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Khandakar officially declared elected

By Staff Correspondent

Ten days after the by-elections, the Election Commission has officially declared A K Khandakar of Awami League elected to parliament from Pabna-2 constituency of Jatiya Sangsad.

The by-elections were held on December 10 and the AL candidate was unofficially declared winner on the same day. However, the EC published the official results through a gazette notification yesterday afternoon. Khandakar has emerged winner by a wide margin of about 20,000 votes.

Earlier, the three-member Election Commission discussed the observations of the Commission's Law Cell that found that the allegations of the BNP candidate regarding the polls were baseless.

The EC members unanimously found the Law Cell's observations all right and officially declared the AL candidate elected, sources in the EC said.

The Law Cell analysed a report of the Returning Officer for the by-elections. The Returning

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PSC negotiations to be deferred once again

Star Report

The PSC negotiations, scheduled to start here today, will be deferred once again as none of the oil companies concerned are willing to visit Dhaka in the next few weeks due to Christmas holidays.

The negotiations were scheduled to start with Unocal-Triton joint venture. Unocal-Triton was issued a letter of intent for exploration in Block 7.

The other companies which were scheduled to follow Unocal-Triton in the coming weeks are Shell-Cairn (Block 5), Enron (Blocks 3 and 6) and Pan-gaea (Block 8).

Besides the Christmas, the tremendous interest of the oil companies regarding the second round block bidding which was seen in the beginning has already worn off due to the government's poor handling of the whole process, sources said.

Some of the oil company executives who attended a seminar on investment in Bangladesh, held in Washington earlier this month, blasted the government for poor handling.

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Khaleda, Nizami talk next course of action

Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general Muttur Rahman Nizami yesterday met BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and discussed various aspects of anti-government movement, reports UNB.

During the meeting that lasted about one hour at the official residence of the leader of the Opposition in the evening, they discussed the latest political situation and future course of action of the 7-party alliance, meeting sources said.

BNP's planned simultaneous programme with Jatiya Party also came up for discussion. Jamaat leaders ATM Azharul Islam and Mohammed Kamaruzzaman were present at the meeting.

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Sehri, Iftar timings			
Ramadan	Dec	Sheri	Iftar
1	21	—	5-20
2	22	5-12	5-20
3	23	5-13	5-21

Global rates at historic low

No sign of slashing oil price

By Sharier Khan

While oil price in the international market is at a historic low now, Bangladeshis continue to buy petrol and octane at a high price which defies logic and business ethics.

On August 21, 1997, three ministers at a press conference announced a government decision to massively increase prices of petroleum products on the pretext that the price of oil was soaring in the international market.

They also said that Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) was incurring loss from oil sales in the local market.

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But the three ministers had made a clear cut promise: If the international oil price goes down significantly, the government will reduce the price accordingly.

Over the period, the oil price fell drastically in the international market. So drastically that nobody remembers when, in the past, it was so low.

But in Bangladesh, prices of petroleum products remain sky high. Sources said that the government has no intention to reduce the prices, no matter how low the international price goes.

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AL-BNP street battles at Feni: Two killed

FENI, Dec 20: Two people were killed and 30 injured as ruling Awami League and opposition BNP supporters fought street battles in the town today, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Manzur Hossain Chowdhury Shamim, 22, Joint Secretary of the town unit of Chhatra League, and Abdul Hannan, 25, a Juba Dal worker.

Witnesses said the clash erupted when a group of armed men came in cars, microbuses and motorbikes and attacked BNP strongholds in Rampur and West Ukilpara at about 7:30 am.

They first attacked the houses of BNP leader and former MP Halima Khatun, party's district unit vice-president Abdul Kader and former convener of district Juba Dal Monwar Hossain Dulal in the Rampur area.

The armed men ransacked the houses, looted valuables and set ablaze a private car of

Dulal. His wife received bullet wounds while trying to escape with her child, officials and locals said.

