

## Country will be run

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to speak of democracy and establishment of the people's rights on one hand and to join hands with those who had killed democracy and repressed the people on the other.

Narrating the hardships and difficulties she had faced during her campaign for restoring democracy and the people's rights, Begum Zia said her party had no lust for power nor did it suffer from any conceit.

During the anti-autocracy struggle, Begum Zia said, she and her party leaders had mixed freely with the people, attended their problems and bore hardships in the streets.

"So we can do everything for the interest of the country," Begum Zia said, adding that everything must be done according to the Constitution and the laws of the land.

Referring to the whole process of negotiations between the government and the Opposition, the Prime Minister said that the two sides had agreed to sign a proposal under which the Prime Minister and her cabinet would resign 30 days before the date of elections at the completion of the five-year term.

The proposal also required that the Opposition MPs would not resign and suspend all activities like hartals, sieges and other disruptive activities for the next one year for the sake

of democracy and the interest of the people.

But, she said, the Opposition did not accept the agreed proposal to solve the problem created by themselves.

She said there was no instance in the history of Bangladesh that the Jatiya Sangsad had completed its full term. So, she said, they had appealed to all parties to set up an instance of this Parliament completing its full term.

If the opposition parties want the completion of the present Sangsad's full term, a continuation of the democratic process and development, then they should accept the latest proposal to solve the problem, she said.

The activities of the Opposition, including their resignation from Parliament and continuation of disruptive programmes, had proved that they neither wanted this Parliament to complete its full term nor the progress of the country.

Begum Zia asked the people to resist those trying to destroy democracy, hinder public life and the socio-economic development programmes.

She expressed her gratitude to the people for their cooperation in her struggle against autocracy.

The Prime Minister said the BNP government had proved that it was true to its words.

Begum Zia regretted that the opposition parties did not also cooperate in the strengthening of the Election Commission for ensuring freer and fairer polls.

The Prime Minister addressed the gathering after laying the foundation stone of the proposed Rupsha Bridge at Labanchora in the city.

Presided over by president of the Khulna city BNP M Nurul Islam, the meeting was also addressed by Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shaikh Razzak Ali, Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Communications Minister Oli Ahmad, Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam, State Minister for Planning Dr A Moyeen Khan, Whip Ashraf Hossain, Mayor of Khulna Shaikh Taiyebur Rahman and secretary of city BNP Nazrul Islam Manju.

Earlier, on her arrival at the meeting venue the Prime Minister was greeted by thousands of people.

## Ctg-Dubai flights

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ously trying to start the operation from February 1, 1995.

"However, some technical works including runway repair and light fittings at Chittagong airport are now underway to facilitate DC-10 flights here," he said.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong Customs authority is also planning to raise the number of customs personnel at the airport, official sources said.

Besides, some other ground facilities required for handling DC-10 flights are also to be provided.

Presently Biman operates two international flights — to Calcutta and Bangkok — from Chittagong airport.

The Chittagong-Bangkok service, via Yangon, was inaugurated on October 25, 1992.

## Press Club

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Monirul Alam, City Editor of the Dainik Khabor, polled 215 votes as against 197 bagged by Zahiduzzaman Farooq, Economic Editor of the Daily Ittefaq.

Abdul Baten, News Editor of the Daily Ittefaq, Abdur Rahman Khan, senior reporter of the Bangladesh Times, Saiful Alam, senior reporter of the Inquilab and Swapan Kumar Saha, shift in-charge of BSS were elected senior vice-president, joint secretaries and treasurer respectively.

Vice presidential candidates Golam Mohiuddin Khan and Syed Akhtar Yusuf polled 210 votes each.

Badiul Alam, chief reporter of the daily Financial Express, Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, a senior reporter of the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha, Ziaul Haq, an Assistant Editor of the Daily Ittefaq, Khandaker Hasnat Karim, Assistant Editor of the Daily Inquilab, Mostafa Kamal Majumdar, a special correspondent of the New Nation, Mrs Rosy Ferdous, a sub-editor of the Dainik Janata and Syed Lutful Haq, chief artist of the Dainik Bangla, were elected members of the managing committee of the National Press Club from the Reaz-Monir panel while Sha-fiqul Karim Sabu, a special correspondent of BSS, Yusuf Pasha, Assistant Editor of the Daily Janakantha and Sheikh Mohiuddin, a special correspondent of the New Nation were elected from the Musa-Faruk panel.



The mangled remains of an autorickshaw (foreground) which met an accident with a truck on the Dhaka-Demra road yesterday. All the three passengers of the autorickshaw were killed.

## BNP won't accept advisory council

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do not resign and suspend all programmes like hartals and barricades.

The second part of the BNP's proposal was construed by some of the opposition leaders as an undertaking to the ruling party on political activities.

A ruling party source yesterday said that the BNP high command had inserted the condition to bargain with the Opposition negotiators.

He said that opposition leader Mohammad Nasim, at one point during the negotiations, told the ruling party negotiators that the Opposition would change its decision of resigning from Parliament only if the Prime Minister announces that she shall not remain in power during the next elections.

"We agreed to that but we told them that prior to any announcement we should sign an agreement," a BNP standing committee member said. He said that this was because there was apprehension among BNP leaders that the Opposition could have reneged on their commitment once such an announcement was made by Prime Minister.

He said that according to the negotiations, all arrangements had been made at the PM's Office for a public address over radio and television.

When contacted over telephone Mohammad Nasim admitted to having suggested

that such an announcement be made on TV.

"If the Prime Minister had announced it, the Opposition parties could have deferred their resignations on the ground that their basic demand had been fulfilled," he said.

