

# DOWN TO EARTH

## City's Oldest Hospital Ailing

By A S M Nurunnabi

The Mitford Hospital is the city's oldest medical institution. It was established in 1858 in the old part of the city, which has now grown to be highly congested. So much so that it involves a tremendous waste of energy and time to reach the hospital premises through any of the existing routes. The road itself, the Mitford Road, on which it stands, presents a deplorable sight with constant traffic jams created by trucks, rickshaws, push carts, and the like.

Along with the hospital there was a medical school conducting LMF course which continued till 1972, when on its conversion, Sir Salmullah Medical College came into being.

The present Mitford Hospital is a 600-bed hospital with a daily attendance of 590 outdoor patients on an average. Since its conversion into a hospital of a medical college, it has been suffering from infrastructural inadequacies in several ways. This has been reported due to the absence of a full-time Project Director for the new construction scheme. This also accounts for lack of coordination among the sectors of the scheme. For example, provision of toilets in the chambers of the departmental heads could not yet be made. There is also lack of space in the rooms for the attending doctors of the different departments.

Only one lift operates in the new building. As a result, there is always a long queue of waiting patients and their attendants. In the scheme there is provision for three other lifts in the new building but the work in that connection was found to be progressing very slowly. One source, however, assured that one of the lifts would be operational sometime in 1993.

As gathered from sources, other departments of the hospital have also their problems or deficiencies. On the side of general facilities, it was learnt that there is at present no cabin system in the hospital. The pre-existing cabins have been converted into dormitories for internec doctors for want of accommodation for them elsewhere. As a result, no treatment is available for patients seeking cabins. There is also no arrangement for paying beds. This entails considerable loss of revenue for the government from the income of cabins and paying beds.

The Orthopaedic Department, which has been in existence in the hospital for the last eleven years, is yet to have a separate operation theatre. The surgeons of this department have to wait their turns for use of the operation theatre in a rotation with the general surgeons, with the result that operation cases pile up. There is also no separate Orthopaedic Ward or full-fledged Physiotherapy Department.

The existing Casualty Block is in name only; it is not yet operational for want of air-conditioning facility.

In the Gynae Department, the operation theatre appeared to be functioning in cramped space. The absence of a door to the entrance of the OT makes it highly susceptible to the risk of infection. Sterilisation of operation instruments is delayed for want of adequate gas supply there. The heavy pressure on the Gynae Ward, attending an average of 50-60 patients a day, poses problems for the understaffed doctors and nurses. The attending doctors did not appear to have even the minimum sitting accommodation in their waiting room.

The Psychiatric Ward appeared to be in a neglected state. It is not clear how far the remodelling work going on there will improve the situation. But the main problem, as reported, relates to the availability of psychiatric drugs for the treatment of mental patients. The drugs are usually high-priced and not supplied by the hospital. As a result, most of the patients, being poor, cannot afford to buy such drugs from outside and consequently their treatment suffers.

The hospital suffers from absence of certain other facilities/departments which are normally found in a full-fledged hospital. For example, there are no burn unit, gastro-enterology, radiotherapy, neurosurgery, urology, ultrasonography, electrocardiography, nephrology departments in the hospital.

Hospital sources further indicate that there are other acute inadequacies in the hospital's supporting facilities. About the supply of drugs and medicines for the patients, the situation is equally deplorable. Except for a few low-priced standard medicines, other medicines in most cases are not supplied by the hospital.

The situation is no better in respect of patient's diet. It is poor in quality and quantity. It has been observed that in most cases the patients try to overcome the deficiency in food by purchases from outside.

According to hospital administrators, financial constraints stand in the way of desired improvements. It is, however, generally felt by observers that if the functionaries of the hospital are more considerate and humane in their approach to duties and services, the over-all situation can be less frustrating for the patients.



Somalian orphans greeting President Bush on his arrival at Baidoa Orphanage yesterday. — AFP photo

## OIC summit on Bosnia Jan 11

JEDDAH, Jan 1: An Islamic summit will be held Jan 11 in Dakar, Senegal, on January 11 to debate the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Organization of Islamic Conference announced Friday, reports AP.

The leaders will explore ways of stopping Serb aggression in Bosnia, said an announcement from the Jeddah-based organization. The 51-member group is an umbrella for the world's estimated 1 billion Muslims.

