In Zinjira, on the other side of the river Buriganga and directly opposite to Boro Katra. stood a spleridid palace. It was built by the successor of Shaista Khan. Nawab Ibrahim Khan II. between 1689-97.

History claims it was in this palace that the mother. Amina Begum, the aunt, Ghoseli Begum, and the wife. Luttunnesa of Strajudduala, the last independent nawab of Bengal, were kept as prisoners before being taken out and drowned at the confluence of the Buriganga and the Dhaleswari rivers. Today. the site of this historical palace is in ruins. The cruel and mind less acts of man and nature have almost succeeded in el facing it from the map.

The history of Dhaka of the pre-Muslim period is shrouded in mystery. Dr K M Karim, a leading archivist of the country, emphasises in his article in the 'Dhaka- Past, Present. Future, published by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. that Dhaka was an obscure place before the Mughals. But between 1299-1608 AD Dhaka was noted for its industry. The Portugese settled here. In 1608 Dhaka became the capital of Mughal Bengal and remained so until 1764.

During this time. Dhaka became the entrepot for the whole of South East Asia. The built up area of the city extended for twelve miles along the bank of the Buriganga and for eight miles inland.

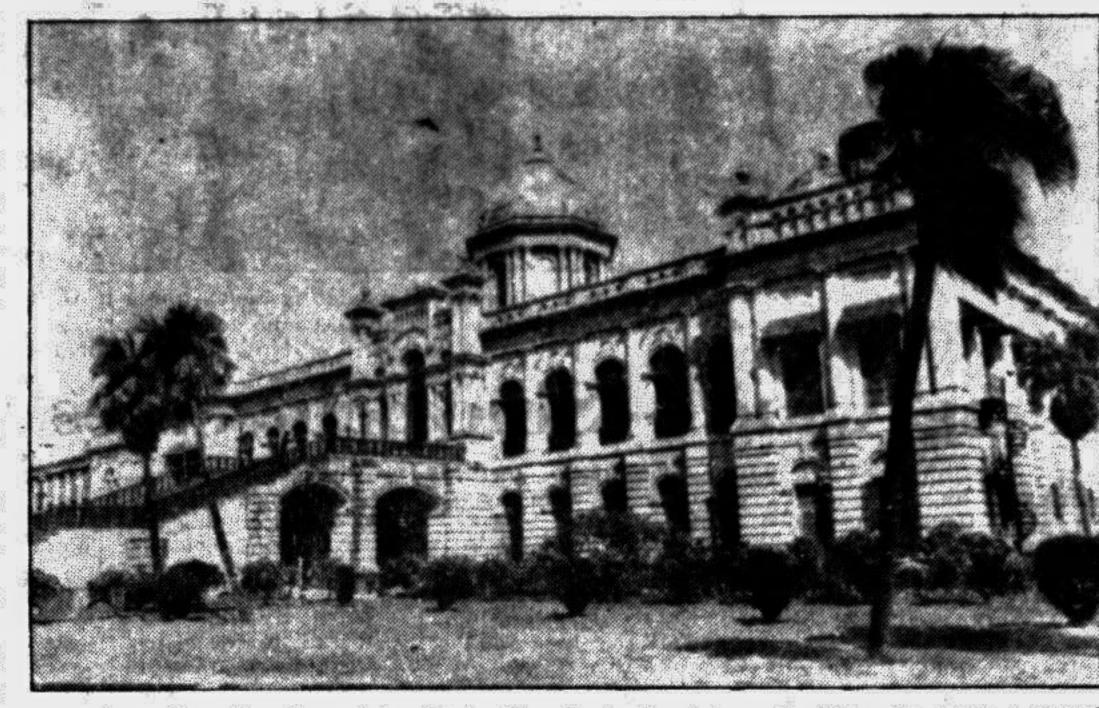
Like the Zinjira Palace. Dhaka has silently witnessed the destruction of countless historical sites over the years.

