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# The Daily Star

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## 100 feared killed as trains collide

At least 100 people were feared killed and about 300 injured as two passenger trains collided head-on at Hilly station in Dinajpur last night in one of the worst train accidents in the country, reports UNB.

Communication Ministry sources so far confirmed 21 deaths.

The accident occurred when Khulna-bound 'Simana Express' from Syedpur crashed head-on with Parbatipur-bound local train coming from Rajbari at about 9:45 pm.

Police and Bangladesh Rifles have been sent to start rescue operation. Relief trains from Lalmonirhat, Parbatipur and Pakshi rushed to the spot.

Communications Minister Col (Rtd) Oli Ahmed instructed concerned authorities to give

compensation for the victims and provide necessary medical treatment to the injured. Oli prayed for those killed and injured in the accident.

Mostafa-e-Jamil, Director, Public Relations of Railway Division told UNB that a relief train with medicine left Pakshi at 11 pm for the spot.

He could not give the casualty figure as he said Railway officials at Hilly and adjacent Panchbibi stations could not be contacted. Possibly, they had fled after the accident, Jamil added.

Jamil said two engines and four compartments were damaged. Engine and three bogies of the local train and the engine and one compartment of the express train were badly damaged.

The express train might have entered into the wrong track and slammed the local train standing at the station reports said.

Most of the casualties perhaps occurred from the local train whose engine and three compartments skidded off the track.



TESTING TIME: Anxious parents wait yesterday on the road outside the Ideal School at Mottijheel while their wards sit for admission tests inside. — Star photo

### PM shocked

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has expressed deep shock and profound grief at the loss of lives in the tragic train accident at the Hilly Station of Dinajpur district last night, reports BSS.

In a condolence message, the Prime Minister expressed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved families and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls.

### JP brings out procession

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders and activists of the Jatiya Party brought out a procession from Ashd Gate and paraded different city streets yesterday.

Police intercepted the processionists when they reached Hotel Sonargaon as part of their programme to press demand for holding general elections under a caretaker government.

The party then held a rally there which was addressed by JP secretary general Khaledur Rahman Titu and Juba Sanghati leader Saifur Rahman. Central leaders Moudud Ahmed and Kazi Zafar Ahmed also participated in the procession. A procession of the Jatiya Mahila Party joined them at Sobhanbagh.

### Dr Kamal for nat'l govt to resolve crisis

MOULVIBAZAR, Jan 13: Gano Forum president Dr Kamal Hossain today suggested the formation of a national government through consensus of all political parties to resolve the current political crisis, reports UNB.

Resignation of Opposition MPs was not the correct way to find solution of the deadlock, rather it deepened the crisis, Dr Kamal said while addressing a public meeting at the Kulaura rest house ground here in the afternoon.

The Gano Forum leader blamed both the ruling party and the Opposition for deepening the crisis by sticking to their respective stances without trying to hammer out a solution across the table.

He said his party had earlier told the Opposition parties not to complicate the situation by resigning from Parliament. "They're now looking for ways to return to the House," he said.

Referring to the Prime Minister's December 29 speech, Dr Kamal said the current situation could have been avoided had she delivered the speech just a day earlier.

### Dissolve JS for polls: Jamaat

By Staff Correspondent

The Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday reiterated its demand for dissolution of Parliament and holding general elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Addressing a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque the Jamaat leaders also accused the government of resorting to dilly-dally tactics in accepting the resignation of the opposition MPs.

Presided over by party's city unit ameer ATM Ashraf Islam, the rally was addressed by Sheikh Aser Ali, Jasimuddin Sarker and Abu Taber Mohammad Masum.

The rally over, a procession was brought out. The processionists returned to the north gate after parading Gulistan, Purana Palan and Topkhana Road and dispersed there.

### 7 killed in road accident near Pabna

Eight people were killed and 35 injured in road mishaps near Pabna and in Sirajganj yesterday, reports UNB.

Seven people were killed and 30 others wounded when a bus fell into a road side ditch at Punduria in Santia thana, 65 kilometers from Pabna town yesterday.

Witnesses and police said the Eureka Paribahan bus skidded off the Bogra-Nagarbari highway and tumbled into the 30-feet-deep ditch at about 4 pm while trying to give side to a Dhaka-bound coach. The bus left Pabna for Sirajganj at about 2 pm.

