

## Mobile phone

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mobile coverage surrounding the office where Khaleda has been in since January 3.

BTRC yesterday directed the mobile operators to restore the network immediately, saying, "It is learnt that some of the diplomatic missions in Baridhara, Gulshan areas, particularly of Japan, Spain and the Netherlands, are facing complete obstructions of mobile phone communications."

Land phone, internet and cable connections to the Khaleda's office are yet to be restored.

MAN HURLS STONE AT KHALEDA'S OFFICE

Police yesterday detained a youth, Paran Sarker, 24, after he hurled a stone at the BNP chief's office. None was hurt in the incident.

Paran claimed he hailed from Kazipur of Sirajganj and lost one of his relatives recently in an arson attack.

Talking to reporters, he, however, could not give details of his relative. Officer-in-charge Rafiqul Islam of Gulshan Police Station told The Daily Star that Paran was in police custody. Meanwhile, the BNP in a statement yesterday said the government would soon be forced to shut down all the government offices in daytime too following the announcement of suspending bus operations after 9:00pm.

## Incas first

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found encased in ice in the Andes.

In the 16th century during its conquest of South America the Spanish forced Incas to work in the mountaintop mines of Potosi in what is now Bolivia -- then the largest source of silver in the world.

The indigenous population already knew how to refine the metal but in 1572 the Spanish introduced a new technology that boosted production many times over and sent thick clouds of lead dust rising over the Andes for the first time in history.

Winds carried some of that pollution 500 miles northwest into Peru where tiny remnants of it settled on the Quelccaya Ice Cap.

There it stayed -- buried under hundreds of years of snow and ice -- until researchers from Ohio State University found it in 2003.

Now in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences they report the discovery of a layer within an ice core that dates to the Spanish conquest, contains bits of lead and bears the chemical signature of the silver mines of Potosi.

The core makes Quelccaya one of only a few select sites on the planet where the pre-industrial human impact on air quality can be studied today.

Dr Paolo Gabrielli said, "This evidence supports the idea human impact on the environment was widespread even before the industrial revolution."

The researchers found a spike in bismuth -- a chemical by-product of mining metals -- around 1480 when the Inca Empire was expanding.

The chemical signature in the Quelccaya ice suggests most of the pollution likely came from Potosi where the Spanish produced the vast majority of silver.

This latest ice core from Quelccaya shows that humans generated substantial pollution in the 16th century.

## Selina Hossain

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recognition of her literary excellence.

The award, which carries a cash component of Rs 50,000, a shawl, a citation and a memento, will be conferred on Selina when she attends the Saarc Literature Festival.

The four-day event will be held at the Grand Hotel in Agra from February 13. The award presentation will be held on the inaugural day.

The festival will also confer lifetime achievement award on veteran Odiya author Sitakanta Mahapatra. The award carries a cash reward of Rs 2 lakh, a citation, a shawl and a memento.

The Foundation of Saarc Writers and Literature (FOSWAL) is organising the event, FOSWAL chairperson Ajeet Caur told The Daily Star here.

She said the festival will bring together writers, scholars, artists, academics and historians from all eight Saarc countries -- India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives.

Literary luminaries from Saarc countries will debate the latest literary trends and present their literary pieces for analytical comments during the festival.

The evenings will be enlivened by performances by Sufis and Darvishes. The regional Braj culture and literature will also be on display.

Besides Selina Hossain, poet Md Nurul Huda, Jharna Rahman, Rahima Afrooz Munni, Rubana Huq and Md Saeed Rana from Bangladesh will also attend the festival.

## So many deaths

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Asked about the allegations of negligence, Brig Gen Abdus Sabur Mia, director of the hospital, told reporters that they formed a three-member committee headed by Prof Ismail Hossain Patwary to probe the matter.

Talking to reporters at the Secretariat, State Minister for Health Zahid Malik said, "The patients died as they couldn't reach the hospital in time due to hartal and blockade."

The number of deaths was higher probably because the patients failed to make it to the hospital at the right time. There was nothing unusual about it, he added.

