



South Korean President Kim Young Sam decorating Bangladesh Foreign Minister A S M Mostafiz with the Gwanghwamse Medal — the highest ROK honour for diplomatic excellence in Seoul recently. — PID photo

**Mostafiz**

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Korean counterpart, Han Sung Joo, on matters of mutual interest as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

The two countries also signed an agreement of economic and technical cooperation and held the Joint Economic Commission meeting for expansion of economic co-operation during the FM's tour. Bangladesh will receive 14 million US dollars under an agreement signed in Seoul for expansion of electricity supply in greater Khulna.

Rahman, during his stay in Seoul, received an award "Gwanghwamse", the order of diplomatic service, from ROK President for his contribution towards strengthening the cordial ties and friendship between the two countries.

**US team due in Islamabad today**

**Rao concerned at possible move to repeal Pressler Amendment**

NEW DELHI, Dec 12: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao has expressed concern at a possible US move to repeal the Pressler Amendment outlawing aid to Pakistan because of its nuclear programme, reports AFP. Rao conveyed his concern to visiting US republican senators Larry Pressler, the author of the amendment, Thad Cochran and Hank Brown at a meeting here Saturday, officials said today. Rao, 72, voiced Indian fears that the Clinton administration's move to change the US foreign assistance act would amount to a repealing of the Pressler Amendment and boost Pakistan's offensive capability. Washington suspended economic and military assistance to Pakistan in 1990 under the amendment which specifically outlawed aid to Pakistan because of its nuclear programme. President Bill Clinton has said he wants to overhaul the entire system of US foreign aid, laying down broad objectives instead of the often conflicting policy goals of the cold war era.

No country would be specifically targeted for sanctions in the new policy. India's concern was also voiced Saturday by Minister of State for External Affairs Salman Khurshid, who told the US senators that any move to drop the amendment would legitimise Pakistan's alleged clandestine nuclear weapons drive. A resumption of US aid to Islamabad would cause New Delhi to reassess its own defence policy and may result in a destabilisation of the South Asian region, Foreign Ministry officials quoted Khurshid as saying. India, which in 1974 exploded a nuclear device but claims that its nuclear programme is entirely peaceful, and Pakistan have fought three wars since the subcontinent won independence from British rule in 1947. Washington has seen South Asia as a potential nuclear flashpoint because of India-Pakistan tensions, neither is a signatory to the nuclear non-

proliferation treaty. The two countries' foreign secretaries are to meet in Islamabad next month, marking the resumption of a dialogue after a break of more than 15 months. Rao told the US senators that the scheduled talks indicated India's keenness to resolve all disputes with Pakistan. Senators arrived here Saturday on a trip aimed at assessing India-US relations. Meanwhile, the three US lawmakers headed by senator Larry Pressler, the author of legislation Pakistan wants to see repealed, are due in Islamabad Monday on a four-day visit. US embassy sources in Islamabad said. Pressler will hold talks with Pakistani parliamentarians and senior government officials. The US team will discuss trade and economic policies, nuclear non-proliferation, human rights and regional issues, the US sources said. However, Pakistani sources believe the main topic will be the Pressler Law which bans US aid to countries pursuing an unsecured nuclear programme. Former president George Bush in October 1990 invoked the legislation to freeze more than 500 million dollars in economic and military assistance to Pakistan, a traditional US ally during the cold war era. Pakistan admits it has acquired the technical know how to manufacture nuclear bombs, but insists it has no plans to do so.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Haridali High School ground in Paikgachha thana under Khulna district yesterday. — PID photo

**Students have rejected BNP, says Hasina**

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the student community has rejected the BNP government for its 'misrule and corruption', reports UNB. Addressing the newly elected office-bearers of the Bhuapur Ibrahim Khan College at 29 Minto Road, she said wrong and anti-people policy of the government has put national economy on the verge of collapse and pushed the country towards ruination. Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, charged the ruling BNP with indulging in corruption and accused its MPs of plundering the state exchequer under an entente with those of the deposed autocratic regime. Welcoming the Chhatra League victory in the Ibrahim Khan University College at Bhuapur in Tangail, Hasina said the victory of her party's student wings in different college union elections proved that the student community had rejected the ruling quarter.

**Instructions for Kuwait returnees**

The government urged all the Kuwait-returned Bangladeshis not to be confused by any misleading information regarding their compensation by the United Nations Compensation Commission, reports UNB. The government is in constant contact with the Commission and will make all necessary arrangement to publicise all information, if any development, on the issue, said an official handout last night. The application forms, received from the Kuwait returnees, have already been sent to the commission office through Geneva High Commission of Bangladesh, the handout said.

