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NEWS BRIEFS

**Rly passenger ferry
 service resumes**

Railway passenger ferry service between Bahadurabad ghat and Tistamukh ghat resumed yesterday. However, the ferry services will operate during the day time only. To adjust with the schedule of the ferry services the time-table of the Ekota Express has been changed. Dinajpur bound Ekota will leave Dhaka at 11:15 pm instead of 5:30 pm while Dhaka bound Ekota will leave Dinajpur at 11:30 pm instead of 4:30 pm, reports BSS.

**Feud over holding
 tournament: 10 hurt**

COMILLA, Dec 8: At least 10 people were injured, two of them seriously in a clash between two rival groups over holding a tournament at Fakir Bazar in Burichang thana today. Police and witnesses said, the clash erupted when supporters of Abdus Sattar, a former UP chairman of Bakshimul, allegedly attacked on the supporters of Foyez Muhuri of Fakir Bazar at about 10 am, reports UNB.

**7 get RI for
 felling trees**

CHITTAGONG, Dec 8: Chittagong Forest Court has sentenced seven people to rigorous imprisonment in three cases for felling trees in the Chittagong reserve forest. Court sources said Shamsul Alam and Noor Hossain of South Koreidanga in Boalkhali thana have been awarded 6 months RI and fined Tk 5,000, in default to suffer 2 months more RI. While Abdul Barez, Nurul Islam, Rustom Ali Sarder and Nurul Islam Sarder of Hajiganj thana of Chandpur district and Al Helal of West Khurshia village in Rangunia thana in Chittagong district, have been awarded 6 months imprisonment and fined Tk 5,000, in default to suffer one month more in jail, reports UNB.

72-hour countrywide hartal from today

By Staff Correspondent

A three-day country-wide hartal called by the three major opposition parties begins at 6 am today.

The Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami called the hartal to press their demand for general elections under a caretaker government, resignation of the Prime Minister and cancellation of the election schedule.

The parties have exempted from the hartal ambulance service, drug stores, fire service vehicles, corpse carrying vehicles, vegetable and essentials markets, food shops, water, electricity and gas supply vehicles, city corporation and municipal garbage cleaning vehicles and

vehicles carrying journalists and newspapers.

In addition, movement of rickshaws from 5 pm to 5 am everyday have been exempted from the hartal.

A number of torch processions were brought out in different parts of the city yesterday in support of the hartal.

At the Bangabandhu Avenue, participants of the Awami League procession and police clashed at around 6.45 pm. A number of cocktails were exploded and gunshots were heard during the clashes, witnesses said. Police picked up some activists from the spot.

Jatiya Party activists brought out processions in

almost all the thanas of the city. At the Satmasjid Road and Asad Gate, processionists clashed with police. Crackers were exploded and gunshots were also heard during the clashes.

Jamaat-e-Islami activists also brought out processions and held a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque in the evening.

Awami League stalwart Tofael Ahmed told The Daily Star last night that the Opposition-led movement would continue to intensify till the ruling party accepted the demand for a caretaker government.

"If the government goes ahead with its plan to hold

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30 hurt, more vehicles damaged

By Staff Correspondent

Sporadic clashes broke out between Opposition activists and members of the law enforcing agencies as they (activists) brought out torch processions in support of the 72-hour hartal that begins today.

At least 30 people including five policemen were injured during clashes in different parts of the city, witnesses, police and medical sources said.

At least a dozen vehicles were burnt and about 50 damaged when pro-hartal activists marched through Bangabandhu Avenue, Paltan, Malibagh, Kamalapur, Moghbazar, Elephant Road, Kalabagan, Panthapath, Asad Gate, Satmasjid Road, Dhaka University and its adjacent areas.

Police picked up at least

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Hasina ready for talks with President if PM resigns

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday said they were ready to meet the President on the formation of a neutral caretaker government for holding the general elections if the Prime Minister resigned.

"The present PM and her cabinet are no longer elected following the dissolution of the parliament... So what's wrong if another unelected neutral person heads a government for the interim period," she told a crowded press conference at the party's Dhannondi office yesterday evening.