Abdus Salam, deputy director of the hospital, said the deaths of so many people were abnormal, not the causes of their deaths.

"The death figure is higher than average ... Normally, 10 to 14 people, including 3 to 4 babies, die at the hospital every day. But the figure of 32 is abnormal," he said.

Five of the babies died of pneumonia, three of neonatal complications and two of serious contagious diseases, he said.

Referring to the deaths of five babies in incubators, a physician in the unit said there was no problem in the incubators.

## Govt focuses

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Talking to The Daily Star, a senior foreign ministry official said the existing process of issuing nationality certificates, national/voter ID cards and passports to foreign jobseekers seems to be flawed as criminals or foreign nationals can manage those by paying money.

There should be some methods, from the grassroots up to the national level, to scrutinise strictly the travel and job documents of the workers, he added.

A jobseeker, said Iftekhar, must have a machine readable passport, smart card, and manpower clearance certificate to land a job in Saudi Arabia.

If anyone migrates to the KSA on forged documents, the public offices concerned will be held responsible for the anomalies, mentioned the expatriates welfare secretary.

MN Zeaul Alam, director general of Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP), said they were working to stop any irregularities in issuance of passports.

"We'll send a notice to all the passport offices across the country to make them aware of issuing passports to the genuine Bangladeshi nationals only," he added.

Sources said although the Rohingyas are not Bangladeshi citizens, many of them over the years have managed passports and other necessary documents for travelling and working abroad.

There are allegations that the Rohingyas with the help of local influential people, politicians, elected public representatives and officials obtained Bangladeshi passports from DIP offices in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong after paying money.

Iftekhar Haider said if any recruitment agency is found guilty of sending law-breakers or Rohingyas abroad, the government will take stern action against them.

Mohammed Abul Bashar, president

## It's 1/11 amnesia

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The following day, Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former Bangladesh Bank governor, was appointed and sworn in as chief adviser to a new caretaker government.

The armed forces had played a crucial role in the changeover amid growing political turmoil caused mainly by the then AL-led 14-party combine's persistent street agitations to resist one-sided polls.

"The caretaker government [led by Fakhruddin Ahmed] is an outcome of the Awami League-led alliance's movement," Hasina told reporters on March 15 at what was then Zia International Airport before leaving for the United States.

She also had declared that if voted to power, her party would legitimise the caretaker government as it "earned the confidence and appreciation of the people."

Abdul Jalil, AL general secretary at the time, on January 11 had termed the changeover "a delayed but necessary action."

The changeover certainly made the AL-led alliance happy as it, immediately after the changeover, called off its street agitation programmes.

Flanked by senior leaders of the alliance, Hasina had even attended the swearing-in ceremony of Fakhruddin Ahmed as chief adviser at Bangabhaban on January 12.

The changeover, however, had frustrated the BNP-led alliance as it could not go ahead with its plan to return to power through the January 22 parliamentary election.

Of the 22 adults, five died of stroke, five of heart diseases and eight from liver disease, cancer, severe anaemia, encephalitis, diabetes-related disease and poisoning, according to hospital records.

Besides, three died of injuries they suffered in a clash and road accidents while one was brought dead to the hospital.

A total of 162 children were under treatment in the paediatric unit-3 as of yesterday. Many of them were found lying on the floor as the unit has only 56 beds.

Officials there said the tertiary hospital always remains overburdened with patients. A total of 1,781 patients were under treatment at the 500-bed hospital till yesterday.

Now, 155 doctors and 173 nursing staffs work at the hospital against the approved posts of 208 and 308, according to the hospital website.

In January, 433 patients, including 62 babies, died at the hospital, said the hospital authorities.

Asked about the number of deaths a day at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, its officials said usually 15 to 35 patients die every day while around 2,500 to 3,000 patients (except those in the burn unit) get admitted to the hospital.

of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), said it is not possible for the agencies to do the detailed background checks of each of the jobseekers.

"We'll only support the recruitment process of those jobseekers who have valid documents like the MRP, smart card, and manpower clearance certificate. The government has to make sure that nobody with criminal records migrates to Saudi Arabia," he added.

