

Algerians vote to bury one-party rule

ALGIERS, Dec 26: Algerians went to the polls Thursday in the nation's first free parliamentary elections, which could end three decades of one-party, socialist rule and bring Muslim fundamentalists to power, reports AP.

The Interior Ministry reported a 32.5 per cent voter turnout seven hours after voting began at 8 am (0700 GMT). The polls were to close at 7 pm (1800 GMT).

Preliminary results were expected early Friday morning. "If the day ends as it began, Algeria truly enters the era of applied democracy," Deputy Interior Minister Abdelmajid Tebou said.

But the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front charged that voting irregularities were apparent in four cities, including Algiers. It did not elaborate.

Voters faced a dizzying array — 49 parties and 5,712 candidates — vying for the 430 seats in an expanded National People's Assembly.

Police were posted discreetly on streets in the capi-

tal and near polling stations. Many did not carry weapons.

Authorities allowed party candidates and observers to oversee balloting at the more than 32,000 voting stations around the country. Ballot boxes were clear.

The two leading parties are the National Liberation Front, or FLN, which has ruled this North African nation since independence from France in 1962, and the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front.

The Salvation Front, which appeals to the poor and seeks to institute Islamic law, easily won the June 1990 regional elections. The Salvation Front's interim leader, Abdelkader Hachani, has predicted it will take 70 per cent of Thursday's vote.

The governing party holds all 295 seats in the current Parliament.

Premier Sid Ahmed Ghazali, leading a transition government overseeing the elections, predicted last week that no party would win a majority in the first round. He expected frenzied negotiations for alliances before the second round.



President Gorbachev reading his resignation statement shortly before appearing on TV in Moscow to announce his decision on Wednesday. — AFP photo

Mujahideen to free 3 Red Army soldiers

ISLAMABAD, Dec 26: Afghan guerrillas said Thursday they would free three Red Army soldiers held for as long as seven years, but said it may be weeks before they can return to their homes in Uzbekistan, reports AP.

Rebel leader Burhanuddin Rabbani said the three would be handed over after the guerrillas and the new Commonwealth of Independent States formed a committee to negotiate the transfer.

"We're hopeful it won't take too long," Rabbani said at a news conference. Meanwhile, he said, they will remain in the rugged mountains bordering Pakistan.

Hartal in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Dec 26: A half-day hartal called by local Awami League, was observed today (Thursday) in Melandah upazila of the district to press for distribution of relief materials among the flood victims and river erosion homeless, reports UNB.

A dawn-to-dusk hartal was also observed yesterday (Wednesday) in the upazila headquarters for the same reason.

During the hartal period the protesters gheraoed the UNO's office today demanding relief materials.

Delhi recognises 12 republics

NEW DELHI, Dec 26: India on Thursday recognized all the 12 republics of the former Soviet Union, including Georgia, where opposition forces are combating to oust President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, reports AP.

Foreign Secretary J N Dixit told reporters that in keeping with Indian intention "formal recognition is being accorded to Russian Federation and other republics."

The decision was taken by Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, Dixit, the top bureaucrat in the ministry, said.

"Communications to this effect are in the process of going to the presidents of the republics," Dixit said.

He said diplomatic missions in four of the republics — Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Byelorussia — will be set up soon, besides the existing one in Moscow. He did not give a time frame.

India also has "taken note of the fact that Russia has assumed the successor role" to the Soviet Union, he said without elaborating.

India enjoyed vast trade relations with the defunct Soviet Union and also has a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union which calls for military help in the event of aggression.

The ministry and departments in the government are in the final stages of preparing plans for defence, economic and technological interactions with these republics, Dixit said.

Workers block highway near Tongi

GAZIPUR, Dec 26: The Dhaka-Mymensingh highway was blocked for two hours and a number of buses and trucks were damaged by angry workers in Tongi when a local textile mill worker died after being struck by a speeding bus this morning.

Rafiqullah (25), an employee of the Meghna Textile Mill, was seriously injured after a Dhaka-bound bus hit him near the Tongi Station Road at around 11:15 am. He later succumbed to his injuries at the Tongi Hospital.

Angry workers in the area barricaded the highway and damaged about 50 buses and trucks, witnesses said.

