

**সাদা সিমেন্ট, মোজাইক, সিংক ও পাডল**  
 আকর্ষণীয় ও কমমূল্যে  
 সাদা সিমেন্ট: জাপান, মালয়েশিয়া -  
 মার্বেল চিপস: পাকিস্তান, চায়না, ভারত -  
 ক্রিচেন টিল সিংক: স্পেন, সুইজারল্যান্ড -  
 সোসেম, পাডল: ইংল্যান্ড -  
 মার্বেল ও ব্রোকেন মার্বেল: পাকিস্তান ও মালয়েশিয়া -  
 যাক্টার মোজাইক ও স্যানিটারি সামগ্রীর একমাত্র বিক্রেতা প্রতিষ্ঠান  
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## 'Crisis must be solved by constitutional means'

# Nothing going to happen after Dec 27, says PM

Prime Minister yesterday slammed the Opposition rigidity on caretaker government and threat to create a political vortex over the demand but offered to do all possible within the Constitutional ambit to resolve the problem, reports UNB.

Begum Zia seemed unmoved by Opposition threat of an uncertain situation after December 27, the deadline set by them for the government to concede to their demand, as she said "nothing is going to happen."

"We'll do the responsibility of an elected government according to the Constitution," she said.

As per the Constitution, only people's representatives can run the country. The crisis has to be solved within the framework of the Constitution," Begum Zia asserted.

Begum Zia lashed at the rigid stance of the Opposition, saying "It will be a mistake if they think that BNP has weakened."

The agitating opposition parties have given the government until December 27 to meet their demand or they will resign en masse from parliament on December 28 and go for an out-government movement.

Criticising the Opposition demand for a caretaker government headed by a selected person to hold national elections, she said, "an unelected person running the govern-

## 'No change in BNP stance'

By Asiuzzaman

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder has said there is no change in the ruling party's stand on the caretaker government issue.

"We still stick to our position following the earlier dialogue. We are ready to accept (Commonwealth Emissary) Sir Ninian Stephen's proposal about interim government," Talukder told The Daily Star in a telephonic interview yesterday.

He also dispelled media speculations that a dramatic solution to the present political impasse was likely. "The only drama the press reports suggest is that we resign or hand over power to the opposition parties," he said.

BNP still enjoys the people's support and will face any political consequences politically, Salam Talukder asserted.

"We still urge the opposi-

## Arab-Israeli peace possible, says Saudi ulema chief

RIYADH, Dec 21: Saudi Arabia's highest religious authority for the first time today said peace was possible between Arabs and Israelis as it was not against the teachings of Islam, reports AFP.

The country's Mufti Sheikh Abdel Aziz Ibn Baz said in an interview to be published in the Saudi weekly Al-Mushmoon that "a permanent or temporary ceasefire with the enemy is tolerated, if rulers see an interest in it."

"But it can be broken if the need disappears," added the Mufti who heads the country's highest religious body, the Council of Ulema, which wields a large influence over state policies.

The Mufti, who was questioned on the Israeli-PLO au-



**SAARC CRICKET BANGLADESH 1994**

### Pakistan take on hosts today

Sports Reporter

Pakistan take on hosts Bangladesh in the inaugural match of the quadrangular SAARC cricket tournament at the Dhaka Stadium today. The 50-overs-a-side game begins at 9 am.

Test discard Rameez Raja will lead the Pakistani second



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a rally of the Jatiyatabadi Freedom Fighters at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city yesterday. — PID photo

## Businessman shot dead in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A young businessman, Sabuj Chowdhury, 30 was shot dead in the city's Segunbagicha area yesterday.

Unidentified gunmen shot at Sabuj while he was coming out of the Public Works Department (PWD) at Segunbagicha by a rickshaw around 1 pm. He was accompanied by one of his friends Sohel.

As the gunmen opened fire indiscriminately, the rickshawpulled, Sonu Mia, 40, also suffered bullet wounds and was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Fatally wounded Sabuj was rushed to the DMCH where he expired at the operation theatre in the evening. Five bullets pierced different parts of his body.

Witnesses said, when Sabuj came out of the building he was waylaid by four gunmen

## Govt refixes some phone, telex charges

By Nazmul Ashraf

The government has reduced the charge for change of names or numbers of telephone subscribers and also readjusted the rate for international telephone calls, competent sources in the Telecommunications Ministry said.

Installation and transfer charges for teleprinter and telex machines have also been substantially lowered.

The ministry in a circular issued recently also recognised the commercial telephone and telex centres in the country by introducing registration fee and deposit money for those.

