

সাদা সিমেন্ট, মোজাইক, সিংক ও পাডলু
আকর্ষণীয় ও কমমূল্যে
সাদা সিমেন্ট: জাপান, মালয়েশিয়া -
মার্বেল চিপস: পাকিস্তান, চায়না, ভারত -
কিচেন সিলিং সিংক: স্পেন, সুইজারল্যান্ড -
সোসেম, পাডলু: ইংল্যান্ড -
মার্বেল ও ব্রোকেন মার্বেল: পাকিস্তান ও মালয়েশিয়া -
ঘাসীয়া মোজাইক ও স্যানিটোরী সমগ্রীর একমাত্র বিক্রেতা প্রতিষ্ঠান
রনী ইন্টারন্যাশনাল
১নং নিউ ইন্ডিয়ান রোড, ঢাকা, ফোন: ৪১৬১০৬, ৮৩০৬১৭।

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Inside Today

Article
The Press under Pressure
Column: Between the Lines by Kuldeep Nayar Page 4

International
Tiwari to quit as Uttar Pradesh Congress chief
Heavy fighting around Grozny Pages 5, 8

Business
Uttara Bank earns a net profit of Tk 8.41m in '93

Gulf Arab states may trim lavish subsidies Pages 6, 7

Metropolitan
Dhaka Day by Day

A Treat for the Season Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

BNP nominees for by-elections
The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has nominated three candidates for parliamentary by-elections to be held simultaneously on January 25. They are Principal Abdul Rashid Khan - Bakerganj 6, Mohammad Shahjahan Hyder Sujan - Brahmanbaria 6 and Prof Kazi Golam Morshed - Natore 3, according to a party announcement last night, reports BSS.

Train derails
RAJBARI, Dec 29: Four compartments of a Goalanda bound inter-city passenger train were derailed near the Rajbari railway station today. No casualties were reported. The train - Jamuna - went off the tracks at about 12:30 pm, due to high speed, railway sources said. Relief train is reportedly on its way to the spot from Ishurdi. Meanwhile, rail service between Rajbari and Goalanda remains suspended, reports UNB.

Dacoity in Barisal
From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Dec 29: A group of 15 armed men committed a robbery in the house of one Mannan Farazi of Darichar Ekarbania village under sadar thana of Perojpur district last night. The dacoits entered the house by breaking the doors and beat up the inmates. They looted gold ornaments, other valuables and about fifty thousand taka at gunpoint. Four persons of the house - Jahangir, 35, Mamun, 18, Bashir, 25, and Nazmul, 30, were injured. They were admitted to the Perojpur sadar hospital. A case was lodged with Perojpur thana.

Nepal celebrates King's birthday
KATHMANDU (Nepal), Dec 29: More than 500 prisoners were released from jail Thursday in a goodwill gesture on King Birendra's 50th birthday, an occasion marked by pomp and glitter, reports AP. Oil lamps flickered from thousands of shrines across the Himalayan nation and people rang bells, danced and prayed for the king's long life. In capital Kathmandu, people dressed in colourful flowing robes stood in long lines outside the King's palace to meet the constitutional monarch. On Thursday jailers let off the prisoners, most of whom had served nearly two-thirds of their jail terms.

PM tells public meet at Sreenagar Opposition should revise decision

SREENAGAR (Munshiganj), Dec 29: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today described the resignation of the Opposition members from Parliament as "regrettable" and "not the right thing," reports BSS. Addressing a huge public meeting at the local stadium here Begum Zia said that despite the BNP government's highest concession by agreeing to a proposal under which the Prime Minister and her cabinet would resign 30 days before the date of election at the end of the five-year term, the Opposition members did not

refrain from resigning from Parliament and perpetrating destructive activities. Begum Zia said that the same proposal required the Opposition MPs to resign and to refrain from destructive activities, like hartals and sieges. The Prime Minister said that the BNP government had accepted the Opposition's proposal only for the sake of democracy and the interest of the country and the people. By resigning from Parliament the Opposition MPs had done harm to the country

and failed to keep their pledges to the people, Begum Zia said. The latest proposal, she said, was finalised after negotiations between the Opposition and the government. Begum Zia said that by avoiding the path of resolution the Opposition proved that they were opposed to the democratic process and development of the country. The Prime Minister, however, said that the Opposition MPs had by now realised that they had not done the right

