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NEWS BRIEFS

Ghali formally appointed

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 3: Boutros Boutros Ghali, Egypt's Deputy Prime Minister, was formally appointed by the UN General Assembly today to be Secretary-General of the United Nations for a five-year term beginning on January 1. The 69-year-old Ghali will succeed Javier Perez De Cuellar of Peru who completes his second five-year term at the helm of the world organisation on December 31, reports Reuter.

Hasina's return may be delayed

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina may have to delay her return from Brunei where the condition of her brother-in-law, Dr Shafiq Siddique, continued to be critical, reports UNB.

BCL leader arrested

Police Tuesday arrested a student leader wanted in many criminal cases, Tofael Hossain Josef, Vice-President of pro-Awami League Chhatra League (A-A) Mohammadpur thana unit, was caught by a group of youths near the Central Jail and handed over to Lalbag police. Later he was transferred to Mohammadpur police, reports UNB.

Kenya to go for pluralism

NAIROBI, Dec 3: Thousands of ruling party members shouted their approval for the reintroduction of political pluralism in Kenya on Tuesday after an emotional appeal from President Daniel Arap Moi. The 3,600 delegates to the party's General Assembly cheered Moi wildly when he asked them to ratify a resolution calling on Parliament to repeal a 1982 constitutional amendment that officially made Kenya a one-party state, reports AP.

Major political parties meet, pledge support to Govt action

Seven-point resolution to curb campus terrorism

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of all the major political parties of the country Tuesday adopted a seven-point resolution aiming at eliminating campus violence and ensuring a congenial academic atmosphere in the educational institutions.

The nearly five-hour-long meeting at the International Conference Centre was held at the invitation of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

In the resolution, all the political parties attending the meeting pledged to give total support to governments' any legal step against illegal arms holders and not to shelter

them.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Awami League leaders Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP and Tofael Ahmed MP, Maulana Matur Rahman Nizam MP of Jamaat-e-Islami, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik of Patriotic Democratic Front (PDF), Shajahan Siraj MP of JSD (Straj), Rashed Khan Menon MP of Workers Party, Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury MP and Anwar Zahid of NDP, Hasanul Haq Inu and Kazi Aref Ahmed of JSD (Inu), Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan of BSD, Nurul Islam Nahid of CPB, Tipu Biswas of UCL, Dilip

Barua of Samyabadi Dal, ANM Yusuf of Muslim League, Alhaj Abdus Samad of Gana Azadi League, Nirmal Sen of Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal and Pankaj Bhattacharya of NAP.

Ruling BNP leaders Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, Majid-ul-Haq, Oli Ahmed, M Saifur Rahman, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Prof Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Barrister Nazmul Huda, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Tariqul Islam and Zahiruddin Khan were present.

The meeting adopted the

following resolutions:-

1. As student politics is not isolated from the mainstream of politics, the student organisations are asked to give up terrorism from their activities once for all.

2. To resist with all might any attempt by terrorist elements in future.

3. To maintain absolute neutrality by the government, administration and law enforcing agencies in taking stern action against all acts of terrorism irrespective of party and group identity, in accordance with the principle of rule of

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over a meeting of all major political parties on the campus violence. — PID photo

ME talks without Israel today

WASHINGTON, Dec 3: The Bush administration overcame an obstacle with Palestinian Arabs Monday but confronted the possibility of the Mideast peace talks resuming tomorrow (Wednesday) without Israel.

Despite expressions of confidence by US officials that an Israeli delegation would show up, Israeli sources said their representatives would not arrive until the end of the week, thereby sticking to Israel's insistence that the negotiations be delayed until next Monday.

"There will be no Israeli delegation before then, low-level or other wise," said the sources, insisting on an anonymity.

In the midst of the mixed signals, US officials said the talks probably would be held at the State Department.

The main issues to be negotiated include self-rule for Palestinians who live under

Israeli control, the Arabs refused to accept a Jewish state in the region and Israel's retention of lands captured from Syria, Egypt and Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day war.