The announcement said the summit will include Senegal, Morocco, Kuwait, Turkey, Indonesia, Syria, Pakistan and "Palestine", meaning the Palestine Liberation Organization led by Yasser Arafat.

An emergency meeting of Islamic foreign ministers in Jeddah early December set January 15 as a deadline for the UN Security Council to implement peace resolution in Bosnia.

The announcement said that "as this deadline is rapidly approaching, the mini-summit will dedicate the major portion of deliberations to the question of Bosnia."

The group has not said what action it would take if it is not

satisfied with United Nations peace efforts when the deadline passes.

Western UN Council members, led by the United States are moving toward using warplanes to make Serbs honor a UN resolution barring Serbian warplanes over Bosnia.

There is tremendous disillusionment in Sarajevo with UN efforts to end the 9-month-old war, which has killed more than 17,000 people and left 1 million homeless.

Meanwhile, lame-duck Yugoslav Premier Milan Panic has flown to the United States and will try to dissuade government officials there from contemplating the use of outside force to end Bosnia's war, his office said Friday.

But with Panic's position eroded, it was unclear how high-level a meeting he could arrange.

Panic departed from Belgrade late Thursday as UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, another key player in attempts to find a peaceful end to the war, left for Geneva.

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## Bush visits US troops, Somali orphans

BAIDOA, Somalia, Jan 1: US President George Bush visited US troops and orphans of famine and civil war in Somalia's city of death today on the second day of his new year visit, reports Reuter.

The outgoing President flew by helicopter from the assault ship Tripoli off Mogadishu to Baidoa, the centre of the famine in Somalia and a major base for the American-led multinational task force protecting relief supplies.

At Baidoa airbase, US troops showed him weapons and technical gunwagons they have seized from Somali gunmen.

He then drove into town by armoured vehicle to a home for 700 Somali orphans.

Bush was flying on to Ball Dogle, about halfway between Baidoa and Mogadishu, to eat a ration pack lunch with troops at the Soviet-built military airfield.

Bush, wearing a camouflage shirt and cap and pale khaki trousers, saw some 200 captured weapons including recoilless rifles and Kalashnikov assault rifles at the Baidoa base.

US marines and crack French troops secured the base and town, 250 km (150 miles) west of Mogadishu, on December 16 in the first major ground thrust in land by the task force.

## PM: JCD

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unity, faith and discipline.

Begum Zia also asked the JCD members to detect anybody within the organisation involved in acts not in conformity with its ideals. She said there should be efforts for the correction of such misguided members. Anybody who would not mend their ways should be rejected, she said.

Presided over by city unit president of JCD Abul Khair Bhuiyan, the function was addressed, among others, by Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, Education Minister Jamir Uddin Sircar, Student Affairs Secretary Advocate Mojibur Rahman, DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman MP, former Convenor of JCD Kazi Asaduzzaman and JCD leaders Fazul Huq Milon, Khairul Kabir Khokan, Rizvi Ahmed, Najmuddin Alam, Kamruzzaman Ratan, Rafiqul Islam and Shahiduddin Chowdhury.

Recalling the glorious tradition of JCD, the Prime Minister asked the members of the organisation to take a fresh vow forgetting selfish interests for the implementation of the ideals of Zia.

Begum Zia asked them to organise JCD at the grassroots levels for the spread of its ideals and restoration of peace and discipline in educational institutions.

The Prime Minister said some vested quarters were out to create violence in educational institutions as they were opposed to peace and national progress.

She said, "We have only friends outside the country but no masters."

Begum Zia said that she was happy over the full panel victory of JCD in 26 out of 27 city college student unions.

She said the best way to establish Bangladeshi nationalism was through successful spread of the national culture. She said certain quarters were creating violence in educational institutions in order to force the parents to send their children outside the country for education. She said such practice was not good as that was influencing our culture.

Begum Zia said the best way to uphold the spirit of the Language Movement was to strongly establish the country's language, literature and culture.

## Opposition

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winter session in view of recent political developments in the country and the region.

But, the sources hinted, Awami League and its allies might boycott the President's speech on the opening day even if they decide to return to the House.

The winter session is expected to witness fiery debates on some major national and international issues, including the demolition of Babri Mosque in India and outbreak of communal violence in Bangladesh, repatriation of Rohingya refugees and stranded Pakistanis, and the repeal of indemnity ordinance.

Awami League is thinking of moving a private bill to ban communal politics in the country to ensure communal peace and amity.

The ruling party is also busy in deciding its position to face the opponents in Parliament.