There was no legal provision in this regard until recently.

According to the ministry sources, the charge for changing name or number of a telephone subscriber has been reduced to Taka 5,000 from Tk 7,500 and the fee for transfer of name from the parents alive to their children to Tk 2,000

string while Akram Khan will captain the hosts.

The week-long meet, which also involves India and Sri Lanka, will, however, not be recognised as an international competition and will thus be exempt from some of the regulations observed in official one-dayers.

This will be the second time

## Oil exploration work in 2 dists from Jan

The California-based multinational company Occidental Petroleum Corporation will begin exploration work in Netrokona and Sylhet districts next month, reports UNB.

A memorandum of understanding to this effect was signed between Occidental and Petrobangla in November this year.

On Tuesday, the Cabinet Committee for Finance and Economic Affairs approved a production sharing contract for exploration and development of blocks 12, 13 and 14, informed sources said.

The company will launch an exploration and development programme in the three blocks in January 1995. Block 12 covers some areas of Netrokona and Sylhet districts and blocks

## Now all rest with PM, Hasina tells rally

SANDWIP, Dec 21: Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina who is campaigning for a non-party caretaker government said today the country could be saved from confrontation only if the Prime Minister gives up her "lust for power," reports UNB.

Addressing a big public meeting at Sandwip New Complex ground, she alleged that the prime minister's intransigence and desire for sticking to power at any cost created the prevailing tangle and conflict in politics.

"Now everything depends on the prime minister," Hasina said just a week before the Opposition's planned resignation from parliament on December 28.

The Awami League President said her current movement was to ensure people's legitimate right to vote and elect an accountable government through free and impartial elections as free polls and security of voter's life are not possible under Begum Zia's government.

"The prime minister is ready to relinquish everything but chair as she knows that if elections are held under caretaker government, it would be difficult for BNP to stage a comeback because of its misrule," she told

## Moitree goes on rampage in Khulna: 4 hurt

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 21: At least four persons were injured and six private cars damaged when a group of the Biplobi Chhatra Moitree activist suddenly went on the rampage in front of the Awami League office this evening.

The injured persons, all pedestrians, were released from Sadar Hospital after first aid.

The incident occurred when a procession of the Chhatra Moitree was passing by the city Awami League office. The procession was brought out to protest an attack on Pradoot Kumar Chaiti, a leader of the Moitree, at Rajshahi University.

Riot police lobbed two tear gas shells to bring the situation under control.

Police arrested three activists of the Chhatra Moitree for hurling cocktails at a police van which, however, did not explode.

In another development, photo-journalist Abdul Gaffar of the local vernacular daily 'Prabaho' was severely injured in an attack by riot police in front of the press club here this evening.

His right hand was frac-

## Shantibahinimen attack patrol

CHITTAGONG, Dec 21: Shantibahinimen have intensified their activities in violation of the ceasefire now in force in Chittagong hill tracts (CHT).

According to official sources, a group of armed Shantibahini men launched a sniper attack on a security patrol yesterday afternoon at Rajanipara area under Lakkichari thana of Khagrachhari district.

An exchange of fire between the two sides followed.

There was however, no casualty. At one stage the attackers fled into deep forest.

Later in the evening the tribal insurgents removed a slab from a bailey bridge near Babuchara bazar under Dighinala thana that caused dislocation in traffic movement there, the sources said.

In another incident late Monday night, Shantibahini kidnapped two brick-field workers from Shasantula area of Dighinala thana and demanded a ransom of Taka one lakh from the brick-field owner reports said. The same night, Shantibahinimen also stormed into the house of a tribal man, Gonja Karbari, and tortured him on charge of collaborating with the administration, official sources said.

Besides trial insurgents have stepped up their toll collection drive in the CHT.

## Pandemonium in Indian parliament

NEW DELHI, Dec 21: The Indian parliament adjourned in pandemonium today as furious opposition deputies seized the floor and demanded that Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao sack ministers accused of corruption, reports AFP.

"Corrupt men quit power," opposition MPs chanted non-stop in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament, forcing Speaker Shivraj Patil to repeatedly call a halt to proceedings.

The Rajya Sabha, the upper house, was adjourned after opposition deputies demanded that the prime minister come to the chamber to personally reply to the allegations of widespread corruption within his administration.

"Corruption will not be allowed," they shouted. "This government will not last."

Ram Vilas Paswan, secretary-general of the centrist Janata Dal Party, said the prime minister had "no moral rights continue in office" and should resign for shielding corrupt members of his cabinet.

