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NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina addresses docs' confce today

The first national convention of the 'Pro-Liberation Doctors' will be held today at 9 am at the auditorium of the Engineers Institution. Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina will address the convention as chief guest, reports UNB.

BMC reopens Dec 29

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Dec 23 : The Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College (BMC) will reopen on December 29 after a 23-day-long unscheduled closure. According to the Academic Council decision today the extra academic activities of the medical college, however, have been temporarily suspended. The medical college was closed since the following violent clash between the supporters of the Bangladesh Chhatra League and the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal reportedly over the writings of a wall magazine on December 6.

Indian shawls seized

SAVAR, Dec 23 : Police seized smuggled Indian shawls worth about Tk 75,000 from a night coach coming from Rajshahi near Savar Bazar bus stand early this morning. Acting on a tip, police raided the bus and recovered the contraband. They also nabbed Sahabuddin, 32, Sukur, 28, and Bangu, 30, in this connection, reports UNB.

Two mayors resign, 2 others to follow

By Staff Correspondent

Two mayors of the country's four city corporations have resigned ahead of the forthcoming elections, scheduled to be held on January 30.

Two other mayors will resign shortly.

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin formally announced his resignation at a press conference at his office while Rajshahi City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu announced his decision at a public meeting yesterday.

The Khulna City Mayor, Shaikh Tayebur Rahman, will announce his resignation at a press conference at the Khulna

Press Club at 6pm today (Friday).

Mayor Mirza Abbas of the Dhaka City Corporation is likely to announce his resignation before the submission of nomination papers on December 29, party sources said.

The decision to resign came at a meeting with Prime Minister and ruling party chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia on Tuesday, sources said.

The meeting, held at the Prime Minister's office at Tejgaon, was attended by all the mayors and other party stalwarts.

Sources at the meeting said, the majority of the senior mem-

bers of the party and the cabinet were in favour of the resignations before the polls to set an example and prove their popularity.

Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar had also resigned from Begum Zia's cabinet before contesting the by-election from a Dhaka constituency originally won by the Prime Minister herself during the 1991 parliamentary elections.

Sircar was a technocrat minister in the cabinet until he won the by-election.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong says, Mir Nasiruddin told the press con-

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Major parties' reaction

By Staff Correspondent

The major opposition parties of the country yesterday termed the resignation of the city corporation mayors before the polls as a primary victory of the people's aspiration for a free and fair election.

The parties, however, observed that mere resignation of the mayors was not enough to make the polls, scheduled for January 30 next year, free and fair.

Awami League (AL) general secretary Zillur Rahman, while talking to The Daily Star last night said, the mayors had resigned in response to the demand from almost all the opposition parties. Terming the resignation as a people's victory, the AL general secretary said the government must stop influencing the voters through

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Population 11.15 crore, growth rate 2.17 pc

Country's population has mounted to 11 crore 14 lakh 55 thousand and 185 with annual growth rate of 2.17 per cent, according to a 1991 population census, reports UNB.

There were 5,73,13,929 men and 5,41,41,256 women in the country till March 11, 1991, said State Minister for Planning Dr Abdul Moeen Khan MP while releasing the final results of the Population Census 1991 at a press conference here yesterday.

He stated that the enumerated census population in 1991 was 10,63,14,992 - 5,47,28,300 men and 5,15,86,642 women - and the annual growth rate as compared to the 1981 census stood at 2.01 per cent. But it was found that somehow or other 4.61 per cent people remained

outside the enumeration, he said, adding that the final result was worked out by including this number.

The sex ratio in the 1991 census shows that the country had 100 women: 105.86 men. Their ratio was 100:106.14 in 1981.

The population density was estimated at 735 per square mile in 1991 against 609 in 1981.

The age-wise population as per the 1991 census: 0-4 years- 1,86,94,788 which is 16.77 per cent of the total population, 5-14 year- 3,18,33,872 (28.56 per cent), 15-64 years- 5,72,60,397 (51.38 per cent) and 65 plus years- 36,66,138 (3.29 per cent).