Meanwhile, the Saudi deputy minister in a meeting with Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said his government will make maximum efforts so that the Bangladeshi workers can go there through an easy and simple process.

The Saudi National Recruiting Committee and Baira yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding on sending workers to the KSA at the latter's city office.

On February 1, the Saudi government announced that it would hire Bangladeshi workers again after a six-year ban since 2008 over anomalies in recruitment process.

## Boys included

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Students from other groups would receive Tk 125 each as monthly stipend alongside one-time allocation of Tk 1,200 for the same purpose.

A candidate will have to fulfil three criteria to win the stipend. These are: the annual income of the parents must be below Tk 100,000, the amount of their land property should be less than 75 decimals and the student must have at least 75 percent class attendance.

The money will reach the students through bKash, a mobile money transfer provider, and electronic money transfer networks.

The Ecne meeting also okayed five other projects involving Tk 834 crore.

## Criminal hurt in 'gunfight' with police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A wanted criminal suffered bullet wounds in a "gunfight" with police in Raozan upazila of Chittagong early yesterday.

Kamrul Islam Titu, 40, of Noapara, stands accused in over a dozen criminal cases, including five for murder, police said.

In 1996, Kamrul along with his gang attacked Noapara police camp, killed a policeman and looted 17 rifles and a large quantity of bullets.

"Kamrul has been absconding since then," said Pradip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Raozan Police Station.

On receiving a tip-off that Kamrul was staying at a house in Noapara on Monday, police conducted a drive there and arrested him around 8:00pm, the OC said.

After gleaming information from him, police took Kamrul to Chander Dighir Par of Noapara to recover the looted firearms around 2:00am yesterday.

"When we were returning to [our police station], the accomplices of Kamrul attacked us. Police opened fire in retaliation that triggered a "gunfight" with the criminals," Pradip said.

Kamrul sustained bullet wounds in his leg during the "gunfight". A light gun, four bullets of rifle and three petrol bombs were recovered from the spot, the police official claimed.

## Tigers look

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trouble continuing with his momentum. He scored a 13-ball seven on Monday.

Mushfiquur Rahim got out first ball to young leg-spinner Yasir Shah and that was perhaps the most crucial wicket for the Pakistanis on that day. With scores of 19, 8 and 0 Mushfiquur has had a below-par start to the tour, an aspect which is contrary to his form last year when he emerged as the highest run-getter for the Tigers. Like Mominul, Mushfiquur too spent a good amount of time in the nets in a bid to revive his form.

Nasir Hossain, who scored a half-century in the second game against the Australian XI, was dropped for the game against Pakistan. At the moment, it seems as though the team management prefers young Sabbir Rahman to Nasir, however, there is a chance that the player might feature for the Tigers tomorrow when Bangladesh take on Ireland. By the looks of it, Bangladesh are yet to decide on a number seven batsman and as a result both Nasir and Sabbir batted hard in the nets yesterday in a bid to make their presence felt.

Al-Amin Hossain was the only pacer who did not play in the warm-up against Pakistan. He did however have a one-on-one session with Heath Streak yesterday. With the pace-bowling department doing well at the moment, it will be difficult for Al-Amin to claim a place on the side.

## India's top

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said 'Canon Law' had to be applied and enforced by a criminal court while deciding a case under Section 494 (bigamy) of the IPC.

"It is reasonable that when the courts in India recognise dissolution of marriage (by pronouncing the word talaq three times) under Mohammedan law which is the personal law of Muslims, the courts should also recognise for the purpose of dissolution of marriage Canon Law as the personal law of Indian Catholics," the petition said.

Canon Law says that Catholics are required to marry in a Catholic church and enjoins that they seek nullity of marriage in the canonical court also under the code of canon law. Otherwise, the marriage and the dissolution are not recognized by the Catholic church.

The comment came days after US President Barack Obama denounced growing intolerance on religious minorities in India.

