

## Hasina's last formula

From Page 1 Col 8  
would be to conduct free and fair elections.

According to the formula, simultaneously announced by two other opposition parties — the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami — from their separate rallies in the city on the day, the interim government would be dissolved with the appointment of a new prime minister after the elections were held, under Article 65(3) of the Constitution. The new framework would be ratified by the next elected Parliament.

After announcing the formula, Hasina urged the audience for their consent. Thousands raised their hands to say 'yes'.

She then declared, "After our resignation from Parliament we'll move for a single demand — the resignation of the government of Begum Khaleda Zia to ensure fair elections, under a non-party caretaker administration."

At this stage, the Awami League chief asked her audience to raise the slogan "Ours is only demand: departure of Begum Zia" at the top of their voice. She also called for carrying forward the Opposition agitation including today's nationwide half-day hartal, tomorrow's demonstrations throughout the country and similar hartals on January 2, 3 and 4 in the capital.

Hasina said she had given enough concessions and tried their best to reach a consensus

with the BNP government to resolve the persisting political impasse. But the Prime Minister's lust for power and her "government's obstinacy had forced the Opposition MPs to resign on expiry of the December 27 deadline.

The AL leader said that the Opposition had changed its previous stand and agreed to the formula that the Prime Minister and her cabinet colleagues would resign with the announcement of the election schedule and the President would run the administration with the help of an advisory council only for the sake of peace and stability in the country.

She announced that her party would launch a one-point movement from today demanding ouster of the Khaleda government and for restoring people's franchise and ensuring peace, progress and stability in the country.

Hasina also accused the BNP government of oppressing opposition political activists, denying people's fundamental rights, politicising the administration, running the country inefficiently, interfering into the judiciary, denying the right to seek justice and breaking all pledges including that for scrapping the Indemnity Ordinance, violating its accords with different groups and making the sovereign elected Parliament ineffective.

The rally was also addressed by party leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman and Mohammad Nasim.

## Unfolding drama

From Page 1 Col 2  
the negotiation process.

A TV crew was called to the office and the PM's speech was even reportedly recorded. Deputy Director General of BTV Mostafa Kamal Syed was also seen at the PM's office.

On the other hand, the opposition leaders held a meeting with their leader Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence.

Sheikh Hasina and some other Opposition leaders entered the Parliament building around 4:45 pm where they finalised their draft framework for handing over power to a caretaker government.

Hasina left the Sangsad Bhaban at about 5:15 to address the party rally at Manik Miah Avenue from where the Awami League leaders returned to the Parliament again to submit their resignation letters to the Speaker.

At about 5:40 Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali left the Prime Minister's office for Parliament. The last and final phase of the abortive negotiations, which were to have concluded with the signing of a formal agreement between the two opposing camps, started at that time.

The correspondence between the two sides was mainly carried out over cordless, cellular and, at times, red telephones.

At around 7:15pm Hasina, along with some other leaders, entered the Speaker's chamber to submit the resignations, but the Speaker led them to his "call-room" for another round of talks.

After several rounds of telephonic conversation, a three-member government team comprising Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdus Salam Talukdar and Oli Ahmed came to the parliament, reportedly to sign the agreement with the opposition parties.

But the talks broke down in the very last minute and the ruling party leaders left the building around 9:10 pm, telling newsmen present that they would address a press conference immediately at the PM's Tejgaon office to explain their position.

The Opposition MPs then submitted their resignations. The respective party whips of the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat submitted the identically worded letters to Razzak Ali.

## JP : Agitation

From Page 1 Col 5  
party with the strength of its majority in the House.

Regarding the ruling party's contention that the Opposition demand for a caretaker government was "illegal", the JP leader said pointed out that the BNP itself came to power through polls under a caretaker government.

"What was legal for BNP cannot be illegal for others. Caretaker government was now termed illegal because BNP wanted to win the elections by rigging," the JP leader said.

JP parliamentary group leader Moudud Ahmed said their party had taken the decision of resigning from Parliament to ensure voting rights of the people.

He said resigning from Parliament was a great sacrifice on the part of the opposition members for establishing democracy and giving democracy an institutional shape.

Party central leader Shah Moazzem Hossain said resignation by the opposition MPs would be an unprecedented incident in the history of the country.

Kazi Zafar Ahmed said the movement of the JP from now on would be to remove the "corrupt and inefficient" government from power.