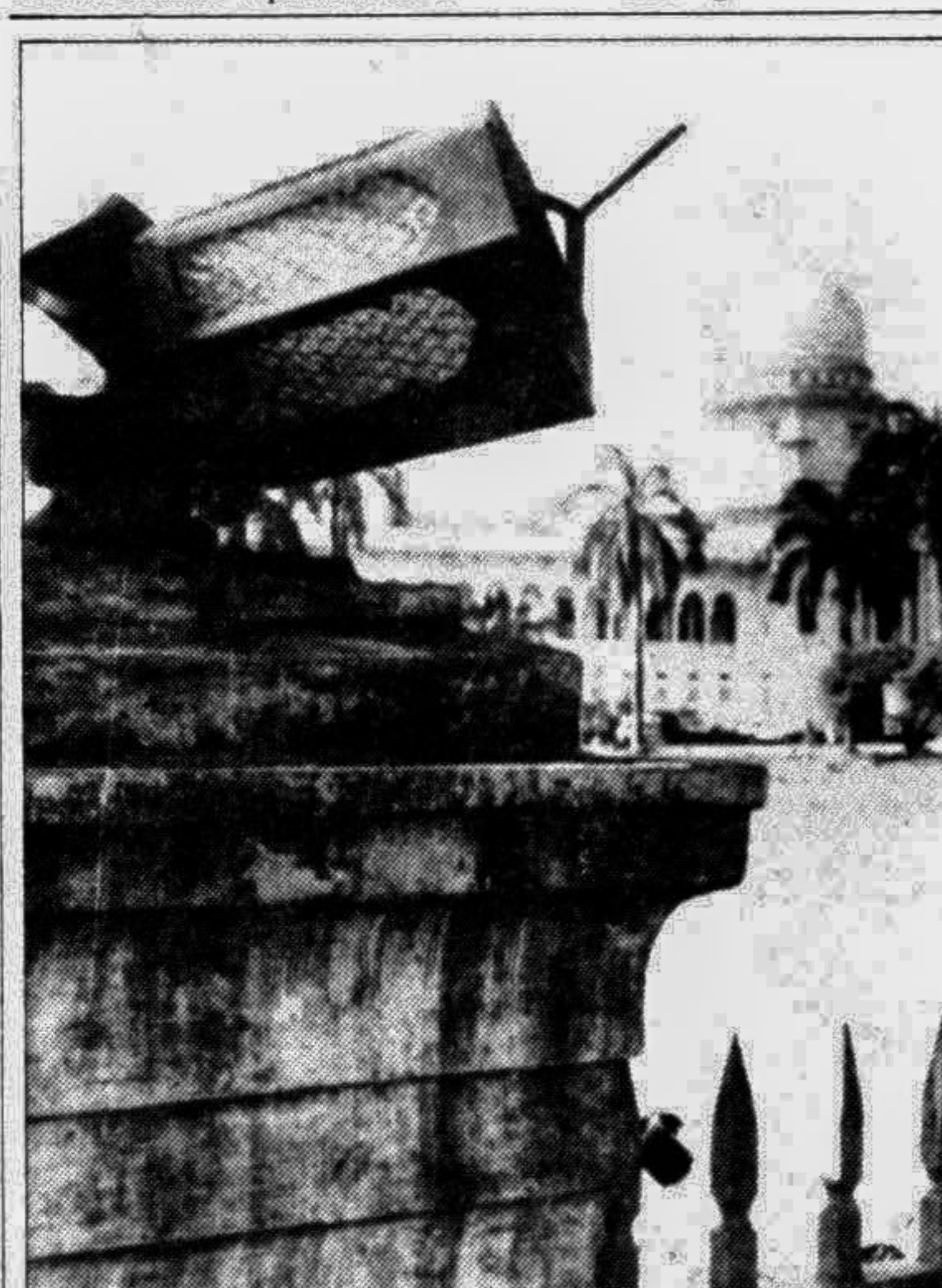
Then they gathered at West Ukilpara and stormed and ransacked the houses of Abdul Bari, Mostak Mia, Jahangir and Harun Mia.

The local administration had to call out paramilitary BDR forces to restore order. The stunned BNP workers later gave a clarification, using the loud-speakers of mosques, for all in the town to stand in a resistance, fuelling a fierce fight.

Sources said the BNP activists in reprisal chased the attackers and torched the homes of district Juba League president Adv Zahid Hossain Khasru, BCL leader Sumon and Kunu Mia at East Ukilpara.

At about 9 am, the enraged BNP blocked traffic on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway and damaged at least 13 buses and trucks during the rowdy

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VANDALISED BUT NO ONE TO CARE: An expensive light shade, designed to keep symmetry with the architecture of the Supreme Court building, lying with its bulb missing on the outer fence of the court. Like this, all other shades are either missing or damaged by thieves. But no one deemed it appropriate to refix the lights or replace the shades.

— Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Delhi yet to respond to revised proposal

Direct bus service delayed further

By M Anwarul Haq

Direct bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta which was to begin last month, is likely to be delayed further, sources said.

The service is being delayed as India has not yet responded to Bangladesh's revised proposal on signing of a 'Passenger Traffic Movement Agreement', providing for only plying of

A draft of the proposed agreement was sent to the Indian authorities along with the proposal by the Ministry of Communications through the Foreign Ministry earlier this month.

Earlier, the Indian side was

learned to have insisted that besides buses, trucks and heavy duty vehicles be also permitted to move non-stop between Dhaka and Calcutta, and then to other parts of India.

A high official involved in the negotiation process for plying of all modes of transport directly through land points in Bangladesh since an earlier Cabinet decision approved linking Dhaka with Calcutta and Ajmer by bus service only. Officials in the foreign and communication ministries however said they were hopeful that India would accept the draft of the 'Passenger Traffic Movement Agreement' if India

Senate to hold impeachment trial next month

Clinton defiant, won't quit

WASHINGTON, Dec 20: Impeached by the House of Representatives for perjury and obstruction of justice, President Bill Clinton has become only the second chief executive since America's founding to be ordered to stand trial in the Senate, reports AP.

Hours after the House vote Saturday, a defiant Clinton rejected calls for resignation and vowed to remain in office 'until the last hour of the last day of my term.' He called for a 'reasonable, bipartisan and proportionate' conclusion in the Senate to end the ordeal.

The drama of impeachment — written into the Constitution more than two centuries ago but scarcely seen since — played out on a day made even more tumultuous by a stunning announcement that incoming House Speaker Bob Livingston would resign over his own marital infidelities. Republicans quickly coalesced around Illinois Rep Dennis Hastert to replace him.

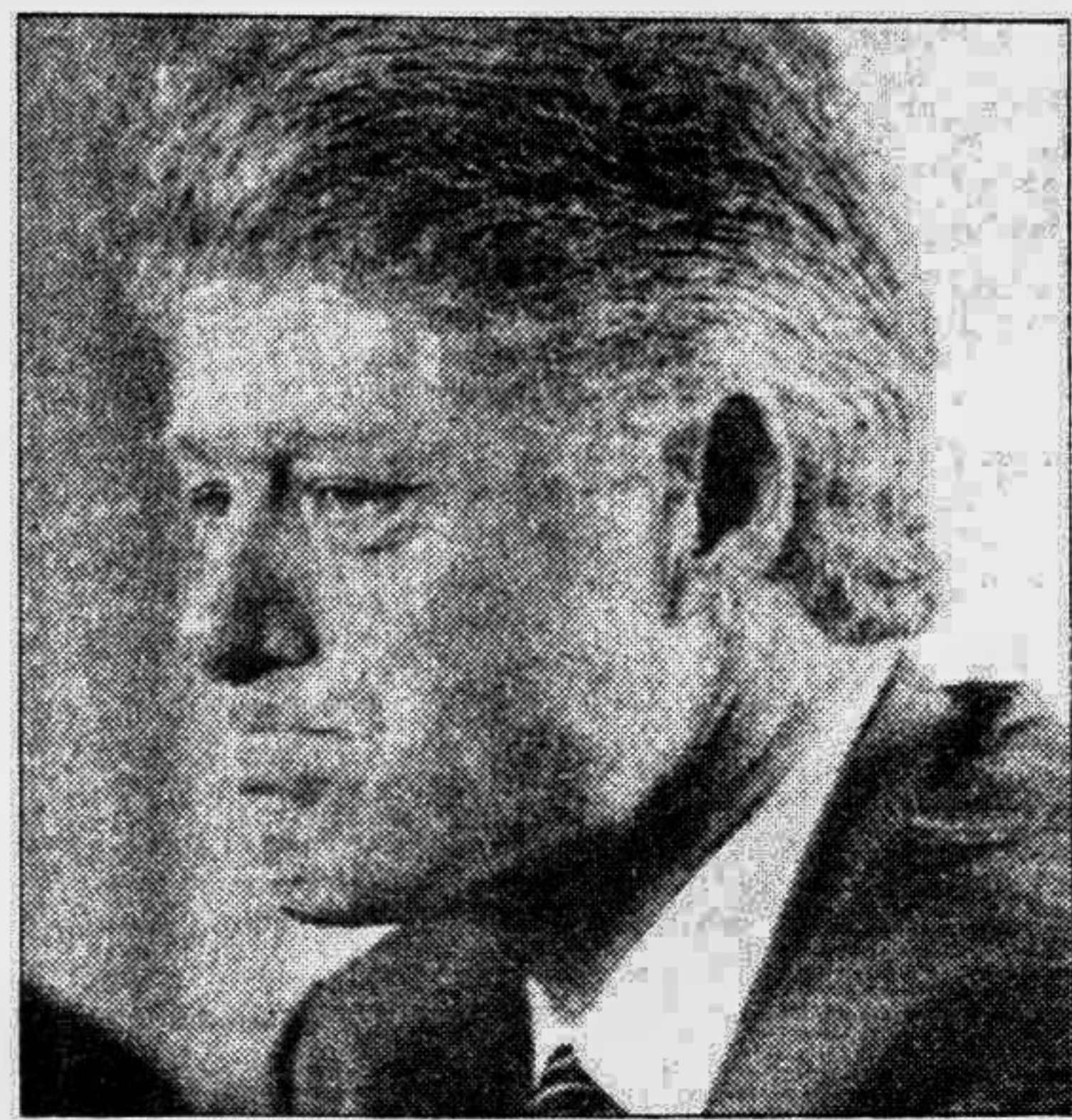
"We have fulfilled our duty to our magnificent Constitution," Livingston, said shortly before the roll was called in the House on presidential articles of impeachment for the first time in 130 years. "We are not ruled by kings or emperors, and there is no divine right of presidents."