She disagreed with the ruling BNP's view that a constitutional vacuum would be created if Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia resigned.

Hasina said, "We'll select a non-partisan man, to be appointed as Prime Minister by the President as soon as the



Sheikh Hasina

incumbent PM resigns."

Replying to a question the AL President viewed that an atmosphere for dialogue on formation of a neutral caretaker government could be created only after the resignation of the PM.

Hasina made it clear that her party wanted that the caretaker government be formed under the existing structure (a PM to head it) and was opposed to the idea of a President-led government.

Responding to another query, the AL leader alleged that the ruling party was not sincerely to hold a free and fair polls. This is evident from the schedule. "Many tasks including the prepara-

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Two cars were set on fire by pro-hartal activists at the Elephant Road in the city yesterday. A bullet-hit pedestrian being taken to hospital (inset).

— Star photo

US won't tolerate Iranian, Afghan fighters in Bosnia

WASHINGTON, Dec 8: The United States has stepped up pressure on Bosnia's Muslim-led government to ensure that Iranian and Afghan Muslim fighters leave and not threaten US troops sent to enforce a peace agreement, reports Reuter.

Most of the Iranian and Afghan soldiers are in what will be the American sector around Tuzla in northeast Bosnia.

"We believe they do represent, possibly in the future, a threat to the American and other forces there, and we want that threat removed," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said. "We don't believe that their presence there is at all helpful and we won't tolerate it."

Burns said Iranian and Afghan Muslims-Mujahideen who helped the Bosnian government in its 44-month-old

war against Serbs and Croats — have a "radical agenda" and not one of peace like the Americans and their NATO allies.

He also renewed the US call for Bosnia's government to "reassure Bosnian Serbs their rights will be protected when the peace accord finalized in Dayton, Ohio on Nov 21 takes effect."

"We believe that the Bosnian Serb civilian rights should be protected... we think it's important to build up the confidence of these people, we'd like to see them stay in their homes. We don't believe it's going to be useful if Serb civilians flee when the accord is signed because they suspect their rights will not be respected," Burns told reporters.

Chief US negotiator Richard Holbrooke made both of these points in an interview on Wednesday with Reuters and said he would be carrying these messages when he visits Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to prepare for the formal signing of the Dayton accord in Paris on Dec 14.

6 DU hall rooms ransacked; 5 BCL workers hurt

By DU Correspondent

At least five Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists were injured when Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists ransacked six rooms at the Surya Sen Hall of the Dhaka University Thursday night.

The rooms are 174, 175, 426ka, 434, 553 and 575. The injured BCL activists are Hafizur Rahman, Monir Hossain, Montruzzaman, Delwar and Zakir.

The BCL leaders alleged

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Over 3m mines in Bosnia!

WASHINGTON, Dec 8: US military intelligence believes that there are at least three million anti-personnel and other mines in Bosnia but the total could be twice as high, a senior military official said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

"Our speculation — based on intelligence from what we know — says it's about three million," Air Force Lt. Gen. Howell Estes, director of operations for the joint chiefs of staff, told reporters. "Could it be double that? Yes sir. I don't think anybody really knows how many mines are there."



Michael Jackson hospitalised

NEW YORK, Dec 8: Pop star Michael Jackson may have collapsed from a heart problem combined with dehydration and was in "serious but stable condition", in a New York hospital, his doctors said on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Jackson, 37, was in the intensive care unit being treated for inflammation of the stomach and intestines, kidney and liver function, a statement by the Beth Israel North Hospital in Manhattan said.

"Yesterday, Jackson suffered a fainting reaction possibly due to a cardiac arrhythmia with dehydration,"

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MCCI criticises BB's monetary measures

A leading chamber has cautioned against panic reaction on the part of the government to current inflationary pressure, saying that any excess would only worsen the situation, reports UNB.

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), in a review of latest trends in the country's economy, was critical of the Bangladesh Bank's recent monetary measures, including indiscriminate credit restrictions, to defeat inflation.

The chamber felt that the economic situation, marked by remarkably low current account deficit, was yet to demand such painstaking move and signalled that the current inflationary pressure had been threatened with further deterioration by the Bangladesh Bank moves.

