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NEWS BRIEFS

Lankan FM calls on Hasina
Visiting Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar made a courtesy call on Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina at her Minto Road residence yesterday morning. Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary RCA Vandergard, Director MNG De Silva, acting High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Dhaka CR Jayasinghe were present, reports UNB.

Diarrhoea claims two in Sylhet
From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Dec 6: Diarrhoea has claimed two persons in Kanailat and Dakshin Bari-nagam unions of Kanailat thana where about two hundred others had been suffering. The dead are, Habibur Rahman, 40, and Tabera Begum, 11, of village Bhalidi under Kanailat union.

28 VCP sets recovered
From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Dec 6: An anti-smuggling team of Chittagong sea customs raided a Russian flag carrying vessel anchored at the MPB Jetty of Chittagong port on Monday night and recovered 28 pieces of smuggled VCPs from the ship, official sources said.

2 killed in Sylhet road mishap
From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Dec 6: Two persons were killed in separate road accidents on the Sylhet-Tamabil road during the last 48 hours. The road was blocked for nine hours by the agitated villagers, following the incidents. A truck carrying coal from Tamabil border hit a rickshaw in Garighat area causing the death of the rickshaw-puller, Hanifuddin, 25. Police caught the truck driver and seized the vehicle. The other incident occurred at 5 pm yesterday in the Korichh bridge near Haripur where another truck carrying coal crushed a ten-year old boy Ab-tan.

Opposition sets a Dec 27 deadline

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition MPs will resign en masse from Parliament on December 28 if the ruling party fails to accept the demand for a caretaker government by then. Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina announced yesterday.

"We are giving an ultimatum to the government. Accept our demand by December 27 or else we will resign en masse on December 28," Hasina announced at a big public meeting at the Bangabandhu Avenue.

She said the opposition MPs, having failed to speak for the people in the Fifth Parliament, have decided to resign and join ranks in an all-out agitation against the ruling BNP.

"We will force them to ac-



Awami League chief and leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Hartal hours relaxed

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition parties have revised the hartal hours and announced yesterday that 48-hour strike due to begin at 6 am today will now end at 12 noon on Thursday.

Moreover, their will be a four-hour break for 6 to 10 pm today.

The major opposition parties including the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat called the hartal to press home their demand for holding the next general election under a caretaker government.

Opposition sources said hartal hours have been relaxed considering the inconvenience of the export-oriented, business community and the people.

Newspaper transports and other emergency service vehicles would remain exempted from the purview of the hartal.

100 Bangladeshi troops held hostage by Somali gunmen

HARARE, Dec 6: Somali gunmen were holding 100 UN peacekeepers hostage north of Mogadishu today the Zimbabwean deputy commander of UN forces in Somalia said, reports AP.

Maj. Gen. Mike Nyambuya said the peacekeepers from Bangladesh were surrounded in their base at Afgoy, 30 kilometers north of Mogadishu, by armed clansmen demanding "substantial amounts of money."

No shots were fired and UN officers were attempting to negotiate a peaceful end to the stand off, Nyambuya told the Zimbabwe Inter African News Agency (ZIANA).

But he said UN forces were ready to free the Bangladeshis by force if the gunmen did not disperse.

"We are telling them they will not gain anything by sur-

US announces second annual visa lottery

The United States has announced its second annual lottery for permanent resident visas under which 55,000 visas will be issued to people from countries with low immigration rates to America, reports UNB.

Applications are due in early 1995 for the visas that will be issued for use in fiscal year 1996, which begins October 1 next year, said a USIS press release yesterday.

Winners will be chosen at random by computer to be eligible for the immigration visa process. The applications are grouped in six geographic areas and are numbered upon receipt by area. The computer selects random numbers.

For last year's lottery, more than six million entries were received.

The visa lottery programme is open to 'most' areas of the world.

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Reconsider demand, JP's call to BNP

By Staff Correspondent

Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, acting Chairman of the Jatiya Party yesterday called upon the ruling BNP to reconsider the demand of the opposition parties for a caretaker government keeping in mind the possible consequences of the present situation.

