

Air raids on Grozny called off, claims Moscow

MOSCOW, Dec 26: Russia has called off its air raids against the rebel Chechen capital Grozny for the time being, a high-ranking official in the Defense Ministry said here today, reports AFP.

Air strikes were aimed at wiping out 'groups of bandits, tanks and ammunition dumps,' said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Another report says, the fighting for Argun intensified today despite an order from President Boris Yeltsin to suspend all military operations, with Russian tanks, artillery and snipers closing in on Chechen forces defending the strategic town.

Yeltsin said it was now possible to end the three-year crisis, but he insisted the region was part of Russia, news reports said.

Chechen defenders were separated from the Russians, sent on December 11 to crush the mostly Muslim republic's independence drive, by as little as 600 metres to a kilometre.

The air rang constantly with the thunder and percussion of the Russian artillery and tanks, the hammer of machine guns and the crack of sniper fire.

The Russian side opened up with big guns at 3:00 am today after only sporadic fighting Sunday.

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Appeal to leaders

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genuine opinion polling system in the country today, you both would know how utterly disgusted people are with your bickering, mutual abuse, negative politics, lawlessness, misgovernment, broken promises, state-controlled electronic media, boycotting Parliament, frequent hartals, impeding regular productive activities in our mills and factories, patronising violence, keeping armed cadres in your student wings, putting personal and party interest above the country's, and failing to understand what the people want. As you see, the list is long, and is getting longer by the day.

Recently a UN study has shown that only 9 per cent of our children get adequate nutrition between the ages of 1 to 2. Don't you both feel ashamed that you are leaders of a country where 91 per cent of the children are below the nutrition level, and a majority of them are so chronically undernourished that they are stunted for life by the age of five? Did you both have time to read the report that said we are the **ONLY** country in the **WORLD** where people are actually growing shorter, while in the rest, they are growing taller? Do you know that the **average IQ** of our people is **going down**? Do you realise that the people, you both are fighting so hard to lead, are suffering so much, just as you both quarrel?

But with all the disadvantages, with all the problems and resource constraints, with all the disruptions, our people are forging ahead. After being in shacks for decades, our private sector is for the first time poised to make significant strides. International investors are already favourably inclined to come here, and are waiting and watching the latest political developments.

Our farmers are already producing much more than they did ever before, and we are on the brink of food-self-sufficiency. Our private development partners are setting superb examples of development activities which the world is emulating.

Much has happened. **And much more can happen. Only if you both allow them to happen.** And here comes the question of true leadership. I appreciate very much all that the Opposition has done to bring to the public agenda, the question of free and fair election. But can elections, however central and critical, be more important than our very economic survival? Isn't China postponing many of its democratic reforms for the sake of economic growth and greater grassroots-level prosperity of the people?

On the other hand we also understand the concern for constitutional continuity and to maintain the forms and etiquette of parliamentary government. But can such concerns ever be more important than peace, and political harmony? Especially when that peace and harmony can be gained by a simple personal

Attack on brother: Sister gets bail

By Court Correspondent

Nasim Banu, arrested on Sunday allegedly for bursting into her brother's Dhanmondi residence along with some hired gunmen, was released on bail yesterday.

The gunmen reportedly shot and wounded one Rintu Mahmood in the house of Banu's brother Waker Hossain at West Dhanmondi.

Dhanmondi police arrested Nasim Banu and produced her before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka, who granted the bail on a bond of Tk 25,000 yesterday after the prosecution failed to furnish any supporting papers regarding the seriousness of the injured's condition.

HSC results

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The computer centre of the Engineering University (BU-ET), the services of which were utilised for the publication of the HSC results, earlier on Thursday said that there were at least ten causes for withholding of the results.

Sources said, the Dhaka Board authorities replied to the queries of the computer centre Saturday night. But the replies of the other three boards are yet to be received by the computer centre.

The results of around two per cent examinees of the Dhaka Board and roughly three per cent of the three other boards were withheld.

It was learnt that a large number of students who were shown absent in the attendance registers of the examination centres were not actually absent. The results of those students were withheld.

Besides, according to sources, a number of students who got 70 or 80 per cent marks in some subjects, got failing marks in the practical examinations. Results of those examinees were also withheld.

20 injured as launches collide

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 26: At least 20 people were injured, three of them seriously, when two launches collided on the river Shitalakha around noon yesterday.

The Narayanganj-bound MV Nazmul-Haq, which was coming from Sureshar, Faridpur, collided with the ML Shahana which left Narayanganj for Taltola, Munshiganj near Sonakanda around 12 noon.

Hajj policy

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A 53-member medical mission will be at hand to serve the Bangladeshi pilgrims in Saudi Arabia, according to the policy.