Total eligible voter (over 18 See Page 12 Col 7

US visa lottery '94

No need to send money abroad : BB

Star Report

Amidst fears of a possible flight of a huge amount of foreign exchange (forex) from the country, Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday urged the people not to respond to the advertisements on visa lottery for immigration to the United States.

The advertiser, a Los Angeles based American lawyer, recently put advertisements in some leading newspapers urging the Bangladeshis nationals to remit to him 50 US dollars each for the purpose of lottery for the US immigration visa.

But the US Embassy in Dhaka informed Bangladesh Bank that the procedure for immigration visa has not yet been finalised and a notice de-

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Multi-storied bldgs near airports banned

A ban has been imposed on construction of high rise and multi-storied buildings and must near the Tejgaon Airport and Zia International Airport, reports BBS.

The decision has been taken in accordance with the international rules for safe landing and take-off of aeroplanes as the civil aviation authorities have undertaken the responsibility of keeping in force the STOL service at Tejgaon Airport, a press release of the Civil Aviation Authorities said here yesterday.

The ban is also applicable for other airports - Chittagong, Sylhet, Jessore, Rajshahi, Sayedpur, Cox's Bazar, Shamsheer Nagar, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon, Ishwardi, Barisal and Comilla.

All concerned have been asked to seek permission from Rajuk and Civil Aviation Authorities before going for construction of such building or mans.

Prokrichi action: 252 docs submit resignation

By Staff Correspondent

Some 252 doctors, belonging to the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council, Thursday submitted their resignation letters to the chairman of the council and Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) President Dr MA Majed.

The Action Council, a platform of some 70 thousand professionals of the country, is waging a movement to press home their 17-point charter of demands.

The demands include removing service anomalies of the professionals, making the elected public representatives chief executive of the concerned ministries, separating the judiciary from the administration and restructuring the present bureaucracy.

Those who submitted the resignation letters are: Director General of the Health Services Professor M Nurunabi, Prof. A B Bhuiyan of the Dhaka Medical College, Director of Epidemiological Disease Control and Research, Dr M Enamul Huq, Director (Administration) of the Health Services, Dr Fazlul Rahman, Director, Medical Education, Dr AKM Nurul Anwar and Director, Planning and Development, Dr Hosne Ara Begum.

BMA General Secretary Gazi Abdul Huq, Dr Mushtaq Hossain and Dr Z A Matin-Ali Haid were present during the submission of resignation letters.

Bangladeshis in USA form Farakka body

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladeshis living in the USA have formed a 15-member committee on Farakka which will try to create international opinion in favour of resolving the crisis.

A press release faxed from the USA yesterday said, the 'Boston Farakka Committee' headed by Dr Md Strajul Haq was formed following a seminar on the Farakka problem held at the MIT Students Centre in Boston which was attended by expatriate Bangladeshis scientists, engineers, social workers, educationists and others on Tuesday.

The members of the committee include Dr Shahjahan Mahmud, Dr A K Abdul Momen, Shahiduddin Ahmed, Kazi Be-

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Indians march on

Sports Reporter

The Indian charge has well and truly begun.

At the end of the third day of medal reckoning of the Sixth SAF Games, the superpowers of the biennial sporting contest have really wakened up to the task at hand. Resounding ring of medals falling into the Indian coffers reverberated through the air. The medal haul of the Indian increased at a break-neck speed.

Fifty-four medals were garnered by them at the end of the day yesterday. Besides the 24 golds, the Indian athletes and swimmers who were in action on the fourth day of the Games that began on December 20, gleaned 14 silvers and 16 bronzes and many more, it goes without saying, are on their way to the familiar and already fat pocket.

Apart from living up to the gold expedition, Indian participants in the athletics events set two new meet records. Shakti Singh and Waraich were the record breakers in the discus and hammer throwing events.