Hasina asks govt to resign Hold elections as per Opposition formula

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday demanded immediate resignation of the BNP government and fresh elections as per the Opposition formula, announced Wednesday. The present Jatiya Sangsad as well as the government have lost their legitimacy following the en masse resignation of opposition MPs, representing 69 per cent of the voters," she told a hurriedly-called press conference at the VIP Lounge of the Jatiya Press Club. Refuting BNP's claim of having majority in parliament she said the party no more enjoyed majority after the opposition MPs resigned. Claiming that the negotiations for ending the present political crisis failed due to lust for power and obstinacy of the government, the AL chief said, "The Prime Minister could avert the en masse resignation of opposition legislators by accepting their minimum demand - her resignation with the announcement of

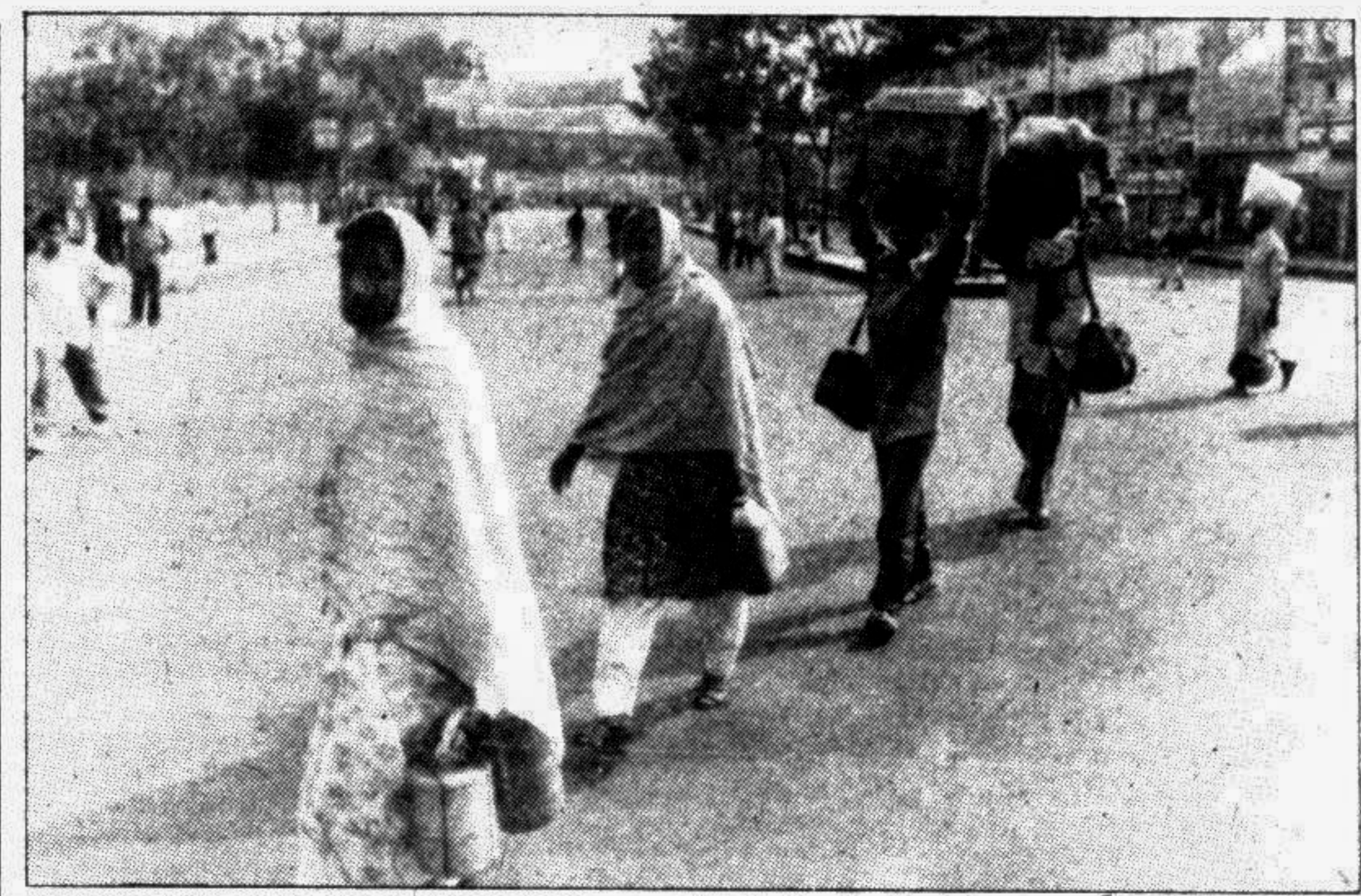
resignation letters faulty, then the situation may be different," Talukdar told a group of newsmen at his residence last night. "If he (Speaker) finds the resignation letters faulty, then the situation may be different," Talukdar told a group of newsmen at his residence last night.



