The Midnight File

ABU DIS. West Bank, Jan 17: Israeli soldiers withdrew

Israeli troops quit Abu Dis

unannounced from their headquarters in this town on the

outskirts of Jerusalem today, prompting celebrations that quickly resembled a campaign rally for supporters of

Yasser Arafat. The headquarters, perched on a hilltop with

a clear view of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's

holiest sites, was set up after the start of the 1987-1993

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities have issued a set of new directives for female residential students restricting this movement outside the halls after evening. sparking protests from the female students.

Some 300 students of the Bangladesh-Kuwait Friendship Women's Hostel brought out a procession on the campus yesterday protesting the directives saying those, issued Tuesday last, violated an earlier understanding between them and the hall au-

The new directives came in notices which also said that those were passed by the DU Syndicate on November 30, 1995.

According to the new directives, gates of female students' halls will be closed at 7 pm in the winter and at 8 pm in the summer and the gate can not be opened without Provost's permission before 6 am next morning. Students, in special cases, can enter their respective halls until 9 pm in the summer

and 8 pm in the winter through the narrow gates beside the main gates but they have to record their particulars in the gate book.

If any girl student returns to her dormitory after 9 pm or wants to stay out at night she has to take prior permission from the House Tutor or the Provost.

The hall authorities will pay surprise visits to the halls between 9 pm and 10 pm in the summer and 8 pm and 9 pm in the winter three days a week. In the rest four days. the students, will sign the

The protesting female students demanded that the hall gates should be kept open from 5 am to 9 pm and that in case of staying out at night, informing the office and registering their names in the gate books should be enough.

It is difficult to get the Provost or the House Tutor after 9 pm to take permission to enter the hall, some of the students claimed.

Hartai passes on

From Page 1

the city today, the date for scrutiny of nomination pa-

In the city, all modes of transport except rickshaws and rickshaw vans stayed off the roads. Rickshaws plied from the early hours of the While visiting the areas, this correspondent saw private cars and jeeps on the roads in the afternoon Gulshan. Banani and Baridhara

Shops, markets and business houses remained closed. Attendance in government offices was relatively thin.

A rickshaw-puller was injured when a few bombs were hurled from a pro-hartal procession near the Bangladesh Bank at around 11 am. Some pickets damaged a rickshaw at Topkhana road at around 1

According to a news agency report, a free lance photographer was assaulted allegedly by some activists of pro-LDF Gonotantrik Chhatra Oikvia (GCO) in front of the Jativa Press Club at about 10 in the morning. The victim was taking a snap of a Shibir procession.

No inter-district passener buses operated during the hartal hours.

Pro-hartal activists were seen picketing at various points in the city. Contingents of police backed by BDR personnel were posted at vulnerable points to avert untoward incidents.

Railway communication was partially disrupted. Trains, which left Kamalapur station in the city since early morning got stuck up at difterent stations due to barricades put up by pro-hartal activists.

Iwo domestic flights of the Biman- to Chittagong and Jessore - were cancelled while all the scheduled international flights operated to and from the Zia International Airport (ZIA) normally.

River transports operated almost normally.

According to reports received from different parts of the country, the hartal was observed by and large peace-

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reports: Normal life was disrupted here during today's dawn-todusk hartal.

Port sources said hartal paralysed the port activities Delivery of goods to and from the port was also suspended during the hartal hours.

No untoward incident was reported. All kinds of vehicles but a few rickshaws were off the roads. Railway source said train service to and from Chittagong was as usual.

Shops and markets were closed during hartal hours. Business houses in Agrabad commercial area and Khatun goni were closed.

BSS adds: The opposition called dawn-to-dusk hartal vesterday passed off peacefully in Khulna and Rajshahi.

All shops, educational institutions remained closed and vehicles went off the streets in the two divisional headquarters during hartal

Indian SC orders in-camera trial of rape cases

NEW DELHI, Jan 17: India's Supreme Court ordered today that rape cases be tried behind closed doors to prevent the humiliation of victims in open courtrooms, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said, reports Reuter.