As per parliamentary practices, the House may be adjourned for a day or two after the President's speech.

The House Business Advisory Committee meets at 11:00 am today (Saturday) with Speaker Sheikh Razaque Ali in the chair to decide the business of the winter session.

## Workers Federation

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quarters were conspiring to close down the fertilizer factory for ever by misappropriating the funds allocated for its BMRE (Balancing, Modernization, Rehabilitation & Expansion). The fate of the Machine Tools Factory had also become uncertain because of massive misappropriation of the funds allocated for resuming its operation, he added.

He, however, demanded punishment to the persons involved in misappropriating the funds.

He said that the country's agricultural production and basic industrialisation would be affected to a great extent if the operation of the two factories was not resumed. Moreover, thousands of workers would be face to unemployment.

The President of the federation criticized the government for delaying the announcement and implementation of the report of National Wage Commission and breaching the election pledge by disinvesting the government owned industries and retrenching the workers.

He called upon all irrespective of party and politics to launch united movement to resist such 'anti-people' activities.

## Smuggled items

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about Taka 121.62 crore in 1991 and of about Taka 104.60 crore until November in 1992.

Of the total seizure in 1992, smuggled goods of about Taka 24,61,22,748 were reported in Dhaka zone while of about Taka 26,15,09,374 in Chittagong zone, of about Taka 17,76,20,961 in Rajshahi zone and of about Taka 36,07,89,368 in Khulna zone, according to the source.

Of the biggest hauls, the task force members seized foreign made cotton sarees worth about Taka 58 lakh at Bangabazar in the capital on November 23 last year, according to a task force member.

Meanwhile, a number of shopowners made allegations against the government officials of harassing the shopowners and shopkeepers. In many cases the task force members harassed them seizing local products, they added.

They further alleged that without ensuring tightened measures in the border areas, at sea ports and international airports to check smuggling of goods into the country the task force members were swooping

# Tension eases in Faizabad, curfew lifted

FAIZABAD, Jan 1: Indian authorities lifted a curfew here as tensions eased today, a day after Muslims clashed with police and Hindus while heading to nearby Ayodhya to pray at the rubble of a razed mosque, reports AFP.

Police said an indefinite curfew clamped after Thursday's street clashes between Hindus and Muslims which left nearly 10 injured was lifted at 4:00 am (2230 GMT).

The situation is peaceful and under control," senior superintendent of police Herbjhan Singh said as residents returned to the streets of this town after more than 12 hours under curfew.

Singh said one injured man was still in hospital in serious condition.

The district administration imposed the curfew after some 400 Muslims traded bricks and other missiles with scores of Hindu resident and fought with police. Several vehicles were attacked and damaged.

The Muslims were part of a 3,000-strong gathering stopped by police from marching to Ayodhya, 12 kilometres (seven miles) away, to offer prayers at the site of the ancient Babri Mosque razed by Hindu zealots on December 6.

Police sources said there was no further attempt by the Muslims, who number in the thousands here, to proceed to Ayodhya.

Meanwhile, 65 Hindu holy men pursued an indefinite hunger strike for the fourth day today in Ayodhya to demand that they be permitted to pray at a makeshift temple erected by the Hindus on the rubble of the fallen mosque.

The holy men were joined by 17 other Hindus on Thursday.

Authorities have cordoned off the disputed area and enforced a curfew there to prevent both Hindus and Muslims from reaching the site, which is revered by both communities.

PTI adds from New Delhi: Meanwhile, Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, Thursday re-asserted his decision to rebuild the mosque at Ayodhya and said "we are not going back on that."

"We have said we would see to it that it is rebuilt. That's all," the Prime Minister told the India Today, a fortnightly news magazine in an interview for its latest issue.

A press release issued by the magazine quoted Narasimha Rao asserting that there was

no need for him to resign.

"I have the responsibility to undo whatever has been done. There is no question of my resigning," Rao said.

Rao also asserted that any other prime minister in his place too would have done exactly the same. "I had to depend on assurances. I had to depend on the Constitution. I could not overrule all this and say I go by my Munich," the magazine quoted the Prime Minister saying.

Reports from Calcutta said: The West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu last night launched a scathing attack on the Congress-I and said that the "Prime Minister had failed to firmly tackle the Ayodhya affair and surrendered to the fundamentalist forces again and again."