Troops overreacted to protests in Timor

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Dec 26: An investigative commission said Thursday that Indonesian troops overreacted to anti-Indonesian protests in East Timor, and the resulting death toll was higher than the 19 acknowledged by the government, reports AP.

The commission's preliminary report on bloodshed Nov 12 in the East Timor capital of Dili said about 50 people died and 90 were missing — possibly dead, injured or hiding in the jungles.

After more than two weeks of investigations, the commission reported to President Suharto that troops initially fired in self-defence against demonstrators protesting Indonesian rule in East Timor, a Portuguese colony annexed by Indonesia in 1976. It said an officer had been stabbed and another soldier injured.

But, it said, "the actions of a number of security forces have gone beyond what was necessary, claiming many victims, including those killed, wounded and injured." It said troops did not follow proper

procedures for handling a demonstration.

The commission called for lawful punishment of any violations found in connection with the Nov 12 bloodshed.

The report also said the armed forces failed to give victims' families enough time to identify the dead so that they were buried without being identified.

Human rights groups and foreign witnesses have said more than 100 people died in the Nov 12 violence.

"The commission has strong reason to conclude that the death toll is about 50, with 91 injuries," said M Djaciani, who headed the commission of senior officials from the Supreme Court, the departments of justice, foreign affairs, defence and interior, the attorney general's office and parliament.

Djaciani earlier had accepted the government's figure of 19 dead and 91 injured. Suharto appointed the commission on Nov 19 under heavy international pressure.

BADC employees

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The Employees Union (CBA) gheraoed the head office of the BADC at about 11 am and continued to hold it till 4.30 pm.

It also held a rally in front of the office of the Chairman of BADC, where the CBA leaders said the recent decision of the government regarding Barind Development Project had gone against the national interest and demanded its immediate cancellation.

The CBA leaders said the foreign donor agencies had influenced the government into privatizing almost all the service sectors under the corporation, including irrigation and distribution of fertilizers, as part of the 'intrigue' to make Bangladesh dependent on them for food. The rally

PM: Youth

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Increasing participation of youths in all our development programmes," she said.

Begum Zia said the present government would give momentum to the national development efforts by turning the individual merit and creativity of youths into collective strength.

The Prime Minister said the youths had to take spade in their hands for digging canals and they had to work ceaselessly for eradicating illiteracy.

Begum Zia said the youth force had a glorious past. The nation would always remember the role of youths in the war of independence and language movement.

The Prime Minister said the autocrats wanted to destroy the youths to have a firm root in the social structure. They took long term planning to cause moral erosion among the youths who were the driving force of the democratic movements and constant threat to autocrats.

Begum Zia regretted that a very small portion of youth population was trying to create discipline in the social life. This situation, she said, was the creation of the autocrats.

The Prime Minister said cooperation from all levels of the society was necessary to solve this problem.

She said the government had taken several administrative steps to stop anarchic activities.

The Prime Minister said the government would try to provide a piece of land to the JCI to enable it to work more effectively to the welfare of the people.

Later, Begum Zia distributed medals for life membership of Jaycees to the recipients.

Plea for withdrawal of hartal in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Dec 26: Leaders of different social and professional organisations here today called for the withdrawal of December 31 hartal call given by Greater Chittagong Development Mass Action Committee, reports BSS.

They said that Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) had launched a massive development project for overall development of the city and as such there was no justification for observing hartal demanding development.

Two hundred and twenty lawyers of Chittagong in a joint statement said the people should cooperate with the CCC in executing the uplift projects involving crores of Taka. "We do not find any justification for observing hartal when development works are going on in full swing in the city," they said. The signatories to the statement were, among others, Advocates Mohammad Kabir Chowdhury, Mohammad Saleh Zanoor and Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad.

Meanwhile, Advocate Abu Saleh Chowdhury and Alhaj M A Rahim, President and General Secretary respectively of the Chittagong district south chapter of Bangladesh Nationalist Party in a statement condemned the hartal call in the name of development saying people of all walks of life should extend their whole hearted cooperation to various development works already undertaken by the CCC.

Advocate Shahabuddin Faiz and Advocate Fazal Amin Chowdhury, convenor and member secretary respectively of Chittagong district lawyers' chapter of Zia Parishad expressed grave concern over the hartal call which, they said, would harm people's interests in many ways.

They urged the sponsors of the hartal to refrain from such harmful activities.

