

# DOWN TO EARTH

## A Look At Dhaka Libraries

By ASM Nurunnabi

At a seminar recently held under the auspices of the Centre For Development Research, Bangladesh (CDRB), valuable information was made available about existing libraries in Dhaka. Salient features of such information are noted below in broad outlines.

The existing libraries are divided into the following categories: (i) University Libraries (ii) Learned Societies and Museums (iii) National and Public Libraries and (iv) Specialised Libraries.

**University Libraries:** Dhaka University Library has a collection of many rare books and manuscripts in Sanskrit, Bangla, Urdu, Persian and Arabic. The manuscripts collection is one of the richest in the Indo-Bangladesh sub-continent. This richness is evident from the manuscripts on a wide variety of subjects.

The manuscripts at Dhaka University libraries are being preserved with modern methods including temperature control, lamination and micro-filming, etc. Jahangirnagar University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology libraries have respectable collections to support their academic programmes. Both are relatively new. Therefore, their collections consist of recent materials to support their academic needs. Both are service oriented and have devised ways to make their research materials more accessible to the students and faculty.

**Learned Societies and Museums:** (i) Asiatic Society of Bangladesh came into being after the Bangladesh War of Independence. Its library contains 7,000 highly specialised rare titles. It also has over 3000 manuscripts in Urdu, Persian and Arabic. (ii) Bangla Academy Library has a total collection of 80,000

volumes. Number of bound volumes of newspapers is between 35,000 to 40,000 including long runs of important early 20th century Muslim oriented papers, i.e. Millat, Angur and Dhumketu. The manuscript collection consists of 2,500 items.

**National Museum Library:** It has a rich collection of over 30,000 monographs, some rare and dating back to the 18th century on various subjects such as art, archaeology, history, museology, culture, natural history and conservation, etc. The library has three special collections: (i) over 100 audio cassettes of interviews with prominent living leaders in various fields i.e. politics, social sciences and development, etc. (ii) Around 300 files of original documents, newspaper cuttings, articles, interviews on the War of Independence. (iii) 1,800 manuscripts in Bangla, Sanskrit, Persian and Urdu.

**National and Public Libraries:** This library system has one main Central Library in Dhaka, four division libraries in Rajshahi, Chittagong, Khulna and Barisal. The total collection of the system is over 700,000 volumes. The library has received some important collections from Dhaka Balda Museum and Dinajpur Maharaja libraries.

The National Library is a depository of publications under the copyright law. Its collection exceeds 200,000 volumes.

The National Archives of Bangladesh: Established in 1983, it is responsible for preservation and maintenance of government records, acquisition and preservation of private collections, acquisition of government printed materials, organisation of archival library. Its collection is unique and comprises District Records Government Secretariat Reco-

nds. Divisional Commissioners' office records old newspapers, press clippings and old maps.

**Specialised Libraries:** There are many specialised libraries in their respective areas of specialisation, the more important of which are of the following organisations: 1) Community Development. 2) Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies. 3) Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific. 4) International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh. 5) Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies. 6) Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council. 7) Bangladesh National Scientific and Technical Documentation Centre. 8) Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh. 9) National Press Club 10) Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh.

These libraries are trying to serve their clientele effectively, but are facing serious limitations of staff training, funding and lack of modern technological know-how and equipment. They are, however, leading the way to overcome these difficulties.

All specialised libraries are using Computers and CD-Databases, Xeroxing, micro-filming and information sharing at the national and international levels to varying degrees.

**Conclusion:** Libraries of Dhaka have rich collections of rare books, manuscripts and reports of various government departments and agencies. But these collections are not well organised; there are serious problems of space, lack of trained staff and funding. Some progress has, however, been made in creating local computer data bases and sharing and exchanging information at the local, national and international level, but it is not enough.

## Nirmul body plans rally in city May 6

By Staff Correspondent

The Ekattorer Ghatok Dalai Nirmul Committee has planned an anti-communalism and anti-fundamentalism procession in the capital on May 6 to mark the 66th birthday of its founder-convenor late Jahanara Imam.

Family members of the martyrs of the War of Liberation in 1971, intellectuals and noted personalities will take part in the procession.

The Committee deferred its programme from the actual birthday of Jahanara Imam on May 3 due to non-availability of an auditorium where it earlier planned a memorial lecture.

Now, all functions will be held at the Teachers-Students Centre (TSC) of the Dhaka University.

A meeting of the central executive committee of the Nirmul Committee yesterday also decided to award gold medals to an individual and an organisation for special contributions to the on-going campaign against the war criminals of the liberation war.

Chairperson of the National Public Trial and Chief Adviser of the Nirmul Committee Begum Sufia Kamal will attend the function as chief guest.