Sheikh Hasina at the Press Club yesterday. — Star photo
election schedule and holding of the polls under an advisory council to be formed by the President in consultation with the ruling party and opposition parties." See Page 12 Col 7

'Situation now depends on Speaker's interpretation'

BNP Secretary General Abdul Salam Talukdar has said the political situation now depends greatly on Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali's interpretation whether the Opposition MPs' resignations were tendered properly or not. "If he (Speaker) finds the resignation letters faulty, then the situation may be different," Talukdar told a group of newsmen at his residence last night. He reiterated that the BNP had accepted the basic demand of the Opposition and agreed that the Prime Minister and her cabinet would not be in power during the next general election. He declined to explain the fresh appeal from Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to reconsider their (Opposition MPs) resignation and return to talks for resolving the political crisis. The Prime Minister, at a public meeting yesterday at Sreenagar under Munshiganj, said if they (Opposition) re-



Near the GPO at the city centre yesterday morning during the hartal. — Star photo

AL's post-hartal rally in city

Leaders of Awami League yesterday said the Opposition has launched an out-govern-ment agitation through resignation from parliament, reports UNB. Addressing a post-hartal rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka yesterday afternoon, they asserted that the struggle would continue until the government stepped down accepting the demand for a neutral, non-party, caretaker government. The rally followed a half-day countrywide hartal enforced by Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami demanding resignation of the government and elections under a neutral caretaker administration. Awami League leader Amir Hossain Amu told the rally that the government was responsible for the present political crisis. He described the resignation of opposition MPs as unprecedented and said they had resigned to establish the voting right of the people. Party leader Mozaffar Hossain Paltu said hunger for power of this 'corrupt' government had pushed the country to a grave crisis and urged the people to intensify the agitation under the leadership of

Half-day country-wide hartal observed

An eight-hour hartal called by three major opposition parties was observed partially in the capital and elsewhere in the country. The hartal was by and large peaceful, barring stray incidents. Two persons including a photo journalist were seriously injured in Dhaka and 12 others were injured in Narayanganj during the hartal hours. The Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami called the countrywide 6 am to 2 pm hartal yesterday and similar hartals in the city on January 2, 3 and 4 to force the government to accept their demand for holding elections under a caretaker administration or quit power. Members of Parliament from the parties resigned Wednesday night to press home the demand. In the city, activists of the three parties brought out small processions and held rallies in front of the Jatiya Press Club during the strike hours. Rickshaws and auto-rickshaws plied almost as usual but other modes of transport like buses and trucks remained parked. Road and railway communications between the capital and other parts of the country were disrupted as inter-district buses and trains did not operate. Authorities posted police and para-military Bangladesh Rifles at important spots in Dhaka during the hartal period. A photographer of the Dainik Prattasha, Tarun was seriously injured when some pickets hurled bricks at a running minibus near the Farmgate around noon. Tarun was taking photographs of the pickets. He was admitted to the Suhrawardi Hospital. One Anwar Hossain (20) was injured when a bomb was hurled at a procession of the Awami League at Nawabpur Road in the morning. He was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Our Narayanganj Correspondent adds: Clashes between supporters and opponents of the hartal left at least a dozen

People still hopeful of a solution

With the Fifth Parliament now virtually shorn of any opposition following the resignations Wednesday, people in various walks of life were still hoping against hope that the political crisis could yet be resolved. Gossip and rumours tinged with fears and speculations regarding the resignation of the opposition MPs and the consequences, were rife in the capital yesterday as people discussed the possible impact on their lives. They expressed their deep disappointment at the final split in Parliament and the end of the dialogue between the ruling and the opposition parties. Yet, they remained optimistic believing that negotiations could still be resumed with a spirit of patriotism and statesmanship to save the country from impending crisis. Some pointed out that technical details like the fact that the resignation letters

MPs' resignation endangered democracy: Kamal

The Gano Forum (GF) in a statement yesterday said resignation of Parliament members seriously destabilised the polity, endangered the democratic process and created a climate of panic and uncertainty. The forum also said: "The nation was disappointed at the resignation of MPs and resented the failure of the government and the opposition parties to resolve the present political crisis through negotiation and dialogue." The statement added, "It is all the more depressing that the understanding finally collapsed on flimsy grounds." The GF appealed to all concerned to avoid the path of confrontation and conflict and also warned against any sort of 'repression'. It called upon all professional groups and other people to join hands for resolving the crisis.

