

## Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of Victory Day. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

## Inside Today

### Article

#### Crisis, Commissions, Criminals and Confidence

Column: Beneath the Surface  
by Abdul Bayes  
Page 4

### Focus

Land and destiny: Bangladesh perspective; Is there a silver lining — after 24 years? Does Bangladesh speak what shaheeds wanted to say?  
Page 5

## International

US may reimpose sanctions if Balkan accord violated

India preparing for its first nuclear test since '74  
Page 8

## Business

Weekly Review: DSE loses Tk 24 cr in market capitalisation

ASEAN agrees to slash tariffs on most products by 2003  
Pages 6, 7

## Victory Day Special

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains an eight-page supplement on Victory Day  
Pages 13-20

## Metropolitan

### Dhaka Day by Day



Tale of Roadside Tailors  
Page 3

# Nation celebrates Silver Jubilee of war victory

By Staff Correspondent

The nation today celebrates the 25th Victory Day with a renewed pledge to safeguard the independence and sovereignty of the country.

On this day in 1971, Bangladesh came into being as an independent and sovereign nation and supreme sacrifices of millions of sons of this soil after a nine-month war. The Pakistani occupation forces had surrendered to the freedom fighters and allied Indian troops at the historic Race Course Maidan (Suhrawardy Uddyan) on this day.

### Editorial on page 4

A festive mood sweeps the capital and the rest of the country as elaborate programmes have been drawn to mark the day.

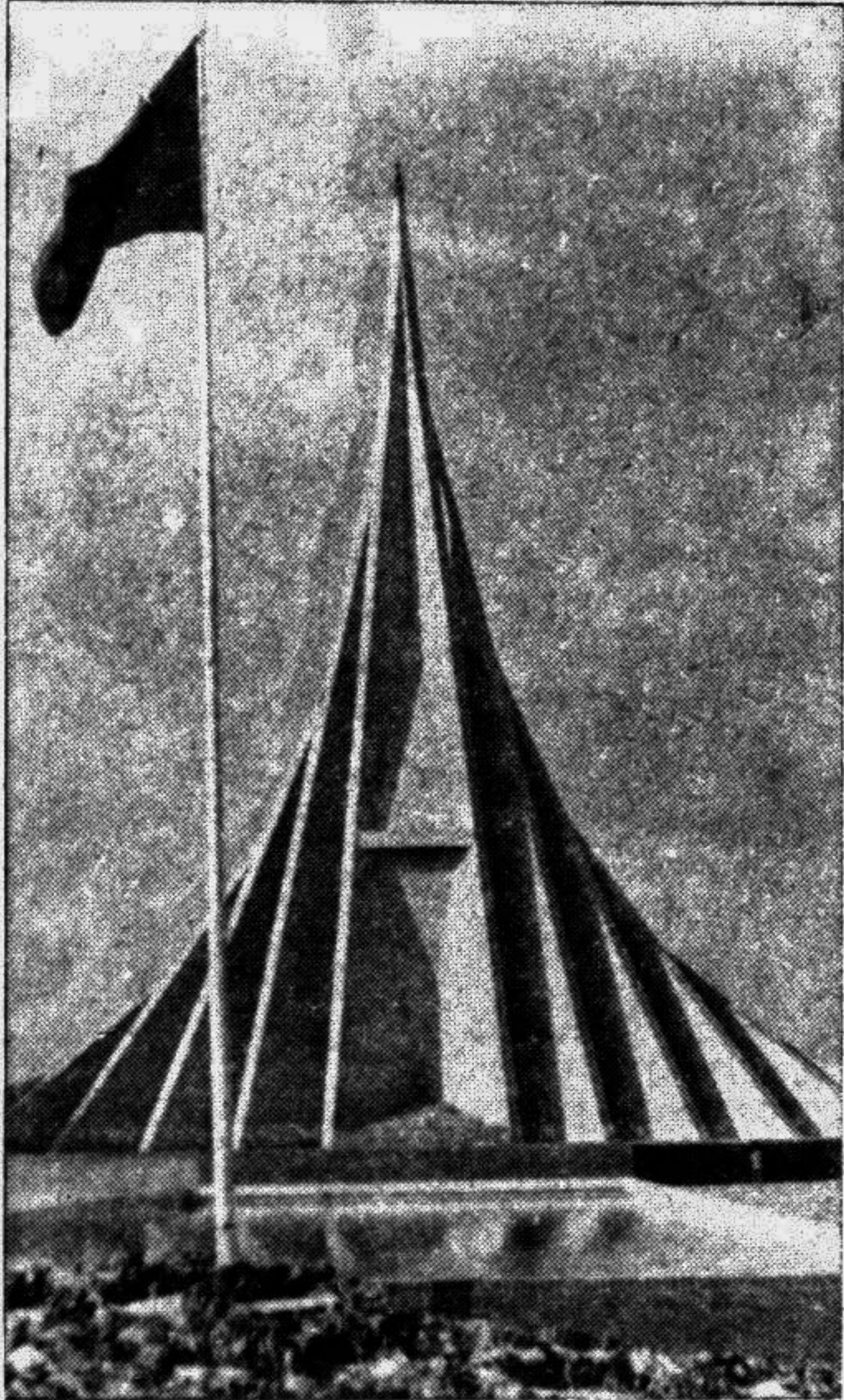
President Abdur Rahman Biswas in a message on the occasion urged all to resolve all national problems through united efforts.