The function will be rounded off with a discussion and a cultural soiree.

## Hasina

From Page 1

giving lip service to democracy, saying that all its actions and attitude were autocratic. She mentioned the killing of farmers, workers, students, businessmen and others during the four years of the BNP rule.

"They (BNP) even snatched away the right of resignation of the opposition MPs," Hasina said adding that the opposition members were compelled to quit Parliament. "We resigned from Parliament as we did not want to be a party to corruption of the government."

She accused the Prime Minister of allowing her relatives, ministers and partymen to make money through corruption. "They have plundered the country's economy," she alleged.

Blaming the BNP government for creating fertilizer crisis, Hasina said it was done deliberately to allow the partymen to make money before the election.

She also alleged that the present government had closed down some 5,000 mills and factories, and thrown thousands of workers out of job.

Referring to the party's economic policy, the Awami League chief said: "We want to generate employment and increase production by setting up new mills and factories."

The meeting at the Anwara High School ground was presided over by Abul Kalam Chowdhury while the other at the Patiya Rahat All High School ground was chaired by Shamsuddin Ahmed.

## BNP Confce

From Page 1

their seats at the conference venue by 8 am today. Besides, it asked the presidents and secretaries of the district committees to submit the list of delegates of their respective districts.

No delegate will be allowed to enter at the meeting place without card, the press release said.

## ROK gas explosion

From Page 1

Police and gas workers were practically chased out of one hospital as mothers and relatives beat and shouted at them.

Investigators were trying to determine what caused a broken gas pipe.

The national news agency Yonhap, reporting that excavators were being used near the gas line, suggested workers may have accidentally damaged it.

Construction worker Suh Man-kyo heard a loud boom and was thrown in the air. Cars were mangled and crushed like paper cups. Bloodied clothes, schoolbags and textbooks were scattered helter-skelter.

The explosion blew off and scattered metal sheets that were serving as a temporary four-lane road for a 300-meter stretch of the construction site.

The sheets, each weighing about 280 kilograms, were found strewn atop buildings and houses as far as 50 meters away.

South Korean President Kim Young-sam called the explosion the result of unspecified "carelessness," Prime Minister Lee Hong-woo visited the site and apologised to the victims, their relatives, the city and the nation.

The government called up soldiers and reservists for the rescue efforts, and set up an emergency disaster headquarters. It also ordered safety checks of gas pipes in other large cities.

## SPGRC threatens self-immolation

Pakistan government has shelved the repatriation suspended on lame excuses of shortage of funds and housing, the SPGRC leader said, expressing his dismay over the repatriation issue.

He also highlighted the plight of some 2.38 lakh Stranded Pakistanis - also known as the Biharis - lodged in 66 camps across Bangladesh since 1971.

Referring to Begum Zia's recent visit to Pakistan, Nasim said that she had failed to convince and pursue Benazir Bhutto to get the repatriation process underway as per the joint declaration of August 12, 1992.

The threat was given by Nasim Khan, the Chief Patron of SPGRC.

## Guardian killed at IU

From Page 1

Azam sustained injury as he was accompanying his sister, an examinee of the 1st year hours admission test of "Cha" unit held at the IU campus at 4 pm today.

Three other seriously injured were hospitalised. Motalib, a Masters final year student of Accounting, was admitted to Jhenidhad sadar hospital while Tutul, a 2nd year student of Public Administration, and Meem, a 1st year student of Management, were admitted to the Kushtia sadar hospital.

The clash between the Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal and the Islami Chhatra Shibir erupted on the campus at about 4:30 pm during the 1st year honours admission test following an altercation.

Earlier at noon, the activists of JCD and Shibir exchanged hot words in the dining room of Ziaur Rahman Hall over a

## 2 Khulna Shibir leaders held

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 28: Police arrested two Shibir leaders from the BIT campus today.

They are Muradul Hossain, secretary of the city unit of the Islami Chhatra Shibir, and Shawkat Hossain, president of the BL College unit of the party.

They are accused in the Azad murder case. Azad, the secretary of the city unit of the JCD, was gunned down on February 26 near the Daulatpur bus stand.

The city Jamaat leader have demanded unconditional release of the Shibir leaders.

## SAPTA to be high on agenda

From Page 1

submitted a list of 71 items for tariff concessions from India under the SAPTA and 34 items at bilateral level. Dhaka also wants entry of these items into India at zero duty.

India, according to available information, has also submitted a list of 121 items for tariff concessions from Bangladesh under the SAPTA.

Among the items submitted by Bangladesh for tariff concessions from India include chemical fertiliser, electronic products, leather and leather goods, books and periodicals, raw jute, jute carpets, agricultural products, tea, fresh fruits and dry fish.