Both houses of parliament have been virtually paralysed for a week by a combined opposition offensive against Rao's Congress(I) Party following its rout in recent state assembly elections.

But the prime minister, whose party enjoys a comfortable parliamentary majority, has refused to bow to pressure to oust ministers responsible for a securities swindle and a sugar shortage this year.

The 73-year-old Rao sat by impassively and unruffled in the Lok Sabha as the angry scenes raged around him today.

There is speculation in political circles here that if Rao does eventually concede to carry out a cabinet reshuffle it would not take place until the end of parliament's winter session on Friday.

Calling it a "cover-up", opposition MPs on Wednesday attacked an official report released Tuesday which failed to recommend sanctions against ministers accused of involvement in the 1.3 billion dollar securities swindle.

India's worst financial scandal, the securities scam involved the diversion of public funds to the Bombay stock market by a coterie of officials, bankers and brokers.

The money helped fuel a bull run in the Bombay bourse, India's largest, which eventually collapsed in April 1992, ruining thousands of investors.

## Price hike of foodgrains temporary: Govt

A review meeting to discuss the price position of the essentials, particularly the price of foodgrains, was held in the city yesterday with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair, reports BSS.

The meeting expressed its satisfaction to note that despite good harvest of paddy this year, there had been no case of smuggling of rice across the border. It also noted that the slight increase in the price of foodgrains is only temporary and artificial in nature and the prices is bound to come down within a couple of weeks.

The meeting was informed that the government had substantial stock of food of 6.25 lakh tons including 5 lakh tons of wheat and 1.25 lakh tons of rice. Moreover, two ships carrying 1.60 lakh tons of wheat arrived at the ports which is likely to be unloaded within a

## 'Major reforms needed to make administration effective'

By Staff Correspondent

Politicians, economists and civil servants participating in a dialogue in the city yesterday stressed that the country's administrative machinery needed major reforms but they differed on what changes would have to be made.

A day-long dialogue organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), private think-tank, yesterday focused on various aspects of the administration including politicisation, deteriorating quality and lack of transparency and accountability.

The participants, who also included representatives from the World Bank and various UN organisations, put forward a number of suggestions for making the administration more effective and people-oriented.

Some of the participants in the second session of the dialogue stressed relocating some responsibilities of the government to local levels to enable the central administration to concentrate more on the nationally important issues or

## Hasan Raja festival begins in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 21: A two-day festival commemorating the 138th birth anniversary of the great mystic poet Hasan Raja began this afternoon.

National Professor Dewan Mohammad Azfar formally inaugurated the festival at the Sylhet Auditorium this afternoon, while former state minister Dewan Taimur Raja Chowdhury presided.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Dr Ashraf Siddiqui, Dr Momen Chowdhury and Sabir Ahmed Chowdhury.

The two-day festival programmes include seminar, discussions, presentation of folk songs and reception to Professor Azfar.

## Carter leaves for home Serbs shell Bihac ignoring accord

SARAJEVO, Dec 21: Ignoring a tentative agreement for a holiday cease-fire, Bosnian Serbs and their allies attacked a government-held enclave in northwestern Bosnia, UN officials said today, reports AP.

After two days of shuttle diplomacy, former US President Jimmy Carter said the warring sides supported a temporary truce, starting Friday.

"My hope is that we can soon have a cease-fire, the total disengagement of military forces... all these things have been promised by both sides," he told reporters in Belgrade, the Serbian capital late Tuesday.

Senior UN officials were

## Hope for truce with LTTE fades

COLOMBO, Dec 21: The government's hope for a cease-fire with Tamil rebels before Christmas faded Wednesday as it said it would wait for a response to its proposals from the Tigers before beginning the talks, reports AP.

We have put forward our priority issues. Negotiators will leave when a response arrives," Media Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake told reporters. He did not say what the government's proposals were or when they were sent.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who was elected last month on a pledge to end the war, said last week she was expecting a ceasefire and negotiations before Christmas, after the rebels agreed to a government proposal for a cessation of hostilities.

But the clashes have continued. On Tuesday, the rebels killed a sailor and wounded two others in a mortar attack on the Karainagar naval base.

**NEWS BRIEFS**

**ALCWC meet on Dec 27**  
 An extended meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) will be held on December 27 at the party office at 11 am. Faruq and leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting, reports UNB.

**Dean Rusk dead**  
 ATHENS, Georgia, Dec 21: Former US Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who served under presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, died on Tuesday night at his home here. He was 85. Rusk was secretary of state from 1961-1969 and a primary defender of America's role in the Vietnam War, reports Reuters.