Ramallah free forever,

COLOMBO, Dec 30: Tamil rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran is ready to negotiate peace if the military withfrom the former guerilla stronghold of Jaffna city. Tamil civilians said today quoting rebel radio, reports AP.

The announcement was read by rebel theoretician Anton Balasingham over the guerilla's clandestine radio station yesterday, said the civilians in northern Vavuniya town contacted by telephone.

Prabhakaran also wanted a foreign country to mediate in the negotiations, said the civilians who spoke on condition of anonymity. The text of the message was not immediately available.

The government has not reacted to the rebel state-

The rebels broke off negotiations and ended a threemonth truce in April, reigniting the 12-year-old war that has left 39,000 people dead. Prabhakaran is leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil

RAMALLAH. West Bank.

Dec 30: Palestinian leader

Yasser Arafat declared the

West Bank town of Ramallah

"free forever" as he paid a

triumphant first visit today

following the end of 28 years

of Israeli occupation, reports

Israel handed over control

of Ramallah, considered the

West Bank's economic capi-

Monajatuddin

laid to rest

body of journalist Monajatud-

din was laid to rest at Mun-

shipara graveyard of Rangpur

His first namaj-e-janaza

was held at Dhap Lalkuti

Primary School ground of his

village home while the sec-

ond janaza was held at Kera-

matia jam-e-mosque in the

created when hundreds of

shocked people thronged

into Rangpur Press Club

where his body was taken

from his village home and

kept for few hours. People

belonging to different shades

of opinion and social strata

poured into the Press Club

premises to have a last

glimpse and pay their last re-

Representatives of local

administration, educational

institutions, socio-cultural

bodies and business commu-

nity assembled at the Press

Club and placed wreaths at

the coffin of the journalist.

Besides, working journalists

from district headquarters

and far flung areas of Rang-

pur, Dinajpur, Kurigram,

Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat and

other northern districts

reached Rangpur Press Club

to pay last respect to their

Club has taken a three-day

programme to mourn the

death of Monajatuddin. The

Press Club opened a condo-

lence book which will remain

open for the next three days.

The journalists will also wear

black-badges for the next

three days as a mark of re-

spect to the departed soul.

Milad mahfil, discussion and

memorial meetings are the

Meanwhile, Rangpur Press

professional colleague.

spect to Monajatuddin.

A heart-rending scene was

Rangpur town.

town today, reports BSS.

RANGPUR, Dec 30: The

Eelam (LTTE) which is fighting to establish a Tamil state in northern and eastern

Sri Lanka. On December 5, the military captured the rebel stronghold of Jaffna city in the north, capping a 50-day fierce military operation that forced the rebels to retreat to the jungles.

Three days later, President Chandrika Kumaratunga offered amnesty to the rebels but demanded that they surrender their weapons first. She has warned that the army will destroy them if they continue fighting. Fighting has died down in

the north, but attacks on military targets continue in the east. On Saturday, a rebel detonated bombs strapped to his body as a military truck passed him on a bridge in the eastern Batticaloa district. The rebel was killed and one officer in the truck and a civilian bystander were wounded, a military statement said.

to Arafat's self-rule au-

Standing on the roof of

thority on Wednesday under a

deal spreading autonomy

the new Palestinian police

headquarters, he told tens of

thousands of cheering sup-

porters, "before you, I de-

clare the town of Ramallah

mallah on board a helicopter

which landed in the court-

yard of the police building.

which had served as the Is-

raeli military administration

history of Palestine, of a man

Palestine with Jerusalem as

some 5,000 Palestinians still

held in Israeli jails. "The day

of your freedom is near," he

several times by the crowd

who chanted "We are ready to

sacrifice our lives and blood

with Palestinian flags and

portraits of the veteran PLO

leader, who was cheered and

applauded by wellwishers

from Ramallah and surround-

2 die in separate

incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

in bus accident and a young

woman reportedly commit-

ted suicide in the city yes-

One minor girl was killed

Taslima, 7, was killed

In another incident, an

when a speeding bus ran over

her near the old airport in

unidentified young woman

aged about 22 reportedly

committed suicide by hang-

ing herself in a residence at

Sher-e-Bangla Road in Rayer

Bazar area, hospital sources

body to the Dhaka Medical

College Hospital (DMCH) at

known immediately. Dhan-

mondi police said that they

did not have any information

about 5pm, sources said.

One Sikander Ali took the

The details could not be

The town was bedecked

its capital," he said.

for you aby ammar."

ing villages.

the morning.

