

# DOWN TO EARTH

## Incentives To Tourism In City

By A S M Nurunnabi

There was a time when the elite classes who had the time and money used to enjoy travelling. Things have since changed. The concept of tourism has now acquired a wide-ranging significance which exerts considerable socio-economic impact. In many countries, tourism has been accorded the status of an industry on account of its potentiality for earning foreign exchange. We are yet to attain the stage of development in this field already achieved by our neighbouring countries — India and Nepal. One reason perhaps is that we are late starters in this field.

Everybody will agree that our country offers a wide scope for promotion of tourism. It is a land of beauty and rich heritage. Even in the Dhaka city itself, there are many attractions in the glory of its oriental past and the pervasive beauty of nature lying in unbroken view of surrounding region. The tinging bells of innumerable oriental rickshaws offering a pollution-free mode of transportation, the exotic beauty of the old monuments testifying to the superb skill of the craftsmen and, colourful shops full of traditional handicrafts of wood, bamboo, straw, brass and copper are characteristic features of tourist attractions.

The Tourism Month of this year has been launched by the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation early this month. The Tourist handbook distributed by the Corporation gives full details of the places of tourist attraction in the city. The programme details of the Tourism Month embodying different shows and cultural functions appear to have been designed to attract prospective tourists from home and abroad.

In the eyes of the ob-

servers, however, tourism in our country is yet to achieve a people-oriented character. It is felt that for the development of tourism in the country, we need to bring our middle class people out of their homes by projecting our tourist spots and offering them attractive travel-cum-stay packages. Lately, we have observed a trend in this direction in some programmes adopted by the Parjatan Corporation. Under these programmes, the city dwellers are provided with opportunities for city sight seeing under guided tours at reasonable rates. These tours cover almost all the places of tourist attraction. Moreover, there are provisions for river cruises with short duration. The river cruises of longer duration which may be considered expensive by common people are tailored to attract foreign tourists.

It is felt by some tourist operators that if scope is created to introduce economy rates for tour tariffs, the city dwellers may be motivated to take more interest in visiting places of tourist attraction in greater numbers. Such a thing has reportedly happened in India where positive incentives are allowed to internal tourists.

More sight seeing is not considered enough for a tourist. To make every guided tour meaningful, the role of expert guides can hardly be exaggerated. In fact, they form an indispensable part of the tourist industry. The question of providing adequate security to the tourists during their visits is also very important. At the same time, there is need to build adequate infrastructure including road communication and hotel accommodation, etc.

Tourism in general in our country is greatly influenced by seasonal changes. Besides,

foreign tourists, even internal tourists choose winter as more favourable for their outings. Because of the comparatively high expenses, some sections of local people are not able to avail the various facilities provided by the Parjatan Corporation such as the Joy Restaurant at Savar, Waterfront Restaurant at Zia International Airport, Mary Anderson Floating Restaurant at Pagla VIP Jetty. These facilities for entertainment are mostly enjoyed by people of higher income groups and foreign tourists. Similarly, other facilities near the city and its suburbs provided by the Parjatan Corporation are mainly directed at foreign tourists and the rich people.

It is felt by observers that certain factors act as disincentives in the growth of tourism. Any instability or disorderly condition in our political and civic life adversely affects foreign tourism. Moreover, the proliferation of beggars, on the streets, shopping centres and other places frequented by foreign tourists projects a poor image of our country.

Since the contribution of tourism in earning foreign exchange, widening of scope for capital investment, alleviation of poverty, opening of new job opportunities is considerable, it behoves the authorities concerned to take all possible measures to attract larger number of tourists. In this respect, large scope exists for the private sector to play an important role, as in many other countries aiming at augmentation of their foreign exchange earning. There is a paramount need to take advantage of the fast growing opportunities for travel emerging all over the world so that the great potentialities of tourism in our country can be fully realised.

## First gold for Bangladesh

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bronze with 571 points.  
**Silver in Kabaddi**  
Bangladesh won the silver after convincingly beating the spirited Nepalese 29-15 in the kabaddi competition at the Nehru Park Sports Complex today.

Bangladesh trailed 6-11 in the first session.  
A 32-9 drubbing of Pakistan by India in the second match today confirmed the silver for Bangladesh.  
With a five-point deficit,

## Leaders

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preparing to launch a four-day mass communication programme across the country from December 26.  
BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder and senior minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Shamsul Islam Khan and Rafiqul Islam Miah were in their home districts yesterday.

