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NEWS BRIEFS

5-member JS panel of Chairmen

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali at the commencement of the 17th session of the current Sangsad yesterday, nominated a five-member panel of chairmen from the members arranged in order of precedence. The panel of chairmen comprises L. K. Siddiqui (BNP), Syeda Begum Sajeda Chowdhury (AL), Mohammad Ali Jinnah (BNP), Moulana Abdus Sobhan (Jamaat) and Begum K. J. Hamida Khanam (BNP), reports BSS.

Jhenidah College closed till Nov 28

JHENIDAH, Nov. 12: The Jhenidah Degree College was closed today till November 28 following clashes between two feuding student groups. A tense situation has been prevailing on the campus since the clashes on Wednesday and Thursday, reports UNB.

British trade team in city

A high-powered British trade and investment mission arrived in Dhaka yesterday morning on a four-day visit. The 27-member mission, during its stay, is scheduled to meet ministers, officials and private sector representatives to explore trade and investment opportunities, reports UNB.

Seven hurt in road accident

BARISAL, Nov. 12: At least seven people were injured, three of them seriously when a tempo tumbled into a road side ditch on the Barisal Faridpur road at Chowdhuripara in Baranipara thana today, reports UNB.



A large number of passengers who arrived at Zia International Airport yesterday morning were stranded at the airport due to a day-long general strike in the city. — Star photo by Anisur Rahman

Hartal paralyses life

By Staff Correspondent

A peaceful hartal paralysed normal life in the capital yesterday as the mainstream opposition political parties further pressed their demand for a caretaker government to hold general elections.

Except some stray incidents like pickets chasing defiant rickshaws, setting off crude bombs and stoning a few automobiles which dared to come out on the largely empty streets, the day-long hartal passed off generally peacefully.

The Opposition parties will enforce another hartal, country-wide, from dawn to dusk today.

Public and private offices, banks and other financial institutions, shops and market places and educational institutions were seen closed during yesterday's hartal hours from 6

am until 6 pm. A few rickshaws were, of course, seen plying, but their pullers took care to avoid the more heavily picketed areas where activists of the opposition parties kept vigil to ensure observance of the strike.

However, after 1 pm, rickshaws came out in large numbers, in keeping with the waiver announced by the hartal's sponsors.

Office-goers trekked miles to reach their places of work.

Some BA (Pass Course) examinees were harassed by pickets when they rode rickshaws to reach the centres of examinations, not knowing that the Dhaka University authorities had Friday postponed all examinations scheduled for yesterday and today.

Awami League and Jatiya

Party workers brought out sporadic processions in the Gulistan, Topkhana Road, Shahbagh, Farm Gate, Green Road, Shukrabad and Mirpur areas.

They also held rallies in front of the Jatiya Press Club where they blamed the ruling BNP for aggravating the present political crisis by not accepting their demand.

The Awami League meeting was addressed by Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Bir Bikram, Akhterul Alam and Iqbalur Rahim while the JP rally was addressed by Secretary General Khaledur Rahman Tito, Kazi Feroze Rashid, Col (Retd) Zafar Imam, Saifur Rahman and Abul Hossain Babla.

The Awami League, the See Page 12 Col 3

Opposition calls countrywide hartal today

By Staff Correspondent

The major opposition parties — the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami — have called a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal today. Ambulance, fire brigade, pharmacy, hotel, newspaper and press vehicles and examinations in educational institutions will not come under the purview of today's 12-hour hartal.

Besides, rickshaws will be allowed to ply after 1 pm.

Sheikh Hasina thanked the people for supporting yesterday's shutdown on the capital and urged them to observe a dawn-to-dusk hartal across the country today to press for a caretaker government.

The people's spontaneous See Page 12 Col 3

Ninian places 3 plans before PM, Hasina

By Asiuzzaman

Commonwealth envoy Sir Ninian Stephen, during separate meetings with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, reportedly placed three formulae and urged the opposing camps to examine them.

One of the proposals suggests an interim government with present Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia as chief of an 11-member cabinet.

The second suggests any ruling party MP other than Begum Zia be the interim prime minister.

Under these two formulae, five members from each side would be inducted in the interim cabinet and a technocrat minister acceptable to both camps would take care of the important ministries like Home, Information, Establishment and Cabinet Division.

To implement any of these two plans, there would be no need to amend the Constitution.

Sir Ninian's third proposal was that the President be given executive powers and a nonpartisan council of ministers be formed to assist him during the time of general elections.

An interim government with the President as its chief would require amendments to the Constitution, informed sources said.

