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FAREWELL TO MANDELA

SA prepares for historic funeral

AFP, Johannesburg

South Africa yesterday prepared a sweeping, emotional farewell to Nelson Mandela -- a funeral that will draw an unprecedented gathering of world leaders and luminaries, reflecting the anti-apartheid icon's transcendent influence.

Presidents, heads of government and royalty from every corner of the globe will be among those seeking to pay their respects to modern South Africa's founding father, who died late Thursday aged 95, surrounded by friends and family.

The sheer scale of the event and of the global attention and emotion surrounding it has had observers searching back decades for a precedent, with some citing the funerals of Mahatma Gandhi and Winston Churchill.

Mandela's body will lie in state for three days from Wednesday, ahead of his eventual burial on December 15 in his boyhood hometown of Qunu.

The government yesterday announced that his coffin would be taken in a cortege through the streets of Pretoria each morning, giving the millions of South Africans still coming to terms with the death of their first black leader an opportunity to say a final farewell.

The organisational logistics are daunting and the military yesterday cancelled leave for troops and reservists to help with crowd control.

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LEGACY OF MANDELA ... Mourners of all races, faiths and age gather on Friday to honour Nelson Mandela in a service at the Grand Parade in Cape Town where the revered icon of the anti-apartheid struggle had made his first speech as a free man in 1990.

PHOTO: AFP

Call off blockade during nat'l mourning
PM asks opposition

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the opposition leader to withdraw the blockade and hartal programmes showing respect to the great South African anti-apartheid

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PRAYER TIMING December 8		
Azhan	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		

Six JP ministers, one adviser 'to quit today'

Ershad rules out rumours of his resignation as party chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The six Jatiya Party ministers of the polls-time government and an adviser to the prime minister will submit their resignation letters to the premier today, party sources have claimed.

They claimed that the seven did not do it yesterday as they could not get an appointment with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"We will submit resignation letters tomorrow [today] whenever we get an appointment," cabinet member and JP Secretary General Ruhul Amin Howlader told reporters at party chief HM Ershad's Baridhara home.

His announcement followed rumours from in and outside the party that two of the JP ministers were unwilling to resign from the polls-time cabinet.

At his Baridhara home, 83-year-old Ershad said it did not matter if one or two ministers refused to resign. " ... I will never participate in any polls if all political parties do not take part," Ershad said.

Talking to The Daily Star, a JP presidium member who is a minister and close to Ershad, said, "If the prime minister does not give us time

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Call for talks by parties lacks heart

Says Justice Habibur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The call for dialogue by the feuding parties to resolve the ongoing political crisis lacks heart, Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, chief adviser to the 1996 caretaker government, said yesterday.

"We as a people have a propensity for being garrulous, but have failed to develop the art of negotiation," he said in an address

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APPEAL IN BDR CARNAGE CASE

Convicts wait for copies of verdict

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Most of the convicts in BDR carnage case could not file regular appeal with the High Court against their convictions and sentences, since they did not get certified copies of the trial court verdict.

A Dhaka court on November 5 sentenced 152 people to death, 161 people to life imprisonment and 256 others to different terms of imprisonment in the case.

Among the death row convicts, 137 submitted separate jail appeals to the HC through the Dhaka Central Jail authorities in seven days after the lower court had delivered the verdict.

While 137 convicts have filed jail appeals, one convict filed a regular appeal. They are now in the condemned cells of different jails. The rest 14 death row convicts are on the run, said sources in the lower court.

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Top business leaders of the country yesterday comment and sign on a banner in front of the BGMEA Bhaban in the capital demanding relief from the ongoing political violence and security for the garment sector.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

2 'JCD men' held over Shahbagh bus torching

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives yesterday arrested two people for their alleged involvement in torching a bus in the capital's Shahbagh 10 days ago, that left three passengers dead and 16 injured.

After primary interrogation of the arrestees, police identified the two as Uzzal Hossain, 26, president of the ward-70 unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), and its activist Sohel Chan Milon, 28, DB Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam told newsmen at a press conference at the Media Centre of Dhaka Metropolitan Police on Mintoo Road.

A Dhaka court placed each of the "JCD men" on a three-day remand for further quizzing, said another official of Detective Branch of police.

Uzzal was arrested in the capital's Shantinagar, while Sohel in Bangshal.

On November 28 evening, unidentified miscreants hurled a petrol bomb on a Mirpur-bound bus of Bihanga Paribahan near the Shishu Park in Shahbagh. A 71-hour

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The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you think there is still hope for an all-inclusive national election?

Yes

No

(26%)

(74%)

TOTAL VOTES: 326

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the international pressure to hold dialogue between the two big parties will have any impact?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

Scrap polls fixture

Shujan urges EC not to go for 'one-sided' election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (Shujan) yesterday urged the Election Commission to cancel the schedule of the polls to stop it from being a one-party election.

"Cancel the schedule of a one-party election, announce fresh polls-schedule where all political parties will join and stay away from playing controversial role," said Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

At the conference, titled "Shujan's Call to Resolve Ongoing Crisis," Badiul urged the

ruling Awami League and the main opposition BNP to reach a consensus through discussion to save democracy and stop playing "unethical game" with Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad.

On November 25, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed announced that the 10th parliamentary elections will be held on January 5.

About the EC's decision to deploy the army during election, Badiul said army's assistance would be needed if the ruling party wanted to hold a one-sided election forcibly.

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CANDIDATURE CANCELLATION 48 challenge EC decisions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 48 appeals were filed with the Election Commission yesterday against the cancellation of their candidacies for the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for January 5.

Aspirants whose candidatures have been rejected will get the chance to appeal to the EC till Monday, said Sirajul Islam, additional secretary of the EC Secretariat.

The commission will start hearing on these appeals on Tuesday, and it will

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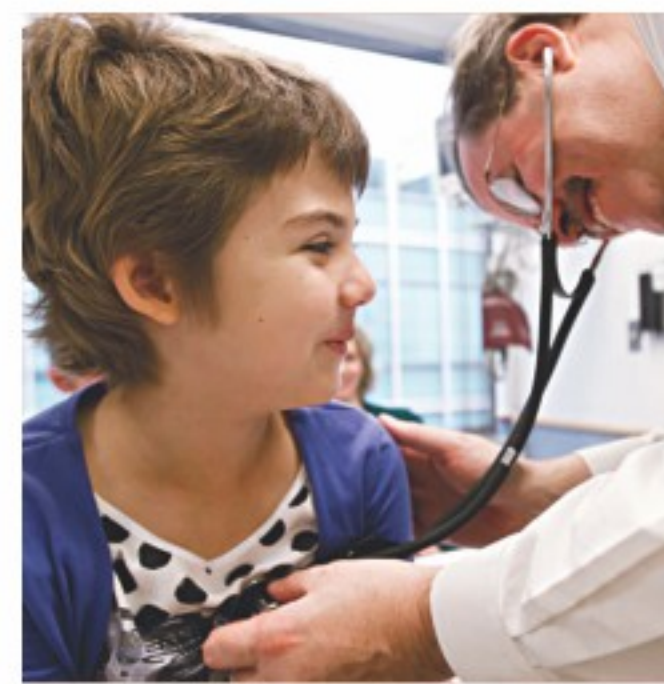
Gene therapy's big wins against blood cancers

AP

In one of the biggest advances against leukaemia and other blood cancers in many years, doctors are reporting unprecedented success by using gene therapy to transform patients' blood cells into soldiers that seek and destroy cancer.

A few patients with one type of leukaemia were given this one-time, experimental therapy several years ago and some

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Emily Whitehead, the first child given gene therapy for leukaemia.

AP PHOTO