He said, former President Ershad had quit power to avert bloodshed and honour the sentiments of the people. Had he not done so, the consequences would have been bad for the country, he said, adding that the BNP has been leading the country towards a similar situation by ignoring the demands of the people.

Chowdhury was addressing a public meeting yesterday — the fourth anniversary of the ouster of Ershad in the face of a mass uprising — at Mohakhali in the city, organised by his party on the occasion of, what it called, the 'Democracy Day'.

JP presidium members Moudud Ahmed, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Secretary General Khaleedur Rahman Tito also spoke while Col (Retd) Abdul Malek was in the chair.

Claiming the credit for having established democracy in the country, the acting JP chairman said, his party had not only established democracy but had also honoured the

Opposition leader still absent on TV news

By Staff Correspondent

On the occasion of 'Democracy Day' yesterday, all the major parties held public rallies in the city.

Although news and pictures of most rallies were carried on Bangladesh Television, no visuals of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina were shown. Only a short report on the AL rally was read out in the news.

This paper repeatedly wrote for wider coverage of Opposition programmes, especially that of the Leader of the Opposition, in the interest of media freedom.

After finding the picture of the Leader of the Opposition's public rally conspicuously absent, this correspondent contacted the Director General of Bangladesh Television over telephone last night.

On enquiry, the Director General said, "We wanted to cover the Opposition leader's programme and we accordingly sent a TV crew."

He also said that as reported by the TV camera crew, the Awami League leaders had sent them back, saying they did not want any TV coverage.

Last week, too, TV camera crew returned from Sheikh Hasina's official residence and reported to the newsroom that they had been turned away.

The DG said that the Information Minister had also issued

No intrigue can pull govt down: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

In a sharp retort to the Opposition threat to unseat the ruling BNP, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said "I will not quit power at anybody's threat or provocation."

"Don't compare me with Justice Sattar who had been robbed of power at gun point. I'm Khaleda Zia and I'll not surrender power just like that," Begum Zia told a huge public meeting in the capital yesterday afternoon.

"The BNP came to power with the people's mandate, not through anybody's courtesy or through any unconstitutional means. The party will remain in power as long as it had been mandated for," she said, adding that no agitation or intrigue would be able to pull the government down.

Referring to the Opposition legislators' threat to resign from Parliament and their current anti-government agitation for realising the demand for the next Parliament elections to be held under a non-party, caretaker administration, the ruling party chief commented, "The BNP was elected to power following street agitation and it knows well about all kinds of agitations. It is not afraid of such political action."

In a clear reference to the main opposition party, the Awami League, Begum Zia alleged that a certain party was

BUET teacher found dead at Rajendrapur

By Staff Correspondent

The body of a senior teacher of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) was recovered by police from a private rest house in the Bhawal forest area at Rajendrapur early yesterday morning.

Prof Ajmal Hayat Ahmad, 54, Head of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, had been reported by family members as missing since 2 pm Monday.

According to the Gazipur Sadar police, the body was recovered near the 'Sujan' rest house in the forest area at around 2 am Tuesday and his car was found abandoned nearby.

The Duty Officer at the sadar thana, when contacted over telephone, said that police

PM concludes Feni tour

FENI, Dec 6: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia returned to the capital today concluding a two-day extensive tour of Feni, her home district, reports UNB.

During the tour, she addressed a number of rallies and exchanged views with the local people.

Begum Zia today laid the foundation stone for construction of a 280-foot Kalidaha-Lashkarhat bridge across the river Kalidaha Pahalia.

She also formally opened a rural electrification project at Radhanagar in Parshuram thana.

Later, she laid the founda-

Boycott of JS Judgement on writ Dec 11

Staff Correspondent

The High Court yesterday reserved judgement for December 11 in the writ regarding the Opposition's continued boycott of Jatiya Sangsad proceedings.

Earlier, in the morning, Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed rejected applications filed by the respondents seeking a larger bench to hear the writ.

