

# Israeli troops withdraw from Ramallah

RAMALLAH (West Bank), Dec 27: Israeli troops withdrew today from Ramallah, the seventh and last main West Bank town to be handed over to full Palestinian control, clearing the path to historic self-rule elections next month, reports AFP.

Thousands of Palestinians cheered and danced as military jeeps carried the last Israeli soldiers from the military administration building and police station which had been their headquarters during 28 years of occupation.

Some youths threw stones and empty bottles at the withdrawing jeeps, but the only casualty was a Palestinian youth hurt by a stray rock. It was the first time the

Israeli army withdrew in full daylight. "From now on Ramallah is free," declared General Haj Ismail Jaber, head of Palestinian police on the West Bank.

In a brief ceremony, Jaber shook hands with the departing Israeli West Bank commander, General Gaby Ophir, outside the military administration headquarters as hundreds of Palestinians stormed into the building and civilians and policemen alike fired guns into the air in celebration.

"I can't put my feelings into words, I am so proud of what is happening to us," said Saleh Hushieh, 36, a UN employee who spent several periods in detention under Is-

raeli rule. But joy was not the only emotion among Ramallah's residents.

"It's true that there is happiness and celebrating, but we won't ever forget the Israelis' injustice and repression," said Mohammed Rashid, 35.

Ramallah isn't a liberated town because the Israelis still control the access," he said.

Ramallah, a prosperous town of 40,000, was decked out with thousands of red-green-black-and-white Palestinian flags and banners bearing the portrait of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat flew everywhere.

"Ramallah welcomes the lions to their kingdom," read one banner hung between electric poles.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia laid the foundation stone of Ashuganj-Bhairab bridge across the river Meghna on Dhaka-Sylhet highway yesterday. — PID photo

## Ashuganj-Bhairab Bridge foundation laid

ASHUGANJ (Brahmanbaria), Dec 27: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia laid the foundation stone of the longcherished Ashuganj-Bhairab Bridge here today, reports UNB.

The 1,160-metre-long bridge across the river Meghna will be constructed 120 metres upstream of the existing railway bridge at a cost of about Tk 267.39 crore. Of the amount, the government will provide nearly Tk 113 crore while the rest will come as project assistance.

Officials said the construction work will begin in 1996-97 and the bridge will be completed in 1998-99.

Laying the foundation, Begum Zia told a big gathering at Ashuganj ferry ghat this morning that development of communication network was one of the important ways to achieve economic advancement.

"If we can build a smooth communication network, it will be easy to ensure a balanced development in the country," she said adding that the government had given top priority to the development of communication network since its assumption of power in 1991.

The Prime Minister said the construction of the Meghna-Gumti bridge has established an uninterrupted

link between capital Dhaka and the south-eastern port city of Chittagong.

Similarly, the Ashuganj-Bhairab bridge will also establish an uninterrupted road communication between the capital and the districts of the Sylhet division.

Begum Zia said 320 bridges and numerous culverts were constructed in the country in last four fiscal years. She mentioned the construction of the Meghna-Gumti, Monu, Mohuri, Shikhalba, Mahananda, Shah Amanat, Pagla Shaheed Siddiq Protap and Manda bridges.

## Kamal welcomes new political development

Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain has said the latest developments in the political arena regarding the proposed dialogue at the highest level provided a real opportunity to end the 'suffocating political impasse'.

Welcoming the initiative, he pointed out at a press conference yesterday that the opposition had already indicated it was ready to sit for a dialogue at the highest level if it was broadcast live on television and radio.

## Nuban Ahmed laid to rest

By DU Correspondent

Nuban Ahmed a teacher of the Dhaka University was laid to rest at the Mirpur Shaheed Buddhijibi graveyard after his namaj-e-janaja at the Dhaka University Central Mosque yesterday.

Nuban Ahmed, a teacher of the Economics Department succumbed to stab injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Tuesday.

He was admitted to the hospital on Dec 17 with severe injuries in his right eye and head after some muggers attacked him near the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad.