Israel's Cabinet on Sunday demanded that the talks be delayed until next Monday to give Israel's negotiators more time to prepare.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, trying to justify Israel's absence from talks in Washington, said the Arabs are still trying to avoid direct negotiations with the Jewish state.

He also launched a veiled attack against the United States for setting the date for the peace talks without allowing the parties to the conflict to work it out among themselves.

"As long as the Arabs and even some of our friends make the mistake of thinking it is possible to avoid direct nego-

tiations between us and our Arab neighbours, there will be no peace and no settlement," Shamir said Monday.

"Any attempt to bring us to an international conference, under one disguise or another, will not work. Any international player who thinks he can impose his will cannot play a role in direct and free negotiations," Shamir said at a dinner for Spain's Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, Arab delegations began arriving Tuesday for Middle East peace talks and challenged Israel to show up on schedule for Wednesday's opening round.

"We shall wait for them. We are serious about making peace," said Hidar Abdelshafi, leader of the Palestinian portion of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation that flew into Dulles International Airport shortly before dawn.

20 injured in clash at Adarsha College

By Staff Correspondent

At least 20 persons were injured in an armed clash between rival groups at the Adarsha College in the city Tuesday afternoon.

Witnesses said the clash ensued when a group of outsiders tried to enter the college campus where a cultural function was being held at around 4 pm.

As the clash spread, students allegedly from a nearby college also joined in the fighting. Several rounds of gunshots were fired and over 30 crackers were exploded during the clash which lasted

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Three of the students injured in clash at Adarsha College yesterday. — Star photo

WB meets today to give 'final say' on Jamuna bridge

The World Bank is likely to spell out its final position on financing the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge at a meeting today in Washington, reports UNB.

Highly placed official sources said the bridge would be the main agenda of Wednesday's World Bank board meeting which may give its 'final say' on the project.

In the wake of the decisive meeting, the government is learnt to be optimistic about go-ahead from the Bank as the latest recalculated ERR (Economic Rate of Return) from the 500 million-dollar Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project has been found to be much higher than earlier estimates.

The crucial meeting will evaluate the findings of the World Bank mission that visited Bangladesh Sept 25- Oct 12 to collect data on economic return from the bridge compared to that from improved ferry service and update the project cost in current prices.

Government's latest assessment, which found the ERR much above the WB rating, will also come up at the meeting for a comparative evaluation, sources said.

Both foreign consultants' calculations and that of the government, done in last October, have found a road-cum-powerline bridge much more viable than an improved ferry service across the major river Jamuna.

The economic analysis by the government on the basis of same parameters as of World

Bank found the ERR 19-24 percent which, according to officials, is much above the minimum acceptable rate or return for undertaking any project in Bangladesh.

Another internal study, conducted recently has reportedly revealed in the 1989 World Bank report a major 'underestimation' of the freight forecast across the proposed bridge.

Also calculated by the government that additional food output and reduction in transport and power sector costs due to the impact of the Jamuna bridge would generate savings to the tune of 21 million US dollar a year in the country's balance of payment account.

The recalculations of the economic viability of the project, which have already been sent to the World Bank, 'tremendously' brightened its prospect, said an authoritative official.

In recent months, the government could successfully convince the Bank and other prospective donors about its political compulsion regarding the project as well as its financial capability to provide the matching local fund.

From special surcharges imposed to mobilise the matching fund, the government has so far raised more than Tk 400 crore.

The World Bank has always been questioning the feasibility of the gigantic project and suggesting the government to defer its implementation at

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Transport strike hits S-N districts hard

By Staff Correspondent

Passenger bus services continued to be severely disrupted in the Southern and Northern districts as the nationwide strike by transport workers entered the third consecutive day Tuesday.

According to Bangladesh Sharak Paribahan Samity (owners) and Bangladesh Sharak Paribahan Sramik Union was reached in a meeting at the Naya Paltan office of the samity.

According to Abdul Khaleque, General Secretary of the union, an agreement was reached on issuance of appointment letters and on the rate of payment to the workers. The owners agreed to pay the workers at the same rate as before the issuance of the appointment letters," he added.