Upon applications filed by the respondents December 5, the Chief Justice heard both sides in his chamber to consider the case for a special bench.

In his order, Justice Shahabuddin said, "The rule on the writ petition was issued on June 28. It was heard on several occasions and the hearing is now at its final stage. I do not think it proper at this stage to appoint a special bench. The applications for a larger bench are dismissed."

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed and the Jamaat's Maulana Mattur Rahman Nizami are the respondents in the case.

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Dacoits kill 2, loot goods worth Tk 2 lakh

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 6: A group of armed dacoits allegedly shot dead two villagers in Fatikchhari thana and decamped with goods worth Taka two lakh on Monday night, police said.

The dead were identified as Rina Aktar 9, daughter of Mahmudul Haque and his neighbour Abul Hashem 50.

Besides, 10 other villagers were injured during the attack by the dacoits. They were admitted to the local health complex.

Police said, the robbers stormed into the house of Mahmudul Hoque at Sundarpur village and forced the inmates at gunpoint to hand over valuable goods to them.

But when the inmates of the house raised a hue and cry, the neighbours began to rush while the fleeing dacoits opened fire on people indiscriminately.

A case was filed with Fatikchhari thana and but none was arrested so far.

OIC to send peace troops to Bosnia if others quit

GENEVA, Dec 6: The Organisation of the Islamic Conference, in a draft declaration to be adopted today, said its members would contribute troops if countries unilaterally withdrew from the UN protection force in Bosnia.

The draft, obtained by Reuters as foreign ministers met in Geneva, also called on United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to give a full report on the failure of UNPROFOR (the United Nations Protection Force) to fulfil its mandate to carry out air strikes against Serbs.

Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic was attending the one-day closed-door session.

The draft declaration expressed alarm at suggestions by some members of the five-nation contact group (Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States) concerning new proposals that could lead to a so-called 'greater Serbia' linking land held by Bosnian Serbs to Serbia and Montenegro.

A Sarajevo report adds: the situation in Serb-besieged areas of Bosnia was said to be deteriorating as world leaders bickered over how to end the war and warned that time was running out for the UN peace-keeping effort.

Muslims trapped in Bosnian enclaves were reported on Monday to be fighting each other for food as their leaders accused the West of allowing

Russia vetoes CSCE move

BUDAPEST, Dec 6: Russia vetoed a European summit declaration on Bosnia today, undermining a new-found diplomatic consensus on how to end the war as Britain and France warned that time for a peace deal was running out, reports Reuter.

Russia's move, and its complaints that Serbia was not getting properly rewarded for backing an end to the war, exposed fresh divisions among major powers trying to broker peace.

Moscow, objecting to what Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev called 'Propaganda,' used its veto to stop the summit calling officially on Bosnian Serbs to end fighting around the threatened Muslim-enclave of Bihać and elsewhere in Bosnia.

Bosnia appealed at a tense

Dhaka, Colombo concerned at Bosnia situation

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka yesterday expressed "deep concern" at the deteriorating situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports BSS.

A joint press statement issued at the end of the official visit of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said that the two countries reaffirmed their conviction towards a peaceful negotiated settlement of the dispute and hoped that UN efforts would bring the human tragedies in Bosnia-Herzegovina to an end.

The two countries also reaffirmed their support to all peaceful efforts in resolving the Rwandan and Somali crisis.

At the official talks Kadirgamar and his Bangladeshi counterpart, ASM Mostafizur Rahman reviewed the entire

30 hurt as BCL, JCD clash in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 6: At least 30 persons, including policemen, were injured in clashes between the activists of the Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) here this evening.

The clashes that lasted about two hours began when a procession of the BCL, chanting slogans in favour of tomorrow's hartal called by the Awami League and other opposition parties, came near the Aswinikumar Hall where the JCD was holding a rally at 5-30 pm.

The rival student organisations chased each other, and blasted cocktails. Police say at least 50 crackers and several rounds of bullets were fired.

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