

### Saifur : WB priorities

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own funds for more electricity. However, he admitted that the Energy Ministry has not yet been able to use the funds.

He said that the government was also spending local funds for rehabilitation of 10,000 primary schools, nationalisation of more than 300 secondary schools and providing scholarships to girl students from Class VI to Class XII.

According to the Minister more than 400 crore taka will be spent for scholarships to girls during the next two years.

Referring to slow pace of private sector investment Rahman blamed the lack of courage by bankers.

"At Macro level we have an excellent investment environment, but my Achilles' heel is the private sector. It is not coming up in proportionate with the money we have," he said.

Rahman blamed the "vested interests" in installing a "sense of fear among investors."

The Finance Minister, however, was glad with the economy's performance in the first four months of the current financial year.

He gave some statistics in support of his contention:

For example, the export has grown by 31 per cent, imports by 19 per cent and development spendings by 12 per cent. The inflation for the last month is estimated at only three per cent.

The Finance Minister once again defended the foreign currency reserve currently at the level of 1.8 billion US dollars.

"This does not mean that the economy is stagnant. Instead, this is the result of good fiscal management," he said adding that "this reasonable level of reserve is needed to guard against any sudden failure in crops or an unexpected need for more imports."

Asked about the low price of foodgrains the farmers are getting in comparison with cost of production, the Finance Minister said, "Our farmers often make imbalanced use of agricultural inputs which raises the cost of production."

In reply to a question on goods smuggled from India Rahman said, "the best guard against smuggling is to make our commodities more competitive and attractive price-wise to our consumers."

"Who is going to buy Bangladeshi sugar or eggs if the prices are higher than those offered by the Indians. This is the reality," he said.

BSS adds: In another function yesterday the Finance Minister said we are to survive by exhibiting utmost resilience and vigour in a unipolar world

of multi polar problems.

He said since the Second World War although institutions like GATT, UNCTAD, IMF have emerged with the objective of rationalisation of trade, economy and rational resource flow among the global community, the interests of the Least Developed Countries were not met as expected due to the dominance of the developed countries.

The Finance Minister was presiding over a session on "Importance of International Trade: Role and Functions of GATT: Advantages for Bangladesh of Active Participation in GATT" in the weeklong Bangladesh seminar on GATT and the Uruguay Round at a local hotel.

Saifur Rahman underscored the need for early conclusion of the Uruguay Round for the interest of the third world countries despite many inequalities and distortions in the total gamut because of the predominance of privileged global community. He said the theory of comparative advantage, as envisaged in the GATT and other institutions are being sacrificed at the altar of a few privileged countries of the world.

The Finance Minister said the world trade pattern is so much uneven that the total export from 47 LDCs is only 10 billion US dollar which is 0.4 per cent of the total world export and equal to the distortion of the total world export and equal to the distortion of the USA's trade figure in a year. He said, it is so unfortunate that even the founders of GATT did not abide by the cardinal principle of the institution itself.

Saifur Rahman said LDCs like us have to strive hard to turn our status from primary goods exporters to finished goods exporters. He said we will have to address the problems to reduce poverty and enable ourselves to attain the stature and strength to face the multiple and sometime conflicting conditionalities of the world bodies which are imposed on us.

Moulana Abdus Sobhan MP, Akhtaruzzaman Choudhury MP, Redwan Ahmed MP, Major (Retd) Akhtaruzzaman MP, Shikawat Hossain MP, Major (Retd) Abdul Hafiz MP, Ansar Ali Siddiqui MP, Begum Farida Rahman MP, Chairman of Tariff Commission Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Secretary of Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry Habibur Rahman, participated in the discussion while Eric Sorenson, Dickson Yeboah, and M Kakabade, GATT representatives, and division chief of Planning Division Dr M MI Talukder presented the key note papers.



A large number of the participants of Biswa Ijtema could not return home for want of transport till Tuesday — two days after the conclusion of the Muslim congregation at Tongi. — Star photo

### Babri discussion

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complete his speech on the issue which he could finish the day before due to adjournment of the House, Moni accused the Awami League MP Dharendra Debnath Shambhu of providing the House with misleading information about the communal situation in the former's constituency.