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20 injured as cops clash at Ctg Home Minister warns of stern action

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 3: At least 20 persons were injured as a section of constables at the Dampara Police Line staged demonstrations that began in the early hours of today to protest reported discrepancy in their pay structure.

About 30 police and private vehicles around the barracks were damaged as the constables went on the rampage over half a kilometre area between the WASA turning point and the GEC factory crossing point, witnesses said.

The trouble began at 1 am when a group of constables

from one of the four barracks at the Police Line came out to demonstrate and force their colleagues to join them.

A scuffle broke out when some of the constables refused to join the demonstration. Police sources said about 20 persons were injured during the clash. Five of the injured were admitted to the Chittagong police hospital.

Panic gripped the area as the violence continued for several hours.

Senior police officials rushed to the post along with a contingent of the Armed

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Japanese lower house okays sending troops abroad

TOKYO, Dec 3: Parliament's lower house on Tuesday passed a landmark measure allowing Japanese ground forces to be deployed abroad for the first time since World War II as part of United Nations peacekeeping operations, reports UNB.

The bill — the governing Liberal Democratic Party's answer to criticism that Japan needs to play a bigger role in international affairs — still must win approval in the upper house, where its opponents plan to delay a final vote.

The Liberal Democrats and the Clean Government Party, the only opposition party that

supports the bill, have enough seats in the upper house to win approval, but it was unclear whether a vote could be taken before the end of Parliament's current session, scheduled Dec 10.

The bill passed the lower house by a 311-167 vote. Voting on the legislation was peaceful, unlike a committee meeting last week that erupted in a brawl when the Liberal Democrats rammed the bill through over opposition objections.

After the vote, more than 3,000 demonstrators held peaceful rallies against the bill

in several parks in central Tokyo, police said.

Meanwhile, South Korea voiced concern over the passage of the bill. The South Korean Foreign Ministry called on Japan to use "prudence in sending its troops overseas because of the unfortunate experiences of the neighbouring countries with Japan."

The Korean peninsula was under harsh Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945.

President Bush says in a proclamation marking the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor that the Japanese attack will never be forgotten.

but today "Japan stands second to none as our ally and friend."

The proclamation released in Washington Monday by the White House declares the anniversary next Saturday a day of prayer for the 400,000 Americans who died in World War II. The document designating Dec 7 as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day was signed last Friday at Camp David, Md., the presidential retreat outside Washington, the White House said.

The president said the lessons American learned from the war "and our continuing vigilance and resolve in the

defense of freedom have helped to bring about the triumph of democratic ideals around the globe.

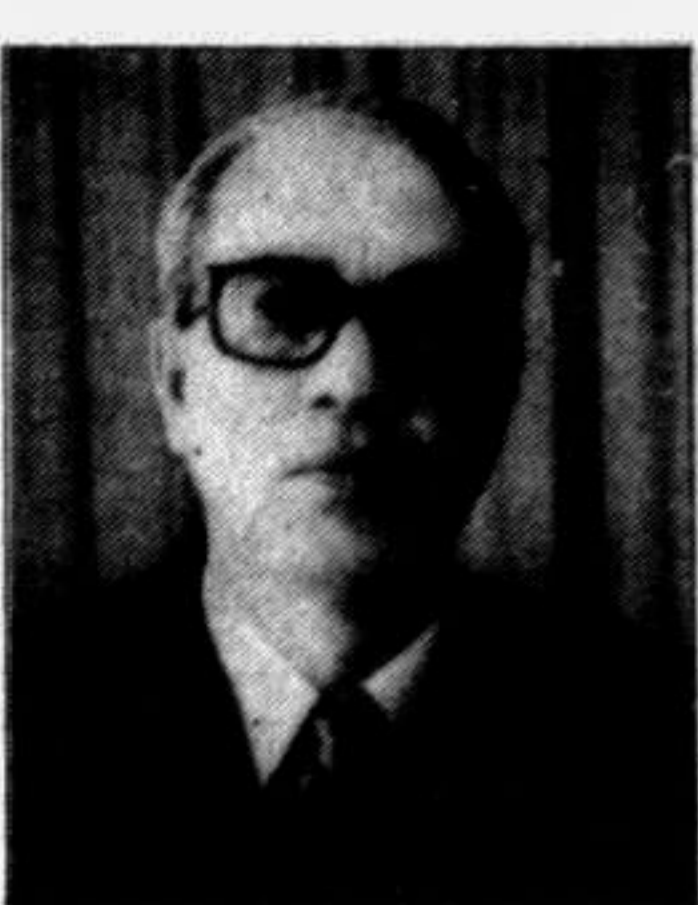
"As we mark the 50th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, let us remember in prayer all those who died on that day and throughout World War II," Bush said.