The Cabinet also approved the public holiday list of next year (1995). It also approved the draft bills of Merchant Shipping Ordinance (Amendment) 1994 and Bangladesh T&T Board Ordinance (Amendment) 1994.



Shahjahan Siraj, MP, presenting a bouquet to BNP chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on the occasion of his formally joining BNP at a ceremony held at the Prime Minister's Hare Road office yesterday.

— PID photo

Prokrichi strike from tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

A two-day work stoppage of the country's professionals, called by the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council, starts Wednesday.

The strike, called to enforce implementation of the 17-point charter of demands by the Prokrichi members, exempts emergency, medical services, utility services, police and Ansars, postal and customs department officials, and the school and college teachers on examination duties.

The decision to go ahead with the strike, programme was finalised yesterday at a meeting of the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council, platform of some 70 thousand doctors, engineers, agriculturists and members of 26 non-administrative cadres.

The Prokrichi members are campaigning for overhauling of the existing bureaucracy, separation of the judiciary from the administration and other professional demands.

Demand for enlisting slum dwellers as voters

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Homeless Welfare Association yesterday demanded of the government to 'restore' voting rights of 20 lakh slum dwellers in Dhaka.

In a memorandum submitted to the Chief Election Commissioner, the leaders of the association called for enlisting the slum dwellers as voters for future elections.

Earlier, the association brought out a procession from its Mirpur head office and marched to the Election Commission (EC) office at Agargaon in the capital.

The responsibility of preparing the voters list primarily rests with the government, the memorandum pointed out. Any attempt to leave the slum dwellers out of the electoral process was a violation of their rights, it added.

A voters' list prepared by the EC in September 1992 excluded the slum-dwellers of Dhaka.

As a result, these people could not exercise their franchise in the last city corporation polls.

Gano Forum

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have the right to be or not to be represented in the cabinet.

The GF proposal readout at the rally by Advocate Zahirul Islam, noted that the political parties and the people of South Africa had evolved constitutional provisions for a national government to rebuild their country.

A GF declaration which contained the formula called upon all political parties and individuals concerned to actively consider it. "Only a national government could rid the nation of the present crisis," it said.

Referring to the major opposition parties' demand for a caretaker government to conduct general elections, the declaration said only a caretaker administration could not ensure fair elections. For free and fair polls, the Election Commission should be independent and have the authority to punish the poll offenders and introduce a code of conduct for the political parties.

Addressing the rally, GF chief Dr Kamal Hossain urged the two top leaders (the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition) to evolve an effective method, through a dialogue, for ensuring free and fair polls.

About the Opposition's threatened resignation from Parliament, Dr Kamal said, "resignation is not the solution. Rather such an action would lead the nation towards chaos. The nation would resist such a move, he added.

The rally was also addressed by Mostafa Mohsin Montu.

A procession was brought out later.

DSE gaining confidence of the investors'

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) held its 33rd annual general meeting yesterday with a pledge to improve the functioning of the institution.

The major decisions of the meeting, chaired by DSE Chairman Khurshid Alam, included computerisation of the trading system by next year, introduction of custodian arrangements and measures to improve the quality of brokers.

According to sources, members of the DSE also discussed the possibility of shifting its office to a bigger building in the city in view of the increased volume of trade. The meeting decided to seek government help in implementing its decisions.

The meeting observed that tremendous confidence has been created among the local and foreign investors in the future of the stock market. The confidence would have to be strengthened further and maintained by improving the services of the institution, the

meeting said, adding for this, members of the DSE would have to be more professional both in terms of attitude and efficiency.

Vice Chairman of the DSE Imtiyaz Hussain, talking to The Daily Star last night, said that for the DSE, the most important thing is to improve the functioning of the institution.

There are allegations against some of the members of the DSE of being non-professional in dealing with the investors, he said, adding that this erodes the confidence of the investors not only in the particular members, but also in the institution as a whole.

"We have to become more trustworthy to the investors by being more professional," the DSE Vice Chairman said.

Some 163 securities of 154 companies are presently listed with the DSE, the market capitalisation of which crossed the one billion dollar mark for the first time last month.

According to DSE sources, the market capitalisation increased almost five times this year compared to that of 1991. During the time, the turnover of shares increased ten times, and the price index about three times.

A number of leading international firms have also got involved in the DSE as it is growing as a big share market. The money injected by the firms this year in the DSE is over 200 million US dollars, the sources said.

Settle political crisis, urges FBCCI chief

SYLHET, Dec 26: FBCCI president Salman F Rahman today urged politicians to come to a settlement to end the current political crisis to ensure and enabling environment for business in the country, reports UNB.