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Matiuur Rahman Nizami and Abdul Kader Mollah were also out of the capital yesterday.  
Awami League sources said a good number of their leaders would be out of the capital from tomorrow, ahead of the four-day programme.

District level leaders have already been briefed on the programme, they said.  
Meanwhile, Opposition leaders indicated that the door for talks with the government is almost closed.  
"We shall not go for any negotiation with the BNP before it accepts our demands," Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman said when contacted last night.  
"We have given enough time to the BNP but in return they have done nothing," he added.

## COMDECA

From Page 1  
augured the meet.  
President Biswas highly appreciated participation of Bangladesh Scouts in various health related and welfare-oriented programmes. This camp, he said, would not only benefit the people but would also have a good impact on society by guiding the youths to live in an honest manner and work for development of the community.

He said among the projects taken up by Bangladesh Scouts, Bangladesh-Australia Child Health Project, Bangladesh-Korea joint Community Development Project and the Diarrhoea Prevention Project now under implementation in Khulna division deserve special mention. He also referred to the success of our Scouts in leprosy control and prevention project implemented with German assistance.

Mahbubuzzaman, President, Bangladesh Scouts, Manzurul Karim, Chief National Commissioner and Mohammad Fazlur Rahman also spoke.  
President Biswas distributed awards for meritorious services for community development activities on region basis.

Bangladesh boys in the second session gave the stubborn Nepalese no chance to out Bangladesh in trouble. V Yadav of the rival team scored only five points in a single raid before the breather.  
Bangladesh players kept cool and subdued their opponents displaying superiority in the game.

Bangladesh won four Ionas against Nepal's two in the encounter. Later on the day, India thrashed Pakistan 32-9 to win the gold.  
India led the first half 19-3. Omprakash and Bhashker of India displayed their skill and power in the game against the well-built Pakistanis. India won six Ionas in the match.

Pakistan was pushed to take the bronze in the event.

## White House to accept covert action plan against Iran

WASHINGTON, Dec 22: The White House has agreed to accept a covert action programme aimed at moderating Iran's Islamic regime which had been approved by the House of Representatives, the Washington Post said today, reports AFP.  
The 20-million-dollar covert, anti-Iranian programme passed by the House Thursday has a modified version of an original programme intended to overthrow the Tehran government, which was steadfastly opposed by Clinton and the Senate.

The bill was pushed through at the insistence of House speaker Newt Gingrich, who has described Iran as "the most dangerous country in the world."

## Diana

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cause Princess Di is spending her first Christmas away from the royal family since marrying Prince Charles in 1981.  
"Name your price," said Burt Reavley, a photo editor at The Daily Star in London.  
The princess was in London on Thursday, and there was no word from palace officials on whether she was planning to travel abroad for vacation.

The word in Vail is that the princess may arrive in the coming days.  
"I think she's fallen in love with the Rockies because she took the boys back to Colorado last summer for an adventure holiday," said Neil Syson, a reporter with The Sun in London. "Charles is taking the boys skiing in Switzerland after Christmas, so it would be unlikely she would turn up there."

Gary Morgan, a reporter with Splash News, a Los Angeles-based press service that tracks celebrities for London's press, said the princess might vacation elsewhere.  
"There's no shortage of people offering her a place to stay," Morgan said. "I personally think there's less chance she'd go to Vail because she was there last Christmas."

## BNP continues

From Page 1  
to have dialogue with the smaller opposition parties on their participation in the polls, two influential ministers, talked to a Gano Forum leader and a leader of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the last few days.  
The move was taken in the face of threats by the three major opposition parties — the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — to boycott and resist the ensuing parliamentary polls if it is not held under a caretaker government.

The efforts to bring the eight-party LDF, Gano Forum and other smaller parties in the elections would continue in line with the party plan go by constitutional provisions as regards the polls schedule, BNP sources indicated.

In a related development, the BNP seems to have hardened its stand on the caretaker government issue and is not likely to concede to the Opposition demand that a neutral person head such a government.

