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Pak opposition leaders divided over election

Sharif to boycott but Benazir to participate

AP, AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani opposition leaders were divided yesterday on whether to contest parliamentary elections under President Pervez Musharraf, a day after he bowed to international pressure by saying he would end emergency rule ahead of the ballot.

Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto said her opposition party would participate in the January 8 elections "under protest."

"We're worried about the elections, we have our reservations, but we're going in under protest," Benazir Bhutto said in an interview with Associated Press Television News.

"We hope as we participate we can try and improve the situation," she said after meeting a US con-

gressional delegation.

Benazir on Friday launched her party's manifesto for elections in January 8. Benazir held up a copy of the document for television cameras as she said that her party

would not boycott the elections following President Pervez Musharraf's announcement that he would lift emergency rule on December 16.

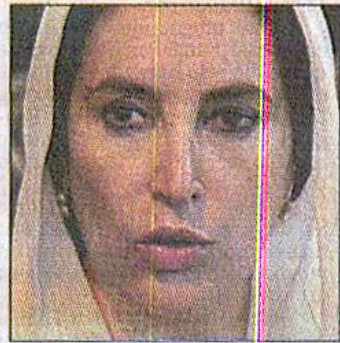
A close aide to Nawaz Sharif,

another former prime minister who heads a 33-member opposition alliance, said Friday his group will try to win Benazir Bhutto's support to boycott the vote unless Musharraf reinstates the Supreme Court chief justice and other judges he sacked after declaring the emergency on Nov. 3.

"Nawaz Sharif will soon meet with Benazir Bhutto to persuade her that the entire opposition should boycott the elections, if Musharraf does not reinstate the judges," said Zafar Ali Shah, a senior leader of Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-N party.

Musharraf had ruled Pakistan as a military dictator since 1999 when he overthrew Sharif in a coup, but

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Benazir Bhutto



Nawaz Sharif

Road accident kills 5 staffs of knitting mill

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Five staffs of Rocky Knitting Mill were killed in a road accident on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway under Rupganj upazila of the district yesterday morning.

The dead are Shihabuddin, 40, marketing officer, Mizanur Rahman, 24, electrician, Afzal Mandal, 28, an employee, Babu, 27, a labourer and Al Amin a security guard of the mill.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred when a microbus carrying the five collided head on with a Narasingdi-bound passenger bus at Ariabo at around 6:30am.

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More foreign aid for cyclone-hit people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US government yesterday announced that it would give additional \$5 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) to provide immediate relief assistance for over 2.2 million cyclone affected Bangladeshis and help restore livelihoods and rural community infrastructures in the battered areas.

With the new contribution, the total US aid through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has so far reached more than \$19.5 million in emergency funds, commodities, food aid and transportation to assist relief and

early recovery efforts in Bangladesh, said a press release from Washington.

Netherlands also pledged additional 4 million euros in emergency aid bringing the total amount to 5 million euros for the cyclone victims. The Dutch aid will be channelled through WFP, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and international NGOs.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store in a letter to Foreign Adviser Iftikhar Ahmed Chowdhury offered a grant of around \$3.27 million, while expatriate Bangladeshis and some

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CANADIAN MP SAYS Int'l community should come up with more aid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jim Karygiannis, a member of Canadian House of Commons, yesterday urged the international community to come up with more assistance for the cyclone victims in Bangladesh.

He also called for the countries that have pledged aid to live up to their commitments. "The international community must do more to help the people of Bangladesh," he said at a press conference in the city following a visit to relief camps in Rangabali of Patuakhali. Humanity First, a London-based charity organisation, is running the camps.

A Liberal member of parliament representing Scarborough-Agincourt for the last 18 years, Karygiannis said, the Canadian government's pledge of \$3 million in immediate humanitarian aid to

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Jute workers in Khulna give fresh deadline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Retired workers of six state-owned jute mills in Khulna and Jessore industrial areas have threatened self-immolation on December 3 if the government fails to pay their arrears by December 2.

They gave this ultimatum from a meeting held in the city yesterday with the CBA leaders of the six jute mills.

The retired workers will stage a sit-in in front of their respective mill offices today to press home their demand. They also appealed to the CBA leaders to express solidarity with their demand.

Another acid victim fighting for life

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Yet another housewife has fallen victim to acid violence and is now fighting for life at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

Mukta Haldar, 25, of Shibhalaya upazila of Manikganj, was forced by her husband Swapan Haldar and in-laws to swallow acid as her family failed to give him dowry.

"On November 14 night I was a little indisposed and sleeping in my room around 2:30am when my husband, his father Mahendra Haldar, mother Kajali Haldar, and brothers Paban and Ratan entered the room," said a tearful Mukta in her medicine ward bed at DMCH. "My husband woke me up and forced to drink a cup of what he said was tea, but it was actually acid," she said.

Drinking the acid, Mukta began screaming due to the immense irritation. Hearing her cry, a few neighbours rushed in and took her to Manikganj Sadar Hospital. Mukta's husband and the in-laws

had already fled the house.

Later, her parents rushed her to DMCH for better treatment.

Mukta's stomach has been burnt with acid and she cannot even drink liquid food, said her physician, adding that her condition is grave.