"Today we are writing in

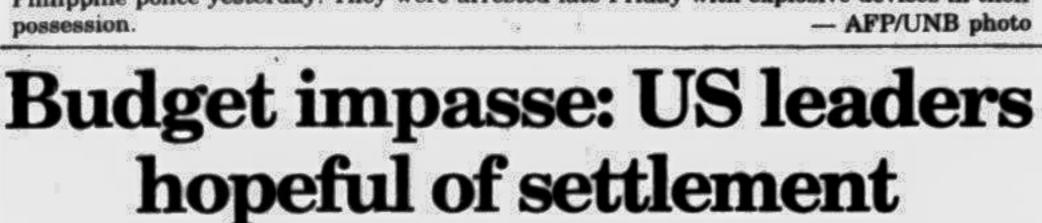
He also paid tribute to

Arafat was interrupted

He earlier swept into Ra-

across the West Bank.

free forever.



The White House and Repub- of the government, closed lican leaders expressed optimism over balanced budget negotiations, but failed to agree to immediately return federal employees to work and reopen the US government, reports AP.

Republican leaders in Congress met with President Clinton for 3 1/2 hours at the White House and scheduled another session for Saturday, as the Republicans sounded out key committee chairman on the talks. All sides agreed not to release any details.

ended "amicably," adding that Clinton was optimistic a compromise would be

for furloughed federal workers, passport applicants and visitors to national parks and

DUTA polls

From Page 1

since Dec. 16, will remain so

Republicans tied a backto-work plan for federal employees to their demand that a balanced budget deal be considered under an expedited Senate procedure that would allow 10 hours of debate. All amendments would have to be discussed within that limited time period.

Sen. Patrick Leahy said Democrats objected to a shortened debate because "I don't think we can get members to waive the Senate

rules on a piece of legislation we have not yet"

"We ought be able to reach some a cement on how we would be able to handle the bill," Dole countered in an exchange on the Senate floor. He said the issue would be discussed again Saturday when negotiations

US House of Representa-

Smithsonian museums. Parts speaking to reporters as the meeting began, said negotiators - in addition to sending employees back - were trying "to find a way to possibly get everyone paid."

Gingrich noted that the Senate last week passed back-to-work plan sponsored by Dole, who also was at the White House meeting. It would declare all federa workers essential, and guarantee that they would be paid when appropriations were passed.

Lawrence Haas spokesman for the Office of Management and Budget said under such a plan, federal facilities could reopen and workers could do their jobs provided their agencies did not need an influx of money. Now, 280,000 'nonemergency' federal employees are home on furlough.

Seated on either side of Clinton, Gingrich and Dole said legislation returning workers to the federal payroll could be voted on in the next two or three days.

Opinion poll

93pc fear unrest if polls held without settlement

Some 1.031 intellectuals including teachers of different universities have opined that none of the ruling and the opposition parties would be able to protect the democratic process if they failed to consider the national interests remaining above petty partisan attitude, reports

All of them unanimously expressed the opinion in an opinion poll conducted among 1031 intellectuals by National Democratic Foundation, a press release of the Foundation said in the city

Arms drive

From Page 1 and wanted criminals.

The law enforcing agencies began a nationwide hunt for illegal arms from December 21 to create a secure environment for the polls and so far netted 637 firearms and nabbed some 6,663 people on various charges

The Commission ordered the operation in a bid to create a secure environment conducive to holding the next general election scheduled for February 7 in a free and fair manner.

including possession of illegal

Chaired by Justice Sadeque, the meeting also discussed the effective implementation and planning of the drive for picking up illegal arms and ammunition, and arresting their holders as well as miscreants, extortionists, terrorists and wanted criminals.

The meeting further held elaborate discussion on how to coordinate the inter-services function at the thana and district levels to make the combined operation a

Army Chief Lt General Abu

Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Navy Chief Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam, Air Force Chief Air Vice Marshall Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Election Commission Secretary Irshadul Haque, Principal Staff Officer of Armed Forces Division Maj General MSA Bhuiyan, BDR Director General Maj General Ejaj Ahmed Chowdhury, Director General of Forces Intelligent (DGFI) Maj General Imam-uz-Zaman. Additional Secretary at the ECSM Zakaria, Additional Secretary at the Finance Di-

vision MM Sharifullah and

Additional Inspector General

of Police AF Kabir attended

the meeting.

Among them, 93 per cent apprehended that a severe unrest might occur if the general elections are held without any settlement be-

Some 41 per cent, however, think that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia does not have any alternative but to follow the Constitution.

think that as the BNP itself came to power through an election held under Justice the opposition political parties for neutral caretaker government.

