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NEWS BRIEFS

Opposition parties meet today

By Staff Correspondent
Opposition parties in Parliament will be holding a series of meetings today, a day ahead of their planned resignation.

The parliamentary groups of three Opposition parties, the Awami League, Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami, are scheduled to sit separately at 4 pm at the Sangsad Bhavan.

Later, at 6 pm, a combined meeting of the Opposition parties will be held at the Sangsad Bhavan premises where all the MPs will be present.

At 11 am today, an extended meeting of the Awami League's executive committee will be held at its central office at Bangabandhu Avenue with Awami League president and leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Sec 144 imposed

Section-144 has been imposed within 200 yards of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute and Tejgaon Women's College to ensure fair holding of Diploma Engineering examinations yesterday. The restriction on gathering of more than four people in the areas, was imposed by the DMP Commissioner and will remain in force until the examination is over, said a DMP press release, reports UNB.

87 fundamentalists jailed in Turkey

ANKARA, Dec 26: The state security court today sentenced 87 Muslim fundamentalists, accused of carrying out a massacre, to prison sentences ranging from three to 15 years. The court also acquitted 37 other people tried in connection with the burning alive of 37 people in Sivas last year. The court rejected prosecution demands for death sentences against 29 of the 124 defendants, judging them for homicide rather than "crimes against the state," reports AFP.



TEARS OF JOY: Man-of-the-match Aminul Islam Bulbul (second from right) rides on a wave of ecstatic emotion minutes after Bangladesh pulled off an unforgettable one-run victory over India in yesterday's SAARC cricket tournament encounter at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Cricketers do us proud

Sports Reporter

The blues of Bangladesh's ICC Trophy debacle were buried in a delirium of unprecedented euphoria as the country's cricketers pulled off an unforgettable one-run victory against India in a nerve-racking match of the SAARC cricket tournament at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

In a month mixed with the twin memories of pain and pleasure, a milestone in the 23-year old history of the country's cricket was firmly planted when umpire Shakeel Khan upheld a stumping appeal against the last Indian batsman Venkatesh Prasad off

the penultimate ball with the second string Indian national team stranded a run short of Bangladesh's 172 collected earlier in the day.

Cricket became the converging point of diverse affiliations and opinions of a country caught in a welter of political chaos as thousands of spectators — the biggest attendance of the meet so far — flooded the ground to hug and have the feel of their heroes who displayed exemplary team spirit to register the first victory against India in any competition at the international level.

From *sajda* to hysterical

sobbing and dancing in the background of streaming, uncountable national flags made the ground look like a moving myrioscope.

Although the memorable victory, which almost powered

Scoreboard and other details on Pages 10, 11.

Bangladesh to the final of the four-nation meet to design yet another battle with the tournament favourites India in the final on December 29 was a team effort than anything else, man-of-the-match Aminul Islam, medium-pace Anisur Rahman and skipper Akram

Khan produced something they would love to live with for the rest of their lives.

The dark and dapper Aminul Islam, better known as Bulbul, got the top score of the tournament so far. His 64 off 120 balls embellished with four boundaries was the mainstay of Bangladesh's innings once the Indian captain, Test discard Praveen Amre opted to field first after winning the toss.

Left-arm seamer Anisur Rahman, who so unluckily missed the attention of the selectors for the ICC Trophy

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Leaders hopeful of an amicable settlement

By Asiuzzaman

Senior leaders of both the ruling party and the Opposition yesterday hinted that they were close to reaching a consensus to resolve the persisting political impasse before the opposition members' planned resignation.

"The chances are fifty-fifty now," an opposition leader requesting anonymity said.

A senior leader of the ruling party also expressed the hope that something would be worked out today or tomorrow.

Both sides are learnt to be negotiating a formula under which the President would head an interim government during the general elections. The Prime Minister would resign on the date of submitting her nomination papers, along with her cabinet colleagues and would decline any request

from the President to head an interim or caretaker-head government after the dissolution of Parliament.