The AL MP while deliberating on the issue the day before claimed that a number of temples of the Hindu community in Barguna came under attack of Muslim fundamentalists after the Babri Mosque incident.

Moni claimed yesterday that no temple in his constituency (Barguna) was attacked by anybody and added that the opposition MP's claim would definitely be proved 'false' if an investigation was conducted.

"I shall resign my parliamentary membership if the opposition MP can substantiate his claim. In that case, he has to resign his membership in case he fails to come out with evidence of 'destruction of any temple in the area', the Treasury bench MP added.

Dharendra Debnath Shambhu, standing on a point of personal clarification later, accepted the challenge and urged the Speaker to form an all-party parliamentary committee to probe into the issue.

Moni also accused Shodhangsu Shekhar Halder of the Awami League and Suranjit Sengupta of the Ganatantri party of exaggerating Muslim reaction in the country against demolition of the Babri Mosque.

Shudhangsu Shekhar Halder had Sunday claimed that 29,000 temples of the Hindu community were demolished in the country following the Babri Mosque incident while Suranjit claimed the 3000 Hindu women had been raped.

Moni said, this sort of exaggeration virtually tantamount to the insecurity of the minority Muslim community in India.

Halder, clarifying his statement of the day before said he would come out with a publication with statistics relating to the demolition of temples in the country.

Suranjit said that he would give evidence only when the government officially contested his claim regarding rape of the Hindu women.

BSS adds: The Speaker first invited BNP member Nurul Islam Moni to resume his speech which he could not finish on Monday due to adjournment of the House.

Moni referred to various observations made by Awami League member Shudhangsu Shekhar Halder and submitted that the statistics given by the member about oppression on the Hindu community here in the aftermath of the Babri Mosque incident should have been substantiated by Halder, otherwise, it would prove to be a provocation to damage the harmonious social fabric.

Jatiya Party acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury condemned the destruction of Babri Mosque and said that the tendency to impose one's own opinion or faith on others was a social guilt and that it could not be accepted in any manner.

Chowdhury demanded immediate rehabilitation of the mosque at its old site.

The JP leader held the government responsible for not being able to take timely steps to contain social harmony in the country and referred to the firing at the Babri Mosque peace march in Jessore which he observed could have been avoided.

Participating next, Awami League leader Abdur Razzak demanded banning of communal politics in Bangladesh to root out communalism from the soil which he observed was trying to vitiate the social harmony.

CPB leader Shamsuddoha, who condemned the destruction of the historic Babri Mosque and demanded its reconstruction in the original site without delay, strongly criticised the Indian central government for its surrender to the fanatical forces led by BJP.

### Loan-distribution plan

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ensure the right of women as envisaged in the Constitution.

She also referred to several measures taken by her government for the women's development including the introduction of free-education upto class eight for girl students in rural areas, scholarships for female students, the policy of fulfilling 60 percent posts of primary school teachers by the female and revitalization of the Jatiya Mahila Sangstha.

Begum Zia said she had allocated Taka two crore and seven-tenths lakh from her own fund for the loan-distribution programme for the rehabilitation and welfare of the distressed and helpless women.

The trained women indifferent fields will be given loan under this programme so that they can generate self-employment for their economic benefit.

At the initial stage this programme will be implemented in 22 greater districts of the country. Advisory committee at the national level, standing committee at the ministerial level and district level committees have been formed for the implementation of the programme.

The Prime Minister congratulated them and said the introduction of this programme would help stand the distressed women on their own feet and increase their dignity and self-confidence in the society.

She said the programme, which would involve the women in the economic activities, would help remove social discrimination and contribute to the country's alleviation.

Begum Zia said there was no alternative to creating equal opportunities for all to make democracy meaningful.

In an independent and democratic country we all are equal partners in the development, she said stressing the

need for launching specific rehabilitation programmes at private level side by side with the government initiatives.

The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the country would be rid of poverty through the united efforts of all.

Enamul Haq, Secretary of the Ministry of the Social Welfare and Women Affairs also spoke on the occasion.

Another report adds: The village home of late President Ziaur Rahman, today witnessed an impressive look as streams of people celebrated the 57th birth anniversary of the late leader talking Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia with them.

Prime Minister Begum Zia flew to village Baghbari, eight miles from the district headquarters, to join thousands of villagers who celebrated the birth day of Zia with enthusiasm.