Thirty-two per cent obtion sixth national parlia-

Sixty-four per cent of the said intellectuals opined that the President might seek Supreme Court's opinion regarding the issue of caretaker government immediately so that any constitutional crisis might not be created.

Woman stabbed in city

some miscreants while resisting them from kidnapping her 14-year-old son at Uttara in the city yesterday afternoon.

Lal Miah, sustained stab injuries in her right leg while her son Tara Miah also sustained cut injuries in his ear, hospital sources said. Tara is a student of class six of a local pre-cadet and high

people attacked Laily when she and the local people resisted them who reportedly tried to kidnap her son from near their residence at Nolb-

Locals who took the in-College Hospital (DMCH) alleged that one Misir Ali of the area led the gang. Misir and Laily's family are in con-

PM lays foundation of 4th friendship bridge today

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will lay the foundation stone of fourth Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge at Debiganj in Panchagarh district today, reports

PM office sources said the 577.40-metre-long bridge across the river Karotoa will cost Tk 60 crore.

The bridge on Boda-Debiganj-Domar-Jaldhaka road is being financed jointly by the governments of Bangladesh and China.

Construction works will begin in April 1996 and the bridge will be completed in 24 months. The 19-span bridge will

provide an alternative road communication network to Panchagarh-Thakurgaon-Svedpur-Rangpur highway shortening the distance by about 20 kilometre.

Diana must have public role, says Major

LONDON, Dec 30: Princess Diana should play a role in public life even if she divorces her husband Prince Charles, Prime Minister John Major said in a BBC interview today, reports AFP. Amid feverish speculation

in Britain over a divorce and the implications for the monarchy, his comments indicated strong support for Diana's stated desire to have an "ambassadorial" role regardless of the state of her marriage. "Whatever may happen in

future between the Prince of Wales and the Princess of Wales, she is the mother of a future king, so the Princess of Wales must have a role in public life, and as I see i (she) always will have a role, Major said.

Unions clash From Page 1

The reason of the clash was a meeting Thursday between the management and representatives of the Biman Sramik Union, said a leader of the Sramik Union. The other union is Biman Employees Union.

After the clash, the em ployees also brought out procession and staged demonstration.

Biman officials could not be contacted for comment. Motifheel police could no give any information in this regard.

EC may deter From Page 1

"To be stronger I need support, which I am not getting from any quarters," he said, adding "only exception is the media."

When pointed out that electoral rules and laws are being violated in many cases, he said, "I will try my level best to apply strictly the

Barricade From Page 1

at 4:10 pm. Eight passenger trains from both directions were stuck up due to the mishap, the added.

The line was cleared for traffic after a salvage operation carried out by two relief trains - one from Dhaka and another from Akhaura.

In city, activists of the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami put up barricades at different entry points. Inter-district buses did not leave Gabtali, Syedabad and Mahakhali termi-

Rallies and processions were organised by opposition supporters at almost every important road intersections in the city, affecting traffic movement. Our Staff Correspondent

adds from Chittagong: Opposition activists put up barricades at Alanker Cinema crossing on Chittagong-Dhaka highway, Kaiballydham railline point, Oxygen crossing on Chittagong-Rangamati road and Bahaddarhat crossing on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar All modes of transport op-

erated inside the city areas. News agency reports from Khulna says: Ferry service in the Rupsha came to a halt due to the Opposition's barri-

cade programme. UNB reports from Raishahi: The engine fireman of the Nawabganj-bound 15-Up train was injured when it came under attack from pro-

barricade at the city's Railgate area yesterday morning. But all other trains, except the inter-city Barendra Express, to and from the city,

plied normally. At Rajshahi, all modes of transport, except a small number of rickshaws and auto-rickshaws, remained off

the roads. Opposition parties brought out small processions and held rallies in the city.

The Midnight Kile

Revived peace talks with Israel useful: Syria

DAMASCUS, Dec 30: Revived peace talks with Israel this week were "useful," chief Syrian negotiator Walid Muallem told AFP today. Speaking by telephone from the United States, he said he would not be returning to Syria as scheduled following the end of the formal three-day session on Friday and instead would be holding informal talks with Israeli counterpart Uri Savir.