The news agency said a two-judge bench of the court made the decision after overturning a state High Court's acquittal of three men who had been charged with raping a 10-year-old girl.

The three were jailed for five years and fined 5,000 rupees each.

"While ordering in-camera trials the judges said they had taken note of a lot of criticism of the treatment of such victims of sexual assault during cross examination.

It quoted judges as saying some defence counsels question victims repeatedly to trick them into making inconsistent statements.

Government statistics show that some 11,600 women were raped in India in 1994, but women's group say the actual number is about double that, as many rapes go unreported because of the shame associated with the crime.

None requested EC

From Page 1

nomination filing, scrutiny and withdrawal of candidature are over, the candidates rights are automatically established. There is no provision to reverse the situation," said another top official of the EC, expressing his frustration at the prevailing political situation.

"On past occasions, representatives of different political parties approached the EC for rescheduling of dates. but today none has come," he

However, another source in the EC claimed that there was still provision for the EC to postpone or adjourn the proceedings of nomination filing under Clause 18 of the Representation of the People

Order, 1972. Clause 18 of the Representation of the People Order, 1972 reads: Where the proceedings relating to nomination, scrutiny or withdrawal cannot for reasons beyond the control of the Returning Officer, take place on the day appointed therefore, he may postpone or adjourn such proceedings and shall, with the approval of Commission, by public notice fix another day for the proceedings so postponed or adjourned and, if necessary.

also the day or days for sub-

sequent proceedings. However, when asked Justice Jalil, referring to the

Clause, said that this was applicable to any one or two polling centres - not to the whole country. When asked how he evaluated a possible elections without participation of the major opposition parties, Justice Jalil replied that in the eyes of the EC, all

parties were the same. Since vesterday morning the EC Secretariat received innumerable telephone calls from people wanting to know if the nomination filing date has would be rescheduled.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice AKM Sadeque left his office at about 3 pm. After 5 pm — the time limit for filing nominations, returning officers from districts started to ring the EC secretariat to update the number of nominations. The few officers, still in the office, spent hectic time to compile the reports.

The Election schedule was first announced on December 4, fixing January 18 as the polls date. The voting date was then deferred to February 7. On January 2, the EC made a partial change in the schedule fixing January 8 and 9 as the last date for filing nomination papers and the date for scrutiny. Then on January 8, the EC again revised the schedule for parliamentary elections fixing January 17 and 18 as nomination filing and scrutiny dates. The polls date was shifted to February 15.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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The Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Parishad brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting the "firing by the Indian BSF at the BDR and Bangladesh people and construction of Indian offices in the no-man's land" along Tamabil sector of the Indo-Bangladesh border along Sylhet. - Star photo

Tamabil

From Page 1 immediately protested the

attempt. The BDR and BSF exchanged at least 70 rounds of gunshot yesterday afternoon at Tamabil border following a dispute over the fresh Indian move to construct a pucca

building very close to the 'no

man's land'. A BDR official told this correspondent that the Indian authorities took the move to construct a pucca building near the border pillars-1274 and 1275 - at about 7 pm on Monday, violating the international bor der conventions. BDR immediately protested this and

struction work. The situation became normal when BSF suspended the construction following a high level flag meeting which decided to follow the international border convention.

asked BSF to stop the con-

Nirmul's founding day tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

A grand rally in observance of the fourth founding anniversary of the Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee will be held at the Central Shaheed Minar at 3 pm tomorrow with Prof Kabir Chowdhury in the chair.

The Nirmul Committee has urged the people to launch a vigorous movement against all the fundamental forces including the 'fascist' Jammat-Shibir circle in the country.