The festivity was on a high key as the people in large numbers participated joyfully in "Zia Mela" and cultural functions organised on the occasion.

The Prime Minister opened the three-day "Zia Mela" organised by the Jatiyatobadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangtha (JASAS) in front of the village home of Zia. There are 40 stalls in the exhibition (mela), first of its kind in this village.

Then Begum Zia, went to her father-in-law's house which was also surrounded by thousands of people.

An emotional Begum Zia stayed for more than an hour at the house where Ziaur Rahman was born on January 19, 1936.

Earlier, Begum Zia laid the foundation stone of Shaheed Zia Memorial Hospital and inaugurated the Shaheed Zia Red Crescent Mother Club and Children Welfare Centre.

President Ziaur Rahman who was nicknamed as Komal had passed some of his boyhood days at Baghbari village.

### Hasina

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lives of the longdrawn anti-awami movement against Ershad.

The Awami League leader also charged the BNP government with failure to resolve bilateral issues, including sharing of the Ganges water with India.

Referring to the postponement of SAARC summit, Hasina alleged that the BNP government failed to arrange adequate security in Dhaka for the leaders of the SAARC countries.

The meeting was also addressed by Salahuddin Yusuf, MP, Abdul Jalil, Moutaz Hossain, Ivy Rahman, Barrister KS Nabi, Abdul Mannan, Mukul Bose and Shamsuddoha Khan Majlis.

### Zia's birthday

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To observe the birthday of the late President, BNP and its front organisations chalked out elaborate programmes, including Quran khwan, mid mahfil, placing wreaths at the mazar of Zia, discussion meetings, rallies and cultural functions.

Thousands of BNP activists and people from all walks of life started gathering at the mazar premises in the morning.

Day's programmes began with munajat (prayer) seeking divine blessings for peace and progress of the country as well as unity and solidarity of the nation. On behalf of various bodies of BNP, wreaths were then offered at the mazar.

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## The Midnight File

### Govt plane hit one to death in Nepal

KATMANDU, Jan 19: A government plane landing at an airfield in northwestern Nepal hit a man and killed him, Nepal's national news agency reported Tuesday. The twin-engine Otter plane hit the man with one of its tires Tuesday while landing at the Sanphe Bagar Airport in the remote Achham district, 275 miles (440 kilometers) west of Kathmandu. The plane belonged to the state-run Royal Nepal Airlines, the report quoted airline officials as saying, reports AP.

### Bomb blast damages temple (near) Pretoria

PRETORIA, Jan 19: A bomb caused extensive damage Tuesday to a Hindu temple near Pretoria, but religious leaders discounted the possibility it was linked to a Hindu-Muslim feud in India. No one was hurt in the 3 am attack in Laudium, which follows sectarian riots across India in the wake of the Dec 6 destruction of the Babri Mosque by radical Hindus in the town of Ayodhya, reports AP.

### Kohl reshuffles cabinet

BERLIN, Jan 19: Chancellor Helmut Kohl, whose center-right coalition has been battered by scandal and a worsening economy, reshuffled his Cabinet on Tuesday. He said the new team would make "a good presence" for national elections next year, reports AP.

### Clinton

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Washington: "The World Stupid."

If that message is too faint, Clinton need only look at his predecessor for a hint of the pressures of his new job.

Bush, at 68 usually vigorous and athletic, has developed a deeply creased, haggard look. He seems weary, and perhaps bitter.

For him, the end of 35-year political career will come at midday (1700 GMT) on Wednesday, followed by a ride to retirement in Texas aboard a jetliner formerly designated Air Force One.

A glittering presidential gala is planned for Tuesday night with a Hollywood razzamatazz Ronald Reagan might envy, including such stars as Barbra Streisand and Jack Nicholson.

Clinton and Bush will launch oath-taking formalities together, with a traditional cup of coffee at the White House and ride in the armoured presidential limousine to Capitol Hill.

### Iraq

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escalation of hostilities in Iraq in recent days.

The skirmishes in the northern no-fly zone came after Iraqi missile and radar installations "locked on" to US and British jets and a US fighter drew Iraqi anti-aircraft artillery fire, two senior Pentagon officials said.

