

# Ghali for streamlining peacekeeping missions

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 5. Facing increased criticism for high costs and setbacks in Bosnia and Somalia, the UN Secretary-General called Thursday for streamlining peacekeeping missions and limiting the use of force, reports AP.

Boutros Boutros Ghali, in a closed-door speech to the Security Council, said peacekeepers must get clear mandates so the lines between maintaining peace and enforcing peace are not blurred.

"Nothing is more dangerous for a peacekeeping operation than to require it to use force when its existing composition, armament, logistical support and deployment deny it the capacity to do so," an official summary of his position paper said.

Boutros-Ghali's statement to the council was prepared to mark the 50th anniversary of the organization.

He warned the council not to launch new missions without securing funding and troops.

## JSD (Rab) demands fresh polls under caretaker govt

The JSD (Rab) has reiterated its demand for immediate dissolution of parliament and fresh elections under an interim government, reports UNB.

The proposed interim government will be headed by an Ombudsman to be appointed by the President. Party secretary general ASM Abdur Rab told a news conference at the National Press Club yesterday.

In a written statement, Rab said the BNP government had lost its constitutional right to continue in power following the en masse resignation of the Opposition MPs.

In this context, the JSD leader pointed out that the Jamaat MPs who had supported BNP in forming the government had also resigned.

The party announced programmes of workers' rally in mills and factories from January 6-7, mass procession in the capital on January 11 and mass contact from January 12-15. It will enforce a country-wide barricade programme on January 19.

## Parties counting points

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And Prime Minister Begum Zia agreed to quit along with her cabinet a month before the elections giving the President the authority to run the country as well as the election until the next elected prime minister takes over.

Immediately after the ruling party conveyed its decision, a number of sincere opposition members, mostly from the AL, took the initiative to iron out other differences and they were almost successful in reaching an agreement.

As the Prime Minister decided to resign, the ruling party sought guarantee from the opposition parties that they (the opposition) should not resort to disruptive activities like hartal and siege during the rest of the BNP government's tenure. On the other hand, the opposition camp demanded a "neutral, non-partisan advisory council" under the President during the next elections to which the ruling party did not agree.

This was the point of disagreement between the BNP and the Opposition which broke the last-minute dialogue.

The ruling party, however, said later that the points of hartal and siege could be negotiated with the Opposition demand for a 10-member advisory council.

During the last episode of the resignation drama, three leading BNP members went to sign an agreement with the opposition leaders in Parliament. According to the leaders who attended the abortive meeting, when Oli Ahmed read out the proposal just before the signing ceremony, AL chief Sheikh Hasina raised questions about the other points of the agreement. Mohammad Nasim of AL reportedly said that the other issues would be settled later on the basis of agreements already reached. At that point, JP's acting chief Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury said, "we are to sign a bond (Mutchleka) to go back to Parliament."

One senior AL leader still believes that the opposition parties can consider withdrawing resignation letters and may return to Parliament for the sake of amendments to the constitution if a political consensus is reached. But on the contrary, the JP held a press conference and said there is no scope of reconsidering the resignation under the present

## EC office

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tuted in the meeting to determine within the next one week the manpower needed and money required to undertake the task of preparing the databased voters list. The committee will undertake a pre-test and sample survey in this regard.

The meeting was told that according to the latest census there are 65,025,958 eligible voters having 18 plus age in the country, and each year the number is likely to increase with the inclusion of more people attaining 18 years of age.

A permanent setup of the Election Commission is also justifiable for preparation of voters list and issuance of identity cards to the new voters each year.

The meeting, held at the NEC Bhawan with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair, requested the Election Commission to immediately go ahead with the whole procedure.

The Election Commission has been authorised to do so for strengthening of the Commission and independently conducting future elections as per the People's Representation (Amendment) Bill 1994 recently passed by the Jatiya Sangsad.

The meeting was also attended by Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf, Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, secretaries of Finance, Establishment, Education, Statistics, Health, ERD, Primary Education and Election Commission Secretariat and other high officials of the Election Commission.

## Salman

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Rahman strongly decried that his efforts towards facilitating a settlement of the political crisis betrayed his own political ambitions. "We do not have any political ambition, we are only venting our sufferings."

The National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCI) organised the reception in honour of the recently-elected FBCCI president and his executive committee.

Salman Rahman promised the small entrepreneurs that the FBCCI would actively pursue the government to set up a bank exclusively for small and cottage industries.

FBCCI vice-president Rashiduzzaman Duda, NASCI president Anul Haq Sobel and leading handicraft exporter Maleka Khan also addressed the function.

## Efforts on to resolve impasse

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message from the Prime Minister containing her proposal to resign 30 days ahead of the next general elections to the AL chief, who is yet to respond to it. Opposition sources said.

"The government's decision as regards going for by-elections or fresh general elections, if it fails to convince the Opposition MPs to withdraw their resignations, largely depends on the Speaker's decision concerning acceptance or rejection of the resignation letters," said a minister. The ruling BNP standing committee would meet early next week to decide the party position on the issue, he added.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, who returned home from hospital Wednesday, was advised a week's rest by the doctors. Therefore, scrutiny of the MPs' resignation letters by him is unlikely to take place now.