Today, with a population of 4.4 million inhabitants, facing acute shortage of housing, business centres and other civic amenities, preservation of Dhaka's heritage has always remained a neglected and lowprofile issue for successive governments since independence in 1971. Many precious historical sites were left to themselves, and even destroyed, only for ugly, haphazard settlements, controlled by influential dons and toll-collecting mastans of the area, to grow up in their places.

In 1986, for instance, a overnment minister took active steps in demolishing the 120-year old Bhawal Raj Palace in the Nolgola area of the city. A super market was planned on the land. The project failed to take off because a row broke out between the occupants of the palace and the 'developers'. A long judicial dispute over who would control the three-bigha plot was started. Now the palace is in a deplorable state. Unless the government, particularly the Department of Archaeology, takes immediate and strong measures to protect the site. It

URBANISATION & HOUSING: PART-7 Dhaka losing its rich history

By Morshed Ali Khan



The Ahsan Manzil, palace of the Dhaka Nawabs in the older part of the city, in its restored — Star photo

will soon be lost for posterity.

Both Bara and Chota Katra. two of the most important remains of the Moghul period in Dhaka, are in similar condition. The brick-and-mortar structures are faced with decadence as slums, huts, factories, godowns occupy them, The different floors of these fort-like buildings have been rented out to serve as working class dormitories, party offices and students' hostels. It was alleged that the rents are regularly collected by 'agents' recruited by the government department which is supposed to conserve these relics.

Amiruddin, 60, who has always lived in the area, expressed his sadness about the way the Katras have been used. "A lot of tourists come here everyday. They come, stand here and ask Where is the Katra? The buildings are almost buried," he said. The original grandeur of the structures can hardly be seen nowadays.

Unplanned and illegal extension work on many historical sites has also been rampant in the city, especially in cases of mosques. Recently, a 400year-old mosque in the Nolgola area underwent such as extension and restoration work that 'its historical value has been totally sacfificed. It was learnt that no permission was either sought or taken by the mosque number of tourists. committee prior to this gross extension and renovation were

designed by a committee

member who had little or no qualification to do so. Originally, the mosque was built by Shaista Khan in the 17th century.

Two identical mosques were built at the same time One was the famous Satmasjid in Mohammadpur, which has been protected by the Department of Archaeology. and the other the Nolgola Mosque, which has now been defaced. One wonders how the historians and relevant authorities could have failed to prevent the disaster. Gloomy reports on the al-

most total apathy towards the need for preservation of Dhaka's historical sites could probably fill pages, but there also exist a few happy stories. The Ahsan Manzil stands out as an inspirational monument in this regard. Until not very long ago the palace, built by the Nawabs of Dhaka in 1872, was home to innumerable destitutes, slum dwellers and factories recycling trash. In 1988 the government took over the building and later turned it into a beautiful museum through extensive renovation work. Now thousands of tourists visit the site every

In the same way, the Lalbagh Fort has been preserved by the Department of

Archaeology, attracting a great There are, however, hun reconstruction. The plans for dreds of small and big historical sites in Dhaka still waiting

to be detected and duly pro-

attract wanderlust people from around the world, helping the country's tourism industry. they also represent our glori ous historical past. The government should bring all the old building under a charter as in the case of Great Britain. where any building at least a hundred years old or having a historical significance, auto matically falls under the char ter and is thus protected. It is time that a master plan is drawn up to renovate and con serve the spots. The govern ment should immediately declare all the historical monu ments and buildings as protected sites. Small museums in some of these spots can be established. And the historical remains should be tied with tourism by developing different itineraries.

Historical remains not only

In the past, celebrated travellers like Ibn Battuta (1345). Nicholas Pisento, Lewis Vertomannus (1503) and Francois Bernier (1666) visited Dhaka and gave vivid descriptions of Dhaka society, its economy, government, administration, buildings and architecture. This shows that Dhaka has always been a place worth visiting. If today we are deprived of tourists, the blame is definitely ours.

Professor AH Dani, in his book 'Dhaka- A Record of its Changing Fortune. laments "Man, in his neglect, has forgotten the value of his magnificence that is this heritage.