MP manhandled in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Dec 26: A parliament member and an upazila official were manhandled allegedly by JCD activists for not cooperating in enlisting their friends as contractors, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the attackers first gheraoed the office of upazila engineer Mohammad Mujibur Rahman in Boalkhali at 2.30 pm and beat him and his peon after he refused to accept their requests.

On hearing the news, Parliament Member (BNP) of Chittagong-10 Sirajul Islam rushed to the spot but he too was manhandled by the same group at about 4 pm.

Rain disrupts normal life in Jamalpur

Normal life was disrupted in the district due to incessant rainfall accompanied by cold wave for the second consecutive day today, reports UNB.

On Wednesday, some thatched houses were damaged and many trees uprooted by gusty winds accompanied by torrential showers that swept over almost all the upazilas of the district.

People were compelled to remain indoors for foggy weather with clouds and downpour. The poor, specially the day labourers, suffered badly due to the shivering cold and drizzle.

The untimely rain caused extensive damage to seasonal crops of mustard, potato, chilli and onion on 20,000 acres of land, local Agriculture Extension Department sources said.

About 1,20,000 acres of land were brought under seasonal crops cultivation in the district this year.

Russia

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envisaged inflation. Experts said due to the introduction of free market economy, deregulation of pricing system and other banking and monetary measures, inflation is likely to hit the Russian economy. Sources said the foreign students may experience a bitter effect on their buying capacity.

Diplomatic sources said although the Russian government will opt for market economy, it will still control the prices of essential commodities in view of the possible inflation. A meeting of all the republics, to be convened on December 30 will discuss in depth all the arenas of financial and banking sector.

The final decisions on the major economic issues will be taken in the meeting. Meanwhile, Russian diplomatic sources said that the Russian Embassy will issue visas for the other republics till the new year. Foreign students may now personally contact the universities in all the 12 republics of the now defunct USSR and arrange for studies on a self-financed basis.

Colder days

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number of rikshaws on the city streets was thinner.

The homeless and the slum dwellers were hard hit by the untimely rain, of whom many had to take shelter in safer places.

Dhaka City experienced 33 mm rainfall highest in the country in 12 hours ending 6 pm Thursday and the temperature fell by one degree than the previous day.

Light to moderate rainfall was also recorded in 21 other districts in 24 hours ending 6 pm Thursday in Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna Division.

The Midnight File

70 feared drowned in Malda

CALCUTTA, Dec 26: Seventy persons were feared drowned in three major boat disasters in West Bengal's Malda district on Christmas eve and Christmas Day, the DIG (HQ), SIS Ahmed told newsmen here today. Only two bodies were recovered, while a massive search was mounted in the rivers in the district for the others, reports PTI.

New US Commerce Secretary

WASHINGTON, Dec 26: President Bush has chosen a long-time political supporter, businesswoman Barbara Franklin, as secretary of commerce, an administration official said Thursday. As Commerce Secretary, she will be influential on matters of world trade, including the faltering negotiations in the Uruguay round of trade talks, which involve 108 governments, and the prospective North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), reports AP.

Tiwan donates rice to CIS

TAIPEI, Dec 26: Taiwan will donate 100,000 tonnes of rice with an international market value of about 20 million US Dollars to Russia and other members of the former Soviet Union, the Foreign Ministry said today. A ministry spokesman said the rice, from the island's stocks of one million tonnes, would help to ease food shortages as the republics struggled to restructure their economies, reports BSS.

China on Mao's birthday

BEIJING, Dec 26: The anniversary of Mao Zedong's 98th birthday was marked here today with a call for using the late Chinese leader's theories to repel 'reactionary Western forces' trying to subvert Socialism. The day that used to be a virtual national holiday during the Cultural Revolution passed quietly for most Chinese, even though those aged over 30 still have strong memories of the 'Great Helmsman', reports AFP.

Smooth JS session

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Moudud Ahmed and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Matur Rahman Nizami, however, expressed a common desire to make this parliament effective fulfilling the aspiration of the people.

Opposition groups have convened respective parliamentary party meetings January 3-4 for planning action during the winter session beginning January 4. Opposition leaders are also exchanging views informally about possible line of action.

