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 Dhaka Day by Day

Chechens prepare for guerilla war

Russian troops take Dudayev's palace

GROZNY, Jan 19: Russian troops hoisted their flag today over Chechnya's presidential palace, the symbol of Chechnya's independence drive during five weeks of bloody war with Moscow, report AP, Reuter.

But Chechen fighters played down their surrender of the smoking hulk, saying they would take the fight to other parts of the capital.

The whereabouts of their leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, a 50-year-old former Soviet Air Force general, was not immediately known today.

It seemed likely Dudayev, to whom many Chechens were indifferent before the Russian intervention, would now become a guerilla leader in the mountains where Chechen resistance fighters have vowed to continue the fighting.

"We won't have any particular bases — we'll be moving all around the city," said a mustachioed fighter with a Kalashnikov assault rifle slung over his shoulder. He would not give his name.

Soldiers of the 276th motorised rifle regiment raised the Russian tricolour this afternoon, said Col. Ivan Skrylnik, spokesman for Russia's Defense Ministry. The government press office confirmed the report.

President Boris Yeltsin issued a statement this evening declaring, "the military phase of restoring the Russian Constitution in Chechnya is now practically over."

"The subsequent mission to restore law, order and civil rights will lie with the Interior Ministry," the president said.

Russian military sources told the Interfax news agency there were several pockets of Chechen resistance in the city, including one close to the presidential palace.

Chechen fighters said they had abandoned the palace overnight after a Russian bomb or artillery shell penetrated down to the basement, where they had stubbornly held off the Russians since New Year's Eve.

They also withdrew from the central railroad station.

The Chechens have vowed that if Grozny falls, they will wage a guerilla war from the mountains south of the city.

Municipal polls Campaign banned from midnight tonight

The Election Commission has prohibited meetings and processions in connection with the municipal polls in Shibganj, Barisal, Chandpur and Sylhet for 48 hours with effect from midnight of January 22, reports BSS.

A press release of the Election Commission said yesterday that under Rule 55 of Paurashava (Election) Procedure, 1977, nobody is allowed to hold any meeting or procession in the concerned municipal area or can participate in them.

The press release said violators of the rule may be fined along with rigorous imprisonment. Concerned administrative authorities and law enforcing agencies have already been directed to enforce the law.

Elections in the four municipalities will be held on January 22 between 7 am and 2 pm without any break, the press release said.

Opposition can still join: Speaker Parliament session summoned Jan 23

By Staff Correspondent

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has summoned the Jatiya Sangsad to meet on January 23 at 11 am; the Parliament Secretariat said in a press release yesterday.

It will be the 18th session of the fifth Parliament.

As per convention, the President is likely to address house on the opening day of the first session of this year.

The 17th session was prorogued on December 8 last.

A Parliament source said that all the MPs, including those who have submitted their resignation letters, would be served with the notice of summoning the 18th session.

The source noted that since the resignation letters were not yet accepted, they are still Members of Parliament.

One hundred and forty-seven opposition MPs had submitted resignations on December 28 after a prolonged boycott of parliament sessions since March last year in demand for a caretaker government to supervise the general elections.

Meanwhile, Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali has said the MPs, if they want, may discuss the issue of High Court ruling asking the Speaker to show cause why action should not be taken as required under the Constitution on the resignation letters of the 147 MPs.

Under Article 78 of the Constitution, Parliament is immune, he added.

Talking to a group of newsmen at his official residence yesterday Razzak Ali said he would not give his decision before the House meets on January 23.

He declined to comment on the ruling of the High Court.

"I will not comment unless I get a copy of the ruling," he said.

See Page 8 Col 1

Opposition calls fresh hartals

By Staff Correspondent

The major opposition parties yesterday announced fresh agitation programmes, including a half-day hartal in the capital on January 24 and a dawn-to-dusk strike across the country on January 25.

The Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami announced the new programmes after enforcing a nationwide road-rail-waterway barricade programme yesterday.

These parties, now agitating for a non-party, neutral and caretaker administration to conduct the next general elections, also announced their decision to demonstrate before the Television and Radio offices in the city on January 23 to press the demand for autonomy of the two media.

The AL has also announced plans to stage demonstrations on January 21 and 22 protesting the price-hike of essential commodities.

See Page 8 Col 6



Bangladesh Nationalist Party chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and senior party leaders placing wreath at the mazar of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman on the occasion of his 59th birth anniversary in the city yesterday. — Star photo



Police personnel clearing railway tracks at the Tongi Railway Station after Opposition activists placed iron bars across the tracks to enforce an 8-hour country-wide road-rail and waterways barricade programme yesterday. — Star photo

Business leaders urge parties to withdraw Jan 25 hartal

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the business community have appealed to the political parties concerned to withdraw the call for a hartal on January 25 since, they pointed out, a two-day Euro-money International Investment Conference is due to begin in the capital on January 24.