In a separate message, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said upholding the spirit of the Liberation War and democratic values will safeguard our independence.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in a message congratulated the people and urged them to renew the pledge to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War.

BSS adds: The programme of the day will start with the

See Page 12 Col 4



The National Memorial at Savar. — Star photo

# ASEAN signs treaty to become N-free zone

BANGKOK, Dec 15: All 10 Southeast Asian nations signed a treaty declaring their region a nuclear weapons-free zone today, although it is mostly symbolic since the United States and China have refused to recognize it for now, reports AP.

The Treaty on the South-east Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone was signed at a riverside hotel after almost 12 years of discussions. A round of applause followed.

The treaty bans the manufacture, acquisition, possession or control over nuclear weapons. It ensures the right of each party to decide whether to allow port calls and transit of foreign aircraft and ships. It does not override rights of passage accorded by the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea.

Signing were the leaders of Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore and Vietnam — all members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations grouping that produced the treaty.

Also signing were the leaders of Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, which attended the first summit of all the region's countries.

The treaty comes into effect after all countries ratify it, and it lasts indefinitely.

The United States and China have objected to the treaty on the grounds that it may threaten their ability to move their warships around the globe. China, according to ASEAN officials, says it does not accept territorial rights

### More about Diana

LONDON, Dec 15: Princess Diana has been dating a wealthy unmarried property tycoon for the last 14 months, according to news reports Thursday night, reports AP.

Two London tabloids, the Sun and the Daily Mirror, named him as 40-year-old Christopher Whalley, who lives in south London and has a house in the Yorkshire

See Page 12 Col 7

implied by the pact.

But ASEAN leaders have said the pact's protocol — a supplement that the nuclear powers will be invited to sign — is likely to be amended later to address most of their worries.

The accord also bans the dumping of nuclear waste in waters around ASEAN countries and sets out guidelines for the monitoring of nuclear power safety.

ASEAN leaders also promised to start eliminating all non-tariff barriers to trade from January 1996 and to speed up the formation of an ASEAN free trade area before the previous target date of 2003.

They agreed by 2000 to maximise the number of items on which tariffs would be abolished or cut to five per cent.

With its declaration on new members ASEAN, formed in 1967 with five members and now expanded to seven, took a major step towards realising the dream

See Page 12 Col 7

# Polls date shifted to Feb 7

By Staff Correspondent

The date for parliamentary elections has been shifted to February 7 from January 18. This was announced by the Election Commission through a gazette notification last night. According to the revised election schedule, the last date for filing of nomination papers is January 3, scrutiny of those will take place on January 4 while January 9 is the last date for withdrawal of candidature.