The Deputy Opposition Leader, Samad Azad, suggested that parliamentary standing committees and select committees should properly function so that they could submit reports to the House within stipulated time and help solve different national issues.

In this context, he cited the slow progress of the parliamentary committees on the Indemnity Bill and the bill on separation of the judiciary. He was critical of the ruling party attitude which he termed counteractive to making parliament effective and sovereign in true sense of the term.

Azad was of the view that all national problems could be resolved through discussion but said the recent steps and attitude of the government virtually undermined the sovereignty of present parliament.

"We want to play a positive role in parliament, to face all odds against the democratic process unitedly. We want this government in power but, unfortunately, there is lack of sincerity on the part of ruling party in making parliament accountable."

Replying to a question, Azad said his party would mainly press the government party to resolve the issues of scrapping

the Indemnity Ordinance, terrorism in and outside campuses and economic problems aggravating hardship of the commonman.

Moudud Ahmed said JP parliamentary party would meet soon to discuss its plan for the coming session. JP leaders are talking informally with other opposition groups in this regard.

Jamaat leader Matur Rahman Nizami said his party would initiate a move to press the government to place before the House the caretaker government bill seeking next parliamentary elections under a neutral and caretaker government similar to that of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. The bill was submitted to the Parliament Secretariat during the second session of this parliament.

Nizami said his party wanted an effective parliament and let the need for cooperation between the treasury and opposition benches. "We will always play a constructive role in the House. We don't want to create any deadlock."

Jamaat has, meanwhile, called its parliament party meeting on January 3. The Jamaat Secretary General said his party would raise debate on aggravating law and order and the prevailing economic situation.

Meanwhile, some opposition groups are learnt to be thinking of boycotting President's speech in the inaugural session of parliament in the new year.

But no formal discussion on the question was held either in the Awami League or in the Jatiya Party.

A senior leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, however, ruled out possibility of boycotting the Presidential address.

Dhaka asks Burmese envoy

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the response of Myanmar government is awaited, the spokesman said.

Morale of the Bangladesh people along the border is "very high" and there had been no exodus of "our people from those areas," he added.

Yangoon (Rangoon) government has denied attack on the Bangladesh border post and sought to explain the development by saying that its forces were in hot pursuit of the insurgents like the Myanmar Communist Party (WHITE) and the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF).

But Bangladesh made it plain that border incursion by the Myanmar forces did take place resulting in the killing of a border guard and ammunition had also been taken away from the camp.

The Myanmar ambassador in Dhaka, Soe Myint, was called in the Foreign Ministry last Tuesday and was offered services of a helicopter so that he could visit the place of occurrence and verify the damages inflicted by the Myanmar side in the Bangladesh territory.

"We are still awaiting response to our offer as well as for the proposal of flag meeting," the spokesman said.

Bangladesh Charge d'Affaires in Yangoon also informed Myanmar government Dhaka's views on the recent developments.

The spokesman detailed Bangladesh's reactions to the last Saturday's attack and said security along the border had been strengthened following the development.

He made it clear that Dhaka could not remain indifferent to exodus of the Myanmar Muslims into its territory and once again urged Yangoon to initiate measures to stop such

influx.

Replying to newsmen's queries, he said all necessary steps were continuing from Bangladesh side to facilitate the return of Myanmar refugees to their homes.

The spokesman reiterated Dhaka's policy to settle problems with neighbours through bilateral discussions and added that it remained stuck to this despite the fact that the gravity of the refugee problem was enormous.

Bangladesh had not so far made any hue and cry of the influx for the sake of good neighbourliness and had also seen to it that the border incursion was not blown out of proportions, the spokesman said.

Dhaka-Rangoon meet soon, says Burmese envoy

Bangladesh and Myanmar are expected to meet in near future to resolve all issues including border tension and repatriation of Rohingya Muslims, reports UNB.

This was indicated by the Ambassador of Myanmar in Dhaka on Thursday. He, however, didn't mention any specific date for the meeting.

Responding to a query on the prevailing tense situation along the border, U Soe Myint told UNB both Dhaka and Rangoon were in constant touch for starting negotiation as soon as possible.

"Why do you insist on holding flag meeting, we shall review and discuss all issues," the Ambassador said.

Jessore HSC

From Page 1 Col 7

Government M M College, Jessore, Roll No Jessore-120. He obtained 927 marks and letters in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. All three students are from the Science group.