Five of the seven passengers who died on the spot were identified as: Md Abu Shamah, 42, of Karmaja village and Abdul Majid, 32, of Bonogram. See Page 8 Col 1

## ID cards unlikely if early elections held

By Nazmul Ashraf

The Election Commission (EC) is unlikely to complete the gigantic task of issuing identity cards to nearly six crore eligible voters in the country prior to the next general elections, if held earlier than scheduled, according to commission sources.

Although the Jatiya Sangsad passed a Bill in December last providing for legal compulsion for the voters to use ID cards to elect their representatives in Parliament or the local government bodies, the authorities are now convinced that implementation of the new system was not possible in the immediate future. EC officials are, however, optimistic about

the completion of distribution of ID cards among the voters for using those in the next general elections, if held as per schedule in February next year.

Against the backdrop of widespread speculation that the present Parliament may not get to complete its full term, and also to cover up for a lapse on the part of the Law Ministry while pushing through the EC Bill during the last session of the Jatiya Sangsad, the President signed an Ordinance earlier this week. The Ordinance kept in abeyance the effectiveness of the new EC Bill regarding the ID cards until the issuance of the

cards is actually completed, said officials of the Law and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry and the President's Secretariat. The Ordinance would come in the form of a gazette notification shortly, said an official of the President's Secretariat, adding that it would also call for ratification by Parliament.

The process of strengthening the EC and introducing the ID cards for the voters would continue as usual, a Law Ministry official insisted.

Talking to The Daily Star, another official of the ministry admitted a lapse on its part in the EC Bill, passed by Parliament. See Page 8 Col 7

### Crux of the crisis

Star Report

The negotiations for resolving the current political impasse did not make any headway since the ruling party was still insisting on a solution under constitutional framework while the Opposition demands required amendments to the Constitution, sources concerned said yesterday.

Ruling party sources said that the BNP high command was still in favour of a political solution under constitutional provisions even if the Prime Minister stepped down ahead of the next general elections.

The BNP is ready to implement the proposal of Commonwealth emissary Sir Ninian Stephen who suggested a 10-member interim cabinet — five each from that two sides — under Begum Khaleda Zia, one senior leader said yesterday. He said that if Begum Zia See Page 8 Col 5

## No scope to reconsider resignations: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there was no scope to reconsider the resignations of the opposition members from Parliament.

"The present Parliament must be dissolved and elections must be held under a neutral caretaker government," Hasina said while addressing a rally at Hazratbagh Park in the old part of city.

The rally was held prior to the start of a *parajatra*, as part of the opposition programme to press home the demands for dissolution of Parliament and holding general elections under a caretaker government.

The Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami brought out processions in the city from Wednesday and the AL will stage another *parajatra* tomorrow from the Biswa Road under Sabujbagh thana to press

for the demand. Sheikh Hasina said the present Parliament has only 147 members after the resignation of 147 opposition MPs and death of four others. "It is now a minority Parliament and it has no legitimacy," she said.

Hasina said the opposition members resigned from Parliament since they were not allowed to speak about the government's failure to check the prices of agricultural inputs, terrorism in educational institutions, corruption by the ministers and closure of industrial units.

Referring to the Prime Minister's announcement of quitting power 30 days before elections, Hasina said she (PM) agreed to resign when time ran out.

Hasina, however, called See Page 8 Col 6

## Nasim urges PM to accept Hasina's proposal

Former Opposition Chief Whip Muhammad Nasim yesterday urged Prime Minister Begum Zia's government to accept Sheikh Hasina's latest proposal for a caretaker government to save itself from political death.

"The ruling party should know that the Awami League and other opposition parties will not join elections under the BNP government in any form under any situation," he told UNB last night.

He asserted that "no compromise will be made on this question. The BNP must take its decision keeping this in mind."

Nasim, who had talks with Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain on Wednesday, said he does not know of any response from the government side to Hasina's new proposal.

On January 10, the Awami See Page 8 Col 8

**NEWS BRIEFS**

**PM attends BDR dinner**

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia last night attended a dinner hosted by the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on the occasion of its bicentennial celebration. Ministers, members of Parliament, diplomats, high civil and military officials and former director generals of BDR also attended the dinner. A spectacular tattoo show was presented by BDR on the occasion, reports BSS.

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