The committee will also bring out a colourful procession from the Shaheed Minar. The rally will be ad-

dressed by Poet Shamsur Rahman, Kalim Sharafi, Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Syed Shamsul Huq. Kamal Lohani, Prof Momtajuddin Ahmed, Maolana Abdul Auwal, Ataus Samad, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Prof Panna Kaiser, Prof Muntasir Mamun, Kazi Mukul, Tawhid Rezanur and Kamal Pasha Chowdhury, according to a press release.

Nominations

From Page 1 papers were 26 in Patuakhali 30 in Bhola, 28 in Barguna

and 15 in Jhalakathi. UNB adds: BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder is contesting in Jamalpur-4 constituency, State Minister for Social Welfare Fazlur Rahman Patal in Natore-1. and ASM Nazmul Huda in Mymensingh-3.

(Incomplete)

Shantibahini attacks 2 army camps

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Jan 17: Shantibahini this morning attacked an army camp in Tibrachhari area of Naniarchar under Rangamati hill

said. This was the third attack on the same camp in the last three days.

district, security sources

Security sources said, a group of Shantibahini men equipped with sophisticated weapons started firing on the camp at 9 am from a hill-top adjacent to the camp. They fled into deep forest in the face of stiff resistance from the army personnel, sources

Meanwhile, security sources said another army camp at Kanghalchhari under Maniarchar came under Shantibahini attack this afternoon.

Sircar makes a record

RANGPUR, Jan 17: Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar has created a record by inaugurating different buildings of 24 educational institutions within a day in the district recently, reports BSS.

Besides inaugurating academic and science buildings in the district town area, the minister during his stay in Rangpur, also opened buildings of educational institutions at Kaunia, Taragani, Gangachhara, Mithapukur and Pirganj thanas, a PID handout said.

3 Indian ministers quit over payoff scandal

Three Indian cabinet ministers named in a huge payoff scandal today resigned from the government of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao. domestic news agencies reported, says AFP.

Agriculture Minister Balram Jakhar. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vidya Charan Shukla and Human Resources Development Minister Madhav Rao Scindia submitted their resignations to Rao, the news agencies said.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said Shukla informed Rao in a letter that it would not be appropriate for me to continue as a member of the government after being accused in the multimilliondollar scandal. PTI and the United News

Scindia also quit after the Prime Minister returned to New Delhi from Calcutta. On Tuesday, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) accused seven opposition leaders and the three ministers of taking bribes from

businessman in exchange for

NEW DELHI, Jan 17:

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

President L K Advani, the

leader of the opposition in

parliament, Atal Behari Vaj-

payee and party colleagues

today courted arrest defying

prohibitory orders imposed

residence, reports AFP.

around the prime minister's

They were going to submit

an open letter to the prime

minister on the Purulia arms

prising about 150 MPs, MLAs

and party office bearers were

protesting against the failure

of the government to safe-

guard national security and

being unable to come forward

with full facts regarding the

ultimatum on the govern-

ment giving a week's time for

it to unfurl full facts regard-

ing the arms-drop in Purulia.

was to have been led by Vaj-

payee was instead led by Ad-

vani who had announced his

resignation from the Lok

Sabha last night following his

implication by the Central

Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

in the Rs 65 crore Hawala

sition parties today de-

manded the resignations of

three ministers named in a

multi-million-dollar bribery

scandal as a political volcano

erupted with general elec-

Meanwhile, Indian oppo-

The BJP delegation which

Vajpayee had served an

arms-drop.

The BJP delegation com-

Advani, Vajpayee

court arrest

of India said Jakhar and

Opposition leader Lal Krishna Advani, one of the those accused by the CBI denied charges that he took bribes, but resigned from parliament on Tuesday and vowed not to fight elections until he was proved innocent

The scandal has been simmering for five years following the discovery of a coded diary belonging to the businessman which showed he paid more than 20 million dollars to politicians and bureaucrats between April 1988 and March 1991 to win contacts.