Basu said that despite a free hand given to him by the National Integration Council, the Prime Minister did not act and believed those who played double-game which led to the disaster on December 6. Basu said that his party and he himself opposed the "darshan" of the idol at the disputed site but the Prime Minister again surrendered to the fundamentalists.

## Policy for welfare of disabled soon

A national policy will soon be formulated for the overall welfare of nearly one crore disabled people in the country, reports UNB.

The draft of the policy will be submitted to the government by next March for consideration, M Abdus Sattar Dulal, secretary general of Bangladesh Prothobondhi Kalyan Samity (BPKS) told a press conference yesterday.

## Matin: Clarke

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Clarke was also briefed about a five-year master plan of Tk 7.5 crore to be launched soon with the assistance of the United Nations Drug Control Programme.

Bangladesh side appreciated the assistance provided by the British Government in this regard and emphasised the need for more narcotics control measures, including conducting an epidemiological survey, coast guard and training academy.

## Dacoits loot night coaches

JHENIDAH, Jan 1: Dacoits swooped on several night coaches and looted cash and valuables worth about Tk 50,000 injuring five passengers at Pathila in Kaliganj thana on Dhaka-Darshana road early today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said bandits numbering about 15 barricaded the Pathila bridge and attacked three Dhaka-bound buses coming from Darshana at about 4 am.

## BB Dy Director robbed in Sylhet

From Our Correspondent SYLHET, Jan 1: A Deputy Director of Bangladesh Bank was robbed of money and other valuables worth about Taka ten thousand this morning.

At about 5-30 am Al-Amin Jahangir, Deputy Director Accounts of the Bangladesh Bank, while on his way to the Sylhet Railway Station was attacked by a gang of muggers.

## Barisal Divn

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BSS adds: Later addressing a public rally held at Bell Park here Begum Zia said the politics of present government placed more emphasis on the future to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh for the posterity.

"We want to build a prosperous Bangladesh for the future as it is more significant than the past in the politics of BNP," the Prime Minister said.

Begum Khaleda Zia said the government wanted to solve the problems with the support of people and fulfil its pledges to the masses.

Begum Zia said it was the responsibility of the democracy loving people to resist the elements who wanted to create hindrances in the way of development. The people had to come forward unitedly in maintaining peace and stability in the society to help the present government fulfil its promises to toiling masses, she said.

The meeting was also addressed by Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, T and T Minister Keramat Ali, State Minister for Education Prof Yur'us Khan, State Minister for Agriculture Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar MP, Red Crescent Chairman Syed Shahidul Huq Jamal MP, Selina Rahman MP, Raushan Ara Hena MP, Nurul Islam Moni MP

# The Midnight File

## Bush-Mitterrand talks tomorrow

PARIS, Jan 1: US President George Bush will have talks with French President Francois Mitterrand on Sunday, his spokesman said today. Spokesman Jean Musitelli said Bush would stop in Paris on his way back from a Moscow summit to sign the START-2 nuclear disarmament agreement with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. He would have talks and dinner with Mitterrand, reports Reuter.

## Rabin's condition for return of deportees

JERUSALEM, Jan 1: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said today the 415 Palestinians Israel deported last month could return home early if the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories is halted. "If the heads of the PLO supporters and the heads of Hamas ... promise to halt the Intifada (uprising), and this would stand the test of time for nine months I would bring them back early," Rabin told Army Radio, reports Reuter.

## Red Crescent Society

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mously also confirmed this. The member, an MP, however, said that the Chairman had the authority to take the action. The Chairman was not available for comment.

"The annual general meeting (AGM) was held on December 30 and the two days that followed were holidays," Qureshi argued giving an account of the AGM proceedings. The December 31 was a BD-RCS holiday and the next day was Friday. President Abdur Rahman Biswas inaugurated the one-day annual general meeting that approved the annual budget and dealt with other formalities.

On Tuesday, the President had issued an order extending the tenure of the incumbent Managing Committee by six months. The Committee was to have expired Thursday (December 31), and the AGM was supposed to elect a new Committee.

Qureshi admitted that he had not been on good terms with the Chairman of the Managing Committee, Shahidul Huq Zamal MP, for quite some time and that there had been differences on various issues. He did not give details.

But sources close to Qureshi said that the Secretary General had in recent days been opposing "irregularities, corruption and abuse of power" perpetrated by the Chairman.

They said that a Member of the Managing Committee, Kamruzzaman Khan Jusu, at a meeting of the Committee on December 10 presented a list of 11 specific charges against the Chairman.