The minister, unwilling to be named, told The Daily Star

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressed a huge public meeting at Chandina in Comilla district yesterday. — PID photo

## 2 cargo ships with 54 crew sink near Romanian port

BUCHAREST, Jan 5: Two cargo ships have sunk near the Romanian Black Sea port of Constanta following strong gales and their 54 crew are feared dead, Romanian port authorities and shipping agents said today.

Two bulk carriers, the Paris, sailing under Maltese flag and the You Xiu, registered in Hong Kong, sank near Constanta last night, Constanta Port Captain Marian Popescu told Reuters.

"All attempts to salvage the vessels and the crews have failed due to the bad weather. I'm afraid there are no survivors," Popescu added.

He said the incident occurred after both ships had hit the breakwater surrounding the port basin shortly before midnight.

## Economy stronger: PM

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ing the pace of development, creating employment opportunities and attracting foreign investment.

Listing some of the development and welfare measures undertaken by her government, the Prime Minister said the BNP is the most trusted friend of the countrymen and that is why the BNP government has completed a record number of pro-people development projects and programmes in nearly four years, which is unprecedented in the history of this country.

Begum Zia regretted that during the last days of the autocratic regime there had been no money to pay even the salaries of the public servants.

But, she said, now Bangladesh is inching towards self-reliance because of the restoration of fiscal and financial discipline, epoch-making pro-people development programmes and establishment of democratic government.

Referring to the newly launched food-for-education programme for the poor students, stipend programme and tuition-free education for girls up to Class Ten outside the municipal areas and development of educational institutions across the country, the Prime Minister said no government had taken such massive programmes in the past for turning the population into human resources.

Mentoring that Taka 318 crore has been spent in Comilla district alone in the past three and a half years, she said, similarly the entire country is being developed.

Saying that her government has been leading the country forward on the path of development and prosperity, she said more could have been achieved had there been no disruptive programmes like



The Bangladesh Chhatra League brought out a colourful rally in the city on the occasion of its 47th founding anniversary yesterday. — Star photo

## Efforts on to resolve impasse

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the government was exploring the possibilities of the Opposition MPs reversing their decision by studying the suggestions by constitutional experts.

Referring to fresh bids for negotiation between the government and the Opposition, he said, "The moves are at a very early stage and there is nothing to mention about those at the moment. The senior leaders of the BNP would take up the issue if the efforts mature."

However, AL leader and former chief whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim, talking to this correspondent last night, denied that the ruling party leaders had contacted them after their resignation from Parliament December 28.

Regarding the move by Mayor Hanif, who is also the city AL chief, Nasim said, "The Mayor himself can speak about his initiative. The AL has not yet re-established contacts with the government since the

## India has strong case to become UNSC member, says Hurd

CALCUTTA, Jan 5: British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said today India has a strong case to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, but did not commit his country to support New Delhi's entry, reports Reuter.

"India has a strong case," Hurd said in response to a question at an international business conference while on a brief visit to Calcutta. "But there are many competitors and much argument."

Hurd supported a proposed expansion of the council. "It is something I believe is right," he said. "We see all sorts of problems on which the Security Council is asked to take decisions."

India has been lobbying to become a permanent member with veto power in addition to the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China.

It has sent its troops to support the UN peacekeeping forces in Somalia and Rwanda.

## Jordanian cabinet resigns

AMMAN (Jordan), Jan 5: Prime Minister Abdul-Salam Majali submitted his Cabinet's resignation Thursday after an eventful 19-month tenure that produced a peace treaty with Israel and muzzled Muslim fundamentalists at home, reports AP.

## 20 hurt as villagers clash in Barguna

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 5: At least 20 persons were injured, 8 of them seriously, in a clash between two groups of people in Tenga village of Chardjani union under Patharghata thana of Barguna district yesterday morning.

According to Patharghata thana police, the clash began as a group of persons, known as the Khabir group, swooped on the Jalal group when the latter was reaping paddy on a disputed land.

During the clash, at least 20 persons from both sides were injured. One Babul was admitted to the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College hospital, Barisal in a critical condition. His statement was recorded by a magistrate. The seven other critically injured.

Shanu 22, Dulal 20, Sagir 18, Rafiq 12, Ansar 25, Siraj 20, and Yunus 18, were admitted to the Patharghata Thana Health Complex. A case was filed with Patharghata police in this connection.

Strong navy

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search and survey ship, Begum Zia said.

The Prime Minister extended her sincere thanks to the newly commissioned Midshipman.

Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam received the Prime Minister on her arrival at the parade ground.

The Prime Minister reviewed the parade and took salute at the impressive march past. She also distributed awards among the outstanding midshipmen.

Midshipman S F Ahmed (X) BN was adjudged the best all round midshipman and was awarded the Osmani Gold Medal. He also won the award of the Chief of the Naval Staff securing highest marks in academic subjects while Midshipman S W Ali (X) BN won the award in professional subjects.

