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Violence growing, yet EC indifferent

BNP again demands army deployment, EC says no; one killed in Khagrachhari

PANKAJ KARMAKAR and PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY

With the election just a week away, growing violence and the Election Commission's apparent indifference to it may throw the polls environment out of balance, experts think.

Though over two dozen incidents of violation of the electoral code of conduct have been reported in the media over the past five days, the election watchdog seems to have chosen not to probe any of those.

It has left all the alleged incidents at the local administration's discretion. Meanwhile, a BNP man was killed after an election campaign programme in Khagrachhari yesterday.

Against this backdrop, the BNP has again demanded army deployment in the 234 municipalities where elections are due on December 30.

However, the chief election commissioner (CEC) has discarded the possibility of considering the demand, saying the situations in the polling areas do not yet require it.

The EC has slapped restrictions on traffic movement in the polling areas on the voting day.

BNP MAN KILLED

A local leader of the pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal was hacked to death in Matiranga of Khagrachhari last night.

The dead -- Nazrul Islam, 55 -- was a senior vice-president of Krishak Dal's upazila unit.

Assailants indiscriminately hacked Nazrul at Islamnagar around 8:30pm



MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 2015



An elderly man lies down hugging his dog for added warmth on the footpath at a bus stop in the city's Farmgate yesterday night. Winter nights get worse for the capital's homeless as they hardly have enough clothes to keep them warm in the open.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

US will help find Rohingya solution

Says Bernicat assuring Bangladesh, Myanmar

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The USA will help Bangladesh, Myanmar and other regional countries find just and durable solutions for the Rohingya problem.

United States Ambassador to Bangladesh Marcia Bernicat said this while visiting Cox's Bazar on December 21-22.

During the visit, she met district officials, undocumented and registered Rohingya refugees and organisations providing humanitarian assistance there, said a press release of the US embassy yesterday.

Bangladesh for decades hosted hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas, said

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Delhi plane crash kills 10 BSF men

BGB-BSF talks slated to begin in Dhaka today postponed

STAR REPORT

The BGB-BSF director general-level talks scheduled to start in Dhaka today has been postponed after a BSF plane crash in New Delhi killed 10 people on board yesterday.

The meeting was to be held at the BGB headquarters. A new date would be announced later, said a press release of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

A 10-member team of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) reached Dhaka yesterday morning to attend the talks. Another 13-member BSF team, led by its Director General (DG) Devendra Kumar Pathak, was also slated to arrive in Dhaka in the afternoon, according to the press release.

In the release, the BGB also mentioned that its DG Maj Gen Aziz Ahmed phoned

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SAUDI-LED STRIKES IN YEMEN

Those could be in breach of int'l law

Says HRW

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Air strikes conducted by the Saudi Arabian-led coalition could have broken international law in Yemen after claiming the lives of 60 civilians in residential districts, according to a report by Human Rights Watch.

The NGO, which interviewed survivors of the strikes, claims it found no evidence of military targets in the Old City and in the Al-Asbahi neighbourhood, adding that homes in several other areas were hit "200 metres or more from possible military objectives."

In the report the group claims the coalition "carried out at least six apparently unlawful air strikes in residential areas" of Sana'a, the country's capital. It adds: "Coalition members and the United States, as a party to the conflict, are required under the laws of war to investigate such attacks, but they have not."

Joe Stork, the group's deputy Middle East director, said: "How many civilians will die in unlawful air strikes in Yemen before the coalition and its US ally investigate what went wrong and who is responsible."

"Their disregard for the safety of civilians is appalling."

The war being waged in Yemen involves a Saudi-led coalition of Sunni Arab states that has launched an all-out air campaign against the Iranian

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Extraterrestrial farming!

Nasa wants to grow potatoes on Mars



CNBC ONLINE

In Ridley Scott's science fiction drama 'The Martian', Matt Damon's character plays a botanist who discovers how to grow potatoes on the Red Planet. Now, scientists are conducting an experiment that will bring them a step closer to making that a reality.

