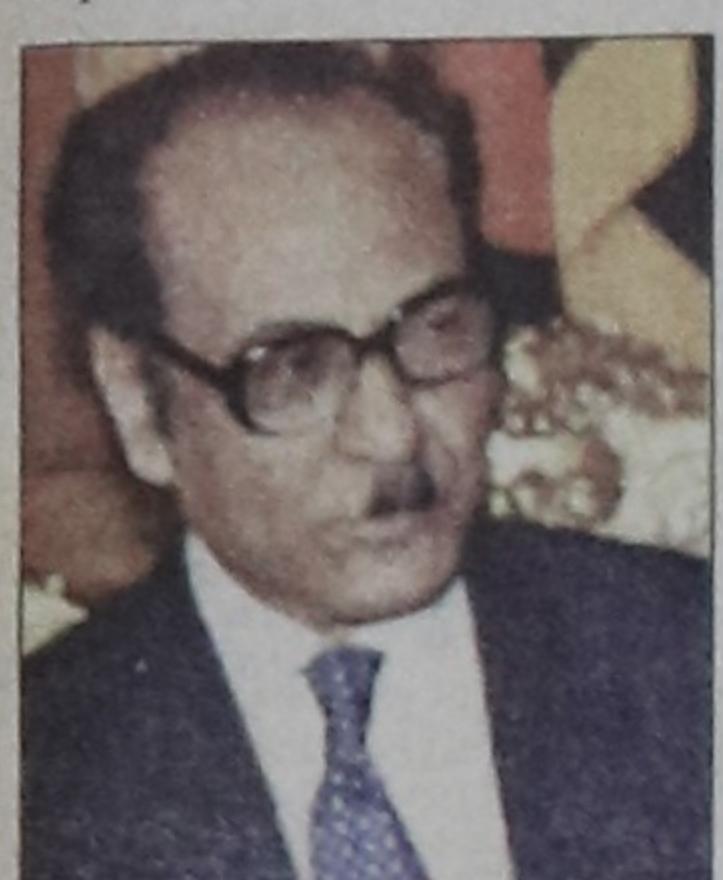
President calls
for unity on
nat'l issues

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday said the prime need of the hour now was to forge unity on important national issues and create a favourable social atmosphere ensuring uninterrupted peace and development for people's welfare, reports BSS.



"All will have to devote sincerely to the establishment of..."
See page 11 col 8

Face evil forces
with spirit of
1971: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called upon the countrymen and Bangalees living abroad to come forward with the spirit of War of



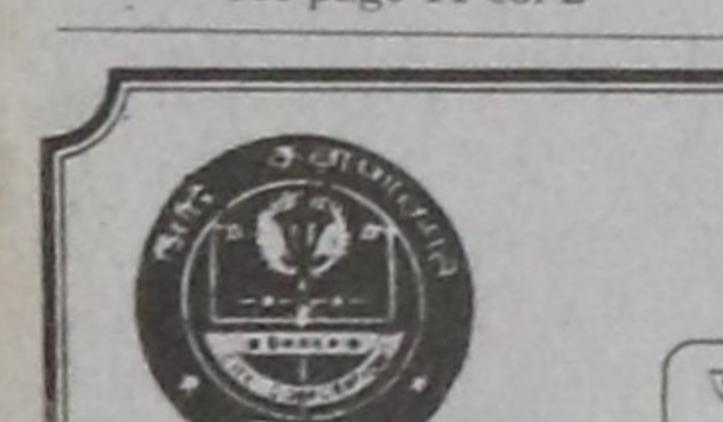
Liberation to face the evil forces, who want to halt the pace of..."
See page 11 col 6

Turn movement
into upsurge,
says Khaleda

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the people to turn, what she termed the ongoing people's movement, into a



"mass upsurge" to force the government to quit and establish..."
See page 11 col 2



Comes again Victory Day

By Staff Correspondent

The nation celebrates today the 29th anniversary of its victory in the nine-month War of Independence in 1971.

The people will pay homage to three million martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the bloody war to liberate the motherland from Pakistani occupation forces. They would renew their pledge to materialise the martyrs' dream for prosperous Bangladesh free from poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and all sorts of exploitation.

The Victory Day celebrations this year bear special significance following pronouncement of a historic judgement by the High Court in Bangabandhu murder case just two days back, confirming death sentences to 10 persons for killing the Father of the Nation and his family members in August 1975.