In the Humanities group, Mohammad Rahibul Islam of Kushtia Government College, Roll No Kushtia-819, stood first securing 826 marks and distinction in Logic, Geography and Statistics. 2. Rubina Khatun, Khulna Government Women's College, Khulna-Ma-220, m-816, Log, Islamic Studies and Psychology. 3. Mohammad Saifur Rahman Talukdar, Barisal Cadet College, Barisal Cadet - 44, m-812, I.S., and Geo. 4. Mohammad Shariful Islam, Kushtia Government College, Kushtia-863, m-811, Log and Stat. 5. Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun, Kushtia Govt College, Kushtia-698, m-810, Log, Geo and Stat. 6. Mohammad Quamruzzaman, Government M M College, Jessore, Jessore-464, m-808, Log and I.S. 7. Mohammad Abdul Jabbar, Kalaroa Government College, Sathkira, Kalaroa-129, m-806, I.S. and Mohammad Aktaruzzaman, Government M M College, Jessore-537, m-806, Geo and I.S. 8. Jakia Akhter, Government Women's College, Jessore, Jessore-Ma-1206, m-804, Log and I.S. 9. Mosammat Asmaul Husna, Kushtia Government College, Kushtia-Ma-955, m-802, Log and Stat and 10. Hassan Khaled Faysal, Barisal Cadet College, Barisal Cadet-43, m-793, Geo.

Sajjad Kabir Mohammad Shariful Alam topped the merit list of the Commerce group. A student of Jessore Cantonment College, Alam got 763 marks and distinction in Accounting, Shorthand and Type Writing. The second position in the Commerce group merit list was secured by Mohammad Taibur Rahman of Kushtia Government College. He got 747 marks and letters in Accounting and Statistics securing Roll No Kushtia-439.

Mohammad Nasiruddin of Azam Khan Government Commerce College Roll No Khulna-756 and Mohammad Anwar Hossain of Jessore Cantonment College, Roll No Jessore-Cant-298 jointly stood third in the Commerce group. Both of them secured 746 marks each. Nasir's distinction is in Statistics while Anwar's is in Shorthand and Type Writing.

The first ten in the merit lists of the three main groups are as follows:

Science

1. Khan Wastuddin Mahmud, Barisal Cadet College, Roll No Barisal Cadet-4, total marks-951, distinction in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Statistics. 2. Parvez Rayhan, Barisal Cadet College, Roll No Barisal Cadet-11, marks-944, dis.- Mathematics, English, Physics, Chemistry and Statistics. 3. Mohammad Quamruzzaman, Government M M College, Jessore, Jessore-120, marks-927, dis.- Math, Phy, Che and Bio. 4. Mohammad Habibul Haque, Jhenidah Cadet College, Jhenidah Cadet-38, marks-921, dis.- Eng, Math, Phy, Che, and Bio. 5. Mohammad Jahid Hossain, Jhenidah Cadet College, Jhenidah Cadet-8, marks-912, dis.- Math, Phy, Che and Stat, and Tapan Kumar Pal, Jessore Cantonment College, Jessore Cant-2, marks-912, dis.- Math, Phy, Che and Bio. 6. Mohammad Hassan Mahmud, Barisal Cadet College, Barisal Cadet-23, marks-909, dis.- Math, Phy, Che and Stat. 7. Tanfis Ishtiaq, Barisal Cadet College, Barisal Cadet-30, marks-901, dis.- Math, Phy, Che and Stat. 8. S M Saiful Islam, Jhenidah Cadet College, Jhenidah Cadet-15, marks-900, dis.- Math, Phy, Che and Stat. 9. Sheikh Muhibur Rahman, Government PC College, Bagerhat, Bagerhat-54, marks-899, dis.- Math, Phy, Che and Bio and 10. M N Momen, Barisal Cadet College, Barisal Cadet-14, marks-893, dis.-

Question leak postpones exam

From Staff Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Dec 26: The Junior Scholarship Examination at the Jhenidah centre was postponed on Thursday because of question leakage, official sources said.

More than 85 per cent of the questions were found short when it was received by examination centre authorities from the treasury of the deputy commissioner.

The District Education Officer came under attack by guardian and the public when the authorities tried to continue the examination by handing out photo-static copies of the question papers.

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