Drilling of offshore well to be completed soon

CHITTAGONG, Dec 30: Drilling of an offshore well for finding hydrocarbon by two foreign companies in the Bay of Bengal will be completed in a fortnight, officials

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandkar Mosharraf Hossain who flew to the drilling base, 35 km from the port city, yesterday to see the drilling work expressed his optimism about the prospect of hydrocarbon reserve. Giving his reaction to

well, he said some 1900 metres had already been dug out of the targeted 3500-metre depth. The work of the 8 million US dollar well will be

Purulia airdrop Review body submits report NEW DELHI, Dec 30: A

committee set up by India to review security following a mysterious weapons airdrop submitted its report to the government today, the United News of India (UNI) said, reports Reuter. The committee, headed by

a senior civil servant responsible for internal security had recommended measures to pluq existing gaps to prevent any further recurrence of such incidents, the news agency reported. No further details were given. Prime Minister PV

Narasimha Rao had ordered the review following the discovery of weapons in some eastern Indian villages.

The arms were apparently dropped by parachute from an Antonov AN-26, a Russian made short-haul transport aircraft, in village around

West Bengal town of Purulia on December 17. The aircraft believed to have made the drop was forced down in Bombay on

December 23 while it was on a return flight from Phuket in Thailand via Madras to Karachi in Pakistan. Friday that more arms re-

Indian authorities said on nades and 17,000 rounds of ammunition.

completed in two weeks. He said the government

had so far signed six contracts, including two initial contracts, with foreign companies for oil and gas exploration work in eight out of 23 geological blocks in the country

US dollar 75 million would be spent for exploration in eight blocks by the year 2001, he said, adding that international bidding would be called by next February for the exploration work in the rest 15 blocks.

Cairn Plc of Scotland and Holland Sea Search of the Netherlands, working for hydrocarbon exploration in the Bay - have gathered equipment including one oil rig. one ware barge, one tug and one anchor tug.

The companies will drill two 'pilot holes' in the exploration Block No-16, covering

Hasına From Page 1

The AL chief said the people have again expressed their no-confidence in the government by observing a successful barricade programme. They will give a perfect reply to the heinous conspiracy of the government, she added.

She said: "There is no security of life and property of the public today... The murder, kidnapping, snatching and anarchy being committed everyday have surpassed all past records.

Hasina said the people have been carrying forward the agitation for 19 months for establishing a caretakergovernment in order to en-

sure a free and fair election. She called upon the people to observe the next programmes of her party, including a 48-hour hartal on December 3-4 for the victory

of the current agitation. Jatrabari bus fire

From Page 1

the sake of investigation. Investigation is going on but report of the Forensic Department is yet to reach the investigating officials, po-

Jatrabari incident, water was used to put off the fire. When contacted a high ranking official of Fire Brigade explained that normally foam is used to extinguish fire which originates from petrol.

他的 বই ব্যক্তিকে আনন্দ সমাজকে আলো আর দেশকে দেয় সমৃদ্ধি ১-১৫ জানুয়ারী -১৯৯৬ **DHAKA BOOK FAIR 96** ट्यमात मयस मुठी উদ্বোধনী দিনে বিকাপ ৩টা থেকে রাভ ৮-৩০ जन्याना मिरन **नकान ३३টा थिएक बा**छ ৮-७० বিরতি ঃ শুক্রবার দুপুর ১২-৩০ থেকে ২টা স্থান ঃ বিজয় সরণিস্থ সামরিক জাদুঘর মাঠ धरवन मुना ४ २ छ।का প্রতিদিন প্রবেশ পরের উপর পুরকার ১০০০, ৫০০ ७ ৩০০ ग्राकास वरे <u> भूख क श्रकाणकरमञ्ज त्मीकरमा त्मन्ना घर</u>न প্রতিটি জেলা শহরে বইমেলা ১-१ जानुगाती-১৯৯৬ আয়োজনে ঃ জাতীয় গ্রন্থ কেন্দ্র DFP-32670-27/12 **Editor**: Mahfuz Anam

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other highlights of the proin this regard. grammes. 23pc ADP funds

cent. The import registered an increase due to a sudden upswing in the import of foodgrains. However, in the recent weeks, the import growth has been moderated and is decreasing now.

About the foreign exchange reserve, the meeting expressed satisfaction and observed that the reserve is capable to meet the import requirements for five

It was noted that the decline in foreign exchange reserve during the recent months was principally attributable to the increase in imports, particularly that of food imports. The reserve situation is stabilised in recent weeks.

The meeting expressed satisfaction over the country's food situation. It was told in the meeting that the current stock of food grains in the government godowns stood at 9.86 lakh metric tons as on December 27. Of the stock 3.53 lakh metric tons is rice while the rest 6.33 metric tons is wheat.