Jusu, a Faridpur district

BNP leader and Vice Chairman of the district BDRCS committee, charged that Zamal resorted to manipulations to award all major construction contracts to a particular firm.

Allegations had it that the Tk 55 crore BDRCS headquarters building construction contract was given to the Bengal Development Corporation at an "exorbitantly high rate". According to an official of the BDRCS, the work should not cost more than 35 or 36 crore taka.

The contracts of constructing 40 cyclone shelters also went to the company, the sources said.

The sources claimed that Zamal used his authority to set the terms and conditions of the tenders in such a manner that the smaller firms could not bid.

The charges against the Chairman also said that he had done irregularities in BDRCS purchases and recruited staff flouting rules.

Refuting Qureshi's claim that the termination order came abruptly, sources close to Zamal said that a four-member committee had already been constituted to probe several allegations of corruption against Qureshi. A Y M Khalilur Rahman MP heads the committee that includes Shamsuddoha MP, Mashur Rahman MP, and M A Jinnah MP. They are all members of the Managing Committee.

Qureshi was appointed to the post in March 1976 after retirement from the Army. He was enjoying the salary and benefits of an Additional Secretary.

## Hossain Ali's anniversary of death today

Hossain Ali Smriti Sangsad has chalked out an elaborate programme to observe today the 13th death anniversary of late Hossain Ali, former ambassador and the first diplomat to defect Pakistan to join the Bangladesh liberation struggle during the crucial days of 1971, a sangsad press release said, reports BSS.

Hossain Ali, while serving as the Deputy High Commissioner at Pakistani High Commission office in Calcutta in 1971, raised the flag of independent Bangladesh atop the office building.

The sangsad programme included hoisting of national and sangsad flags atop its central office building, kangali bhoj (feeding of the destitute) at noon, discussion and milad mahfil in the afternoon.

Sangsad general secretary Mohammad Abdur Rauf called upon all including freedom fighters, members of various socio-cultural and political organisations to observe the day with due respect.

## Rice export

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ming this year's bumper production of rice a 'gift of nature'. The government may find it difficult to meet the country's food demand unless such production continues, they pointed out. The donors may also toughen their attitude in pledging food aid to Bangladesh in the next meeting of the Aid Club if the country claimed to be a food-exporting one, they added.

ERD sources said that the government had so far received commitment from Japan for 11.15 million US dollar food aid until October '92.

Donors at the April meeting of the Aid Club pledged for Bangladesh food aid of 216 million US dollars. Except Japan, no other member of the Club had converted its pledge into a commitment as yet, sources added.

Bangladesh is yet to get any pledge for food aid except that of the Aid Club in the current fiscal year.

Meanwhile, the government has started looking for countries to export this year's surplus rice. Food Ministry sources said adding that moves were underway to export rice to Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia.

## Siraj Sikdar's anniversary of death today

By Staff Correspondent

The 18th anniversary of death of Siraj Sikdar will be observed today.

The founder of Sarbahara Party, Sikdar was killed while in police custody on this day in 1975.

The day's programmes include laying wreaths at the grave of the late politician, holding Qufan khwan, milad mahfil and discussion meeting.

Shaheed Siraj Sikdar Smriti Sangsad will hold a discussion on the life and works of late Sikdar at 3 pm in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Siraj Sikdar's sister Shamim Sikdar, Assistant Professor of the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, in a statement last night demanded broadcasting of TV programmes on Siraj Sikdar.

Milad mahfil will be held and destitute will be fed at Siraj Sikdar's paternal house at Khilgaon in the city at noon.

## Tourism

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meetings have been held to implement the programmes taken for development of potential tourist spots.

"After a prolonged stagnation, there has been a significant headway recently in the tourism sector. What is needed most now is the close and constant coordination among the concerned ministries," he said.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation has begun an aggressive publicity campaign, both at home and abroad, as part of its drive to attract tourists. Brochures for all the famous tourist attractions of the country have been produced and circulated to foreign missions and international tour operators.

While all the South Asian countries are earning a lot from tourism, the sector is still in its infancy in Bangladesh.

The WTO's tourism master plan study depicted an unfavourable image about the country, resulting from frequent calamities and socio-political unrest. This has been discouraging foreign tourists about Bangladesh.

A number of travel agents, contacted by UNB, said image building is the first and foremost job in attracting foreign tourists.