Nasa and the Peru-based International Potato Centre (CIP) will start cultivating potatoes in Mars-like conditions on Earth, with the hope of

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Uttara priest gets fresh death threat

RAFIUL ISLAM

A Christian priest in the capital received a death threat for a second time yesterday, barely three days before Christmas.

Jagdish Edward, academic dean of Gloria Theological Seminary at Uttara, was among the dozen of priests who got death threats in text messages last month.

At 5:54am yesterday, he received another SMS from the same number. It read: "... Should we arrange your burial or let your family do it? Inform [us] today."

Later around 7:30am, he got a phone call from that number but could not receive it as he was away, he told The Daily Star.

In the previous morning,

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Somali-based al-Shabab frequently launches attacks over the border in Kenya.

FILE PHOTO: BBC ONLINE

Bangladesh is for people of all religions

PM tells Christians

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh would continue to move ahead overcoming all obstacles.

"We have many obstacles. We have to overcome the hurdles as we work for people's welfare. The obstacles could not slow down the pace of our work," she told Christian community members at the Gono Bhaban.

The PM was exchanging

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PHOTO ON PAGE 3

Muslims shield Christians in Kenya Islamist attack

BBC ONLINE

A group of Kenyan Muslims travelling on a bus ambushed by Islamist gunmen protected Christian passengers by refusing to be split into groups, according to eyewitnesses.

They told the militants "to kill them together or leave them alone", a local governor told Kenyan media. At least two people were killed in the attack, near the north-eastern village of El Wak on the Somali border.

The Somali based al-Shabab group says it carried out the attack. The group often carries out attacks in Kenya's north-east. The bus was travelling from the capital Nairobi to the town of Mandera.

When al-Shabab killed 148 people in an attack on Garissa University College in April, the militants reportedly singled out Christians and shot them, while freeing many Muslims.

Last year, a bus was attacked near Mandera by al-Shabab militants, who

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Six Shibir men held with 2kg explosives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested six alleged leaders and activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir and recovered two kilograms of explosive materials from them in Rampura in the capital.

Inspector Mustafizur Rahman of Rampura Police Station said acting on a tip-off, they raided the third floor of a six storey building in Ulan area on Monday and arrested the six Shibir men.

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SIBL Social Islami Bank Limited

PRAYER TIMING

DECEMBER 23

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-20 12-45 3-45 5-22 7-00

JAMAAT 5-55 1-15 4-00 5-25 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

The Daily Star

17th O & A Level Award Presentation Ceremony 2014-2015

SALUTING THE NATION BUILDERS OF TOMORROW

Announcement for 'O' & 'A' Level Private Candidates and Schools

Private Candidates: Private candidates who fulfill the criteria described below are requested to register their names at The Daily Star office for inclusion as awardees. The criteria to be fulfilled are as follows:

Criteria for 'O' Level: Minimum 6 (six) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings within May/June 2014 to May/June 2015

Criteria for 'A' Level: Minimum 3(three) 'A' grades within 1 academic year (May/June 2014 to May/June 2015)

Eligible candidates are requested to contact Mr. Shahir Hasan Khan at The Daily Star office, 64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215, with their original Result Certificates and a photocopy, and 2 (two) passport-size photographs in person on 25, 26 or 27 January, 2016, between 12:00 noon and 5:00 pm.

Schools: Any school that has students meeting the above criteria but has not been contacted by The Daily Star (i.e. has not been informed of the first scheduled meeting through regular post, email or phone) is requested to contact Mr. Shahir Hasan Khan at The Daily Star office (64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215), on the aforementioned dates and times or email him at o.alevel.tds@gmail.com by 28th January, 2016, with:

- The name of the school, phone number of a responsible representative and a valid email address that is checked regularly.

The schools are also requested to promptly prepare a list of the candidates meeting the above criteria, the number of 'A' grades achieved by each candidate, and photocopies of results certificates for each candidate.

No registration will be allowed or accepted after 5:00 pm of 28th January, 2016.

NOTE: If you know of any private candidate(s) or school(s) that may be unaware of this, please communicate the above information to them so that we may include them in this ceremony as well.

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