Besides, Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka Irfan Raja was declared 'persona non grata' and asked to leave the country by last night for his audacious remarks on the War of Independence.

On December 16, 1971, the 93,000-strong Pakistani occupation forces surrendered to a Bangladesh-India joint command at Suhrawardy Uddyan in Dhaka, marking an end to the War.

The occupation forces had earlier indulged in an unprecedented massacre of the freedom-loving unarmed people of this country.

Today is a public holiday. The National Flag will be hoisted atop public and private buildings. The day will be heralded with a 31-gun salute at dawn.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will lead the nation in paying tributes to the martyrs by placing floral wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar early in the morning.

The President, who is also supreme commander of the Armed Forces, will take salute of combined march past by Army, Navy, Air Force, BDR, Police, Ansar and other auxiliary forces at the National Parade Ground in the morning.

He will accord a reception, followed by iftar, at Bangabhaban. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the function. The Prime Minister will also visit the Bangabandhu Museum and garland the portrait of

See page 11 col 1



Face of freedom

The Victory Day may not bring overnight change in her socioeconomic condition, but the marginalised urban teen is, nonetheless, imbued with its spirit.

— Star photo by AKM Mohsin

HC verdict "a great victory"

PM launches ruling party's election website

Bangladesh Awami League yesterday set up a new website www.al-election2001.net, the first of its kind by any political party in the country, under the supervision of Election Steering Committee (ESC) of the party, reports BSS.

President of Awami League and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally launched the website at a simple ceremony in the afternoon at the party's Dharmodhikar Election 2001 office.

Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister expressed the hope that by the grace of Almighty Allah the verdict of the Bangabandhu Murder Trial would be executed.

Referring to the split verdict delivered by a High Court Division Bench on the death reference in the Bangabandhu murder case, the prime minister said although the verdict did not fulfil the aspirations of the people in totality "we have achieved a great victory".

tory and come a long way in trying the heinous killers".

Finance Minister and ESC Chief Coordinator Shah A.M.S. Kibria, Secretary Muzaffar Hossain Palu, Joint Secretary Advocate Syed Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Local Government Minister Zillur Rahman, members of the cabinet, senior party leaders, intellectuals and representatives of the front organisations attended the function.

Referring to the 50-year history of the party, the prime minister said Awami League was always installed in power by ballot and was never voted out of power. Rather, each time, it was unseated through conspiracies, killings and coups.

After formal inauguration, a 15-minute display of

See page 11 col 3

News Analysis

Split verdict spells AL worries

By Nazmul Ashraf

The latest developments in the trial of Bangabandhu Murder Case have become the prime concern for the Awami League government that is now on the verge of ending its term.

The High Court's split verdict on death sentences given by the trial court to 15 former army officers has brought about fresh concerns for Awami League that is mandated to continue in power for less than seven months from now. Because, the party has a plan to quit power earlier than scheduled, taking into consideration some key factors suitable for it to contest the next general election.

Its secret plan is that the government will transfer power to the caretaker administration at a suitable time after celebrating the next independent

ence Day on March 26 in a befitting manner. And, the government expects execution of the verdict in the Bangabandhu Murder Case before the handing over of power. The AL believes that punishment to Bangabandhu's killers, a key agenda of the ruling party, before it transfers power will give it a lot of dividends in the next elections.

Nevertheless, the latest developments in the process of trial have upset the AL plan. The party is learnt to be examining its plan afresh and consulting legal experts to understand how long the trial may take to culminate in the execution of the verdict.

The split verdict by the two High Court judges has

See page 11 col 7

Dakha Siti karporashon

Nagor Bon, Dakha

Apnana parivesh sundar and parichay raখন
Apnana shikha teika din

8th Jatiyotika Diwas 17 December, 2000
(2nd part)

Proyog Nagor Bon

Amdanai amanikum

Agomoy 17 December, 2000 Roj paribar 8th Jatiyotika Diwas 17 December, 2000

পুনরায় ০-৫ বছর বয়সী সকল শিশুকে "পোলিও টিকা" খাওয়ানো হবে।

পোলি ও রোগে আর একটি শিশুও যাতে আক্রান্ত না হতে পারে সে লক্ষ্যে ধনী-দরিদ্র নির্বিশেষ সকল শিশুকে "পোলিও টিকা" খাওয়ানোর প্রয়োজন আছে।

