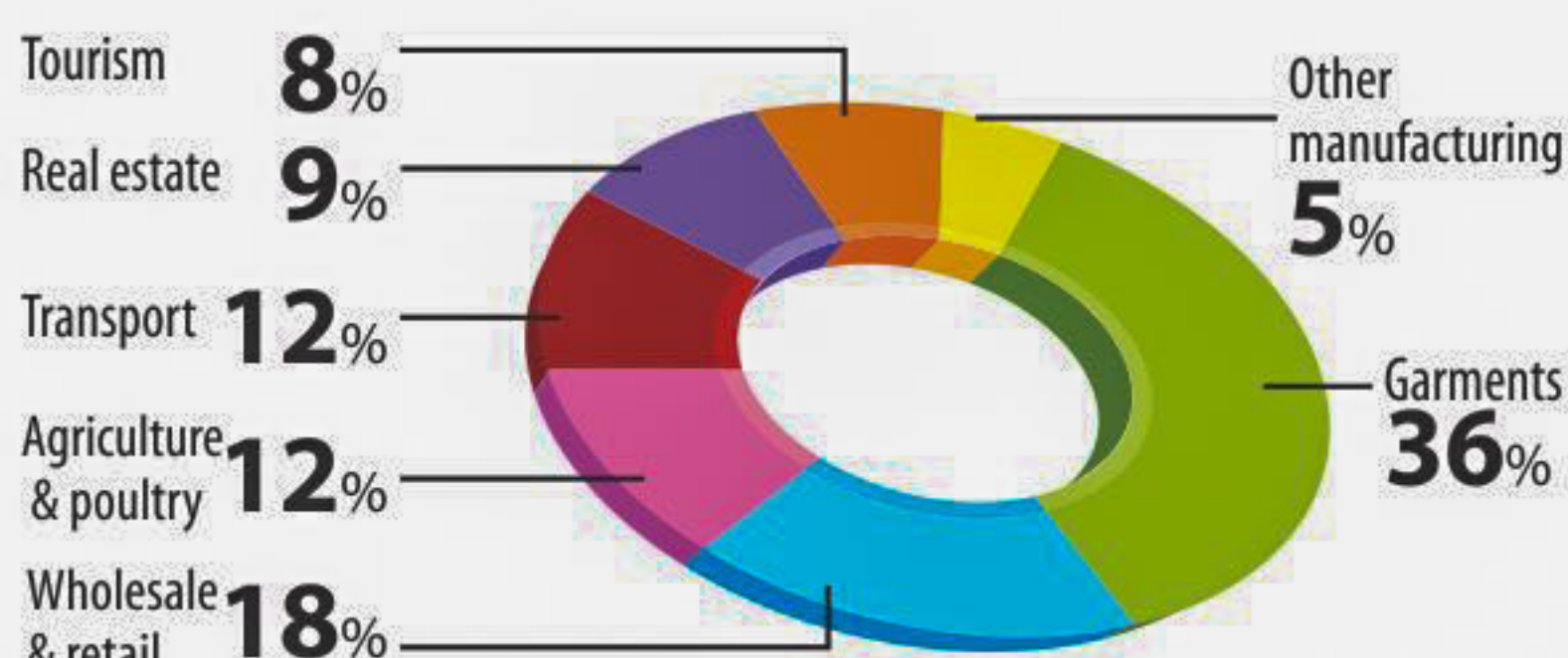
ARIF HOSSAIN SUMAN
assistant manager, Saj Mahal, a wedding products seller

SECTORS HIT HARD BY POLITICAL TURMOIL

In % total losses

TOTAL LOSS IN BLOCKADE

Tk **75,000** cr



5 BCL men to die for killing Zubair

6 get life term; court says the murder was outcome of unethical practices by student organisations

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Five BCL men of Jahangirnagar University were handed down death penalty and six others life term yesterday for the killing of a rival faction activist, Zubair Ahmed.

Two other accused in the murder case were acquitted of the charges while six, including the five sentenced to death, were now on the run.

Zubair's family expressed satisfaction over the verdict. "We are happy," his elder brother Abdullah Al Mamun told The Daily Star. "However, we will be happier if the fugitives are tracked down and the verdict is executed quickly."

Mamun, a private university teacher,



Zubair Ahmed

alleged some of the convicted BCL men were living in different dormitories of Dhaka University and some even took part in a recent public programme at JU.

Delivering the verdict, Judge ABM Nizamul Haque of Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 of Dhaka said the Zubair killing was the ultimate result of unethical activities by student organisations at public universities.

Some so-called students indulged in crimes, including killings, but none was brought to justice in the near past, he said and recommended formulating "codes of conduct" for student politics.

Hailing the verdict, JU Vice-Chancellor Farzana Islam hoped it would help bring an

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Last day of exam, last day of life

JU CORRESPONDENT

It was January 8, 2012. Like other days, Zubair Ahmed wanted to leave the campus safely after taking his last exam of honours final. But his rivals had other plans.

Having taken the test, the Patuakhali boy was about to leave after taking a cup of tea with his friends.

As he finished the tea around 4:30pm, several Chhatra League activists asked him to go with them to the nearby library gate. From there, they dragged him behind the Wajed Ali Science building, a relatively isolated area.

A few others joined the group and together they beat him with iron rods and left him there to bleed profusely.

He succumbed to his

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PHOTO: SK ENMAUL HAQ

Abul Kashem caresses his daughter Mim at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday while Kashem's wife feeds him as his both hands are bandaged. He was injured in a petrol bomb attack in Feni on February 1.



The Class of 2015: Members of the Malaysian football team celebrate their finest moment with the Bangabandhu Gold Cup. They won the trophy defeating hosts Bangladesh 3-2 in a pulsating final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium last night. Story on Page 14

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



"Civil society members only offer advice. They are like a cancer on the society. This parasite... the cancer named civil society must be uprooted from the society."

FOOD MINISTER
QAMRUL ISLAM
AT A PROGRAMME
IN THE CITY

Arson, bomb attack on vehicles continue

2 more arson victims die; petrol bombs hurled at Maitree Express; 2 Jamaat men, one cop hurt in 'gunfight'

STAR REPORT

Two more petrol bomb victims died of their injuries yesterday raising the death toll to 68 since the political violence sparked early last month.

Abul Kalam Azad, 40, who was injured in a petrol bomb attack in Gaibandha Friday night, died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital yesterday afternoon.

Truck helper Hasib, 30, who was injured in a similar attack Saturday night in Bogra, died early yesterday at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

Criminals hurled at least three crude bombs at India-Bangladesh train Maitree Express in Ishwardi yesterday afternoon when it was heading towards Dhaka from Kolkata. None was hurt.

Meanwhile, Gaibandha police filed a case on Saturday against 90 leaders and activists of the 20-party alliance in connection with the petrol bomb attack on a bus on Friday night that killed eight people and critically injured 14 others.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE
related to blockade

68 KILLED
since Jan 5

52 OF THEM HAD NO POLITICAL LINK

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5