Only days after warning in New Delhi during a historical tour about the need to promote religious tolerance, Obama invoked the memory of India's independence icon Mahatma Gandhi to drive home a similar appeal during a speech in Washington on last Thursday.

While praising its "magnificent diversity", Obama then described India as a place where "religious faiths of all types have, on occasion, been targeted by other peoples of faith, simply due to their heritage and their beliefs".

Such "acts of intolerance... would have shocked Gandhiji", added Obama in comments that made front-page headlines in Indian newspapers on Friday.

The issue of religious freedom in India -- an officially secular country -- has become particularly contentious since the election last year of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a fervent Hindu nationalist.

## A lesson in Aam Aadmi

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many worried. Was India heading towards political hegemony?

The impact of the Aam Aadmi Party victory in a city state like Delhi should not be over-estimated, but it shows both the impermanence of politics and resilience of Indian democracy. The AAP used precisely the open nature of Indian polity to mount a similar campaign. Voters like having checks -- and anecdotal evidence suggests many were uncomfortable with the concentration of power in one man, one party.

No substitute for organisational resilience

In 2014, Modi's success was in galvanising the cadre and bringing back energy to the organisation. Last May also spelt an almost existential crisis for the AAP. Kejriwal had walked out of the Delhi government; the AAP had over-reached in the general polls and 96% of their candidates lost their deposits.

But they stayed the course. Kejriwal kept his flock together; stayed away from other states, including Haryana; kept nibbling away at BJP's claims; exposed the Lieutenant-Governor's willingness to toe the Centre's line; urged his party MLAs to remain connected with their constituencies.

In a recent piece, Ajaz Ashraf highlighted how 11 men and a woman constituted their Delhi Election Campaign Committee and made several innovations like jansabhas and Delhi dialogue. The AAP's organisation remained resilient.

Creating a multi-class, multi-caste alliance is the future

Before 2014, many predicted while the BJP may win the elites, they had little traction among the disadvantaged. Modi proved them wrong. In the run-up to the Delhi polls, many had billed it as a battle of classes, where the underclass would prefer the AAP while the middle class and upper middle classes would stick to the BJP. This view missed the larger trend of Indian politics. Parties which are able to bridge the class, caste, regional divide will flourish; those who are not able to do so may remain significant but will not cross the threshold.

Modi won urban and rural India; he won the middle class and upper castes of north India but also won the lower middle class, sections of the poor and

backward castes and Dalits. Kejriwal's success was being able to carve out a wide social alliance. The AAP focused on the slum clusters, Muslims, workers and marginalised groups. They also spent time in middle-class localities, fought in TV newsrooms, and drew out specific campaigns for the diverse communities. The future is in adding to your core vote.

Personality and leadership issue are critical

Modi filled in the yearning for leadership in the 2014 polls. And the Delhi verdict is a clear vote not as much for the 60-plus AAP MLA candidates as it is for Kejriwal. This was a personalised campaign; the "paanch saal Kejriwal song became as much of a buzz as "Modiji aanewale hain" was last year.

The appeal of a Jawaharlal Nehru or an Indira Gandhi, or even an Atal Bihari Vajpayee, drove voters to particular formations in the past. But the need for a strong leader as the face of the campaign is now becoming an almost key ingredient of electoral campaigns. In Delhi, the toss-up was between Kejriwal and the Modi-Bedi combine. People decided to go with the former. This has lessons for future elections -- in Bihar, the JD(U)-RJD alliance is all set to project Nitish Kumar as the face, while the BJP is not yet clear who will lead the party. That could well be risky, for people want to know who will lead them before they vote.

The electorate prefers decisive verdicts

One other pattern that is increasingly apparent is the desire of the electorate to have clean verdicts. Modi waged the Lok Sabha campaign on a 272-plus pitch; the voters responded. In Delhi, Kejriwal claimed the last time around, he could not deliver because he did not have a full majority.