The two-day meeting of the SAARC council of foreign ministers that begins in New Delhi tomorrow prior to the summit is also expected to approve a new area of technical cooperation among the member-states, concerning conventional and renewable energy. If adopted, this would be the 13th area of technical cooperation among the SAARC states.

The next summit is likely to approve recommendations for strengthening of the SAARC Secretariat located in Kathmandu so that it could effectively coordinate the proliferation of SAARC related activities both at the government and non-governmental levels. The office of the organisation's Secretary General is also expected to receive a much more emphasis.

The progress made by the SAARC nations in the field of poverty alleviation is likely to be highlighted at the summit. Country papers may be presented on the activities of the nations of the region in the sphere of poverty elimination.

Another issue that is likely to come up is the extension of the visa exemption list for more categories of people, particularly government officials. At present, three categories - MPs, Judges and VCs enjoy the facility.

The leaders who would be meeting at the summit would also review the overall progress of the decade old or-

## Head-count of Rohingya Sunday

From Our Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 28: The authorities will hold on Sunday a day-long head-count of Rohingya refugees now living in nine camps here.

Officials say, some 200 officials will conduct the census of an estimated 60,164 refugees. The objective is to ascertain their actual number.

So far, 1,90,344 refugees have gone back to their homes in Myanmar, the officials said.

## Dry spell

From Page 1

During the last couple of days, mercury plummeted by several degrees in the city, he added.

According to Sazedur Rahman, the highest temperature in Dhaka in the last four years were as follows:

1992: 39.2 degree recorded on April 4.

1993: 37.0 degree recorded on April 8.

1994: 37.6 degree recorded on April 14.

1995 (till April 28): 39 degree recorded on April 25.

According to Met office, the maximum temperature recorded in the country since 1952 was 45.1 degree in 1972 in Rajshahi.

The highest temperature in Dhaka was 42.3 degree on April 30, 1960.

However, there are other aspects of the current heat wave. The vanishing greens of the country are surely one of the main reasons behind our sufferings, an expert noted.

Besides, the falling ground water level had also warmed up the country, according to experts.



Peace activists demonstrate outside the main railway station in Colombo yesterday demanding an end to the renewed ethnic-bloodletting.

## LTTE may try bomb attacks on May Day, warn police

COLOMBO, Apr 28: Police have warned Sri Lankans that May Day parades could be marred by Tamil rebel violence on Monday, but only one of the celebrations has been cancelled, reports AP.

Political parties and labour unions often celebrate the national holiday with major rallies in many cities, even though Sri Lanka has been fighting with the Tamil guerrillas for 11 years and that sometimes leads to terrorist attacks.

Two years ago, President Ranasinghe Premadasa was assassinated by a suicide bomber while leading a May Day procession in Colombo, and police blamed Tamil militants.

In November another suicide bomber killed Ganimi Dissanayake, a presidential candidate, and 57 other people at a campaign rally.

Last week, the rebels broke off a three-month cease-fire with the government and

## The Midnight File

### Dozens of Taliban militants killed

ISLAMABAD, Apr 28: Dozens of Taliban militants were killed and wounded in an offensive launched by forces loyal to President Burhanuddin Rabbani in the northwestern province of Farah, radio Kabul reported today. The radio station, controlled by Rabbani's administration, said the Islamic student-led Taliban forces were flushed out of several areas in the region, reports AFP.

### Strategies for normalcy in Kashmir soon

NEW DELHI, Apr 28: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao today said he would soon unveil strategies to restore Kashmir to normal, and vowed to replace an unpopular law forged a decade ago to crush terrorism. Addressing parliament, the 73-year-old Prime Minister also defended his wide-ranging economic reforms, which have been blamed for his Congress (I) Party's humiliating defeats in recent state elections, reports AFP.

## Delhi won't yield to outside pressure on missile plan

NEW DELHI, Apr 28: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao today said that his government would not freeze the military missile development projects despite pressure from abroad, reports AFP.

The Prime Minister did not name the United States, which has protested against the test-flights of a medium range ballistic missile, but said his government would not yield to pressures from outside.

Whatever has to be done will be done, he said of the development of a ballistic missile called 'Agni' (fire), which can transport a conventional, nuclear or a chemical warhead across 2,500 kilometres (1,560 miles).

The government will also not slow down ongoing tests of 'Prithvi' (earth) despite protests that the surface-to-surface rocket posed a threat to regional security in South Asia, Rao said in an address to the parliament's lower house.

He described the test-flights of Agni as "technology demonstrations" and said Prithvi, which has a range of

250 kilometres (156 miles), was undergoing final tests ahead of its deployment by India's million-plus army.