The namaj-e-janaja of Nuban was attended by the Vice Chancellor of the Dhaka University prof Enajuddin Ahmed, Education Minister Zamir Uddin Sircar, former justice Habibur Rahman, Awami League leader Abdus Samad Azad and a number of teachers, students and employees of the university.

His qulhwani will be held at his residence at 7/7 Sir Sayed Ahmed Road, Mohamadpur in the city tomorrow.

The teachers, students and employees of the Economics Department of DU yesterday brought out a mourning procession. The procession started from the Arts Faculty premises and ended at the National Press Club after parading different roads of the city.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed her deep shock at the premature death of Nuban Ahmed.

## Times-Bangla

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1995 and Taka 81.41 lakh on account of the Times till 1993.

Dainik Bangla's total loans including interests stands at Taka 5.56 crore till 1995 while Times' loans including interests total Taka 1.92 crore.

Earlier, Dainik Bangla had taken interest free loans of Taka 1.58 crore from the president's Relief Fund in 1989 and Taka 13.26 lakh from president's Discretionary Fund in 1990.

## Autoricshaw

From Page 1

An end to the alleged harassment of autorickshaw drivers by police and relaxation of a rule providing for a minimum educational qualification of an autorickshaw driver.

The union claims that an agreement was signed in 1992 between the union and the BRTA, but it was not implemented.

Most of the buses were off the roads for the third consecutive day yesterday fearing attack by the agitators creating sufferings to the people.

The agitating autorickshaw workers brought out processions and went on rampage at Ramna, Malibag, Jatrabari, Saidabad and Gulistan in the morning. They also damaged passing and parked buses, trucks and private cars at Kalabagan, Bahadur Shah Park and Mirpur Section 1. One traffic constable was beaten up by them.

At around 2 pm, while a procession of autorickshaw workers was proceeding towards the Press Club from Malibag area, police chased them and beat up some 10 processionists.

At 3 pm, they held a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club where president of the union Azizul Haq and secretary Golam Faruk declared that the government accepted nine out of the ten demands.

They brought out a victory procession from the rally in the evening which marched towards Motijheel area. Witnesses said, at least eight to ten cocktails were exploded during the procession.

## Six killed in city incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least six persons were killed in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Abdur Rahman, 40, a resident of Shahjadpur Bazar under Gulshan was electrocuted when he was hanging clothes on a live cable wire.

Zarina Begum, 20, a garments worker was found dead in her house. The body with a scarf around her neck was recovered by police from her residence at East Rampura. Zarina's husband Forkan Mian, a rickshaw-puller, was absconding, police said.

Sufia Begum, 30, of Sen Para under Mirpur 10, fell from the roof of a one-storey building and died in the hospital in the afternoon.

Body of Javed, 22, a resident of 280, Bara Moghbazar was found in his room. Javed reportedly committed suicide by hanging himself with the ceiling.

An unidentified male, aged about 20, died on the spot when he was run over by a speeding bus at Shukrabad.

Sabiha, 40, who received injury in a road accident at Shat Rastar Morh, succumbed to her injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the afternoon.

## \$172m project to develop rural roads, markets

About 574 kilometres of rural roads and 150 markets (hats and bazars) will be developed in 14 districts under a US 172 million dollar project, reports UNB.

The proposed project is designed to help increase rural employment and income and reduce rural poverty through reduced transport costs, better marketing facilities and higher farm productivity.

## Press cynical about SAARC

By Staff Correspondent

Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan yesterday criticised the media for being 'cynical' about the prospects of SAARC.

Speaking at the launching of a news organisation — South Asian News Agency (SANA) — he said, "Among the cynics, the media is one which can be said to be quite cynical about SAARC."

"It is easy to write a story, but difficult to get it printed on the first page," he said referring to items related to regional cooperation. The Foreign Secretary mentioned that when the council of foreign ministers met Delhi recently, the Indian media 'did not find any interest' and there was hardly any coverage of it.