## Couple held for running after Biswas' motorcade

From Our Correspondent  
Barisal Dec 22: A couple was arrested while running after the motorcade of President Abdur Rahman Biswas here today.  
Witnesses said Abdur Rab (52) and his wife Parveen (47) wanted to meet the President to tell him about their distress.  
President Biswas was on way to Barguna to attend the closing ceremony of the COMDECA at Barguna.

# The Midnight File

## German soldiers head for Bosnia

COLOGNE, Dec 22: German soldiers headed to the Balkans today to support the NATO peace force for Bosnia, launching Germany's biggest military mission abroad since World War II, reports AP.

## Crackdown on Peshawar blast

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ripped through Saddar Bazar, a major shopping centre in the city. Many of the injured were said to be in serious condition.  
The dead included the daughter, granddaughter, grandson and chauffeur of Khurshid Ali Khan, the Provincial Governor. Peshawar's Commissioner Gulzar Khan said.  
**Plane**  
From Page 1  
controllers. The six members of the AN-26 transport plane had been taken into custody and the plane impounded, he said.  
Munde said the plane was spotted in the air space over Bombay shortly after midnight and directed to land.  
**Beaten to death**  
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Police took him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment. Hospital sources said that police on suspicion started chasing Kashem and his three accomplices from Panthapath at about 5:30am. Police fired on them when the gang hurled crackers at police to escape arrest.  
A case has been filed with Tejgaon thana.

## Toll collection tactics

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of revenue for them, according to residents of the localities.

Through organised networks, these people are carrying out the business all over the city, said a police official, adding that they are protected by a section of influential local people.

"These people, for their business interests and status in the society harbour these extortionists, most of whom are local youths," the police official added.  
"The system of collecting illegal toll has changed. Earlier, they used to take in kind but now, besides taking goods on credit, they are also demanding cash in the name of security of the business," said a middle aged shopkeeper at Adabar.

"I polish at least eight pairs of shoes almost everyday without being paid a single paisa," said a roadside cobbler, otherwise, he feared, he would have lost the place where he works.  
It was roughly estimated that in Adabar area at least Tk 1,42,000 was collected as toll every month. A dwelling house has to pay Tk 50, a pharmacy or clinic Tk 100 to 500, a shop Tk 90 to 150, any auto-rickshaw passing through a particular street Tk 2 to 3, a garments factory Tk 5000 and above.  
Money is collected also in the name of mazars, said a resident of Mohammadpur. Every now and then some people enter houses and want money for this and that at the mazars, he added.  
"One does not mind contributing an amount for religious functions but a people is taking advantage of this sentiment, using it as a toll for extortion," said a resident of Shyamoli.

## Dhaka Book Fair from Jan 1

By Staff Correspondent

The second Dhaka Book Fair '96 will begin from January 1 at the ground adjacent to the Bijoy Smarani in the city under the aegis of the National Book Centre (NBC).  
Some 120 publishing houses from home and abroad are likely to take part in the fortnight-long fair synchronizing the National Book Day and the Book Week. Most of the foreign publishing houses will participate in the fair through their local agents. A number of institutions from Saudi Arabia, Iran, India and the British Council will take part directly.  
Besides cultural programmes, there will be discussions on books everyday during the fair, says an NBC press release.

President Biswas distributed awards for meritorious services for community development activities on region basis.

# 400 garments units

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come to 2.40 dollars, cost of production stands at 4.5 dollars, totalling 6.90 dollars. This results in an estimated loss of 0.90 dollars per dozen.

Entrepreneurs point out that input costs on bank, insurance, transportation and C&F heads have jumped up over the last couple of years.  
"Instead of the present eight to nine per cent, we could contain these costs within five per cent," said Engineer MA Taher, former Vice President of BGMEA and owner of Fortuna Group. "This means we now have to sustain at least three per cent cost increase on these accounts alone."  
Moreover, the entrepreneurs have to pay to the shipping lines and additional 200 dollars per container as congestion surcharge both for import of fabrics and accessories and export of RMG.

Another extra burden is the Cubic Metre Charge (CBM) payable to shipping lines which is now Tk 170 per CBM. Earlier, in most cases we were exempted from this charge," said Taher.  
"Some of the shipping companies used to charge it at the rate of Tk 60 per CBM. For low cost apparels, this amount makes a big impact on cost."  
But these costs get even higher if manufacturers face any short-shipment and have to send by air their apparels to meet the deadline. Hartsals and congestions are the two main obstacles that they have to fight off continuously to avoid cost escalation.