Nasim said that under such circumstances both sides could gain enough time to negotiate the other subsidiary clauses of the agreement.

"We sincerely wanted a negotiation for the sake of the country and the people," he added.

The Opposition proposal was that — (a) the Prime Minister and her cabinet should resign on the day the Election Commission announces the election schedule; and (b) the President should form a neutral, advisory council upon the advice of both the parties and that cabinet would function until the next Prime Minister took over.

A ruling party source said last night: "If the Prime Minister resigns who would be the BNP's nominees to be the members of the interim cabinet?"

The BNP leader, insisting on anonymity said that his party had already set a convention of resigning before elections.

Citing an example, the minister said Jamiruddin Sircar had resigned before contesting the by-election to the city's Mohammadpur JS constituency. Sircar was a technocrat minister in Begum

Zia's cabinet. Moreover, all the city corporation mayors had resigned before last January's elections.

"We decided to maintain this tradition and our Prime Minister, too, agreed to honour the convention, although it was a major shift from the BNP's original stance," he added.

On the other hand, Mohammad Nasim said that the BNP earlier agreed to the idea of a 10-member interim cabinet, proposed by Commonwealth emissary Sir Ninian Stephen.

He said the chances to improve the present situation, complicated further after the mass resignation, were bleak.

In a related development, Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali expressed the hope that the present crisis can still be solved through discussion among the parties.

"If you (Opposition MPs) want to give democracy an institutional shape I believe it is still possible that the problem can be solved through discussions," he told a rally at Khulna yesterday.

Legal experts said a liberal interpretation and political will on both sides may yet retrieve the situation.

Meanwhile, Speaker Razzak Ali was taken ill on return from Khulna and was admitted to Suhrawardy Hospital. His indisposition may delay the scrutiny of the Opposition MPs' resignation letters and a final decision on the matter.

## The Midnight File

### New Year's Eve parties banned in Pak province

ISLAMABAD, Dec 30: A provincial governor has banned New Year's Eve parties after Muslim fundamentalists threatened to disrupt celebrations. Mansoor Wattoo, chief minister of Punjab state, apparently feared a repeat of last year's violence in the eastern city of Lahore, where Islamic activists smashed more than 200 cars parked outside a club while some of the country's wealthiest people greeted the new year, reports AP.

### Flight recorder of Turkish plane recovered

ANKARA, Dec 30: Rescue workers today found the flight recorder of a Turkish Airlines (Thy) Boeing 737 which crashed in eastern Turkey killing 55 people and injuring 21, an airline spokesman said. The death toll rose when one person died in hospital a day after the passenger plane ploughed into a hill near Van airport in a sudden blizzard, the spokesman said, reports Reuter.

## Elections only solution

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under a neutral, caretaker government and the sooner it is done the better," said the former Opposition Chief Whip.

Acting Chairman of the Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury said that after the resignation of the Opposition MPs, who represent 69.8 per cent of the voters, the Prime Minister should voluntarily resign and arrange elections under a caretaker government.

Defending his position, Chowdhury said the government lost its legal and moral rights with the resignation of Opposition MPs as per the concept of a parliamentary form of government.

This Parliament does not exist. It died its natural death with our resignation," he said.

In reply to a query, the JP leader said as per the Constitution and rules of procedure of Parliament, as soon as the resignation letters of MPs reach the Speaker these are deemed to have been accepted.

"Once a resignation is submitted to the Speaker, that cannot be taken back.... Only those who have no idea about the Constitution can speak of reconsidering our resignation," he said.

Chowdhury alleged that the Prime Minister's statement about her resignation and the Opposition's resignation were only to bluff the people at home and abroad.

He said the Opposition de-

mand for free and fair elections under a caretaker government would be realised through the people's agitation.

Jamaat Secretary General Matur Rahman Nizami said the present government is the product of the present Parliament. Since Parliament has lost its legitimacy, the present government has also lost the right to remain in power.

He hoped that good sense would prevail upon the government to dissolve Parliament, hand over power to a neutral, caretaker government to clear the way for holding a free and fair election within 90 days, as envisaged in the Constitution.

Nizami was critical about the blackout of the news of the Opposition resignation by radio and television. He said the people are being deprived of their right to know the fact.

The government is shifting its failure to the Opposition and misusing the state-owned media to mislead the nation, Nizami said, and demanded that speeches of Opposition leaders be broadcast by radio and television.

### Speaker hospitalised

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He is now under treatment at VIP Cabin No-2 under Prof. Sufia Khatun.

Shaikh Razzak Ali has been suffering from angina pectoris, a chest complaint, which he has been feeling for the past few days.

## The road was long and winding

The quest for excellence is one that defies adversity and where there are challenges to be met and overcome. Today, as BTC reaches the end of another year, we felicitate each one of our valued partners who were with us, unswerving in their commitment. BTC believes in the spirit of working together. Believes in the well being of the nation by providing impetus to its people, their economic activities, cultural beliefs, skill development, the arts and sports. Believes that it has kept many promises and has many more to keep. And at this time of reflection we pause to remember each one of the more than one million members of the BTC family, the shareholders, tobacco farmers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and the many suppliers, who have always stood by us through all the good times and the bad. We salute their families for the support that provided them the inspiration to carry on at times that were trying. We remember all BTC employees whose dedication has been pivotal to the organisation on its journey to success. And above all our deepest gratitude to all our valued customers, without whose patronisation this tremendous achievement would have been inconceivable. We stand at the threshold of a new year. The dawn of a new day. As we contemplate the year ahead, our thoughts and prayers remain with the people of this beautiful land. Let 1995 turn their dreams into reality.

Thank you —



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