The ruling party is learnt to have agreed to the first proposal — one with Begum Khaleda Zia as the interim prime minister — but the Opposition was insisting upon a neutral person to head such an administration. As for the remaining two plans proffered by Sir Ninian, the Opposition is willing to consider the ideas after due deliberation, sources in the Opposition camp said last night.

Sir Ninian reportedly commented to the two leaders that he had made his proposals in the light of lengthy discussions

across the dialogue table between the two groups so far and also on the basis of press reports quoting constitutional provisions.

The envoy met with the Prime Minister at her Tejgaon office around noon while his talks with the Leader of the Opposition were held at the latter's official Minto Road residence in the evening.

No third person was present during Sir Ninian's meeting with the Prime Minister, which lasted about an hour.

During the 70-minute meeting with Sheikh Hasina, her political adviser S A M S Kibria was present.

Sir Ninian's meetings with the two leading ladies were the latest in his efforts to salvage the stalled dialogue between the ruling party and the Opposition, which he has been trying to facilitate to end the political impasse.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister See Page 12 Col 4

UN, NATO forces strive to breach blockade of Bihac

SARAJEVO, Nov. 12: The UN and NATO are gearing up to forcibly breach the Serb blockade of the northwestern Bihac enclave to resupply UN forces there and parachute food aid to its mostly-Muslim population, UN officials said today, report AFP, Reuter.

UN special envoy to former Yugoslavia Yasushi Akashi said he and the Bosnian government had called on Western nations to provide aircraft to parachute emergency food aid into the pocket, currently under attack from all sides by Serbs from Bosnia and Croatia.

Describing the humanitarian situation in the enclave as

"very serious," Akashi said he had been urging Western nations to agree to air drops for the enclave despite the danger of conducting such operations in a war zone.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimates there are some 208,000 civilians and 1200 UN Bangladeshi troops trapped in Bihac.

If there is no action by UNPROFOR within one week to supply some food into Bihac we are facing catastrophe," Vice President Eljup Ganic said following talks with Akashi.

Meanwhile, a Washington report said: President Bill See Page 12 Col 8

JS session begins amid Opposition boycott

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad (JS) began its 17th session yesterday evening with the Opposition benches once again empty.

The opposition parties have been boycotting the House since March 1 to press home their demand for holding general elections under a caretaker government.

Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz tabled the Anti-Terrorism (Special Provision) Ordinance, 1994, seeking legal cover for cases filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act on or before the expiry of the law on November 5 last.

Earlier, Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali announced a five-member panel of chairmen to preside over the House in the See Page 12 Col 7

News Analysis

Towards a consensus or conflict?

By Chapal Bashar

Although dark clouds have hovered over the country's political arena for some time now, people in general still haven't lost hope that the current stand-off between the government and the Opposition would end soon.

According to political analysts, the question now is not if the crisis would at all be resolved. Instead, it is when and how it would end. Will the antagonists settle their differences across the negotiating table, or will they take to the streets for a bruising showdown?

Eight months have elapsed since the Opposition started boycotting Parliament. During this time, four sessions were held, keeping the House half-empty. And now, another session — the 17th of the Fifth Parliament — began yesterday with total abstention by all the opposition parties.

Most of the Opposition MPs, instead of sitting in the House, are now demonstrating

on the streets along with their leaders, followers and fellow political colleagues. As a consequence, the people are in the grip of a political unrest marked with on-again, off-again violence and continued agitations including a series of hartals, whose frequency has been increasing lately. The Opposition has vowed to carry

NDP activist shot dead

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov. 12: Two activists of the National Democratic Party (NDP) were kidnapped and one of them was later shot dead allegedly by armed terrorists Friday evening at Dabua village under Raazan, 20 miles from here.

The other activist escaped. The body of NDP activist Hasan (20) was recovered last night by police from a hillock near his house at Khosal Tahukder Bari at Dabua village.

on its struggle on the streets until the demand for holding the next general elections and, preferably, a few successive ones, under a 'neutral, non-party caretaker government' is met.

The process of the Commonwealth-brokered dialogue initiated October 20 is still officially on while talks facilitator Sir Ninian Stephen is yet to give up his mediation efforts. The Commonwealth emissary met both Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday and discussed the latest proposals of the two sides on the caretaker government issue.

Sir Ninian, a seasoned trouble-shooter, has completed a month's stay in Bangladesh. He arrived here, with both hope and trepidation, on the 13th of last month to facilitate face-to-face negotiations between the ruling party and the parliamentary Opposition to reach a

See Page 12 Col 3

Force govt to concede to demand: AL

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League leaders, at a post-hartal rally in the city yesterday, threatened to unseat the government of Begum Khaleda Zia if it did not accept their demand for elections under a caretaker administration immediately.