"The media has to play a central role in sensitising the governments to push regional cooperation," Farooq Sobhan observed.

## First meeting of 5th Wage Board demanded within 10 days

Three federations of journalists, press workers and employees of the newspaper industry and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) at a joint rally here yesterday demanded holding of the first meeting of the Fifth Wage Board within 10 days and announcement of the dearness allowance for them, a Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) press release said, reports BSS.

The rally warned that the journalists and employees would announce a fresh programme of action if there was any delay in convening the first meeting of the Fifth Wage Board.

The rally held at the premises of the Jatiya Press Club was presided over by Fazle Iman, convener of the central coordination committee.

## Organised groups

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drive. The deal may cost as much as Tk 5000 altogether. "Fearing the BRTA's normal procedure for obtaining a licence, the job-seeker first makes a 'package deal' with the 'Ustad' who teaches him driving and procures him a licence through his broker at the BRTA," said Abdul Jalil, a driver since 1962.

Jalil said that the licence issued in this way is fake despite the fact that it bears the stamps, seals and signatures of the authorities. It simply is not recorded with the BRTA registrar.

It was alleged that the traffic sergeants, policemen and other law enforcing personnel are all aware of these licences. Before the present crackdown, a driver was usually allowed to 'go' after paying an arranged 'penalty'.

According to a leader of autorickshaw drivers in Mirpur area, there are people who have been driving with these fake licences for the last fifteen years and these licences were renewed every year at the post offices paying a fee of Tk 50 each time.

The drivers say that the normal procedure to get li-

## International Development Association (IDA), an affiliate of the World Bank, will provide 117 million dollar as soft loan for the project.

The government will contribute US 40 million dollar while the rest 15 million dollar will come from the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC).

A World Bank press release issued in the city yesterday said the Second Rural Roads and Markets Improvement and Maintenance Project had recently been appraised. It is expected to be negotiated in April 1996 and approved in July.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) will implement the project over a period of five years.

Apart from upgrading the roads and markets, about 3650 linear meters of bridges and culverts and 19,500 linear meters of drainage structures on existing rural roads will be constructed under the project.

## SAF Games

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dia, the highest gold medal winners of all the previous Games.

Prior to the closing declaration, five best sportsmen of the meet — Bahadur Prasad and Shiny Wilson (athletics-India), Susanthika Jayasinghe (athletics-Sri Lanka), Sebastian Xavier (swimming-India), and Jaspal Rana (shooting-India) — were given special awards.

Indian Union Minister for Human Resource Development Madhav Rao Scindia gave the thanksgiving speech.

Later, IOA President Dr Aditya handed over the Games flag and torch to Mr Paltan Gurung, Assistant Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture of Nepal, who will host the 8th SAF Games in 1997. (Details on Page 10).

## World Bank

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they have not originated from the management of the Bank.

"Nor, of course, am I aware of any memorandum or letter to this effect," added a faxed message of the Bank official.

Rahman in a similar faxed message also said, "I do not think there is such memorandum."

The report in the daily had said "recently the consortium members in a memorandum to the policy makers of the WB and IMF had expressed their concern about the ongoing political impasse in Bangladesh".

Although Otto Pfister, the German coach of the national football team, has claimed that Bangladesh played "very good" in the final but some thousand patriotic youngsters who helplessly watched their full-throated cheers from the eastern end of the giant Nehru Stadium go down the drain, were obviously injured by the pathetic show of our booters.

In the whole 90-minute Bangladesh, apart from a late equalizer opportunity, hardly showed any motivation to cope against a spirited display of attacking football by the Indians.

In the upfront Mizan and Ranjan ran listlessly while in the middle Arman along with Rakib, Zakir, and Hasan al-Mamun displayed all sorts of miss passes and in the rear captain Monem Munna, Masud Rana and Sohail Reza time and again failed to negate the Indian attacks.