Presided over by city JP President Col (Retd) Abdul Malek, the rally was also addressed by, among others, party Secretary General Khaledur Rahman Tito, Abdus Salam, Saifur Rahman, Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar and party MPs Advocate Fazle Rabbi, Manirul Huq Chowdhury, Khurram Khan Chowdhury and Maksud Ibne Aziz.

leaders of the BNP. Commenting on the BNP's latest position he said they had shifted from the position they had during the Commonwealth-brokered talks.

About the government conditions for the Opposition demand, Samad Azad said: "They failed to show minimum courtesy to the Opposition. They ignored the demand of the Opposition MPs representing 69 per cent of the voters."

Moudud Ahmed said the opposition legislators' resignation aimed at realising people's voting rights was a noble task which would be a milestone in nation's history.

"We, as part of our effort to save the nation from a confrontation, abstained from submitting resignation letters even after the deadline and shifted from our original position. But the government's disgraceful condition forced our sincere effort," he said.

Matiur Rahman Nizami said the Opposition MPs' resignation was an expression of "no-confidence in the fifth Parliament and the BNP government and both had now lost their legitimacy."

He said the government had failed to realise the consequence of en masse resignation by the Opposition MPs.

## Earthquake kills two in Japan

TOKYO, Dec 28: A major earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale hit northern Japan today killing at least two people and injuring scores, reports AFP.

Roads were closed and trains stopped, while several small tidal waves hit the coast, reports said.



Secretary general of the BNP Abdus Salam Talukdar addressing a press conference at the International Conference Hall in the city yesterday. Deputy Leader of Parliament A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury and Works Minister Rafiqul Islam are also seen. — Star photo

## Opposition agreed but backed out

From Page 1 Col 3

der Chowdhury, MP phoned us at around 8:45 pm yesterday that the opposition parties were agreed on the government proposal.

"But when Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, Col Oli Ahmed and I went to the Parliament and read out the proposal before signing, the opposition leaders rejected the proposal and submitted their resignations," Talukdar said.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina was present at the meeting, held at the "Call-On Room" of the Speaker.

In reply to a question, Talukdar said that the BNP will follow the Constitution to tackle the situation arising out of the Opposition action.

The Constitution suggests by-election to the vacant seats or fresh election after dissolving Parliament.

The ruling party would take a decision on the matter later on, he added.

Talukdar, also the LGRD and Cooperatives Minister, described the resignation of the Opposition members from parliament as "unfortunate for the nation."

"We have tried our best to prevent the opposition members from resigning from Parliament," he told the crowded press conference.

Narrating the long proceedings of negotiations between the Opposition and the government leaders at various levels, the BNP Secretary General referred to the latest BNP proposal under which Prime Minister and her cabinet shall resign 30 days before the date of elections at the end of the five-year term provided the opposition MPs do not resign and suspend all programmes like hartals and sieges, he said.

"The BNP made this proposal beyond the constitutional provision for the greater interest of the nation and democracy," he said.

During the press conference Deputy Leader of the House Prof. A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Education Minister Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar, Food Minister Meer Shawkat Ali, Energy Minister Dr. Mosharraf Hossain and State Minister for Social Welfare Fazlur Rahman were among others present.

## Mahmudul Hasan

From Page 1 Col 4

"I myself have submitted Mahmudul Hasan's resignation letter to the Speaker in the evening," Mizan told UNB by phone with a note of exclamation after watching on television the floorcrossing of Mahmudul Hasan.

He said all the MPs of his party had submitted their resignation letters to him few days ago on the JP presidium decision to resign if the government did not accept the Opposition demand for holding elections under a neutral caretaker government.

"Moreover," Mizan said, "I have also verified Mahmudul Hasan's signature along with the other MPs before submitting it to the Speaker."

He said there is no such provision as per the Constitution that an individual member would have to submit his resignation to the Speaker. Article 67 (2) of the Constitution says "under his signature", but not by signature," Mizan pointed out when asked about the procedure of resignation.

racy," he said.

Barrister Talukdar pointed out that the Opposition had waged their struggle in the name of free and fair elections but in fact they do not want free and fair elections. Rather, they only wanted to "destroy democracy and disrupt the economic development of the people."

Replying to a question, Talukdar said that the government would take all steps to ensure the safety of the lives and property of the people.

To a questioner, the BNP Secretary General said no administrative and legal crisis would be created after the resignation of the Opposition MPs.

He said that the government would continue its activities and take steps as per the Constitution and the law of the land.