Democrats, buoyed by a last-minute meeting with first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, marched out of the House chamber briefly to protest the Republicans' refusal to allow a vote on the lesser punishment of censure.

"We walked out to demonstrate our deep displeasure with the action of the majority party in clearly disregarding the wishes of the majority of the American people," said Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt on the steps outside the Capitol.

With that, Gephardt led Democrats back inside, where majority Republican waited unflinchingly with the votes to approve the first article of impeachment. It alleged that Clinton committed perjury before Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's grand jury in August when asked about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky.

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The 4 articles at a glance

ARTICLE 1: Approved 228-206. Alleges President Clinton "Willfully provided perjurious, false and misleading testimony" before Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's grand jury on August 17.

ARTICLE 2: Rejected 229-205. Alleges Clinton "willfully provided perjurious, false and misleading testimony" in sworn, written answers on December 23, 1997, and during his videotaped testimony on January 17, 1998, in the sexual harassment lawsuit filed by Paula Jones.

ARTICLE 3: Approved 221-212. Alleges Clinton "prevented, obstructed and impeded the administration of justice and has to that end engaged personally, and through his subordinates and agents, in a course of conduct or scheme designed to

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Clinton's job rating up

WASHINGTON, Dec 20: President Bill Clinton's job approval rating climbed over the 70 per cent mark following his impeachment. Of the respondents 25 per cent disapproved and the rest were not sure, reports AP.

A similar poll on Tuesday found Clinton with a 68 per cent approval rating and a 28 per cent disapproval mark.

Meanwhile, support for House passage of impeachment articles climbed to 43 per cent from 40 per cent Wednesday, while opposition slipped to 55 per cent from 57 per cent.

The pool carried a margin of error of plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

A CBS-New York Times poll taken after the House action found 66 per cent of respondents opposing a suggestion that if Clinton resigned, while 31 per cent supported that notion. The numbers were unchanged from a week earlier. The survey of 499 adults carried a 4-percentage-point margin of error.

Airstrikes end but US forces to stay on guard in Gulf

WASHINGTON, Dec 20: US forces will stay on guard in the Gulf and it is 'always possible' they may strike Iraq again, US Defence Secretary William Cohen said today, reports AP.

"That's always possible," Cohen said in an interview with CBS television, when asked whether the United States would have to go back in six months or a year to attack Iraq again.

"We understand that he may try to undertake to repair these facilities or rebuild them in most cases," he said. "But we are going to be in the region. We are going to maintain our military capability."

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the banner headline in the Al-Musawir Al-Arabi weekly. "Iraq does not deserve but victory with God's help," said Al-Thawra, which is published by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's ruling Baath Party.