The President would then form an advisory council for supervising the elections, to be completed in a month or 45 days.

According to legal experts, the idea can be implemented without amending the Constitution.

A senior BNP leader said, the proposal was basically floated by the opposition parties while ruling party MP Shahidul Huq Jamal acted as an intermediary.

Top opposition sources neither declined nor confirmed that it was their proposal.

"Suppose it is our proposal. See Page 12 Col 7

Opposition calls 8-hr hartals on Dec 29, Jan 2-4 if ...

By Staff Correspondent

The opposition parties in Parliament have called eight-hour hartals on December 29 and on January 2, 3 and 4.

Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim said at a press briefing yesterday.

Hartal will be observed countrywide on December 29 and in Dhaka from January 2 to 4 (6 am to 2 pm), Nasim said.

The action programmes were finalised at a meeting of opposition leaders with Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in the chair at her Parliament office.

But, Nasim said, hartals will not be enforced if the ruling party accepts the Opposition demand for a caretaker government to hold elections by today (Tuesday). The people

See Page 12 Col 8

GF proposes 'govt of national consensus'

By Staff Correspondent

Gano Forum has proposed amendments to the Constitution provide for a government of national consensus to end the persisting political stand-off.

The proposal was made at a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The GF said that such a national government should be formed for the next two terms of Parliament (10 years), proportionately represented by all the parties in Parliament with the prime minister from the majority party in the House and the deputy prime minister from the second largest party.

About the formation of the proposed national government, the forum said each party in Parliament, should be offered one cabinet post for every 10 MPs and the parties should

See Page 12 Col 3

We want solution thru' discussion: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said yesterday that the problem created by the Opposition could be solved through discussions and not by resignation from Parliament, reports BSS.

"We want solution of any problem through discussions... Our doors are open for discussion," she said, urging the opposition MPs to reconsider their threats of resigning.

Resignation from Parliament can not solve their self created problem, she said.

"It can not bring any positive result, rather it is a negative thinking," Begum Zia added.

The Prime Minister was addressing a gathering of more than ten thousand people who assembled at her Hare Road office on the occasion of former JSD and Gano Forum leader Shahjahan Siraj joining

the BNP. The Prime Minister said as per its commitment to respect the people's verdict the BNP government would take all necessary steps to maintain the democratic process and uphold the Constitution.

Reiterating her stance to solve all problems within the constitutional framework, the Prime Minister said that the BNP government would continue to respect the people's verdict and perform its due responsibilities.

Begum Zia said that the BNP government had shown much tolerance because it believes in democratic practices and had given the Opposition enough opportunities to help strengthen the democratic process.

Calling upon the Opposition to refrain from destructive ac-

See Page 12 Col 7

Haji policy approved

The Cabinet yesterday approved the Haji policy for 1995 with provisions allowing up to 1.5 lakh pilgrims from Bangladesh to perform next Hajj, reports UNB.

The approval was given at the regular weekly Cabinet meeting held at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The government has arranged accommodation for 3,323 Hajis near the Haram Sharif. The total cost of performing Hajj under government management will remain the same as that of last year at Tk 83,815 per head.

See Page 12 Col 7

Ceasefire in CHT extended till Mar 31

From Staff Correspondent

DUDUKCHWARI (Khagrachhari), Dec 26: The Shantibahini leaders and the government agreed to extend the ceasefire in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) until March 31, 1995, in an effort to continue the talks for resolving the long-standing tribal problem. The truce now in force there is due to expire on December 31.

The agreement came at the talks held today between the leaders of Shantibahini and the parliamentary sub-committee.

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Shahjahan Siraj joins BNP

Gano Forum leader Shahjahan Siraj MP joined the ruling BNP yesterday, pledging to undo any conspiracy to destroy the hard-earned democracy and to work for implementing BNP's people-oriented programmes, reports UNB.

Amidst thunderous applause of about 10 thousand people in the premises of the Prime Minister's official residence at Hare Road, he expressed his allegiance to the leadership of BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia.