The speakers thanked the city dwellers for observing yesterday's dawn-to-dusk hartal in the capital and urged the people to enforce today's nationwide shutdown to force the government to concede to the Opposition demand.

The Dhaka city unit of the AL organised the rally in front of the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue. Chaired by the city AL vice-president Reazuddin Ahmed, the rally was also addressed by the party's central leaders Siddique Rouf Khan, Obaidul Kader, Najibul Bashir Maizbhandari, MP, Nurul Fazal Bulbul, city leaders Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Akhterul Alam, Kamrul Islam, Moizuddin Mia and others.

See Page 12 Col 8

FBCCI urges Opposition, govt to resolve crisis

By Staff Correspondent

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) yesterday urged both the government and the Opposition political parties to resolve the current political crisis for the sake of the country's economy.

Salman F Rahman, President of the FBCCI, in a statement called upon the politicians to end the stalemate and lead the country to economic prosperity by utilising the opportunities in a changed global economic environment.

He expressed deep concern over the deteriorating political situation in the country and the 'partisan' politics that has laid 'siege to the national economy.'

He warned that the present politics of confrontation would ultimately lead to the collapse of the economy and result in untold suffering to the nation at large. "It is our firm belief that this concern is equally shared by the silent majority."

The FBCCI leader said there

is a tremendous opportunity for Bangladesh to transform itself into a self-reliant economy taking advantage of the new economic order sweeping the world.

Other countries in east Asia and particularly in the Indian Sub-continent are taking full advantage of the changed global economic environment and have embarked on a rapid export-led path of growth.

Bangladesh, having abundant human and natural resources, and the best macro-economic fundamentals, is in a unique position to immensely benefit from the exciting array of both global and regional opportunities, he said.

See Page 12 Col 2

Cellular phone issue: Govt to fight in court

The government will appoint some top lawyers of the country to fight the legal battle against a private company enjoying monopoly in cellular telephone, T & T Minister Tariqul Islam said in the JS yesterday, reports UNB.

Replying to a supplementary question from Sardar Sakhawat Hossain Bakul, he said the private company went to court upon expiry of its five-year monopoly and secured an injunction for another six months.

Upon expiry of the company's five-year monopoly, the government had floated tenders for cellular telephones.

Without mentioning the name of the private company, See Page 12 Col 7

Kumaratunga sworn in as president



Newly-elected President Chandrika Kumaratunga (C) taking oath of office before Chief Justice G P S de Silva (L) at the presidential secretariat in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo yesterday. — AFP photo

COLOMBO, Nov. 12: Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was sworn in as Sri Lanka's first woman president today and said her goal was to end the bloody 11-year civil war against Tamil separatist rebels, reports Reuter.

Kumaratunga said in a speech to the nation that her emphatic election victory earlier this week was a vote for peace.

"This must be, however, peace with honour for both parties to the conflict for it to be strong and durable. My government and I will continue our quest for peace," she said.

With a sweeping mandate from the polls, Kumaratunga is expected to resume peace talks with Tamil separatist rebels which were suspended last month when her main opposition candidate was killed in a bomb blast during a campaign rally.

Kumaratunga was invested in a colourful ceremony amid heavy security following a long and violent polls campaign. See Page 12 Col 1

Passengers can now bring in \$5000, Tk 500

All the incoming passengers, irrespective of nationality and resident status, will now be allowed to bring in up to 5,000 US dollars in foreign exchange and Tk 500 in local currency without declaration to Customs authorities, reports UNB.

If the amount brought in foreign currency is higher than 5,000 dollars, the entire amount will have to be declared to the Customs authorities in the FMJ form, said a Bangladesh Bank announcement yesterday.

The amount in local currency that can be taken out at the time of departure from Bangladesh has similarly been enhanced to Tk 500 per person from the existing limit of Tk 300.

Earlier, a resident Bangladeshi was permitted to bring in, without declaration to Customs authorities, up to 2,500 US dollars in foreign exchange and Tk 300 in local currency.

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Applications with full Bio-Data and a passport size photograph must reach Box No: S-578, C/o The Daily Star, House-11, Road-3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka- 1205, by 15 November, 1994. Women are specially encouraged to apply. Salary and other benefits according to qualification and experience. Envelopes must be marked "APPLICATION FOR NEWSPAPER EMPLOYMENT."