**Foreign Secy**

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Foreign Secretary today, Rahman said, the cardinal principle pursued by Dhaka in its foreign policy was guided by the policy of friendship with all and malice towards none. Speaking generally, Rahman said that for a nation like Bangladesh with a large population and scant resources, "pursuing a strong and independent foreign policy was a challenging and daunting task, but we have performed remarkably well."

**Martyred**

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Different political parties and socio-cultural organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes. The programmes include hoisting of black flags, wearing black badges, laying wreaths at the Mirpur Smriti Soudha and offering feteha there, milad mahfils and discussions. BNP leaders and workers will assemble at the party's central office at 8 am, and offer feteha at Mirpur Smriti Soudha at 8:30 am. A discussion will be held at Ramna Batamul at 3 pm under the auspices of Jatyaatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (JASAS). Awami League will pay homage to the martyred intellectuals by hoisting of national and party flags at half mast and black flags at the party central office, Bangabandhu Bhaban and party offices all over the country. The Awami League programme for the day also includes placing of wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and rally at Bangabandhu Bhaban at 7:30 am, and placing of wreath at Mirpur Smriti Soudha at 8 am. Shilpakala Academy will place wreaths at Mirpur at 8 am. The Academy will hold a discussion on the martyred intellectuals at its auditorium at 6 pm. National Professor Muhammad Shamsul Haq will be the chief guest. Bangladesh Shishu Academy will hold a painting competition on Liberation War on December 15 at the academy premises at 10 am.

**Minister resents**

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Sangsada, the minister said. "So, the accusation against the government of being insincere is irrelevant," he commented. The bill was moved by Awami League MP Salahuddin Yusuf two years ago. A special parliamentary committee, headed by Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, had been formed to scrutinise the bill. The report of that committee, containing a split opinion, is now due to be presented before the House during the next session of Parliament.

**PM: Opposition**

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"But we are now producing everything. Now we do not import many things and are even thinking about export." The Prime Minister also said the autocratic regime had harassed the farmers with certificate cases and loan burden, but the present government first waived agricultural credit upto Tk 5,000 and land tax up to 25 bighas. It also withdrew certificate cases. "We are implementing all our election commitments one after another." From now on the government will only assist while the people will be the owners of mills and factories," she said and called upon all to avail of the opportunity being offered by the government. Pointing out the baneful impact of shutdown and blockades, the Prime Minister said foreign investors felt shy to invest in Bangladesh because of the political unrest caused by frequent hartals, the damaging of vehicles and destruction of public property. Due to the correct measures taken by the BNP government, she said, the country has almost achieved food autarky, and "we are even planning to export rice." The people have started reaping the benefits for having voted for the 'sheaf of paddy', her party's election symbol, she said. Begum Zia said the people had fought for independence to get democracy and achieve economic emancipation, but their dreams could not be materialised because the post-Liberation government was busy aggrandising its own interests ignoring people's welfare. "Now democracy has been established and an elected government is in power. Let's work together to realise the dreams of the people and achieve overall development of the country." Begum Zia informed that the government was going to introduce a new technology in shrimp culture and use green jute as raw material in paper mills. Some tourism centres will also be built in the Sundarbans area to attract tourists. Earlier at noon, the Prime Minister also addressed a big public meeting in the remote Bagall union parishad field in Koira thana, 60 miles from Khulna city. The union is one of the most underdeveloped areas of the country. Begum Zia was the first head of government to visit Bagall union in its 200 year-history, local people said. At the news of the MP's trip to the sleepy locality, people from adjoining unions and thanas streamed in over the past two to three days and took shelter in their relatives' houses. On arrival, Begum Zia first inaugurated the electrification programme in the union by switching on a light in the remote area. Begum Zia assured her audience that all villages of the thana would come under electricity supply within a few months.

**Prokrichi-govt talks**

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Mia, Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Commerce Minister Shamsul Islam. The Communications Minister returned home Sunday from a trip to Malaysia. The dispute between the government and the professionals revolves round the question of equal status for all district officials, which is one of the four points in the charter of demands earlier accepted by the government. When asked why the government had backed out from its earlier position, the minister said that the special cabinet committee had, meanwhile, examined whether the status of all district officials in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka was equal or not. "We have found out that the status of the officials in those countries is not equal," he commented. Leaders of the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council, however, said they were ready to talk with the government. "The problem is that the government always backs out from its position," said A.N.H. Akhter Hussain, a central committee member of the Action Council. "Why does a government decision change with the change of a minister?" he asked. Javed Iqbal, General Secretary of the Krishbid Institution of the Agriculturists, commented: "We hope all the ministers would respect the commitment made by the Prime Minister."