He said two Bills had been passed in Parliament, strengthening the Election Commission and introducing the provision for identity cards for voters so that future national polls could be free and fair. He said even after such legislative steps, the Prime Minister and her cabinet agreed to the one-sentence proposal of opposition leader Mohammad Nasim that the cabinet would resign a month before the day of holding of polls in the greater national interest.

Earlier, Communications Minister Col (retd) Oli Ahmed, Housing and Public Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Chairman Shahidul Huq Jamal, MP narrated the entire process of negotiations at various levels between the ruling party and the opposition during the last few days.

During the press conference Deputy Leader of the House Prof. A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Education Minister Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar, Food Minister Meer Shawkat Ali, Energy Minister Dr. Mosharraf Hossain and State Minister for Social Welfare Fazlur Rahman were among others present.

The Communications Minister dwelt at length on the entire process of negotiations with the Opposition, including telephone conversations with Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, Abdus Samad Azad, Mohammad Nasim, A S M Firoz, Salaudun Quader Chowdhury, Rafiqul Islam and KM Jahangir.

Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia also narrated the talks with the Opposition, including those with Matiur Rahman, Nizami of the Jamaat and Mohammad Nasim of the Awami League.

Shahidul Huq Jamal referred to his talks with Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and others.

The BNP Secretary General said: "We had enacted the 12th constitutional amendment to establish an accountable and transparent parliamentary government. We wanted to strengthen democracy and constitutional rule in the country."

He lamented that the Opposition's disruptive programmes were designed to make Parliament ineffective.

He referred to the positive signs of economic development, including the vibrant activities of the stock exchange, the highest ever foreign exchange reserves, increased volume of exports and said the BNP wanted peace, discipline and economic development.

Blasting the Opposition's shifting stances, the LGRD Minister said: "For the last three days we had tried to accommodate the Opposition's various proposals.

"The perspective and the language of the Opposition proposals changed every five minutes in the last hours before the resignation," he said, giving the details of the dialogue proceedings between the government and the Opposition since it started in June.

Members of Parliament of the major opposition parties resigned yesterday after the last attempt of negotiations with the ruling party failed.

One hundred and forty-seven MPs of the 330-member Parliament yesterday submitted their resignations to the Speaker at his Sangsad office.

Awami League whip Azzur Rahman submitted 93 resignation letters of the party MPs to Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali at 9:13 pm, Rahman was followed by the Jatiya Party's Munirul Huq Chowdhury who submitted 34 similar letters to the Speaker. The Jamaat-e-Islami's Latifur Rahman submitted 19 letters while NDP leader Salaudun Quader Chowdhury personally handed in his resignation to the Speaker.

The resignation letter of JP chief, former president H M Ershad, who was convicted and is now in jail, was not submitted yesterday.

However, the Workers' Party's Rashed Khan Menon, Gano Forum's Shamsuddoha and the Islami Oikya Jote's Maulana Obaidul Huq did not resign nor were they present at the time of the mass resignation.

He lamented that the Opposition's disruptive programmes were designed to make Parliament ineffective.

He referred to the positive signs of economic development, including the vibrant activities of the stock exchange, the highest ever foreign exchange reserves, increased volume of exports and said the BNP wanted peace, discipline and economic development.

Blasting the Opposition's shifting stances, the LGRD Minister said: "For the last three days we had tried to accommodate the Opposition's various proposals.

"The perspective and the language of the Opposition proposals changed every five minutes in the last hours before the resignation," he said, giving the details of the dialogue proceedings between the government and the Opposition since it started in June.

Members of Parliament of the major opposition parties resigned yesterday after the last attempt of negotiations with the ruling party failed.

One hundred and forty-seven MPs of the 330-member Parliament yesterday submitted their resignations to the Speaker at his Sangsad office.

Awami League whip Azzur Rahman submitted 93 resignation letters of the party MPs to Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali at 9:13 pm, Rahman was followed by the Jatiya Party's Munirul Huq Chowdhury who submitted 34 similar letters to the Speaker. The Jamaat-e-Islami's Latifur Rahman submitted 19 letters while NDP leader Salaudun Quader Chowdhury personally handed in his resignation to the Speaker.

The resignation letter of JP chief, former president H M Ershad, who was convicted and is now in jail, was not submitted yesterday.

However, the Workers' Party's Rashed Khan Menon, Gano Forum's Shamsuddoha and the Islami Oikya Jote's Maulana Obaidul Huq did not resign nor were they present at the time of the mass resignation.