Reuter adds: India's federal police said today that more politicians would be charged in a widening bribery scandal as pressure mounted on three members of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's cabinet to

The CBI charged seven political leaders, including six former cabinet ministers from a cross section of parties, on Tuesday in connection with the 18 million dollars' scandal.

tions only months away.

Prime Minister

quit immediately.

a businessman.

tion.

Brushing aside corruption

charges filed against its own

president, the main opposi-

don Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP. Indian People's Party

urged the three members of

Narasimha Rao's cabinet to

ishna Advani, touted until re

cently by the party as a po-

tential premier, resigned

from parliament after federal

detectives accused him and

nine other politicians Tues-

day of accepting bribes from

Advant rejected the

charges against him as

"politically motivated," and

which has vowed to storm to

power in elections expected

in April, went on the offen-

tendered his resignation

from the Lok Sabha before

the Speaker Shivraj Patil and

said it is final and there was

no question of reconsidera-

plicated in the Rs 65 crore

Hawala Case, met Patil along

with his party colleagues Ata

Behari Vajpayee, Sikander

Bakt, Dr Murli Manchar Josh

act constitutionally" on the

The speaker said, "I will

and Vijayeraje Scindia.

resignation letter.

Advani, who has been im-

PTI adds: Advani today

his Hindu-revivallist party

A BJP President Lal Kr-

There will be others," CB1 spokesman SM Khan told Reuters when asked if charges would be pressed

against other politicians "The investigation will continue.

The law will take its own course," the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted Rao as telling reporters during day-long visit to the eastern city of Calcutta. "We have to be patient.

The largest opposition party, the Hindu nationalist BJP has seized on allegations of corruption in Rao's ruling Congress party as a major plank in its campaign for general elections due by mid-1996 and expected in April. Rao was asked if his ruling Congress party would be

tainted by the scandal. "It will tarnish the image of all those parties involved," PTI quoted the Prime Minister as saying 'Charges were framed keeping in mind the main challengers to the Prime Minister's chair," said forma deputy prime minister Devi Lal. charged in the case.

Credit rating co today

the first of its kind in the country to give data and information about capital and money markets to investors and offer project appraisals. will start functioning here

Rahman will inaugurate the the company, the Credit Rating Information and Services Limited (CRISL) at a function at the Sonargaon hotel, former deputy prime minister Jamaluddin Ahmed chairman of the company said at a press conference Monday

vestors in any sector.

A credit rating company

Finance Minister M Saifur Services of the company

to be run by a group of inter nationally known profession als, will create greater confi dence among local and for eign investors in the capita market as well as of the issuers of debt instruments and equity, he said. The CRISL will benefit all in the capital and money markets. the former deputy prime minister said.

Muzaffar Ahmed FCMA, M Mobassar Husain MBA and other members of the board of directors of the company were present at the press conference. Jamaluddin said that the CRISL will offer independent rating of securities and make project appraisals for prospective in-

to be launched By Staff Correspondent

Lankan govt, opposition open talks on new constitution

COLOMBO, Jan 17: Sri Lanka opened talks with political parties in a bid to hammer out a consensus on a new constitution aimed at ending the country's protracted ethnic war, a senior minister said today, reports

Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister GL Peiris said negotiations were aimed at obtaining the mandatory twothirds majority needed in parliament to implement the sweeping reforms.

Peiris said he was confident of winning support for the reforms which envisage greater devolution of power to minority Tamils with the aim of halting the Tamil separatist war which has claimed more than 50,000 lives since

"I am very hopeful of obtaining a consensus. People are sick and tired of this war," Peiris told reporters here. "The war is necessary but we must take a political decision on what we are going to spend our money." He said the defence ex-

penditure was estimated at 38 billion rupees (716 million dollars) in 1996, up from 32 billion dellars (603 million dollars) in 1995. He said the draft chapter on the new constitution unveiled by him Tuesday sought

to lay down the structure of

devolution by turning Sri

Lanka into a union of regions but the number of regions will be decided by parlia-

"What we have ensured is that devolution takes place subject to the unity and integrity of the sovereign stage," Peiris said. The draft

Former UP CM Y aday arrested

LUCKNOW, Jan 17: The national president of the Samajwadi Party and former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mulayam Singh Yaday and many of his former cabinet colleagues were arrested under Section 151 in front of the party office, about one km away from the Rajbhawan, here this afternoon, reports PTI.