There appears to be increasing disenchantment with politically fragmented setups. Bihar in 2005 and 2010; UP, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab in 2007 and 2012; Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in 2008 and 2013; Andhra Pradesh in 2004, 2009 and 2014; Telangana in 2014; Gujarat ever since 2002; Odisha in 2009 and 2014; Tamil Nadu in 2011; West Bengal in 2011 have a clear message -- either a party on its own or a pre-poll alliance has won a majority. Delhi has confirmed the trend.

## SSC exams in fresh

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They received new textbooks but could not start their classes properly. Although many schools have remained open despite the blockade, presence of students is thin, especially in the city and town areas.

Meanwhile, the government shot down the proposal by several eminent personalities for a national dialogue with the BNP.

The BNP-led alliance extended their 72 hour hartal to Friday 6:00am, protesting the "arrest and killing of its leaders and activists". It also demanded the release of the party leaders, including acting secretary general Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir.

The hartal coincided with Thursday's exam on Religion under eight general education boards as well as on Fikha and Usulul Fikha under Madrasa Board and Physics Second Paper under Vocational Board.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday expressed hope that the hartal would be called off considering the future of the students.

Meanwhile, sporadic incidents of violence marked the third day of hartal yesterday as pickets exploded crude bombs and carried out arson and vandalism across the country.

At least 12 people were injured in arson attacks on vehicles while criminals set fire to at least 12 vehicles, including a passenger bus, a private car, a covered van and trucks, at different places across the country, said police and fire service officials.

In Feni, two passengers were burnt and seven others injured when alleged blockaders hurled crude bombs at a bus at Dagonbhuayan upazila around 9:15pm.

The burn victims were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. One of them received 20 percent burns. They were first taken to Feni Sadar Hospital, reports our Feni correspondent, quoting Fayeze Ahmed, duty doctor at Feni Sadar Hospital.

The identities of rest of the victims could not be known immediately.

In a separate incident, criminals set fire to three buses of Star Line parked inside the company's bus depot in the town around 11:30pm, said Jahangir, inspector of Feni fire station.

Jahangir added that miscreants exploded several crude bombs in front of the police check post located beside the fire station in the town at 9:00pm.

In Mymensingh, a truck driver was burnt when suspected blockaders hurled petrol bombs at the vehicle.

cle at Gauripur around 11:55pm, police said.

Another trucker and his helper were burnt as alleged blockaders hurled a petrol bomb at their sand-laden truck around 9:00pm at Durgapur in Netrokona.

The injured were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, said Rezaul Islam Khan, officer-in-charge of Durgapur Police Station.

In Chittagong, a mob caught and beat up a youth named Rubel while he was fleeing after exploding a crude bomb on a road near Bandar Police Station around 11:00am yesterday. Locals handed over Rubel to police later.

Jahedul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bandar Police Station, said Rubel, during primary interrogation, admitted that he was hired for exploding bombs in exchange of Tk 800 and also disclosed the names who hired him.

The OC, however, declined to divulge the names.

In Bogra, alleged activists of Awami League vandalised furniture inside a BNP office in the town, triggering a chase and counter chase between the ruling party and BNP men. Jubo League Municipality unit president Masum was injured in the incident. In two separate incidents, alleged blockaders hurled petrol bombs at two goods-laden trucks in the district.

In Jhalakathi, suspected blockaders set alight the vehicle of AL-backed Nalcity upazila chairman, police said. Criminals hurled a petrol bomb at the jeep parked inside his garage, he added.

In Bhola, alleged blockaders set fire to an oil tanker and vandalised a truck in Daulatkhana upazila.

In Munshiganj, police arrested two BNP men in connection with Monday's arson attack on a truck which was carrying some 38000 books.

Meanwhile, law enforcers detained 46 BNP-Jamaat men from Chapainawabganj, 13 from Rangpur and five from Noakhali.

In Dhaka, detectives picked up Abdus Sattar Patwari, office secretary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, from Dhanmondi yesterday afternoon. He will be produced before court today, Krishna Pada Roy, deputy commissioner (South) of the Detective Branch of Police, told The Daily Star.

Alleged blockaders hurled a crude bomb at a bus in the city's Mohammadpur area early yesterday, leaving a passenger injured. He received splinter injuries.