Shri Lankans kept apace the Indians in sharing the spoils, particularly in setting new records. To be a wee bit probing, the athletes from the hosts of the previous Games two years ago were far more attractive with their performances yesterday. A 20-year-old named Sugurh Tillekaratne set a new record in the men's 400m run



while 23-year-old Sriyani Kulawansa carved a niche in the record books with a magnificent show in the women's 100m hurdles.

To follow it up, Shri Lankans maintained the second position in the medals table at the end of the day with a total haul of 31 gongs, eleven of which were golden.

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MEDALS TABLE

The medals table after Thursday's competitions in the Sixth South Asian Federation (SAF) Games: (Tabulate under gold, silver, bronze and total)

	G	S	B	Total
India	24	14	16	54
Shri Lanka	11	7	13	31
Bangladesh	6	8	6	20
Pakistan	1	9	8	18
Nepal	0	4	2	6
Bhutan	0	0	0	0
Maldives	0	0	0	0



M A Sriyani Kulawansa of Shri Lanka seen close to the touch line in the 100m hurdles of the Sixth SAF Games at the Mirpur Stadium yesterday. She easily won the gold medal in a time of 13.73 seconds, a new meet record. — Star photo

BSRS role undefined for 8 yrs

By Sohel Manzur

The Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS), one of the six DFIs of the country, remained busy with the recovery of non-performing loans during the last eight years and very recently with the rehabilitation of some sick projects, according to official sources.

The BSRS is neither being privatised or converted into a commercial bank, as decided earlier by the government, nor is it performing its due role as a Development Financing Institution (DFI).

The activities of the BSRS as a DFI came to a halt in March 1985 when the Asian Development Bank (ADB), asked the corporation not to finance the projects against the backdrop of its poor loan recovery and sickness of many projects it financed.

The government in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ADB and some other donor agencies, including the UNDP and the IDA, agreed to improve the situation by taking appropriate measures.

In September 1990, the

ADB, in response to a government request for lifting the embargo on the BSRS offered some advice as preconditions for the proposed lifting.

The conditions included privatisation of at least 51 per cent share of the BSRS in two years, and finalisation of a pragmatic operating policy for the DFI providing it with additional functions of a commercial bank.

The ADB also suggested that the appointment of the Managing Director of the BSRS be made by its Board of Directors, not by the government. As per the suggestion of the ADB, the government decided to privatise the BSRS and hand over all its shares and undertakings to a public limited company, the Development Bank Limited (DBL), which according to its memorandum and articles of association has got registration to act as a bank besides financing for industrialisation. According to the memorandum and articles of association, the DBL is supposed to provide 80 per cent of its disburseable loan as term

loan for the industrial sector.

The process, however, came to a total halt just before the handing over ceremony of the shares and undertaking of the BSRS to the DBL in April this year, when the owners of BSRS-financed projects appealed to the petition committee of the Jatiya Sangsad for re-examination of the net worth of the DFI before handing over its shares and undertaking to the DBL. The BSRS was being handed over for Tk 83 crore, but the entrepreneurs claimed be the value would be much more.

The entrepreneurs of the BSRS-financed projects also questioned the procedure of selling out the institution claiming it was being done to serve the interest of a vested group. Meanwhile, the BSRS has been making desperate efforts to realise all its outstanding loans by taking over the defaulting projects through invocation of the Article 34 of the BSRS Order, 1972.

In most cases, the defaulting projects are part of the 1556

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Castro's daughter takes asylum in US

WASHINGTON, Dec 23: The daughter of Cuban President Fidel Castro has left Cuba and been granted asylum in the United States, a State Department official said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Alina Fernandez, in her late 30s, left Cuba on Monday for Spain and flew to Atlanta, Georgia on Tuesday, the official said privately.

She left a teenaged daughter behind in Cuba, where the standard of living has deteriorated steadily since the breakup of the Soviet Union cut off Cuba's fuel supply.