The government, in a dialogue with the leaders of the Prokrichi-BCS Council on April 15 last, had agreed in principle to accept four of their 17 demands. Meanwhile, a holiday mood prevailed in different public and autonomous offices yesterday, the second day of the three-day mass leave campaign. Except emergency services like power, gas, customs and port and harbour operation, no member of the professional groups joined their duties. Some of the offices, which are completely technical in their nature, looked deserted during the office hours. Attendance in the Roads and Highways Department, the Telephone and Telegraph Department, the Dhaka Electric Power Supply office, RAJUK, the Water Development Board, the Power Development Board, the Public Works Department, the Bangladesh Agriculture Re-

search Council, the Agricultural Research Institute, the Rice Research Institute, the Fish Research Institute, the Livestock Research Institute at Savar was very thin. The sufferings of the patients at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, PG Hospital, and the Sir Salmullah Medical College Hospital mounted with the doctors having gone on leave. Only the emergency medical cases were given attention by special medical squads, reported our DMCH and SSMC correspondents. No surgeries were done in these hospitals. Many patients were seen leaving the hospitals. Leaders of the Bangladesh Medical Association claimed that their programme was being observed in all the hospitals and clinics across the country. The Action Council leaders yesterday held a meeting at the Institution of Engineers to discuss their on-going mass leave movement. The meeting termed the comments about the judiciary made by the Chief Justice Saturday 'significant' and observed that the Prokrichi and the BCS Council held similar views on the need for separation of the judiciary from the administration.

The meeting also observed that vested interests in the administration were engaged in hatching conspiracies against the on-going struggle of the professionals. Meanwhile, the leaders of the BCS General Education Associations yesterday expressed their solidarity with the on-going programme of the members of the Prokrichi and BCS Central Action Council. In a statement, Dr QATM Habibur Rahman and M Abu Yusuf, president and general secretary respectively of the association, contradicted a news report published in a section of newspapers and said the government college teachers were involved in the struggle of the professionals.

**The Midnight File**

**Indian troops kill 5 Kashmiris**

JAMMU, Dec 12: Indian troops shot and killed five suspected Kashmiri Muslim guerrillas Sunday in an operation to capture militants from a village, police said. The guerrillas were killed during a gunbattle with soldiers who had cordoned off Keshwani, a mountainous village of Jammu-Kashmir state. The village is about 230 kilometres (143 miles) northwest of Jammu, the state's winter capital, reports AP.

**12 die as trains collide in Cairo**

CAIRO, Dec 12: At least 12 people were killed and 85 injured when two trains collided north of Cairo early today, security sources said. They said a mistake by a railway traffic controller is believed to have caused the collision between a passenger train and a goods train at Zifta Station, 97 km (60 miles) north of Cairo, reports Reuter.

**Low turnout in Russian polls**

MOSCOW, Dec 12: Two years after the fall of the Soviet Union, Russians voted Sunday on a new constitution and Parliament, but many appeared to ignore President Boris Yeltsin's plea for a strong endorsement of reform, reports AP. Turnout was so low that it threatened to make the vote on the constitution invalid and leave Yeltsin in a legal vacuum, with no rules to guide the new Parliament and no solution in his question for stronger, clearer presidential powers. The result would not be an immediate crisis, but a continuation of Russia's political instability. The most likely course would be for the new parliament itself to revise and adopt the draft constitution, at least as a temporary charter. Yeltsin, voting with his wife, Naina, at a polling station near their Moscow apartment, told reporters, he was optimistic.

**3 killed in mishaps**

By DMCH Correspondent  
Two persons were killed by speeding trucks in the city yesterday while another teen-aged boy was run over by a running train at Pagla level crossing in Narayanganj. A motorbike rider was killed when he was knocked down by a speeding truck at Pallabi, Mirpur early Sunday. The victim was identified as Mahmud, 33. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead. In another incident, an unknown pedestrian was killed when a speeding truck knocked him down in front of the Modhumita Cinema Hall in the city in the morning. The victim aged about 22 died on the way to the DMCH. In Narayanganj, a 15-year old boy, Mohammed Jahangir Hossain, was killed when a running train ran over him at Pagla level crossing in Narayanganj at about 11:30 am Saturday. The victim was admitted to the DMCH where he died early Sunday.