সকল শিশুর পিতা-মাতা ও অভিভাবকসহ সকল সচেতন নগরবাসীকে ৫ বছরের কম বয়সী সকল শিশুকে "পোলিও টিকা" খাওয়ানোর জন্য আমি বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ জনাচ্ছি।

এর আগে শিশুকে "পোলিও টিকা" খাওয়ানো হলেও পুনরায় এ টিকা খাওয়ানোর প্রয়োজন আছে।

সম্মানিত ওয়ার্ড কমিশনারগনের দণ্ড, কমিউনিটি সেন্টার, সরকারী/বেসরকারী ডিসপেনসারী এবং এনজিও দণ্ডের সমূহে আপনার এলাকার টিকাদান কেন্দ্রের তালিকা পাওয়া যাবে।

আগ্রাহ আমাদের সহায় হউন।

DCC/PRD/257/00-01

GD-1159

মোহাম্মদ হানিফ
মেয়ার

Dakha Siti karporashon

Inside Today
V-Day SpecialSonar Bangla:
Still Distant
Reality?

By Mansoor Mamoon

Portrait of 'One
of Us'

By Almas Zakiuddin

Page 4

D-8 Commission
meets in capital
next monthTest flight of plane, Islamic
banking to top agenda

By M Anwarul Haq

Dhaka will host a two-day meeting of the D-8 Commission next month which is expected to lay the ground for the D-8 Summit due to take place in Cairo in March 1 and 2.

Test flight plan for a D-8 manufactured aircraft, unfolding a scheme for Islamic banking and progress in easing trade and visa restrictions among the eight member-countries are likely to dominate discussions at the Dhaka meet, sources said.

Senior officials of all the member-countries will attend the meeting, scheduled for January 16 and 17.

Bangladesh is the current chairman of the D-8 or the Developing Eight. Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey are the other members of the economic forum.

The Dhaka meeting will review progress of the organisation since its second Summit here on March 1 and 2 last year.

It is learnt that some major progress made in the domain of D-8 co-operation in the last one and a half years include comple-

See page 11 col 4

Irfan Raja expelled

Errant Pak diplomat flies out

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Bangladesh yesterday expelled errant Pakistani diplomat Irfan Raja on a 12-hour notice for his audacious and derogatory remarks on the War of Independence.

The government decided to bundle out Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka by declaring him persona non grata under Article 9 of the Vienna Convention.

Raja left Dhaka at 10:30 pm on a Biman flight to Dubai.

This is for the first time that Bangladesh has invoked this provision of the Vienna Convention and expelled a diplomat.