But custodian Ponir, with yet another brilliant exhibition under the bar, saved Bangladesh from a humiliating defeat. The tall goalkeeper, who had earlier inspired Bangladesh to reach the final with two saves in a 5-4 tie-break win over Sri Lanka in the first semifinal, once again rose to the occa-



Bangladesh National Village Development Cooperative Federation started a hunger strike in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday demanding waiving of their loan up to Tk 5000 as was announced by the Prime Minister. — Star photo

## Hope for soccer gold dashed

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where the stakes for Bangladesh, who failed to win the football gold in the last six editions of the meet, was even higher than for the Indians.

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sion to make at least three spectacular saves.

On the other hand India, who employed man-to-man marking, tough tackling and adopted long passes against Bangladesh's abortive short passes, forced the opponents to play to their tune.

They were unfortunate of not having a fourth-minute lead when striker Vijayan, with all the time in the world, headed the ball wide of the mark.

Undaunted by the early disappointment the Indians mounted pressure with captain Bruno Coutinho, Tajinder Singh and Basudeb Mondal providing a series of defence splitting throughs down both flanks.

But they had to wait for an unpardonable blunder from Bangladesh's Hassan al-Mamun for the much-needed goal at the stroke of the short whistle.

As Mamun failed to clear the ball in the left corner of the box, Tejinder Kumar made no mistake to float a perfect cross deep into the heart of the opponents' defence where an unmarked Sabir Pasha did the simple task of heading the ball home past a helpless Ponir amidst rapturous jubilation from a partisan crowd.

In the second half the pattern of the game continued to be the same with Bangladesh remaining at the receiving end despite the inclusion of Manik, Naquib and

## The Midnight File

### India, Afghanistan blamed for Peshawar blast

ISLAMABAD, Dec 27: Pakistan today indirectly accused India and Afghanistan of complicity in a recent spate of bomb blasts in the country. "We are a victim of international terrorism," Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar told parliament while speaking on a car bombing last week that killed 42 people and wounded more than 100 in the northwestern city of Peshawar, reports Reuter.

### 16 Kashmir militants killed, 11 arrested

SRINAGAR, Dec 27: Twelve militants, including a foreign mercenary, were among 16 people killed and eleven militants, one of them a self-styled chief commander of Ikhwan-ul Muslimin outfit, were arrested in Kashmir valley since yesterday evening, reports PTI.

Meanwhile, a major tragedy was averted with timely detection of a live bomb on the roof of a bus near Rehari bus stand in Jammu region yesterday, an official spokesman said here today.

He said the powerful device, suspected to be planted by Pakistan-trained militants, was removed immediately and was later neutralised by the experts.

AFP from London adds: Two of the western hostages being held by Muslim sepa-

### 2 brothers burnt alive

From Our Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 27: Two children were burnt alive in a fire at a house at Majh village in Chikankandi union under Galachipa thana in Patuakhali district midnight last night.

The fire originating from a kerosene lamp engulfed the house killing Tapan, 10, and Swapan, 8, and seriously injuring their parents who were admitted to Galachipa thana health complex.

### 742 Bangladeshis

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on the west coast. The suspects are being held in a detention camp pending repatriation. Mohamad said.

Meanwhile, in one of his frequent swipes at the West, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad today accused Western nations of trying to stall East Asian development by stirring up labour unrest.

"They try to incite our workers not to work unless they are paid higher wages," he said.

Their motive is not to help the workers but to ensure that Asian products become less competitive and the workers lose their jobs. Mahathir said in a speech to inaugurate a racial harmony campaign.

Some Malaysian union leaders are willing to accept the propaganda, but most aren't, which has thwarted the West's plan, he said.

The prime minister did not explain how the West is inciting labour trouble.

Europe and the United States have often called for better labour practices in East Asia, and in some cases they have imposed trade barriers in a bid to enforce their labour and human rights standards.

### Promotion

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the next tier following our appeal, our seniority was not maintained. As a result we have remained junior to those who entered the service after us," another official said.

As an example, a senior bureaucrat said, "An influential minister is lobbying for promotion of a joint secretary, who does not even belong to any cadre."

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