**Housewife dies unnatural death in Uttara**

By Staff Correspondent  
The wife of a retired army officer reportedly committed suicide following a family quarrel at her Uttara residence on Saturday. Sabiha Khaled (37), wife of retired Major Khaled Akhter, was declared dead by doctors at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) late Saturday where she was taken there in a critical condition. Major Khaled filed an unnatural death case with the police Sunday morning in which he said his wife had left the house on December 4 after an altercation with him. However, Khaled did not inform the police about the disappearance of his wife for six days. An Art College student and Khaled's neighbour, Raju reportedly left the victim in an unconscious state in front of her house at around 6-45 pm Saturday, a thana official said, quoting the written statement filed with Uttara thana by the deceased's husband. She was immediately rushed to the CMH where the doctors pronounced her dead. The police have started an investigation into the case and interrogated a number of people in the area. No one was arrested or taken to the police station till the writing of this report late Sunday night.

**One killed, 50 hurt in Sitakundu**

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Dec 12: A tragic road mishap this evening left a minor girl killed and at least 50 other injured at Sitakundu, 25 miles from the city. Police said, a four year old girl died on the spot when a Chittagong bound passenger bus from Dhaka collided head on with a speedy truck on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at around 8 pm.

**Defaulters**

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yet to be announced. Sources said, in addition, people owing arrear municipal taxes, rates and fees would also be deemed unfit for contesting the post of mayor or commissioner. Also, a candidate must prove that he or she is not insolvent.

**FWP budget**

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the schemes approved by the district coordination committees until 30 November while 31 January next has been fixed as the last date for beginning the implementation work. The FWP was introduced in 1974 for generating employment for the rural poor during the dry season by utilising foodgrain donated by the World Food Programme (WFP) and other countries. Afterwards, the government also arranged food from its own resources for the programme which spread successfully all over the country. "Under the FWP, earth works such as construction and reconstruction of roads and embankments, canal digging and other development works are being done every year. During the last fiscal year, 6805 schemes were implemented under the FWP utilising 527,000 tonnes of wheat. The Relief Ministry has also allocated 330,000 tonnes of wheat for this fiscal year's Test Relief, VGD programme and other relief activities.

**Taka**

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General of BIMB A H M Nurul Islam Chowdhury, Deputy Governor, BB, Kamaluddin Ahmed, the chief of the Financial Sector Reform Project Patrick Vath and managing directors of private commercial banks, among others, were present on the occasion. Maintaining that convertibility is a means for the exchange of currencies for international transactions, the central bank governor said: "We made our Taka convertible only for current account transactions now. Unlike other neighbouring countries, Bangladesh is proceeding correctly towards full convertibility, which means we will ultimately make the Taka convertible for the current and capital accounts."

**Municipal dev**

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Further delay is likely and this will push commencement of construction beyond the current dry season and further compound implementation problem. These will also be delay in allocation of housing plots in Kaiballyadham in Chittagong, developed under the project. This delay is occurring because the Housing and Settlement Directorate has not been able to appoint the officials who will process plot allocation and loan arrangements. In Dhaka, the City Corporation will have to submit a drainage plan for the Rasulpur area. The plan is needed to reserve open drainage channel free of future filling and building obstructions. Forty senior level executives of banks and financial institutions are attending the two-day workshop which is being conducted by the BIMB faculty member, Dr Toufic A Chowdhury.

**Students call hartal at Tongi today**

From Our Correspondent  
GAZIPUR, Dec 12: A half-day hartal has been called in Tongi Poura area tomorrow by the Chhatra League (M-I) and the Jatya Chhatra Samaj. The hartal has been called in support of the demand for opening of the Tongi Government College and holding of elections to the college student union.

**Arafat-Rabin talks fail**

CAIRO, Dec 12: PLO leader Yasser Arafat confirmed today that he had failed to reach agreement with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho in time for Monday's deadline, reports Reuter.

**Another Chinese plane hijacked to Taiwan**

TAIPEI, Dec 12: A man pretending to have explosives hijacked a mainland Chinese jetliner to Taiwan Sunday, the Defence Ministry said, reports AP. It was the ninth hijacking from China to Taiwan this year and the second in five days.

**Sick unit**

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ten speech, alleged that the government had made the country a market for foreign goods in the name of adopting a market-oriented economy. He was also very critical of the government's "contradictory policy" that allowed foreign goods to capture the market by withdrawing all restrictions and, on the other hand, hampered the growth of local industries by imposing various kinds of restrictions. He dubbed the Value Added Tax (VAT) as an "anti-production, repressive measure against the entrepreneurs and said it is comparable only with the infamous Salt Act and the Indigo-Tax of the British period. He demanded immediate withdrawal of VAT and other taxes to help promote local industries.