In their similarly worded letters, the Opposition MPs

Urging all to prepare for a movement to unseat the government after the submission of resignation by almost 150 parliamentarians, senior Nayeb-e-Ameer Abbas Ali Khan termed the BNP a "betrayer".

In 1991, BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar had asked for our support in forming the present government saying that we would institutionalise democracy. But what has happened later? It could not ensure a single fair election, Abbas Ali said. Party Secretary General Matiur Rahman Nizami said "accepting this demand is not a defeat for the ruling party."

During Ershad-rule, the BNP itself had demanded election under a caretaker government.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

## The Midnight File

### 200 killed in Russian air raid, claims Chechnya

GROZNY, Dec 28: Russian warplanes resumed bombing Grozny and elsewhere in Chechnya and Chechen officials claimed at least 200 people were killed in raids. The Russian president's promise to stop bombing turned out to be a mere hypocrisy, Russian Chechnya's deputy foreign minister, said in Moscow. An orphanage in the Chechen capital was also destroyed in one raid, reports AP.

### US diplomat fails to release pilot held in North Korea

SEOUL, Dec 28: A US diplomat failed today to win the release of an American pilot held in North Korea. An angry President Clinton denied the pilot was on a spy mission and said the North had no reason to hold him. Army pilot Bobby Hall was captured after his US Army OH-58C helicopter went down December 17 in North Korean territory. Fellow Chief Warrant Officer David Hilemon died. His body was returned Thursday, reports AP.

## Solution fizzles out

From Page 1 Col 4

tators charged that the Opposition was going back on its commitment on the basis of which they had come to the parliament building.

The Opposition side contended that in exchange of accepting their demand for the Prime Minister not to continue in office after the expiry of her term and for the President to conduct the elections, the ruling party was demanding a guarantee that the Opposition would desist from calling any hartals or siege programmes during the rest of the current term of the Fifth Parliament. This the Opposition leaders considered tantamount to an infringement of their fundamental political and democratic right of mass agitation and demonstration.

As the last-ditch efforts for a solution fizzled out, 147 MPs belonging to the major opposition parties in Parliament — the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami — tendered their resignations to Shaikh Razzak Ali at 9:13 pm, compounding the crisis.

Members of Parliament of the major opposition parties resigned yesterday after the last attempt of negotiations with the ruling party failed.

One hundred and forty-seven MPs of the 330-member Parliament yesterday submitted their resignations to the Speaker at his Sangsad office.

Awami League whip Azzur Rahman submitted 93 resignation letters of the party MPs to Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali at 9:13 pm, Rahman was followed by the Jatiya Party's Munirul Huq Chowdhury who submitted 34 similar letters to the Speaker. The Jamaat-e-Islami's Latifur Rahman submitted 19 letters while NDP leader Salaudun Quader Chowdhury personally handed in his resignation to the Speaker.

The resignation letter of JP chief, former president H M Ershad, who was convicted and is now in jail, was not submitted yesterday.

However, the Workers' Party's Rashed Khan Menon, Gano Forum's Shamsuddoha and the Islami Oikya Jote's Maulana Obaidul Huq did not resign nor were they present at the time of the mass resignation.

In their similarly worded letters, the Opposition MPs

Urging all to prepare for a movement to unseat the government after the submission of resignation by almost 150 parliamentarians, senior Nayeb-e-Ameer Abbas Ali Khan termed the BNP a "betrayer".

In 1991, BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar had asked for our support in forming the present government saying that we would institutionalise democracy. But what has happened later? It could not ensure a single fair election, Abbas Ali said. Party Secretary General Matiur Rahman Nizami said "accepting this demand is not a defeat for the ruling party."

During Ershad-rule, the BNP itself had demanded election under a caretaker government.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.

He said that the government was totally indifferent to the demand and the agitation programmes of the Opposition. The government had taken our demand lightly, he said.



Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali (extreme left) talking to the opposition MPs prior to receiving their resignation letters at his Sangsad Bhaban chamber last night. — Star photo



## EBL's 11th Branch opens today at

31, North Commercial Area, Circle-2, Gulshan, Dhaka.

**EBL Eastern Bank Limited**  
Head Office: Jiban Bima Bhaban, 10 Dikusha Commercial Area, Dhaka

Editor: Mahfuz Anam  
Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel CA, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi RA, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035. GPO Box No: 3287, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.