Later, the Prime Minister distributed Bachelor of Science Degree Certificates conferred upon the Midshipmen by a separate ceremony held at the Naval Academy Auditorium.

## Kuwait returnees to stage sit-in in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 5: The repatriated Bangladeshis from Kuwait in Sylhet would stage a day long sit-in and observe a token hunger strike on January 29 in the premises of the manpower office here if their demands are not met by the 20th of this month.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Kuwait Protayaga Bangladesh Samity held here today with Strajal Islam Faruque in the chair. A large number of repatriated Bangladeshis from different areas of greater Sylhet attended the meeting.

The demands include payment of compensation at the rate of US\$ 4000 as recommended by the United Nations, distribution of the money through the Deputy Commissioners and publication of the list of the repatriated Bangladeshis.

## Ex-minister

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les in this connection. As a result, the bidder paid Tk 25,95,952 in nine installments in a period of about seven months but did not deposit the remaining Tk 12,14,000.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed the case under Section 5 (2) of the Corruption Prevention Act 1947, both against the bidder Shish Mohammad and former state minister for allowing irrational time to the bidder for the payment of instalments violating government rules and for not taking any action against the bidder to realise the money.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau has initiated investigation into the case on emergency basis.

## The Midnight File

### Truce in Lanka from Sunday

COLOMBO, Jan 5: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga today authorised a truce with the separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas, which will make way for a 'cessation of hostilities' from Sunday, an official said. Kumaratunga signed a document which had already been initiated by Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in his northern stronghold of Jaffna, the official said reports AFP.

### Talks on Israeli redeployment in West Bank next week

GAZA, Jan 5: PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will meet within the next two weeks to discuss guidelines for an Israeli redeployment in the West Bank, a top Palestinian negotiator said today. "Arafat, Rabin and (Foreign Minister Shimon) Peres... will be meeting next week or the week after to look into the specific issues of redeployment of the Israeli forces from the cities and the populated areas in the West Bank," Nabil Shaath told a news conference in Gaza, reports Reuter.

### Trade fair opens tomorrow

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stalls, five restaurants, four kiosks and 14 utility and service booths, including a post office, a bank, and an information and media centre, have been set up at the fair ground.

In addition, 12 dormitories for the participants, an auditorium, a mosque have also been set up. It will also include 230 car parking stalls, two entry gates, one service gate, 13 ticket counters and 11 toilets. A token fee of Tk one per person will be charged for the use of toilets.

Nine of the pavilions, six mini-pavilions and 61 stalls have so far been allocated to 64 foreign participants. While some 100 stalls, 18 pavilions and 16 mini-pavilions allotted to the local firms.

Investment promotion seminars will be organised at the auditorium with a seating capacity of 1500. Cultural and other entertainments shows will also be organised everyday from 6 pm to 8:30 pm. Four local enterprises have set up two arching gates and two fountains at the fair ground.

The fair is being organised under a Tk 3.72 crore funding from the government and another Tk 55 lakh raised through stall fees and service charges.

The fair is expected to attract a good number of foreign buyers of Bangladeshi goods while it will also enable local businessmen to acquaint themselves with foreign products.

"We hope the fair will have a positive impact in expanding our trade relations with other countries," Shaheedullah said. Officials are also looking into the possibilities of turning the DTIF into an annual event with fair facilities built into the proposed world trade centre to be set up in Dhaka.

Forty-nine pavilions, 165

### Russian troops kill 15 Tajik rebels

MOSCOW, Jan 5: Fifteen Tajik Islamic rebels were killed by Russian border guards trying to enter Tajikistan from Afghanistan, Russian news agency reported today, says AFP.

The reports said two groups of Islamic opponents — one with four people and the other with 11 — were fired on by the Russian troops when they ignored the guards' orders to surrender.

The incidents occurred Wednesday morning at a border post in the country's southwest in the Moskovskiy region.

"When the fighters refused to surrender they opened fire and... eliminated the two groups," Interfax News Agency reported.

It said there were no casualties among the border guards, who have been targets of Afghan-based Tajik rebels in firefights along the border.

On Wednesday afternoon, another rebel group tried to cross the border farther east near Kalakhumskiy. Russian reports said the borders 'neutralised' the group but did not specify what this meant.

About 15,000 mostly Russian troops from a Commonwealth of Independent States force are deployed in Tajikistan — 75 per cent along the Afghan border — to support the neo-communist Tajik regime in its struggle with Islamic guerrillas often based in Afghanistan.

### Art exhibition

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Tk 50,000 Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Award and Mohammad Yunus the Tk 50,000 Arab-Bangladesh Bank Award while Jamal Ahmed got the Pacific Group Gold medal in the competition.

Three honorary awards worth Tk 10,000 each went to Shaikh Alifal, Abdus Sattar and Mohammad Iqbal.

A total of 227 art works and sculptures by 183 artists will be displayed in the exhibition.

The First National Exhibition was held in 1975 and 10 exhibitions were held in the last two decades.

The exhibition will remain open everyday from 2 pm to 7 pm till January 28.