Mukta's brother Joydev Haldar told The Daily Star that Swapan Haldar of Bara Anulia, Shibhalaya,

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Mukta Haldar at DMCH

Turkey plane crash kills 57 on board

AFP, Ankara

A plane operated by a budget airline crashed early yesterday in mountains in southwest Turkey after apparently veering off course, killing all 57 people on board, officials said.

The fuselage and wings of the McDonnell Douglas 83, operated by Atlasjet, were torn apart and pieces of metal and bodies, some still in their seats, were scattered across the area, Anatolia news agency reported.

Earth-moving machines had to clear a narrow path up a hillside so that security forces, ambulances and civil defence teams could get to the wreckage, the agency added.

There were 50 passengers and seven crew on the jet which was en route from Istanbul to the city of Isparta, aviation officials said, revising an initial toll which failed to include a baby on board.

Investigators recovered the two data recorders from the jet, which came down near Cukuroren village in Isparta province shortly before

its scheduled landing.

"There are no survivors either among the passengers or the crew," Tuncay Doganer, Atlasjet's chief executive, told a televised news conference.

Weeping relatives pleaded to be allowed across the security cordon around the wreckage as forensic experts collected blood samples from mutilated body parts for DNA tests to identify the victims.

"Where are they? Where is my child?" a middle-aged woman cried as she argued with the police, to let her across.

"We just want to have the body," a weeping man said.

There was no immediate clue as to what caused the accident. Officials said weather conditions were fine and the pilots did not send a distress signal.

Transport Minister Binali Yildirim, who visited the crash site, said data from the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and the flight data recorder (FDR) would shed light on the accident.

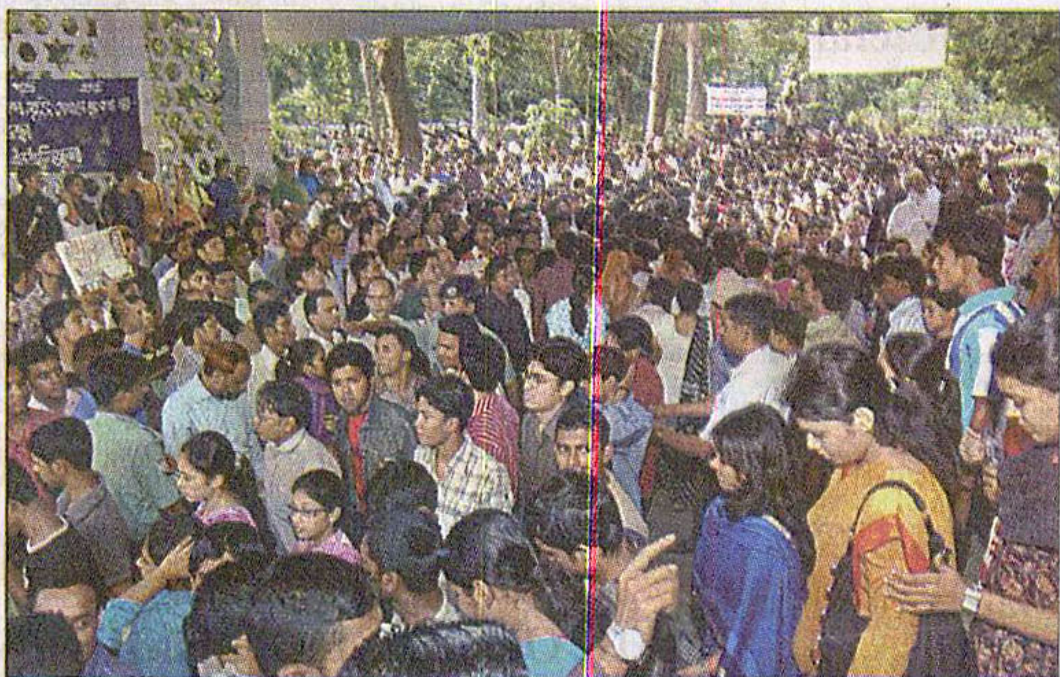


PHOTO: STAR

Students streaming out of the Arts Faculty building of Dhaka University after the admission test for honours courses that began yesterday. Twenty-eight applicants are vying for each seat this year.

The Daily Star

Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views.

Star Campus is an endeavour to bring into the center stage the visionary aspects of our college and university students, alongside their lifestyle, cultural trends and their multidimensional talents.

Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine Of the Students, By the Students and For the Students. Star Campus helps link young minds together.



Stop forming political alliance with anti-liberation forces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Sector Commanders' Forum yesterday urged all the political parties not to form any alliance with anti-liberation war forces.

"If any political party forms alliance with the war criminals for getting votes in the election, we will demand a ban on those political parties and launch campaigns against them," said air vice marshal (ret'd) AK Khandakar, also former deputy chief of staff of the liberation forces, at a view exchange meeting.

The leaders of the forum shared their ideas with members of different professional bodies at the Women's Voluntary Association auditorium in the capital yesterday, the first day of a series of view-exchange meetings.

The forum will hold a series of such meetings with the members of martyrs' families, cultural

organisations, women's organisations and journalists to create awareness among the people.

"We have already discussed the matter with different political parties and they assured us of their assistance," said AK Khandakar.

He said they would work to bring a pro-liberation war force in power to realise their demand for trying the war criminals.

If the new generation is not inspired by Liberation War, the spirit of the war would fade away, he said.

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Prayer Timing

December 1

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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