PM on Tagore's works

From Page 1 Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum, the inaugural function was also ad dressed by former Chief Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman as the special guest.

The anniversary is also being observed at Silaidaha. Shajadpur and Patisar at the government level

and Cultural Secretary Mukh-

lesur Rahman.

Paying tributes to the great poet the Prime Minister recalled with honour his contributions to the Bangla language and literature.

Reminding all that poet Rabindranath had preached for peace and advised all to shun jealousy, malice and

Nirmul chief starts Europe, US tour today

By Staff Correspondent

Convener of the Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee. Begum Mushtari Shafi. leaves Dhaka today for a twomonth organisational tour of Europe and America.

During her visit in Ger many, the Netherlands, Sweden, England and the United States, Begum Shafi will meet the leaders of the Nirmul units there to discuss organisational matters, says a press release The overseas branches of the organisation will also accord receptions to her and hold seminars, discussions and rallies, it added.

Shahrear Kabir will act as convener of the Nirmul Committee until Begum Shafi re-

Police remand

From Page 1 three others yesterday for

their alleged involvement in the killing. Jubo League leader Mahbubur Rahman Chowdhury Tanjil was gunned down by some unidentified persons at

Bangram while he was going back to his residence at Shasi Mohon Bashak Lane at about 9:30 pm Sunday. The three persons picked up yesterday were identified as

Shahjalal, Jahangir Alam and

Teacher beaten to death

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, May 8: A primary

school teacher, who was beaten up by some unidentified people Friday, succumbed to his injuries at the Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital yesterday. The teacher Abdul Wahid

Chowdhury, 36, was beaten up by a group of people following an altercation in Kulaura thana under Moulavibazar district. He was admitted to the

hospital with serious injuries on Friday. He died there yes

One person was arrested in this connection.

confrontation, Begum Zia said "It is possible to quickly ensure peace and prosperity of the country if all of us can work unitedly, stnking our petty differences.

Emphasising the need for placing reason above emotions. the Prime Minister urged the country's artistes litterateurs cultural activists and critics to evaluate poet Rabindranath Tagore on the whole not in a fragmented way.

She urged all who genuinely respect the poet to supplement the nation's march to wards progress.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh and its people were the main inspiration behind the literary works of Rabindranath.

She said Rabindranath's relation with Bangladesh was deep and added that the varied nature and the people of this land had greatly influenced the great poet.

of the poet in the enrichment and modernisation of the Bangla language and literature the Prime Minister said Rabindranath's songs and poetry had provided great encouragement in Bangladesh's Liberation War

Recalling the contributions

Muhammad Habibur Rah man said that the people of Bangladesh were now enjoying. the constitutional rights after the end of the dark era of the martial law

The Prime Minister also opened the Rabindra Exhibition there. The inaugural function was followed by a cultural

Trader killed From Page 1

Jinnah who sat beside Dipu as he tried to resist the gang from snatching the cash, witnesses added.

But their efforts failed and the muggers took away the cash.

Jinnah was rushed to the DMCH where he died after about two hours.

Shamsuddin and Dipu were also under treatment at the hospital Ramna police said a case

has been filed with the thana. No one was arrested in this connection until last night.

Outgoing students must vacate DU halls before Eid

By Staff Correspondent The Dhaka University authorities have asked the students who have completed their Masters' final year examination to leave the residential halls before Eid-ul-Azha.

the university at a meeting yesterday discussed and clarified its decision that had earlier created misunderstanding.

The Provost Committee of

A university press release vesterday said the meeting had asked the hostel authorities to issue notices and take steps so that no outsider can stay in the

The Midnight Eile

SARAJEVO, May 8: The United Nations today condemned the Bosnian Serbs for killing ten people by shelling in an act of heartless evil and said it would take measures, possibly military action, to punish them, reports Reuter.

Transport fares up

From Page 1

other modes of transport.