The announcement was made hours after the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) had a meeting with leaders of political parties. The meeting was attended by representatives of the ruling BNP and 59 other parties. The three major opposition parties, however, did not attend.

Soon after the revision of the election schedule, CEC Justice A K M Sadeque told a small group of newsmen in front of his office "The main purpose of the rescheduling

is to ensure a larger participation in the general elections."

When asked about the possibility of a consensus between the ruling party and the Opposition, Justice Sadeque said, "This is my eternal expectation."

He further said that at yesterday's meeting all political parties, except one or two, gave their views in favour of shifting the election date. "Though they (three major Opposition parties) did not

attend the meeting, we had informal talks also with them," he added.

Responding to another question, Justice Sadeque made it clear that despite the revision of the poll schedule, all activities including the illegal arms recovery drive initiated by the EC would continue in accordance with its plan.

This is for the first time national elections are scheduled to be held in Ramzan, which is likely to begin in the

third week of January. The EC requested all political parties, candidates and others concerned to cooperate in maintaining the sanctity of the Ramzan during the elections process.

In its gazette notification, the Election Commission explained in brief the background of the announcement of election schedule. It pointed out that after the dissolution of the fifth Parliament on November 24, it

See Page 12 Col 7

## PM wants an election of rigging, says Hasina

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday blamed the Prime Minister for pushing the country towards a constitutional crisis by declining to resign and give election under a neutral non-party caretaker government, reports UNB.

"By revising the election schedule without creating an atmosphere for free and fair election she (PM) is, in fact, leading the country to a constitutional crisis. And taking advantage of it, she wants to hold an election of rigging, Hasina alleged.

She was addressing a

See Page 12 Col 6

## Refixing polls date not enough: Opposition

# Dec 17 hartal postponed

Star Report

The Opposition-called 24-hour hartal scheduled for December 17 was postponed by them in view of the announcement of a revised reschedule for the next general elections.

The announcement made by the Election Commission (EC) last night brought a new whiff of relief and relaxed tension which had pushed the political barometer to a climax, with the date for filing nominations only a day away and all Opposition parties remaining determined to boycott the polls.

The previously announced Opposition programme of

ghearing EC offices in the country on December 18 was also postponed as a result of the new development.

Political observers said that this was for the first time a scheduled hartal was called off and described the Opposition move as a sincere manifestation of their wish to solve the crisis and participate in the elections in a truly compatible atmosphere that was mutually acceptable.

Both the government and the Opposition leaders sat at impromptu meetings last night to review the "latest breathing time which perhaps is their last in their bid to re-

solve the 20-month old political standoff that has taken the nation on the brink of total uncertainty," one analyst remarked.

In their reactions, the leaders of the major Opposition parties said yesterday that the revision of the election schedule had given the ruling party the time and opportunity to concede to their demands that the Prime Minister step down and national elections be held under a non-partisan caretaker government, at the initiative of the President.

The opposition Awami

See Page 12 Col 4

## Parties should always be ready for polls: Manju

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party will participate in elections the moment a congenial atmosphere is created for holding free and fair polls, said Anwar Hossain Manju, Secretary General of the Jatiya Party.

In the past also the country witnessed that the elections had been delayed but were finally held. The political parties have to "keep themselves up-to-date taking preparations for that," the JP leader said in an interview with The Daily Star.

About the caretaker government issue he said "Let it not be made a cause of lasting a feud." The people in power have always tampered with the law to suit their own interests, he added.

About the Prime Minister's stand of not going beyond what has been written in the Constitution, Manju said constitution is the embodiment of people's aspirations. Party in power tampers with it to suit their needs, he said.

See Page 12 Col 8

## 3 major parties keep out of CEC's meet

By Staff Correspondent

The three-major opposition parties — Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — did not attend the meeting convened by the Election Commission yesterday to discuss the next parliamentary election.

Representatives of almost all the political parties including the ruling BNP and 59 smaller ones at the meeting gave their views in favour of rescheduling the elections. Some 86 representatives

of political parties attended the meeting held at the NEC auditorium. Prominent among the parties represented were Gano Forum, Muslim League, NAP (Bhasani), Khelafat Andolon, Islami Biplobi Parishad and Freedom Party.