He also called for Americans to honour living veterans of the conflict, "especially the infirm and the hospitalized" and to "give thanks for the great blessings of freedom our World War II veterans helped to secure."

1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, left more than 2,400 dead, while Japanese strikes on US installations in Guam, the Philippines and elsewhere in the Pacific that same day "left a similar trail of death and destruction."

A solid majority of Japanese surveyed believe US-Japanese relations are friendly and will stay about the same during the next few years, according to poll results published Tuesday.

Most of those surveyed believe Japan will surpass the United States as the world's No 1 economic power in the next century.



Justice BA Siddiky dead

By Staff Correspondent

Justice BA Siddiky died Tuesday at the Holy Family Hospital following protracted illness. He was 77.

He was suffering from diabetes, asthma and other old age ailments.

A former Chief Justice of the then East Pakistan, Justice Siddiky held many important posts home and abroad. While Chief Justice, he refused to administer oath of office to Gen Tikka Khan the then governor of East Pakistan in 1971. He was also the President of a faction of Bangladesh Muslim League.

He was a former permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nation, Chairman of Bangladesh Red Cross Society (now Red Crescent Society), Vice-Chairman of the Geneva-based International League of Red Cross and the Red-Crescent Society.

He was also the Attorney General in the then East Pakistan.

On hearing the news of his death, a large number of people and relatives went to the

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Bimal Mitra dead

CALCUTTA, Dec 3: Bimal Mitra, one of the most prominent among the country's litterateurs and a leading figure in the Bengali literary sphere, died of a massive heart attack in a city nursing home yesterday, reports PTI.

He was 80 and is survived by his wife, a son and daughter. Born in this city, which he loved and lived all his life, in 1912, Mitra began his career as a railway employee.

His first novel 'Chhai' (ash) was published in 1943. But it was the runaway success of this next novel 'Sahib Bibi Gulam' in 1950 which decided his fate and he quit his job. The novel was filmed later in both Bengali and Hindi and Mitra emerged as one of the most influential writers of the country in the post Rabindranath-Sarat Chandra age.

In the years that followed,

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Shyamoli to be produced before court today

By Staff Correspondent

Mary Janet Shyamoli will be produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court today as police interrogation is over, said Tejgaon police.

Shyamoli was arrested on Sunday under Section 54 of Criminal Penal Code in connection with the unnatural death Friday of Hafez Mukhter Hossain, Chairman of now defunct Narayanganj Sadar upazila and taken on five days police remand on the same day. The remand period has been shortened as the interrogation is over, police said. During interrogations, Shyamoli "remained firm on what she said earlier," police said.

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Attack on Ctg Mayor

CHITTAGONG, Dec 3: A group of unruly youths today attacked Chittagong City Corporation mayor Mir M Nasir Uddin while he was visiting the Chittagong Medical College Hospital, reports BSS.

The mayor, however, was not hurt.

Mir Nasir Uddin said that the unruly youths being envious of his success as a mayor tried to kill him. He, however, did not identify the attackers. The youths, who threw stones at the mayor, also damaged his car parked in front of the hospital. He went to see a leader of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) who has been under treatment in the hospital.