The appeal was made in a joint statement issued by Abdur Rob Chowdhury, President of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI); Anis Ud Dowla, President of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI); Mahabub Jamil, President of the Foreign...

See Page 8 Col 7

Avalanches kill over 200 in Kashmir

JAMMU (India), Jan 19: More than 200 people were believed dead and 400 others buried under snow after avalanches roared down Himalayan mountain sides along the Srinagar-Jammu highway, the United News of India (UNI) said today, reports Reuter.

It said reports coming in from various points along the highway indicated the final toll could be much higher as rescue teams had not yet reached some affected areas.

Police said as many as five buses had plunged off the 180-km highway that winds through the foothills of the Himalayas since heavy snowfalls hit the area three days ago.

Some 5,000 people had been rescued from vehicles stranded along the highway.

UNI said 133 bodies had been recovered from the area since the avalanches began, and many more were thought to be buried in the snow.

It said 400 people were still taking refuge in the 2.8-km long Jawahar road tunnel. The Press Trust of India reported that air force helicopters had dropped food and blankets around the mouth of the tunnel for the stranded travellers.

AP adds: Most of the bodies were recovered from buses that were struck by the worst avalanche in Kashmir's history on Monday.

Hundreds of buses and passenger cars were stranded on the main highway linking Kashmir with the rest of India. The avalanche struck five kilometers north of the tunnel, police said.

The snowslide also blocked the Jammu-Srinagar state highway, which is 7,500 feet high.

The relief work also has been hit by a strike by the state government workers demanding higher wages.

Zia's birth anniversary observed

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its front organisations yesterday observed the 59th birth anniversary of late President Ziaur Rahman, reports UNB.

On this occasion, Prime Minister and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia laid wreaths at the mazar of the founder of the party and offered *fateha*.

She also witnessed a blood donation campaign organised on the occasion at the mazar premises.

The ruling party also organised a discussion meeting at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium which was attended by the Prime Minister, ministers, MPs, leaders and a large number of party workers.

Presided over by BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Tahsildar, the meeting was addressed by BNP founder Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General.

See Page 8 Col 7

Bid to steal nat'l flag from JS Bhaban: One held

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was detained by the city's Tejgaon police for his alleged attempt to steal the national flag from the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

The man identified as Khalequzzaman, 26, was interrogated several times but police are yet fathom the reason behind his attempt, said a police officer. He appears to be mentally unstable.

Police in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban area arrested Khalequzzaman when he tried to sneak away after lowering the flag from its mast around 10:30 in the morning, according to police.

Khalequzzaman told police that he comes from Rajshahi and has been living in the capital's Talotoa Cantonment area. But he did not give the number of the house.

Barricade disrupts rail, road links

By Staff Correspondent

The mainstream Opposition called barricade programme yesterday disrupted road and rail way communications in the country.

Waterway communications, however, remained unaffected during the eight hour programme that started at 6 am.

The Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami called the barricade programme as part of their on-going agitations in demand for dissolution of Parliament and holding of general elections under a neutral caretaker administration.

One hundred and forty-seven Opposition members of the Jatiya Sangsad had earlier resigned en masse on December 28 to press home their demand.

Vehicle movement at all entry points to the city was blocked since opposition activists manned barricades at Gabtali, Tongi, Syedabad and Jatrabari.

All inter district buses remained off the streets or stranded at different bus terminals.

Trucks and lorries carrying goods, particularly those carrying foodgrains, were parked at different places in the country during the barricade hours.

Several buses, trucks, mini buses and auto-rickshaws which defied the Opposition call were stoned in Gabtali and Syedabad areas.

Train communication was disrupted across the country as opposition activists put slippers and logs on the track and detained those at Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi and Bogra.

See Page 8 Col 3

By-polls to 4 JS seats Jan 25

By-elections to four vacant seats of Natore-3, Bakerganj-6, Sherpur-3 and Brahmanbaria-6 of the Jatiya Sangsad will be held on January 25, an official handout said in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

The government declared a holiday on January 25, the polling date, for all government offices, court, industries, commercial organisations and educational institutions in the polling areas for enabling the voters who work in government, semi-government, autonomous bodies to cast their votes.

The handout said the holiday will be applicable to all offices, agencies and institutions. But those offices, agencies and organisations which are controlled by their own rules would declare holiday on January 25 considering public interest, the handout added.

Quake toll rises to 4000

KOBE, Japan, Jan 19: The death toll from Tuesday's massive earthquake in western Japan soared past 4,000, police said today, making it the deadliest urban disaster since World War II, reports AP.

Police said the death toll as of late today stood at 4,015 with 587 people still missing nearly three days after the 7.2 quake.

The figure surpassed the 3,769 who died in the 1948 quake in Fukui.