The representatives said that for the sake of giving yet another chance to the BNP and the Opposition to reach a consensus for resolving the lingering political crisis, the EC could defer the poll schedule by one to two weeks. Most of them also expressed their frustration over the present stalemate.

With the CEC Justice AKM Sadeque in the chair, the meeting was also attended by Election Commissioner Justice Abdul Jalil, Secretary of the EC Md Irshadul Haq and Additional Secretary S M Zakaria.

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar and State Minister

See Page 12 Col 8

## Interview of BNP nomination seekers complete

The interview of the nomination seekers for the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) for the forthcoming parliamentary elections from Chittagong division which began Thursday was completed yesterday, reports BSS.

Party sources said 200 nomination seekers of different constituencies of Feni, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar appeared before the nomination board at the BNP elections office at Kakrail.

The interview of the nomination seekers from different constituencies of Rajbari district began last night. BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and BNP Standing Committee members took the interview.

Party sources said, the interview of 266 nomination seekers of Faridpur, Tangail, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Mymensingh and Netrakona districts will be held on December 23 while 246 nominations seekers from districts of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Manikganj, Narsinghdi, Gazipur, Munshiganj and Kishoreganj will be held on December 24.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### ALCWC meet tomorrow

Awami League central working committee will meet at the party Dhanmondi office on December 17 at 4 pm. Party president Sheikh Hasina will chair the meeting, reports UNB.

### Jamaat-BNP panel wins IUTA polls

JHENIDAH, Dec 15: The Green Panel, backed by the ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, today swept the election of the Islamic University Teachers' Association, bagging 13 posts out of 14.

### Mostafiz leaves for Delhi today

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman will leave Dhaka today for New Delhi to attend the meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers.

### Honorary commission

Twenty-five honorary lieutenants and 36 junior commissioned officers have been granted honorary commission in the rank of honorary captain and honorary lieutenant respectively on the active list of the Bangladesh Army with effect from today.



The memorial for the martyred teachers of the Dhaka University in 1971 built in front of the VC's residence will be inaugurated today. — Star photo

# Serb gesture of ending war in Bosnia

PALE (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Dec 15: Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic symbolically ended the state of war in the Serb half of postwar Bosnia today — except in Serb-held Sarajevo, reports AP.

Karadzic's gesture was intended to show world leaders he is committed to peace, while reminding them he bitterly opposes their decision to unify Sarajevo under the rule of his enemies.

Peace became official in Paris yesterday with the signing of a US-brokered accord that divides Bosnia into

two regions — one controlled by Serbs, the other by Muslims and Croats.

Some 60,000 NATO troops including 20,000 Americans, will pour into the

country soon to try to make the agreement stick.

In the government-controlled heart of Sarajevo, newspapers heralded the official end of the 3-year war in huge, front-page headlines

"The war is over," the Avaz newspaper proclaimed.

"Welcome to peace," said Sarajevo's main newspaper, Oslobođenje.

An editorial in Sarajevo's

Vecernje Novine said, "People wonder: Can the soldiers of war become the soldiers of peace? ... Anything is possible. The people were not asked about anything by anybody anyway

## Of the unsung heroines...

By Staff Correspondent

They stood up for what they thought was right. They fought side by side with men in the country's War of Independence.

No archive has recorded the saga of Piar Chand Bibi's valor or the sacrifice made by Kafuly Begum of Nalitabari during the nine-month bloody war.

Narigrantha Prabartana, a women's organisation, brought together some of the unsung heroines of the Liberation War yesterday at the Engineers Institution pre-

See Page 12 Col 8

## Prime Bank

Opens its

# Islamic Banking Branch

On Monday, 18th December, 1995  
at 19, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka

- The Branch will be conducted purely in accordance with the Islamic Principles.
- It is a humble gesture on the part of the Bank to show profound respect to the religious feelings of the people of the country and also to meet all their banking needs.
- All types of banking business including Foreign Exchange will be available at this Branch.
- The accounting system of the Branch will be completely independent and separate from the main stream of the Bank.

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