The decision was communicated to Pakistani

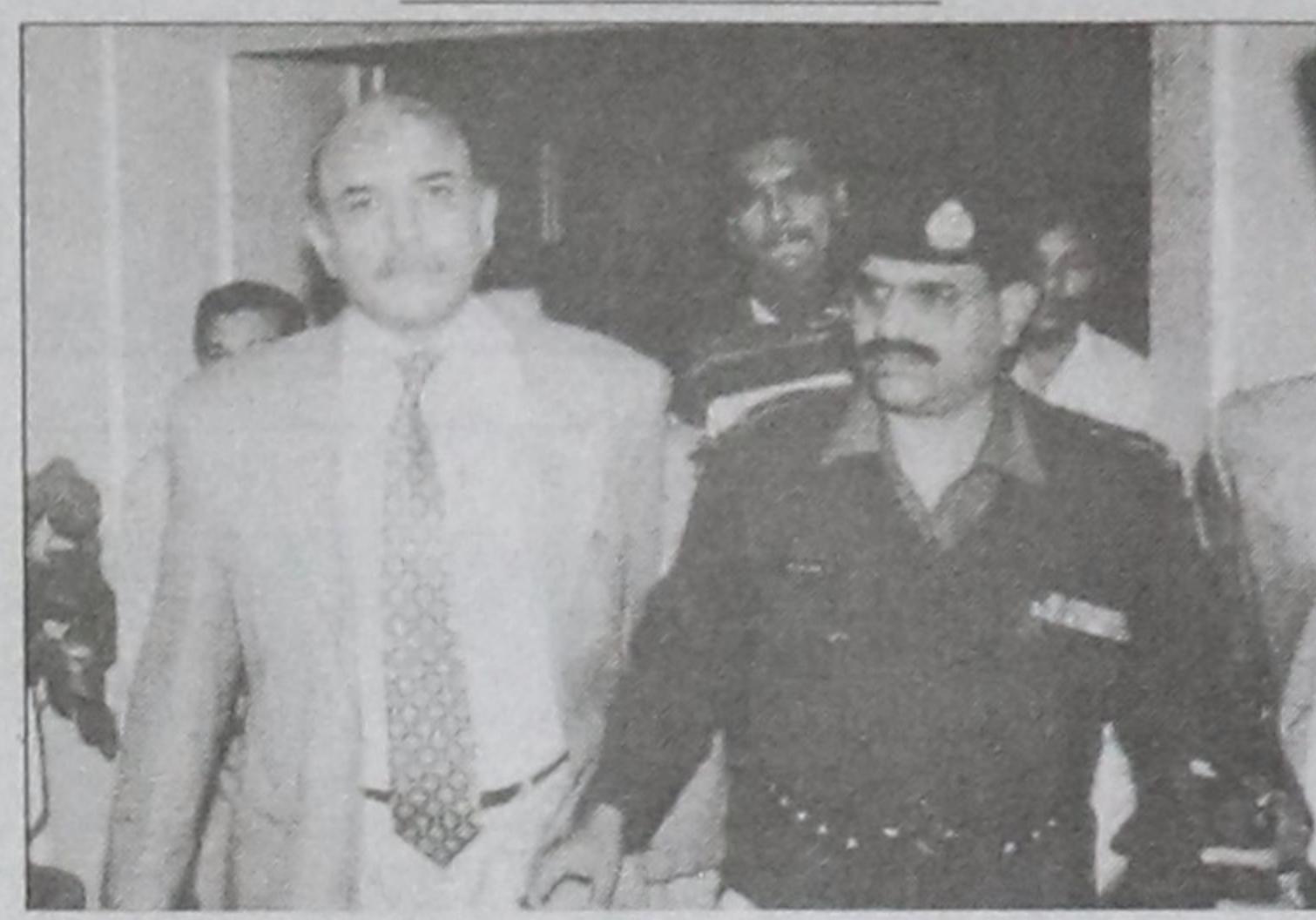
High Commissioner Iqbal Ahmed Khan, summoned to the Foreign Ministry at 11 am yesterday. Acting Foreign Secretary Dr Touqif Ali conveyed the decision that Raja must leave the country within December 15.

The High Commissioner was reminded that a strong protest was made immediately after Irfan Raja made the remarks at a seminar in Dhaka on November 27. "The remarks were incompatible with his status as a diplomat," a spokesman of the foreign ministry said.

He noted that the government had to take the stern action as the diplomat did not leave Dhaka

See page 11 col 1

See Editorial on page 4



Expelled Pak diplomat Irfan Raja being escorted by police on way to airport last night. Raja left for Dubai. — Star photo

AL MP Kamal Bakht dead

Syed Kamal Bakht Saki, a ruling party MP from Satkhira-1 Constituency, died of cardiac arrest in sleep early yesterday. He was 71, reports UNB.

The first namaz-e-janaza for Kamal Bakht was held at South Plaza of the Sangsab Bhaban in the afternoon.

Deputy Leader of the House Zillur Rahman, cabinet members, whips, lawmakers, political leaders, staff of Parliament Secretariat and people from all walks of life attended the janaza.

After the janaza a special munajat was offered for salvation of the departed soul.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina placed wreath on the coffin paying tribute to her party lawmaker. She was followed by Deputy leader of the Parliament Zillur Rahman who placed wreath on behalf of

See page 11 col 5

Greek FM due Dec 20

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Foreign Minister of Greece George A. Papandreu arrives in Dhaka on December 20 on a day's official visit to Bangladesh. It was learnt yesterday.

He will lead a 54-member delegation comprising senior officials and businessmen.

This will be the first high-level contact between the two countries since Bangladesh's independence.

Greece, a shipping giant, is an important member of the European Union and the NATO.

A large number of Bangladeshi, both documented and undocumented, are working in Greece.

The visiting foreign minister is expected to pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and hold official talks with Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad.

Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today (Saturday) on the occasion of Victory Day.

Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow (Sunday).

Asong Low Fat Milk
1% fat only

BRAC Dairy & Food Project

Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 16	5.14 pm
Dec 17	6.35 am

Prayer Timings

December 16		
Azan	Jamaat	

<tbl_r cells="3" ix="3" maxcspan="1" maxrspan="1" usedcols="