"The government will not yield to any outside pressure on the Agni and Prithvi programmes or other defence requirements of the country," he said of an ambitious programme launched in 1983 to develop a volley of guided missiles.

Agni's second test in May last year was briefly held back in line with Rao's visit to Washington to hold his first summit with US President Bill Clinton.

India then described the postponement as a gesture of goodwill towards the United States, which has been trying to force India to cap its 11-year-old missile development programme.

## One shot dead in Sonargaon

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 28: A person was shot dead by a group of armed men at a village in Sonargaon thana early today.

The alleged dacoits shot Lal Chan Miah, 36, when he came out of his house hearing the hue and cry of his neighbour Abdul Jalil. Lal Chan died on the spot.

Witnesses said, the armed group of about 25 people at night killed Jalil's house in Mongolgaon village.

## Chakmas

From Page 1

negative attitude towards resumption of the third phase of repatriation.

Besides, the Refugee Welfare Association tied the resumption of repatriation to the outcome of the ongoing peace talks between the government and the Parbatyia Chhattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), the parent body of Shantubahini.

The refugee leaders also placed some fresh conditions for enhancement of financial benefits and other facilities including reinstatement of the returnees in their jobs.

## Passport

From Page 1

Inside, office rooms, corridors, staircases and balcony were full of people trying to get their job done.

The clerks and the pursuers mingled, it was impossible to tell who was what. A policeman was found running from door to door with files in his hand.

A group of security officials waited upstairs soberly.

A woman was trying to get inside a room filled with men. A sign on the door said "women's corner".

"I deposited my application for an international passport seven days ago," said the woman. "I paid Tk 3,000 to get it done in 72 hours, I have not received it yet."

An official at the office who requested anonymity, regretted the situation and said that the higher authorities, despite knowing these, hardly cared to do anything.

The department is working in deplorable conditions, yet we are being branded as corrupt, slow, inefficient and what not," he said.

The official said that the office was manned to deliver roughly 350 passports a day but actually over 1,200 passports are being issued. More and more people were leaving the country in search of fortune, he added.

Plans are underway to construct a modern office bloc on a three-acre plot at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar to house the Passport and Immigration Department.

Moreover, three new passport offices will be opened in Noakhala, Jessore and Faridpur to reduce pressure on the Dhaka office.

Probably then a decent atmosphere can be expected in the office, the official said.

## ADB loan

From Page 1

million dollars and 130.13 million was disbursed in the first seven months.

During the first seven months of 1994-95, the percentage of loan utilisation was the highest in power sector and lowest in women affairs sector. Dollars 12.92 million and 3.44 million have been allocated for these two sectors.

The full year allocation for agriculture, rural development and institutions and water resources sectors is 122.70 million dollars, of which 48.01 million was disbursed till January.

Allocations for transport and education sectors are 87 million and 46.56 million dollars respectively this year. The percentage of utilisation in these two sectors stood at 62.3 and 54.8 during the said period.

The full year allocation for health and family welfare sector is 4.97 million dollars, of which 1.04 million was disbursed till January 31.

Allocations for physical planning, water supply and housing sectors are 18.63 million dollars while 7.60 million was disbursed during the first seven months.

Dollars 4.66 million was allocated for youth development sector, of which 2.68 million was disbursed. The allocation for oil, gas and natural resources sectors is 2.54 million dollars of which 1.54 million was disbursed.

When his attention was drawn to remarks by some leading economists that the government overstates economic growth rates, Saifur Rahman said "rubbish".

"Bangladesh's growth rates are very very underestimated," he said, adding "growing activities in informal sectors are being overlooked."

The Finance Minister said he had sought technical assistance from the World Bank and the IMF to assess accurately the GDP growth rate.

The donor agencies want a 6.5 to 7 per cent growth rate against the current fiscal year's projection of 5 per cent, he said.

**UK-aided projects**

From Page 1

bridge over the Meghna at Bhairab, according to message received in city yesterday, reports BSS.

They also discussed other matters of mutual interest in the meeting that took place at the House of Lords when the Finance Minister had a brief stop-over in London on his way home, after attending the aid club meeting in Paris.

**Do You Know?**  
(Health Message)

Pancreatitis is a dreadful disease. In majority of the cases, it is due to obstruction of pancreatic duct (by biliary stone, Round Worm etc.).

**Immediate relief of obstruction by ERCP is the appropriate & ideal treatment before the disease turn into serious stage.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

**GASTRO LIVER CLINIC LTD.**  
Road-24 House-77 Gulshan-1  
Dhaka. Phone - 888062-3

New message next day.