"Business community will be the first victim of any unrest arising from the current political uncertainty. The country's leadership should come to a settlement considering the business community's grievance," he said.

Salman made the plea at a discussion meeting with leaders of Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) who accorded him a reception on his election as FBCCI president.

He said the business community have been playing a neutral role in the current political scene, but as tax payers and creator of employment opportunities they have the right to speak.

Comparing Bangladesh's situation with neighbouring India and Pakistan, Rahman pointed out Bangladesh enjoyed the advantage of being a homogeneous country in the Sub-continent. "But we are now heading for a great crisis,"



Chandrika on secret visit to Maldives

COLOMBO, Dec 26: President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who drew considerable criticism in September for leaving the country without informing her government, left for the Maldives today on a secret four-day visit, reports AP.

The presidential secretariat said Chandrika Kumaratunga is on vacation and does not know her whereabouts.

Chandrika was widely criticised by the press in September for visiting Singapore while she was Prime Minister without informing then-President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga or her cabinet.

The Maldives is an Indian Ocean nation of several hundred islands, 730 kilometres west of Sri Lanka.

Asked by reporters last month if she would continue her secret trips abroad, she replied that she would.

"I believe I have the right to a private holiday without the press and high security. I didn't lose my right to privacy when I became president," she said.



Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng (R) accompanied by General Than Shwe (L) reviews an honour guard upon arrival in Yangon yesterday on a three-day official visit for talks with the leaders of Myanmar's military junta to cement economic and political ties.

— AFP photo

Nominations for Barisal, Sylhet poura polls filed

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 26: Six candidates today submitted nomination papers for the Barisal Pourashava chairman elections.

The election will be held on January 22 after eight years. Ninety-nine candidates submitted nomination papers for 30 ward commissioner posts of the 10 unions under the Pourashava.

The chairman candidates are: Ahsan Habib Kamal (BNP), Golam Moula (JP), Mahbuddin Ahmed (AL), Hannan Chowdhury (Freedom Party), Alamgir Khan Alo (Ind) and Mursheed Mahub Olim (Ind).

Some 87,955 voters including 38,467 women are expected to vote in this election. The last pourashava election was held in 1986.

Sylhet

Meanwhile, sixteen candidates for chairman and 209 for ward commissioners today filed their nominations to contest the Sylhet Pourashava election scheduled for January 22.

The last date for withdrawal of nomination papers is January 2.

Cricketers

From Page 1 Col 5

team in Kenya last February, raised his tally to ten wickets from three matches. After providing an early breakthrough the young seamer struck two vital blows to bring Bangladesh back into the game at a time the Indians were steadily progressing in quest of their third victory in the week-long meet.

Although the burly Akram Khan, assigned to lead Bangladesh for the first time, failed with the bat yet he more than amended his tactical oversights during that cliff-hanger against Pakistan on the inaugural day, in a brilliant cerebral stroke he changed his mind to let pacer Saiful bowl the last over and handed the ball instead to slow left-arm spinner Md Rafiq, one of the debutants in the team.

The young spinner, who switched from pace to spin in the last two years, responded admirably after being summoned to perform an unenviable task of bowling the last over.

Bangladesh, who bounced back splendidly in this meet after that one-wicket loss by beating Sri Lanka by five wickets in their second game, raised their fielding to adrenalin-pumping standards and the Indian batting line-up, which contained at least half a dozen players with exposure at the highest level of the game for the national team, found it extremely difficult to penetrate the field. And everytime they aired the ball to break the vice-like grip of the fielders, the catches were taken with a degree of maturity, surety and tranquillity never seen before.

Al-Shahriar Rokon took two important catches to dismiss a doughty Vikram Rathore and Test discard Amre, with the second being an extremely good one under the circumstances.

Young Sajal Chowdhury gobbed up the dangerous looking Atul Bedade, who had announced murderous intentions with a huge sixer following a disdainful boundary. The little pace bowler showed immense patience and judgement as the skier seemed to be coming eternally towards him right on the deep square-leg fence.

If any Indian has the right to rue yesterday's result it was surely the sturdy and tall paceman Prashant Valdia, engaged in a serious campaign to win an Indian cap.

Not only did he bowl superbly in the slog overs to capture three wickets but also showed admirable control over his nerves in making 22 quick runs, playing a potentially match winning knock that was pathetically cut short by Akram Khan's direct throw from mid-wind.

The more cynic patriots may hold the last word in praise for the day the Bangladesh national team beats a full-strength Indian team, but then, a win is a win is a win.

CHT truce

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at Dudukchhari border village under Panchhari thana, about 40 kms from Khagrachhari town.