The renewed hostilities — a day after a coordinated allied attack on Iraq's southern defence network — came as the striking Kennedy moved within striking distance of Iraq in the eastern Mediterranean.

The moves came after Russia raised objections to air attacks on Iraq and demanded that the United States get explicit UN permission before launching more raids.

The UN Security Council planned to discuss the situation later Tuesday. For its part, Iraq on Tuesday insisted that US attacks will not bring cooperation with UN weapons inspectors.



## বিদেশ চাকুরী প্রজ্ঞাশীদেব জনা বিশেষ খণ দার কর্মসূচী

আপনি কি বিদেশে চাকুরী পেয়েছেন?  
আপনার নিয়োগকারী সংস্থা কি  
জনশক্তি মন্ত্রণালয়ের তালিকাভুক্ত?  
তবে আর অপেক্ষা নয়—  
অগ্রণী ব্যাংক-আপনার  
পার্শেই আছে।  
আর ভিটে-মাটি বিক্রি নয়  
অগ্রণী ব্যাংক-আপনার  
বিদেশে চাকুরীতে যোগদানের জন্য  
বিমান ভাড়া সহ অন্যান্য খরচের বিপরীতে  
সর্বোচ্চ এক লক্ষ টাকা ঋণ দেবে।  
অগ্রণী ব্যাংকের দেশবাসী মনোনীত  
বৈদেশিক বাণিজ্য লেনদেনকারী শাখা  
সমূহে যোগাযোগ করুন।

**অগ্রণী ব্যাংক**

দেশ ও জাতির সেবার প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ একটি ব্যাংক

৬৯, ৬৩, তি/হা/ ৯৮০ ১০১২৩

Editor : S. M. Ali  
Executive Editor : Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at The Sangbad Ltd., 36 Purana Paltan, Dhaka. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices : House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX : 50092-4. Advertisement : 50091 (Dhaka) Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM : DAILY STAR DHAKA.

### Hare Road mansion

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the land filling and landscaping work was being done by A Malek and Company and others.

Replying to a supplementary question from Rahmat Ali, the Minister said that the decision to construct the building was taken during the previous regime "to fulfil its own luxurious desires."

At the time nearly Taka three crore worth of work on the building was done. Later, the minister said, the Caretaker Government contemplated abandoning the construction work.

But, Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed, who was in charge of the Works Ministry, decided to restart the construction work after being told that it would be expensive to dismantle the building, the minister added.

Ganotantri Party leader Suranjit Sengupta took the floor and asked why such an expensive residence was being built for the Prime Minister when she already had a residence in cantonment and two spacious offices at her disposal.

The Works Minister denied that the building was being built for the Prime Minister.

He said that when the building was planned there was confusion over who the residence was being built for. "Inside it was written that it was for the vice president."

He added that "lot of people" wanted the building for themselves. "And I don't want to embarrass anyone, so please don't force me to do so."

At this point, AL member Sheikh Selim asked why such an expensive residence was being built in a country like Bangladesh.

The Minister repeated his earlier answer that it was started by the previous regime.

Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim wanted to know why the construction work was not being investigated into alleged irregularities in the work were not conducted by the government.

He also wanted to know why such an expensive residence was being built for the Prime Minister.

The Minister acknowledged that there may have been irregularities in the planning and initial construction of the building as originally planned with an 18,000 sq ft floor area at a cost of Taka 7.31 crore but later the floor area was increased to 26,000 sq ft and work was started without an estimate.

The minister assured the House that the government was looking into the alleged irregularities and would take appropriate action. "We are an accountable government, I assure you that an enquiry would be held and we will take appropriate action."

The residence was being built for government use by an individual or group.

"As a number of members have hammered on the costs and purpose of the building I am forced to disclose that even the Leader of the Opposition had requested allotment of this residence and if needed I will produce documents" to prove that she did, he said.

The Minister went on to add that the Leader of the Opposition frequently alleged that the government was corrupt. "If she can prove corruption charges against a single minister, I promise to resign myself," he declared.

Awami League members immediately protested the ministers' statement and a number of them stood up to take the floor. But Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Pannir adjourned the House for ten minutes.

### DMC classes resume Jan 23

By DMCH Correspondent

Classes of Dhaka Medical College will resume on January 23 after a 20-day closure, according to an official announcement.

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