It said that central bank's intervention to withdraw the excess liquidity had already contributed to liquidity crisis in the call money market and upward pressure on interest rate which, it warned, could raise investment cost and thus trigger "cost-push" inflation.

The MCCI cautioned against any devaluation of local currency on the pretext

of inflation because of what it argued "largely exogenous" inflationary pressures.

The review, which evaluated the economy during July-October 1995 period, however, recognised that the country's macro-economic fundamentals continue to remain under some pressure as a result of inflationary pressure and declining forex reserve.

"With the current account deficit remaining as low as 1.2 per cent of the GDP and exports growing by over 20 per cent, the fundamentals (macro-economic) are certainly not under threat. Indeed, there can hardly be any justifiable fear to pull the alarm chain," it said.

The review mentioned that despite political uncertainties, the manufacturing sector, exports, imports and the resultant revenue collection remained "encouraging".

MCCI, a representative body of the organised industrial sector, warned that Bangladesh Bank's attempt to siphon out the liquidity would trigger a "general bank crisis with wild swing" in interest rates in the same way as it has been happening in

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EC rules for submitting nominations

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday announced the rules and procedures for submitting nomination papers for the next general election.

The last date for submitting nomination papers is December 17. The returning officers and assistant returning officers will accept the papers during office hours, a press release of the EC said last night.

Nobody will be allowed to contest from more than 5 seats simultaneously as per Article 13 A (1) of the Public Representative Act 1972, the

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PM submits applications for nomination

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday submitted her applications seeking party nomination to contest the forthcoming parliamentary elections from five seats, reports UNB.

Mosaddek Ali (Falu), PS-2 to the Prime Minister, was learnt to have submitted the application forms on behalf of Begum Zia to the BNP central office.

BNP sold 2,165 application forms from December 4 till yesterday, the last day for submitting applications seeking party nomination to contest the election. Some 1,674 people finally submitted their applications.

Among the sitting ministers, Col (Rtd) Oli Ahmed and Col (Rtd) Akbar Hossain sought party nomination from four constituencies of their re-

See Page 12 Col 7

JP condemns police action on rallies

Jatiya Party leaders yesterday reiterated their demands for resignation of the Prime Minister and holding of election under a neutral caretaker government without wasting time, reports UNB.

Addressing a press conference, JP acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury urged the government to implement the demand of the majority people for a caretaker government without further delay on the pretext of Constitution.

Chowdhury said constitution had been amended for Justice Sattar and Justice Sahabuddin and now it could be changed again for the sake of the people's demand.

Referring to Thursday's police action on opposition rallies and processions, he

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BNP man chopped to death in N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 8: A BNP activist was killed allegedly by his political rivals, near Murapara Bazar in Rujganj thana of the district on Thursday night, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Tara Miah, 27, a local activist of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Police and witnesses said an armed group of youths picked up Tara Miah from Murapara Bazar at about 9:30 pm Thursday, forcibly took him to a nearby jungle and chopped him to death.

Number of crimes higher than those recorded

By Reaz Ahmad and Mizan Ali

The number of crimes recorded with police was 75,309 in 1994 against 89,887 in 1972, according to data available from the police headquarters here.

The records, however, do not reflect the actual number of crimes, said a high ranking police official requesting anonymity.

The recorded crimes include dacoity, mugging, murder, burglary, stealing, etc.

Police tend to avoid registering crimes taking into consideration few factors. Firstly, they want to maintain the reputation of the respective thanas. Secondly, they scrutinize the probability of "recovery" before registering any case. They register cases

which are "unavoidable and from which can attain at least 60 per cent success". Another reason for not registering the crimes is insufficient fund allocation for criminal investigation, the official said.

Cognizable offences have to be treated as FIRs, according to law but in many cases it is not done as the people are not aware of the law.

Sometimes people also do not want to record the crime with police because of the "non-cooperation" of police in many cases and lengthy legal process in disposal of the case, the police official added.

Recorded crimes in 1975 was 73,663 which dropped

See Page 12 Col 8



The Bangladesh Shishu Academy brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday marking the completion of one decade of the SAARC.

— Star photo