He presented a bouquet to Prime Minister Begum Zia who attended the function as chief guest as the cheering BNP supporters greeted him with welcome slogans.

"I'm joining the BNP not only for political reasons but also for fighting the forces who are disrupting the country's economic development by means of their undemocratic activities," said the former JSD leader.

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Commentary

An appeal to our leaders

By Mahfuz Anam

We appeal to our two leaders — Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina — not to throw the country, and its 120 million peace-loving and simple people into a severe political and economic crisis. We know you both love

this country. We also know that you both have made great sacrifice and suffered personal hardship, both physical and emotional, for the sake of this very land. Therefore, how can you both stand by and watch this country fall into utter chaos.

We know each of you will blame the other, and you will do so with your own well-woven arguments. But please remember, our people will blame you both for creating the deadlock and pushing us into this uncertain future.

We wish we could convey to you the anxiety, the concern, the fear and the severe sense of despondency with which the people of this country are watching you both. Literally thousands of people, in the last two days, have called us or asked us to know if you both have found any solution. We tell you frankly, that as these people made their inquiries, they did not have very kind words

for either of you. Leaders in other countries inspire, enthuse, energize, encourage and take forward their people. In our country you both seem to frighten, impede, discourage, demoralise and push us backward. If there was a

See Page 12 Col 1



Begum Khaleda Zia



Sheikh Hasina

Plane stormed, 4 hijackers killed

MARSEILLE (France), Dec 26: French special forces today stormed an Air France plane hijacked in Algeria over the weekend, killing four hijackers who commandeered the plane, police reported, says AP.

It was not clear if there was a fifth hijacker on board the plane as had been previously reported.

Reporters monitoring police radio said the co-pilot was reported killed. But that report could not be immediately confirmed. The assault left the pilot, three passengers and one of the security forces wounded.

The hijackers killed a fourth hostage and dumped

the body out of the plane, and also directed gunfire at the control tower, apparently triggering the assault which began on Christmas Eve when Islamic gunmen commandeered the plane in Algiers.

Dramatic television footage showed security forces storming the plane at 5:20 pm (1620 GMT), setting off an explosion amid an exchange of gunfire.

Live television showed two white flashes followed by smoke coming from the rear of the jetliner, hijacked by Islamic gunmen. Fire engines and ambulances rushed to the plane as it stood on the tarmac of Marseille's airport.

Commandos dressed in black rushed up staircases alongside the right side of the plane, pointing weapons inside. There were at least two blasts in the jetliner's cockpit.

One man was seen clambering out of the cockpit window and falling to the ground. He got, clutching one arm, and limped away.

A few moments later inflatable emergency slides were deployed on both sides of the plane. Passengers started sliding down and were escorted away with their hands up.

Officials at the airport said that was in order to conduct strict identity checks so that no additional hijackers would

slip away in the confusion.

Sixty-five passengers had been freed in the course of the drama that began Saturday.

Three people, a Frenchman, a Vietnamese and an Algerian policeman were killed since the start of the hijacking.

France announced that it has suspended all sea and air links with Algeria because of the hijacking. Transport Minister Bernard Bosson said the move was temporary but gave no other explanation.

The hijackers, at least one of which belongs to the radical Armed Islamic Group, had demanded earlier Monday a news conference in exchange for liberating passengers

Withheld results of Dhaka Board HSC exams to be published today

By Masud Arif

The withheld results of nearly three thousand examinees of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations of the Dhaka Board are to be announced today.

Seven new names are likely to be added to the three separate combined merit lists, an official source said last night.

The results of these students were withheld due to some faults in the tabulation process when the results were released on December 20.

A government announcement yesterday said the examinees can have their results from their respective colleges at 11 am today.

However, the withheld results of many others of the three education boards — Comilla, Jessore and Rajshahi — are yet to be finalised.

Many of the examinees whose results were withheld are learnt to have secured star marks.

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