But the home-bound passengers sufferings know no bound due to a number of factors. They face troubles like sudden rise of transport fare. non availability of tickets. black marketing of those, overloading of transports and ha-

rassments at bus terminals. Visiting différent bus terminals and Kamalapur railway station vesterday, this correspondent found that despite various problems, people were returning home in large num-

Talking to this correspondent at Savedabad inter-district bus terminal, transport owners and workers admitted that they had increased bus fare by 10 to 20 per cent.

Justifying the fare hike, one bus owner claimed "prices of engines, tyres and spare parts have shot up. We have to procure a pair of tyres at a price of Taka 28 000 now as against Taka 12.000 three months back. A Mitsubishi new-model engine now costs Taka two and half lakh while its price was half of that only a few months back.

Moreover, during the Eid period, unlike Chittagongbound buses, buses plying in different other routes get capacity passengers when they leave Dhaka but come back almost empty, he added.

When enquired about the price hike of tyres, one of the transport owners said. "We have been told by the tyre sellers at Bangla Bazar that due to recent fall of rubber production in India, cost of tyre swelled.

The staff at some ticket counters said that this time bus fare might not come down even after the Eid period

At the Kamalapur Railway Station this correspondent found that many ticket seekers

JP to gear up From Page 1

der a caretaker government. would continue as before.

So long, the JP's agitational activities remained virtually confined to the simultaneous programmes of the combined Opposition comprising the Awami League, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Jatiya Party itself. These three parties have been agitating since March last year to compel the BNP government to accept their demand for a caretaker administration to conduct the next general elections.

According to sources in the JP, the party's leadership believes that with elections now very near, the time is ripe to force the government to release JP Chairman Ershad.

At a party gathering in the city last Wednesday. JP leaders expressed their resolve by threatening that there could be no elections without Ershad. When contacted, newly-ap-

pointed Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju said that his party is demanding release of its chairman before the next elections only to ensure 'equal opportunity' for all contesting parties. "Why should my leader re-

main behind bars when the leaders of the other parties will be campaigning for their candidates" he asked. "This is a question of fairness — the unfair attitude to JP during the election of 1991 should not be repeated." He said that the JP will also

reiterate other demands, such as decentralisation of the judiciary, restoration of the Upazila system and development of the rural areas. The JP Secretary-General,

however, pointed out that his party would not do anything to disrupt the constitutional pro-

Foodgrains

From Page I

due to a sudden crisis in sup-

projected at three million The figures of quantities

and L/C values of the some selected commodities as provided by the Bangladesh Bank statement are: Sugar - L/C valued at 66.66 million US dol lars opened for importing 2.11 MT. Milk powder — 38.7 mil lion US dollars for 24,226 MT and 15,990 cartons. Cement -117 million US dollars for 20.42 lakh MT. BP Sheet -89.6 million US dollars for 2.5 lakh MT. Fertilizer 96.18 mil lion US dollars for 11.79 lakh MT. Pulses - 7.75 million US dollars for 23,186 MT and Chilly -0.14 million US dollars

were returning disappointed since the tickets for May 8, 9 and 10 of different inter-city trains were sold out in advance. Some of them, however, were seen looking around with the hope to find the 'middlemen. These men purchase tickets from passengers who have changed their decision go home at a lower prices and resell those at higher prices.

One such middleman. Md

tion manager concerned said.

The station manager further said, advance tickets were on sale from May 1 and three special trains on Dhaka-Noakhali and Dhaka-Dinajpur routes were arranged. In addition to that, two extra compartments would be given with each train during the Eid pe-

The manager said, "has the higher authorities directed us not to refund tickets once those are sold during the Eid period, it may happen that

highly over-loaded.

bus stand during the normal period.

launches sail for different destinations from Sadarghat terminal, carrying about 20,000 From the Kamalapur Rail-

way Station. 27 trains with about 23,000 seats usually operate on a normal day. During the Eid period, most

also made by trains, buses and river transports to cope with the rush.

Under the new system, all teachers will open accounts in their names with the thana headquarters branch of the banks concerned and will draw the money through cheques.