The papers also suggested that Iraq would stand by its vow to end the work of the UN Special Commission, or UNSCOM, which is charged with eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

It was Iraq's failure to cooperate with UNSCOM that prompted the United States and Britain to launch airstrikes overnight Wednesday-Thursday, US President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair called a halt to the bombardment Saturday night.

As the newspaper Al-Jumhuriya put it in a red headline at the top of its front page: "Swear by God, we will never negotiate."

Iraq has long contended that

it has complied with UN resolutions calling for the elimination of its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons as well as long-range missiles.

But UNSCOM, headed by Richard Butler, says Iraq still is concealing weapons and the means to produce them.

UN trade sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait will not be lifted until UNSCOM certifies that the weapons have been eliminated.

Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan on Saturday night announced that the Baghdad regime no longer would work with UNSCOM, declaring "its mission is over."

Clinton, in announcing an end to the attacks, said he hoped UN arms inspectors could return to Baghdad with full Iraqi cooperation.

Blair made a similar statement and said today that "we want to see the weapons inspected."

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Sexual offence DU teacher suspended

By DU Correspondent

Prof. Shahiduzzaman of the Department of International Relations of Dhaka University has been suspended by DU Syndicate for sexually harassing a female student of the university.

The Syndicate took the decision on the basis of an interim report of the fact-finding committee formed on December 7 to investigate the allegation. The committee led by Prof. Shahadat Ali submitted the report on December 17.

This is the first time that a teacher of the university has been sacked for sexual offence, sources said. "We are dealing the issue very seriously," Vice-Chancellor of the university Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury said. "It is a matter of prestige for the

See Page 12 Col 6

BNP protests PM's remarks about Khaleda

BNP has condemned and protested the statement of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that Khaleda Zia while under arrest of the occupation forces in 1971 had refused to join her husband in India, reports UNB.

"It is utterly false," said BNP joint secretary general Ashraf Hossain in a statement yesterday. He questioned the manner and taste of the prime minister for making such a public statement on December 18.

He said General Zia was totally involved in the war after declaring independence till the victory. Khaleda along with her two sons was hiding at different places and at one stage she was arrested by the occupation forces of Pakistan.

He asked the government leaders to refrain from making motivated statements to tarnish the image of BNP chairperson.

DB questions 2 women claiming as wives of Sohail Chowdhury

By Staff Correspondent

Detective police yesterday interrogated two young women who claimed as wives of late film actor Sohail Chowdhury who was killed on Friday night in the city's Banani area.

The case has been transferred to the Detective Branch of police. Detectives picked up the women in the morning and were released in the evening after interrogation at the DB headquarters.

They were identified as Tuli and Smrity. Ahmed Jaheen Smrity submitted documents against her claim that she was a wife of Sohail while the other could not produce any document supporting her claim.

Police are investigating whether their claims are legitimate. The DB officials had visited the spot of the occurrence yesterday.

DU to confer honorary doctorate on Amartya Sen

The Dhaka University authorities have decided to confer honorary doctorate degree on Nobel laureate Professor Amartya Sen, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Academic Council Saturday night.

The meeting also decided to accord the PhD degree to teachers of various departments and institutes, said a press release.

PCJSS leader claims Govt had agreed to withdraw settlers

RANGAMATI, Dec 20: PCJSS leader Gautam Dewan has disclosed that the government had agreed to withdraw settlers from Chittagong Hill Tracts at the time of signing the peace accord in December last year, reports UNB.

Speaking on the concluding day of the two-day seminar on environment and sustainable development in CHT Saturday, Gautam claimed that the unwritten accord on withdrawal of Bengali settlers was reached between the negotiators of the government and PCJSS.

Abul Hasnat Abdullah.

Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser and Kalpa Ranjan Chakma from the government side and Santu Larma, Rupayan Dewan and himself (Gautam) represented PCJSS in the meeting, he said.

The PCJSS leader said the presence of settlers in the region 'vitiates the environment'. He suggested the Bengali settlers be shifted to the char areas of Noakhali. Instead of giving the char lands on lease to big fishes, settlers in CHT should be given those and be rehabilitated in those char lands, he added.

Santu Larma, the PCJSS

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ঢাকা সিটি করপোরেশন, ঢাকা।

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- লাইসেন্স বিহীন কুকুর পোষা সিটি করপোরেশন অধ্যাদেশ অনুযায়ী দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।
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