Earlier, at about 1150 hours, Yadav led the party workers' march from his residence to the party office at Vikramaditya Marg. along with the party's national general secretary Mohammad Azam Khan where it was converted into a public meeting.

The meeting was addressed by Yadav and Azam Khan besides some others. At about 1430 hours, the district administration arrested Yadav under Section 151 (Apprehension of Breach of Peace) along with Azam Khan and other office bearers

of the party.

will require a two thirds ma jority in parliament and the approval of a nation-wide referendum. The government of Presi-

dent Chandrika Kumaratunga

who initiated the devolution process on August 3, has only a one seat majority in parliament and needs the support of the main opposition United National Party (UNP). UNP General Secretary Gamini Athukorale said they were still studying the 29-

page draft and needed more

time to comment. The gov-

ernment gave copies of the

draft to legislators today, a day after releasing it to the The moderate Tamil United Liberation Front said they were calling a special meeting over the weekend to formulate a position on the

The draft proposes special status to Buddhism, the main religion in this majority Sinhalese nation of 17.5 million people. It is also proposed to set up a "supreme council" of monks to advise the govern ment on preserving Buddhism.

development package.

The move is seen as a bid to win the support of the influential Buddhist clergy who had opposed granting greater autonomy to minority Tamils without first militarily defeat ing separatist Tamil Tiger guerillas.

country toward crisis'

Star Report

'BNP pushing

Palestinian uprising, reports AFP.

The Opposition parties yesterday blamed the ruling party for going ahead with its blue-print for unilateral elections, as the last date for filing of nomination expired yesterday.

"The BNP government is pushing the country toward a further crisis." said Zillur Rahman, General Secretary of the Awami League.

Anwar Hossain Manju, the Secretary General of the Jatiya Party said, "holding of general elections without the participation of the major political parties would be disastrous for the whole nation." Matiur Rahman Nizami

the Secretary General of the Jamaat-e-Islami termed the move as, "blue-print of the ruling party to establish a rubber stump parliament to establish a one-party autocratic rule.

LDF leader Rashed Khan Menon said, 'the decision to go ahead with unilateral elections will automatically bring into question the political maturity of the leadership of the country."

Bosnian Muslim prisoners being held in secret camps

LONDON, Jan 17: Hundreds of Bosnian Muslim prisoners are being held at two secret camps in Serbia The Guardian newspaper reported today quoting a group of Bosnian refugees evacuated by the Red Cross to the Irish capital last month, reports

They said that while they themselves had been released, the other refugees from the enclaves remained in a camp at Sliivocia and in another near Mitrovo Polie.

The Guardian said the Red Cross in Belgrade has been negotiating for several weeks to have the prisoners released and given sanctuary in third countries, and hoped that they might be out "by the end of January."

The paper noted that this date would be 10 days after the deadline set for the release of all detainees under Bosnia's peace accord signed last month by all sides.

Dublin said they were treated 'like animals" on their arrival at the Serb camps, with routine and random beatings. Sanitation was appalling they said, and food rations were restricted during their first weeks in the camps. when the men were also subjected to psychological

abuse such as being made to

salute Serbian emblems and

curse their own leaders.

The men evacuated to

25 injured in Barisal clash

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Jan 16: Clashes between the students of BM University College and a group of people left at least 25 people injured in the Hospital Road and Natun

Bazar area of the town. The three-hour clashes erupted at around 11 am when a group of people tried to occupy a disputed property, Surendra Bhaban which is being used as hostel of the college, and assaulted two students.