The sub-committee headed by Rashed Khan Menon, MP, includes Kalparanjan Chakma, MP, Shahjahan Chowdhury, MP and some officials while the four-member Shantibahini team led by Shanto Larma, president of the Parbatyati Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), parent organisation of tribal rebels, includes Rupayan Dewan, Gautam Chakma and Sudhasindhu Khisa.

The three-and-a-half-hour-long meeting began at 11 am inside a bamboo-made house where both sides had detailed discussions on the demands placed by the Shantibahini leaders.

The Midnight File

Nepal wants fresh talks with India

KATHMANDU, Dec 26: Nepal wants fresh talks with India to win more benefits from a controversial hydroelectric project that straddles their Himalayan border. Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikary said today. "We will have to resume talks with India on the Tanakpur project with the interest and sovereignty of Nepal on our minds," said Adhikary, leader of the newly-elected minority communist government, reports Reuter.

Troops storm army HQ in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Dec 26: Hundreds of discharged soldiers stormed into the Army Headquarters on this nation's capital Monday morning to demand back payments. Gen Brigadier Mondefr Beaufrun, who barricaded himself in his office, told The Associated Press he fired his gun toward the soldiers in self-defence and believes he hit at least one soldier, reports AP.

Leaders hopeful

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But what is their reaction? One senior Opposition leader questioned. He said, "It is immaterial who made the proposal; the point is whether we would accept it or reject it."

When contacted over telephone, Shahidul Huq Jamal told The Daily Star "I am hopeful about an amicable solution."

Jamal held another 90-minute long talks with the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence.

The ruling party MP, who is also Chairman of the Red Crescent Society, reportedly had fruitful talks with Sheikh Hasina.

Jamal later informed BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar about the outcome of his talks.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali and Jamal reportedly held another round of meeting with the Prime Minister at her cantonment residence late last night.

In a related development, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad held a brief meeting with Prime Minister Begum Zia at the Bangabhaban just before the start of the weekly cabinet meeting.

Samad Azad, along with Amir Hossain Amu, went to Bangabhaban to invite President Abdur Rahman Biswas to the wedding of Sheikh Hasina Wajed's daughter. The marriage ceremony is scheduled for January 3.

According to Opposition sources, Begum Zia wanted to know the Opposition's mind about the latest negotiatory bid. The Opposition deputy leader reportedly sounded a positive note, the source

Prime Minister

From Page 1 Col 7

activities for the sake of the country and the people, the Prime Minister said the government could not allow anyone to push the country towards destruction.

If necessary, she said, the government would take strict measures to deal with any situation in future.

added.

According to a late night report, Speaker Razzak Ali and Shahidul Huq Jamal had a meeting, with a senior Opposition leader. It could not, however, be confirmed by any independent source.

Sources in both the ruling party and the Opposition said that if they finally reached a consensus, the Prime Minister and the Opposition leaders would hold a joint meeting to announce the decision.

Another ruling party source, however, hinted that the PM might address the nation to explain the whole matter.

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar told The Daily Star that parleys were continuing yesterday and hoped things may take some concrete shape today.

He declined to elaborate. Meanwhile, ruling party stalwarts and the opposition parties will hold separate meetings to discuss the situation and the progress of negotiation at the Sangsad Bhaban today.

Hartals

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still hoped that the Prime Minister would accept the demand in the greater interest of the country, he added.

Nasim said the opposition parties would have no alternative but to start all-out agitations if the ruling party ignored their demand till the last moment.

"A confrontation is almost inevitable," he said.

The Opposition agitation is not aimed at dislodging any government or any individual. Its objective is to establish a caretaker government to supervise the general elections to make it free and fair, he said.

Nasim urged the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board to shift the date of the SAARC cricket match scheduled for December 29.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Awami League leaders Salauddin Yusuf, Tofael Ahmed and Suranjit Sengupta, Jatiya Party's Moudud Ahmed, Advocate Fazle Rabbi and Monirul Huq Chowdhury and Jamaat-e-Islami's Matur Rahman Nazami were present at the meeting.

বই হোক নিত্যসঙ্গী

জাতীয় গ্রন্থদিবস উপলক্ষে
জাতীয় গ্রন্থকেন্দ্রের উদ্যোগে

১-১৫ জানুয়ারি ১৯৯৫

ঢাকা বইমেলা '৯৫

প্রতিদিন বিকাল ২টা থেকে রাত ৮টা
(ছুটির দিন সকাল ১১টা থেকে রাত ৮টা)

স্থান : বিজয় সরণি সংলগ্ন মাঠ

প্রবেশ মূল্য ২ টাকা

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