Cable News Network reported that Fernandez was in Washington. Jose Cardenas of the Cuban American National Foundation said she would wait several days before speaking publicly.

Representative Lincoln Diaz Balart, a Florida Republican, said Fernandez's decision was

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Govt determined to build Jamuna bridge : Khaleda

JAMTOIL, Strajganj, Dec 23: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today said her government is determined to construct the Jamuna multipurpose bridge for improving the country's communication network and speed up the pace of development, reports UNB.

"We will build the bridge to ensure development and improve road communication in the country's northern region," she told a huge public meeting at the Haji Korap Ali Memorial Degree College ground in Kamarkhand thana this afternoon.

She instructed the local law enforcing agencies to nab the terrorists and trouble mongers irrespective of their party affiliation to bring peace in social life.

Stressing the need for reducing dependency on external assistance, she said, "No more dependency on foreign aid. We have to increase production to export and expand the area of our trade to earn foreign currency for our development."

Presided over by Thana BNP president Jamat Ali, the meet-

ing was addressed, among others, by Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam, State Minister for Establishment Barrister Aminul Haq, party's MPs Shahidullah Khan, Mirza Moraduzzaman, Ansar Ali Siddique, M Akbar Ali, A K M Abdul Mannan, Yahia Khan Majlish and Roushan Elahi, local leaders Humayun Islam Khan, Nur-e-Alam Helal, Nazmul Hasan Rana, Shahidul Alam Khan, Abdul Halim, Aminul Islam and Abdul Mannan Tutul.

Referring to the population explosion, she asked the rural people to keep their families small and groom up their children as worthy citizens to take the future leadership of the country.

Begum Zia called upon the people to set up dairy farms to reduce import on powdered milk. "We spent about Tk 400 crore to import milk. Now we want to import quality cattle instead of milk."

The Prime Minister said smuggling should be checked

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Drop family name, Nusrat asks Benazir



Benazir Bhutto

KARACHI, Dec 23: The rift between Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her mother widened today when Nusrat Bhutto ordered her daughter to drop the charismatic family name and go by her married name, reports Reuters.

"Why is she retaining the name of Bhutto?" Nusrat Bhutto told a news conference. "She should drop it."

An angry Nusrat Bhutto said the Prime Minister should now use the name of her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, and abandon her maiden name, inherited from her famous father Pakistan's first popularly elected Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

"She should address herself as Benazir Zardari and not as Benazir Bhutto," Nusrat Bhutto

said. Simmering rivalry between mother and daughter erupted into a split in Pakistan's first family early this month when the 40-year-old Benazir ousted her mother as chairperson of the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and had herself elected as the sole head of the party.

Nusrat, 63, said she would challenge her daughter's effective internal party coup and accused the Prime Minister of calling the PPP's first internal elections since its formation in 1967 only to provide a cover for her takeover.

"This will not be an election but a selection," Nusrat said. The ousted PPP chairperson said she had been nominated for life by her husband shortly

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Nusrat Bhutto

Sarbahara activities in Jessore on the wane

By Asiuzzaman, back from Jhenidah

Several million people of Greater Jessore district heaved a sigh of relief as the armed activists of the so-called 'Sarbahara' Party have waned because of people's resistance, continued police crackdown and factional infighting.

Not a single political killing was reported during the past three months in the area. Murder was a regular occurrence earlier in all the eight districts of Greater Jessore.

Some 65 people were killed in the first six months in Jhenidah district alone, according to Jhenidah police statistics. The toll in other districts was also high, one official said but could not provide the break-up.

The districts are Jhenidah, Magura, Jessore, Satkhira, Kusthia, Chuadanga, Meherpur and Narail.

Some 150 armed comrades of different underground groups were arrested this year in Jhenidah with some 90 automatic weapons and a huge quantity of ammunition, police said.

Four armed groups were active in the region and had frequently clashed over domination of the area but one of those has already been eliminated, while two others have also been pushed into a corner.

These groups are the Bangladesh Biplobi Communist

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