Dudayev willing to hold talks, claims Moscow

GROZNY (Russia), Dec 29: Russian tanks pulled back from the outskirts of Grozny, capital of the rebel republic of Chechnya, today as jet bombers tore across clear skies repeatedly hitting an oil refinery and Chechen positions report AFP, AP. Meanwhile, Radio Mayak of Moscow, citing unnamed sources in the Chechen capital Grozny, said President Dzhokhar Dudayev had sent a telegram notifying Russia of his intent to hold talks without preconditions. Russian and Chechen officials could not immediately be reached for comment. Russian troops retreated three kilometers from Grozny's eastern front in Khankala, after losing four tanks and an armoured car during a ferocious attempt to break Chechen lines Wednesday, said Chechen commander Vaha Michkayev. In a rare admission of fatalities, Michkayev said seven of his men were killed and many wounded. Chechens said they did not know how many Russians they killed, but showed journalists letters found on the bodies of three soldiers from Saint Petersburg. But in Moscow, the Itar-Tass news agency said that Russian troops pushed back a Chechen armoured assault in Khankala, quoting a Russian government spokesman in Grozny, the agency said the Russians seized six Chechen tanks, six cannon and an armoured personnel vehicle. Khankala, where Chechnya's military airport is located, is only four kilometres from the Presidential Palace in central Grozny. Dudayev, who has been operating out of a bomb shelter under the presidential palace in besieged Grozny, has

adamantly refused to negotiate unless Russian forces withdraw first. Chechnya had broken off peace talks after three days earlier this month amid Russian bombing attacks. In the telegram, according to the radio report, Dudayev expressed the hope that Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin participate in talks but the Chechen leadership also 'agrees to hold such talks at any other level.' Another report says, Dudayev called today for a face-to-face meeting with Boris Yeltsin in a telegram to the Russian president, the Russian government press service said in Moscow. Dudayev insisted on meeting Yeltsin himself, rejecting any possibility of talks with other Russian officials dealing with Chechnya. The Russians hold a huge advantage in manpower and equipment, with as many as

Serb parliament endorses accord with Carter

PALE (Bosnia), Dec 29: The Bosnian Serb parliament today endorsed an agreement that leader Radovan Karadzic signed with former US President Jimmy Carter earlier this month, backing a big power peace plan as a basis for further negotiations, reports Reuters. The parliament informs the Contact Group and the international community of the readiness on the part of (Bosnian Serb) Republika Srpska to enter peace negotiations on the basis of agreement with Carter, said a statement issued after a parliament session. Karadzic indicated today that he could sign an agreement on a four month cessation of hostilities across war-torn Bosnia.

But the UN commander in Bosnia, after four hours of talks with Karadzic at this Serb stronghold east of Sarajevo, said more negotiations lay ahead. "There is good will on both sides, and I hope we're going to get some conclusion by the weekend," Lt Gen Sir Michael Rose told reporters. He said, details were still being discussed but did not elaborate. Facing a Saturday deadline for locking in the four-month cessation of hostilities, Rose stepped up his shuttle negotiations with Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic in Sarajevo. Rose was presenting both sides with a new draft of the agreement for the Serbs and the Muslim led government to stop fighting for four months.

freeze front lines and withdraw some troops. Earlier, Karadzic and his side might even sign the agreement Thursday. "We are discussing several points," he said. On Wednesday, Rose travelled to the Bihac enclave in northwestern Bosnia, where fighting has threatened to unravel an initial one-week cease-fire that took hold across Bosnia last Saturday. Today, 40 explosions as well as heavy machine gun and small-arms fire were reported northeast of Velika Kladusa, presumably coming from Abdic forces or Croatian Serbs aiding them. UN spokesman Alexander Ivanko said. Four detonations and shooting were reported outside Bihac town.