Bank for Dhaka Division, Sonali Bank for Rajshahi Division, Rupali Bank for Khulna and Barisal Division and Janata The authorities further de-

open their accounts in Sonali Bank where the prescribed banks for them are not in exis-Meanwhile, the government

had already taken necessary measures to send the benefitmoney up to thana level through concerned banks. Those teachers having no account, have been asked to open accounts immediately

An Iranian delegate told

tion with Saudi police.

held by Iran in 1987 sparked clashes with security forces mainly Iranians.

that Iranians would hold an anti-US rally on Saturday at holy sites close to Makkah either Mina or on Mount Arafat, but one never took place.

As part of security precautions, Saudi authorities have scattered the Iranian pilgrims throughout different camps and posted hundreds of police outside Reyshari's headquar-

old age or because of heat exhaustion, in the runup to the hajf and all were buried in Saudi Arabia, according to

Indonesia has sent 195,000 pfigrims to Makkah they said.

Voters' identity cards From Page 1 pearing in a section of the

elections just on the plea of ID cards," he said. There was also scope to go for alternatives, he added without elaborating. He, however, added that

some experts believed the preparation of ID cards for nearly 60 million voters could be accomplished within six months. The EC would start work on the ID cards by June The next parliamentary

elections are scheduled for

next winter. The situation

would be different if there was an early election, Justice Sadeque said. He said the EC would soon go for an open tender to select computer firms for preparation of laminated ID cards con-

voter. He dismissed reports ap-Maid murder

taining the picture of every

· From Page 1

the house where Monowara worked as a maid, and her daughter Sharmin Chowdhury. · 15, alias Farah — on a two-day remand Saturday,

Meanwhile, detective police questioned two sweepers of the Concord Tower yesterday.

the sources said. Sources indicated the police may seek additional remand of the detainees today. Earlier, Roksana had stated that Monowara fell down from the house while trying to flee with a gold necklace and some

Police said that Roksana has been involved in various antisocial activities in different posh areas of the city for several years.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on

behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motifheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City

Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News &

Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A,

clothes.

press, that computer firms of a particular country had already been given the contract for

saying the necessary tender was yet to be floated. Some 60 computer companies and software traders have applied for being enlisted for the work, the CEC informed newsmen and said that computer vendors from any country may win the contract if they met all the conditions

preparation of the ID cards by

specified. Justice Sadeque said the EC was determined to hold free, fair and peaceful elections with the help of the people in general and political

parties in particular. "I want to make it clear to the people that the EC could discharge its constitutional duty by rising above all sorts of influence," he said. "The EC is only responsible to the Constitution and the people for

its activities." The EC would exchange views with the political parties and election experts in the near future, he said. "We shall also welcome any constructive suggestion or proposal for

holding fair elections. He said the EC would also formulate a code of conduct for the next parliamentary elections in consultation with political parties. "The EC would also suggest necessary reforms in the rules to make elections free from the influence of money and muscle power," he

Replying to a question, he said that he had no say regarding his appointment. "I had no partiality towards any quarter during long 38 years of service," he said.

AL: CEC office From Page 1

Parliamentary elections, it was Awami League which moved a bill in Parliament and BNP strongly opposed it, said a

resolution. It said the Awami League had built up countrywide agitation and forced BNP to accept Parliamentary form of government. "But after restoration of Parliamentary democracy, BNP systematically crippled it and made Parliament inoperative." it added.

The meeting alleged that the BNP had created fertiliser crisis and amassed crores of taka through illegal means. Even a minister admitted that Tk 131 crore was missing from a ministry, it said.

Expressing concern over

the law and order situation,

the meeting said a son of a rul-

ing MP was killed by the sup-

porters of the same party. This incident indicates to what extent the law and order situation has deteriorated. During the rule of Begum Zia, more than five lakh incidence of crimes like murder. dacoity, hijacking and terror-

Cattle markets

ism has occurred, a resolution

of the meeting said.