About the government's borrowings from banks, the meeting noted that such borrowings, which had increased in the first quarter of

the current fiscal, had considerably decreased in the last two months, and remained well below the target set by the government.

Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs), the finance minister emphasised to activate the country's foreign missions abroad to encourage the NRBs to send their remittances through appropriate channels.

The finance minister also emphasised the proper and timely implementation of the ADP, particularly the programmes, involved with the development of agriculture sector so that the food imports are reduced in the coming years.

planning, Dr A Moyeen Khan, Lutfullahil Majid, Planning Secretary, Shah Mohammad Farid, Food Secretary Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury, Labour Secretary Harun-ur-Rashid, NBR Chairman, Dr Sadaat Shamsul Alam and other seniors officials of different

Regarding remittances by

Sayed Giasuddin Ahmed

The state minister for

Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Alim Khan, ERD Secretary Hossain and Planning Commission members Abu Hena, ministries and divisions and Bangladesh Bank attended the meeting.



WASHINGTON, Dec 30:

US Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole called the The sesman Mike McCinry said it

But there was a sour note

resume.

tives Speaker Newt Gingrich,

tween the political parties.

Of them, 23 per cent

into a whirlpool" and if elections are held as per demand of the opposition parties there might occur a crisis during the amendment of the Constitution in the post elec-

school.

hog area at around 5 pm.

However, Uttara police said that they did not receive any complaint in this connection.

Shahabuddin Ahmed's caretaker government, it should have accepted the demand of served "the politics has fallen

By DMCH Correspondent A woman was stabbed by Laily Begum, 38, wife of

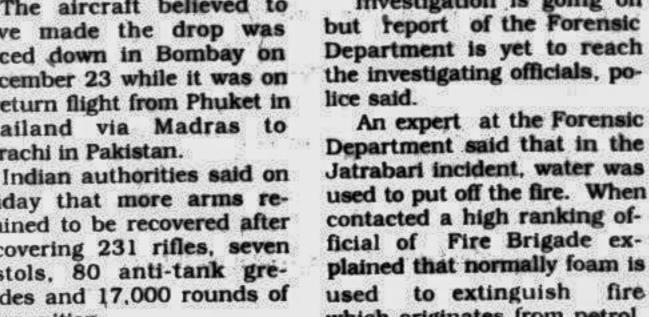
The gang of about 10

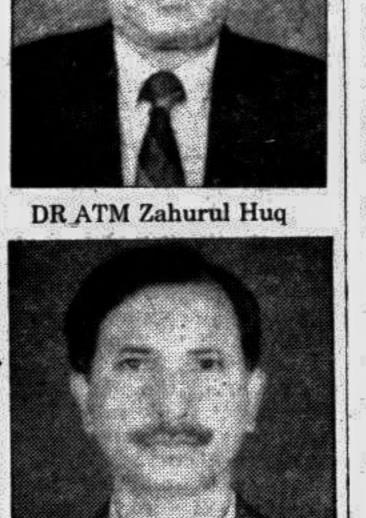
jured to the Dhaka Medical flict over a land dispute.

UNB, the minister said he was very much happy to see the hydrocarbon exploration work in the country after 20 years, which simultaneously will attract foreign investors to this potential energy sec-

About the exploration

mained to be recovered after recovering 231 rifles, seven pistols, 80 anti-tank gre-





Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique

The new Executive Com mittee of the DUTA has been elected for 1996. Members elected from the Blue panel are: Abdul Mannan Chowdhury (Management). Dr Abul Kalam Azad Chowdhury (Pharmacy), Dr Khandker Bazlul Haq (Management), Dr Shahadat Ali (Biology), Dr Emamul Haq (Soil Science), Sharifullah Bhuiyan (History) and Dr

(Public Administration). The three members elected from the White Panel are Dr Anwar Hossain (IBA), Dr AKM Sirajul Islam Khan (Bio-Chemistry) and Dr AFM Yusuf Haider (Physics). A total of 805 votes out of

1050 were cast in the polls held between 10 am and 2 pm at the Dhaka University Club, said election commissioner Prof Santi Narayan Ghose. The election commissioner declared the results in the evening in presence of a number of teachers and journalists.

The left leaning Pink

group did not participate in

the polls this year. It threw

its weight behind the Blue

panel, according to sources.

Opposition -From Page 1 meeting, the sources added.

Talking to The Daily Star. Anwar Hossain Manju confirmed that he had a meeting with Sheikh Hasina but declined to give details.