My resignation now a formality, says Menon

Rashed Khan Menon, a member of parliament and general secretary of the Bangladesh Workers Party, said yesterday that following the resignation of such a large number of MPs "the Sangsad is now virtually dead." Reading from a text at a press conference at the Workers' Party office, Menon said his own resignation from parliament was now a mere formality. Menon, who did not resign along with the other opposition members on Wednesday, however, declined to give a definite date for submitting his resignation. He demanded the resignation of the government and dissolution of the Fifth Parliament to be made way for

Riyadh bows to Syrian demand Normalisation with Israel to be slowed

ALEXANDRIA (Egypt), Dec 29: The leaders of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia ended a summit here today aimed at strengthening Arab unity and Syria's stand in peace negotiations with Israel, reports AFP. Saudi Arabia's King Fahd met presidents Hafez al-Assad of Syria and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak in the Mediterranean port city of Alexandria for the second day after late night talks on Wednesday. Riyadh had agreed to help slow the pace of the Arab normalisation with Israel so long as there was no progress in Syria's peace talks with the Jewish state; a Saudi official said. Saudi Arabia bowed to Syrian opinion that no accord or progress can be made on

the multilateral track until there has been a global solution in the region," he said, asking to remain anonymous. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal "gave his support to the Syrian position" during a meeting of foreign ministers from the three countries today. But he said this backing would not be clearly stated in the final communique due to be published later the same day, but the statement would nevertheless adopt a "severe tone" towards Israel. A source close to the Syrian delegation told AFP that Damascus was "counting enormously on King Fahd not to normalise his relations with Israel prior to the completion of

7 killed, 20 hurt in bus plunge

From Our Correspondent
NARAYANGANJ, Dec 29: Seven people were killed and 20 others injured in a road accident near a bridge on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Ballakandi area of Gazaria thana under Munshiganj district this morning. A cyclist, was also killed in another accident on the same spot bringing the death toll to eight on the same day. In the first accident, a minibus (Dhaka-Metro Cha-0074) broke a railing of the bridge and fell into a 15 feet deep canal at around 8 am. Witnesses said, the Dhaka-bound minibus was coming from Daudkandi. An army rescue group, which had camped near the

50 killed in Turkish plane crash

ANKARA, Dec 29: A Turkish Airlines jet with 76 people aboard crashed into a mountain in eastern Turkey in heavy snow Thursday. At least 20 people survived, an official said, reports AP. Murat Ozkan, deputy governor of Van, told state TV that the rescue teams recovered 30 dead bodies so far. Most aboard the plane were military personnel. The Boeing 737 crashed around 1415 GMT only eight kilometres (5 miles) from its destination, Van, near Iran. The plane was making its third attempt to land after two previous tries were aborted due to harsh weather, the Anatolia news agency said. Transportation Minister Mehmet Kostepe said there were about 20 survivors. He gave no other details. Army rescue personnel went to the scene but heavy snow was hampering rescue efforts, Kostepe added. Bad winter weather often causes plane cancellations in the mountainous region. A passenger list did not include foreign names. Kurdish separatists have been fighting in southeastern Turkey. The military personnel is under strict orders to avoid travelling by road in the region because guerrillas often target passenger buses in search of security officials. Turkish Airlines had its previous major crash in 1983 near Ankara, in which 46 people died.

No scope to scrutinise resignation letters: Moudud

Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed, in a press statement issued through JP's joint office secretary said yesterday the reports appearing in different newspapers that the Speaker would accept the resignation letters of opposition MPs after scrutinising if those were proper surprised him. He said as per relevant rules of the Constitution, when a sitting member tenders his resignation and hands it over to the Speaker, the resignation becomes effective with immediate effect. Moudud also said that when the Parliament members had voluntarily submitted their resignation letters under their own signatures and handed those over to the Speaker, there was no scope for examining those.

Nasim rejects PM's offer

Awami League leader Mohammad Nasim yesterday turned down the Prime Minister's offer to resign 30 days ahead of elections, saying there was no scope for considering it after the Opposition's resignation, reports UNB. In an instant reaction to Begum Khaleda Zia's speech in yesterday's Munshiganj meeting, telecast by BTV, he said she had kept mum when the entire nation had expected an announcement to this effect. "This announcement from her is meaningless after the expiry of time," the former Opposition Chief Whip said. He said if the Prime Minister believed in democracy, she should resign immediately and hand over power to a neutral, non-partisan caretaker government to hold general elections.