From Page 1 Gabtoli, in the city. 17 sacrificial animal markets were leased out by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). Sale of sacrificial animals will continue in these markets upto

the Eid-day, May 11, While visiting some of the cattle markets yesterday, this correspondent found that most of the small number of prospective buyers were walking around to have some idea about the price position. Talking to The Daily Star, a

coordinator of the Kamalapur-

Mugdapara cattle market, said

import of cows was much

higher this time than in the

previous years. The sale would

French President-elect Jacques Chirac (R) is mobbed by supporters upon his arrival at his campaign headquarters in Paris Sunday after he defeated Socialist leader Lionel Jaespin with around 52 per cent of the vote. Unemployment Chirac's main foe

PARIS. May 8: In a huge street party, supporters of conservative president-elect Jacques Chirac feted until the wee hours of today while leaders soberly pointed to the tough job ahead to fight high

unemployment, reports AP. Chirac, who three months ago looked headed toward a third presidential defeat, triumphed over Socialist Lionel Jospin by 52 per cent to 47 per cent Sunday night. It ended the left's 14-year hold on the presidency by Francois Mitterrand.

Already holding 80 per cent of Parliament, the conservative coalition consolidated its grip with Chirae's win and has three years before the next legislative elections. But union leaders have promised more strikes without quick action by Chirac to cut the 12.2 per cent

name: The struggle against unemployment," Chirac, the 62-year-old mayor of Paris and a former prime minister, said in his victory speech Sunday night. "I measure the difficulty of the task that awaits us."

"The Right has nearly all the power, which will give enormous responsibilities. said Socialist Laurent Fabius. and ex-prime minister and former presidential hopeful. Polls showed Jospin, a 57-

year-old former education minister, closed in on Chirac in the final days with calls for job programmes, a boost in the minimum wage and reduction of the work week to spread jobs around. But most voters decided against another Socialist pres-

promise to slash heavy social security taxes on businesses

idency, embracing Chirac's

first time the neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic controlled the presidency and dominated Parliament since 1974. Live on French TV, Chirac went to his campaign headquarters symbolically riding in a modern version of the long, low Citroen the late president Charles de Gaulle preferred.

- AFP/UNB photo

Meanwhile, revelers estimated in the hundreds of thousands filled the Place de la Condorde and the Champs Elysees, splashing in fountains, chanting, dancing and blowing horns. "Adieu to the Left" read Initial market reaction was

positive. Computerised trading at the Paris Bourse opened for two hours Sunday night and boosted the CAC40 index by 2 per cent. The franc gained against the German mark in Tokyo trading today, though it

could not use fertilizer in time

The total shortfall has been

for 1.611 MT.

UN condemns Serbs for killing 10 people

Idris, however, said that their business was going dull since the Railway authorities have this year allowed 'standing passengers in inter-city trains. Asked about this, the sta-

"We are releasing tickets beyond capacity on the requests of passengers who told us that they want to go home even by standing."

riod, he added.

some people outside are doing the job of refunding and reseiling. We can't check it." At the Sadarghat launch terminal the launches and steamers were seen sailing off

According to available information, some 1200 buses with a total capacity of nearly 56,000 passengers operate daily from the city's inter-district bus terminals - Gabtoli, Mahakhali and Sayedabad, the bus stand for luxury coaches at Fakirerpool and the Gulistan

Some 260 steamers and passengers, on a normal day.

of the transports carry passengers beyond their capacity, Besides, additional trips are

Pry teachers

From Page wing it from Thana Accounts

The division-wise prescribed banks include Agrani

Bank for Chittagong Division. cided that the teachers will

From Page 1

AFP Sunday that Iranians were "determined to protest," but would drop their plans if the rally threatened a confronta-An outlawed anti-US rally

that left 402 people dead, Reyshaori warned Friday

A delegate at the Iranian headquarters here said the rally would be held today if it did not take place on Saturday.

More than 100 Indonesian pilgrims have died, mainly of

Saudi press reports.

Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500094 (Direct), Fax No: began to slip back later in unemployment rate. and expand worker training. be gear up by tomorrow, he 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. "Our main battle has one . Chirac's victory marked the , Paris. hoped.