No contact

deadline for filing nomination papers today (Wednesday) BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar told newsmen at his Bailey Road official residence yesterday evening. "But the constitutional experts may have different views on the

From Page

Replying to a question. Salam Talukdar said they expected that the Opposition. after cancelling Tuesday's scheduled meeting without showing any reason, would contact his party (BNP) yesterday. But they did not come forward, he added

Asked if the BNP was going ahead with polls, boycotted by the major opposition parties the BNP leader commented, "The Election Commission would go by the Constitution.

Hasina

From Page 1

in any related activities. The AL chief urged the people to build up united resistance against the holding of 'unilateral farcical elections', ignoring the demand for elections under a neutral caretaker government.

Hasina said that the greed for power and obstinacy of the Prime Minister was pushing the country towards con frontations.

3 JCD leaders held in Kishoreganj

KISHOREGANJ, Jan 17: Law-enforcing agencies today arrested three leaders of ruling BNP's student wing in the town and took them on five days' police remand, re-

ports UNB. They are Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) district unit Joint Convenor and former VP of Gurudayal Government College Mohammad Saifur Malek Chowdhury, JCD college unit President Mahmudur Rahman Khan Tuhin and another former VP of the college. Mohammad Bahar Miah Bahar.

Army and police in a joint drive picked up Saifur and Tuhin from Kachari Bazar area at about 2:30 pm while they were moving in the town with BNP nominee Masud Helali. Bahar was arrested from court area in the afternoon. Police said the JCD lead-

ers were arrested under Section 54. They were produced before court where police prayed for seven-day remand. The court granted five

days for interrogating the JCD leaders.

Aricha

From Page 1 ferry services for transportation of goods to and from northern and southern regions of the country during the month of holy Ramadan. He advised the senior officials of BIWTC and BIWTA to stay at Aricha ghats during Ramadan to monitor ferry services.

The state minister also directed them to procure a weighing machine to weigh the goods of trucks and a crane to lift inoperative vehicles to be used at Aricha ghat. He urged the truck drivers and owners not to carry goods beyond capacity.

Suicide

From Page 1 sources quoting the primary assumptions of the attending doctors said that Babu died a

normal death. The address and other details of Babu could not be known immediately. His body was handed over to Anjumane-Mofidul Islam for the burial. Motifheel police said.

From Page 1 after he was found with the passports at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Oc-

tober 23. "I pleaded guilty because he passports were in my hand," he said, adding that his bag had been switched with someone else's. Tay set a hearing for

rebruary 27. Bangladeshis make up a major portion of the country's 1.2 million legal foreign

workers and many more of its illegal ones. Opposition

From Page 1

administration at the district and thana levels to disassociate themselves from the election process. He blamed that ruling party's efforts for holding

'unilateral elections" was leading the nation to a confrontations. "It is now a big question whether our hard-earned democracy will survive or not," Nasim cautioned. "Khaleda Zia will be respon-

sible for any unbecoming sit-The Opposition would never let democracy destroved under a one-man rule, he added.

On the resignation of the CEC, Nasim said "We believe that the CEC would not only stop this election, but would also step down because of his respect to democracy and his exalted

Riyadh

From Page 1 the UN and Iraq on the huge quantity of oil now preserved in the cross-border pipeline through the KSA. Once a deal is agreed upon, the oil in the pipeline will be put on sale to pay for Iraq's food and medicine imports and to meet the compensation

claims, the official said. A conference of 78 countries having the war-affected people is being planned for March next to put pressure on the international community to expedite the payment of the compensation. he further added.

Meanwhile, leaders of the

KIRBA meet President Abdur

Rahman Biswas on January 9 and earlier on December 20 it sent a letter to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali urging him to expedite the process. The three categories of

claimants are - persons forced to flee (Cat-A), persons died or injured (Cat-B) and individual losses of property (Cat-C).