The 1923 quake in Tokyo and the straddling Kanto plain killed 100,000.

In Kobe, exhausted rescue crews worked around the clock, using picks, shovels, to move tons of debris in search of survivors.

A look into Bangladesh Railways: Part-I

The slums on wheels

by Murshed Ali Khan

Beginning today, The Daily Star takes a hard look at the Bangladesh Railway. The extensive rail network that was built by the British over a century ago, was once looked upon with pride for its quick transportation and efficient management.

Over the past decades, particularly after the independence of the country, although modern equipment and technology have been introduced, the Bangladesh Railway seems to be stuck in a steam-age management requiring huge infusion of public funds.

We start today with our correspondent taking a train ride from Dhaka's Kamalapur station to the poor residential district of Banani. This unrepresentative journey tells a lot about what is ailing our Railway.

The series will cover the history of Bangladesh Railway, the growing threat it is facing from road transportation, the condition of its infrastructure and the problems and challenges of moving freight.

The train is undergoing repairs, said the guard at Dhaka's Kamalapur main railway station.

"It won't leave until 3 pm. Go get your ticket," he added pointing his finger towards the ticket counters at the entrance.

I wanted to have a short train ride from the Kamalapur station. It would help me gain a first-hand experience to sum up my writing on the Bangladesh Railway.

The Akhaura-bound local train which stops at every station on its 60-mile journey should have left at 2:20 pm.

I was lucky. At 2:45 pm I hurried to the ticket counter obeying the guard.

A reluctant and tired-looking attendant at the counter told me to go to counter No. 3. "It is there you get the local tickets," he said. In a typical Dhaka accent, there was none at the counter. "Anyone here?" I shouted through the round glass counter.

A young man with a bundle of electric wires in his hand appeared from inside. "I can't see anyone at the office," he said politely.

I told him about my desire to have a ticket before boarding the train.

He looked like a row of slums on the platform. To add to its wretched state, beggars, squatters and vendors swarmed every part of the transport I was so eagerly trying to board.

I had to find the TTC first to tell him about my ticketlessness. At least, I did not want a criminal record, travelling without a ticket. The repairmen still busy with their work told me to look for a man with a book. After a search on the platform I found the man with a book.

"Where do you want to get off?" he asked looking at me from head to toe. I thought for a moment and said, "Banani."

"Why don't you take the bus?" he asked bluntly.

"I like trains," I replied in short.

"Well this is not a train to be liked. People like you do not take this train," he said putting a smile on his tanned face.

"I do not work here," he added with a smile. "I am installing the computers, you see."

It was 2:55 pm on my watch. I decided to take the train anyway — without ticket!

The five-carriage train

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NOTICE

To ensure the benefit of reduction of urea fertilizer price to farmers, Government has decided to fix Maximum Retail Price (MRP) at Tk.230/- per bag of 50 kg. and Tk. 4.60 per kg. The details of Ex-Factory Price and Maximum Retail Price (MRP) are furnished below:

Urea Price	Per Metric Ton	Per Bag of 50 kg.	Per kg.
Ex-Factory	Tk. 3,725	Tk. 186.25	Tk. 3.73
Maximum Retail Price (MRP)	---	Tk. 230.00	Tk. 4.60

The fixation of Maximum Retail Price (MRP) is not an increase in the existing price of urea fertilizer. It has been done to benefit the farmers from the reduced price of urea fertilizer and to prevent exorbitant price charged by the unscrupulous traders.

বাংলাদেশ রাইফেলস

বাংলাদেশ রাইফেলস-এর দ্বিংশত বার্ষিকী উদ্‌যাপন উপলক্ষে রাইফেলস পরিবার কলাগণ সমিতি আয়োজিত হস্ত শিল্প প্রদর্শনীর লটারীর ফলাফল

র্যাফেল ড্র-এর ফলাফল

১১৫৬৭২, ১৩৮২৮০, ০৭৮২৬৮, ০৪৯০২০, ১০৩৯৬০, ১৪০৭২৬, ০৬৮০৪৭, ০০৭৭৭২, ০২৯৫৫৮, ১১১৫৫৮, ১৪৮৮২২, ০৩৯৪০৯, ০০৭৭৪৪, ০১১৮৫৬, ০৯৫১৭৪, ১০৪৭২৭, ০৯১৭২০, ০১৯২৫৯, ১০৪৫৪২, ১৪০৮২৬, ০৬৫৬৬৬, ০৩৯৪৫৯, ০৫২১৭৮, ১০৭৫৭০, ১১৯০১৮, ০২১৭৯৬, ১১৮৯৯৯, ০৮৫৭৯৯, ০৫৮৯৪৪ এবং ০৫৬৬০২।

শেট লটারীর ফলাফল

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বাংলাদেশ রাইফেলস সীমান্তের অস্ত্র প্রহরী