"If we are to send one dozen of item by air, this eats up our profits made on five dozens," said Anisul Huq. "Such incidents are now very frequent in the country."  
Meanwhile, a stiff competition among the RMG units has resulted in massive undercutting of CM charge, Huq said.  
Col (ret'd) Anwarul Azim, Chairman, Al Anna Group owning more than half a dozen RMG units, said "We now retain 14 dollars as CM charge on items which used to yield 18 US dollars previously. This is because of increased fabric prices while market prices of apparels remained unchanged. In many cases, prices of apparels even dropped."

Fabric prices have registered a sharp rise over the last year due to a fall in cotton output in major producing countries.  
Moreover, natural wage increase has also contributed to the rise in production cost by seven to eight per cent, said Azim, an executive committee member of BGMEA.  
The dampened RMG market has aggravated the situation to some extent this year, entrepreneurs observed.  
"Category 347/348 item priced at 84.57 dollars at 1996 rate was 1.75 dollars higher last year," Taher said. "Most other items also show either slide or stagnation in price. This has eroded our profit drastically."  
Garments manufacturers are now suggesting a devaluation of Taka against dollar to recoup their profitability and to avoid cost escalation.

RMG industries are dependent on imported fabrics and accessories, protected through back to back LCs and profiting on the CM charge by taking advantage of low cost of production.  
Over the years, Taka has remained strong against dollars while the neighbouring countries have made downward adjustments which allowed them to gain comparative advantage in an extremely competitive market, experts say.

In normal case, devaluation makes import costlier, which in turn increases the cost of production in an industry heavily dependent on imported raw materials.  
"But we are protected through back to back LCs in a situation where we do not have to convert Taka into dollar for imports. Thus devaluation will not increase the cost of production. Rather, if Taka is devalued against dollar, it will provide additional money against CM margin which the entrepreneurs retain," said Taher.  
"As CM charges are paid in Taka, the additional money will enable the entrepreneurs to meet the production cost. In favourable situation, the RMG units can again make profit, which in most cases are now incurring losses" added Taher.

"If overall devaluation is not possible, at least sectoral devaluation should be an alternative solution," said Anisul Huq.  
"To save us, the government should even consider special subsidy," Azim maintained.

## Election Commission Secretariat Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka

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# NOTICE

With the authority provided under Clause A of Public Representation Order 1972, the Election Commission has formed the "Electoral Enquiry Committee" consisting of the undermentioned official of the judiciary for investigating pre-election irregularities.

District	Name & designation of officer	District	Name & designation of officer
1	2	1	2
Dhaka	Md Mahabubur Rahman, Sub Judge	Rajshahi	Badsha Alamgir, Sub Judge
Gazipur	Humayun Kabir, Senior Asstt. Judge	Nawabganj	Shahidul Islam Azmi, Senior Asstt. Judge
Narayanganj	Sheikh Jahangir Hossain, Sub Judge	Natore	Motazidur Rahman, Sub Judge
Narsingdi	Md Abu Taleb, Senior Asstt. Judge	Naogaon	Satendra Nath Roy, Senior Asstt. Judge
Manikganj	Md Shamsul Haq, Sub Judge	Bogra	Md Abdul Majid, Sub Judge
Munshiganj	Md Mosharrar Hossain, Senior Asstt. Judge	Jalpaiguri	Abu Sayed Joarder, Senior Asstt. Judge
Tangail	Shamim Md Alzal, Sub Judge	Patna	Md Abdul Hamid, Sub Judge
Mymensingh	K. M. Shamsul Alam, Senior Asstt. Judge	Sirajganj	Abu Mansur Alam, Asstt. Judge
Netrakona	K. M. Zahir, Sub Judge	Rangpur	Enayet Fazlur Rashid, Sub Judge
Jamalpur	Kazi Golam Sarwar, Senior Asstt. Judge	Gaibandha	Ratneswar Bhattacharia, Asstt. Judge
Kishoreganj	Md Shajahan, Sub Judge	Barisal	Syed Aminul Islam, Sub Judge
Sherpur	Arefur Rahman, Senior Asstt. Judge	Dinajpur	A F M Mahabubul Haq, Senior Asstt. Judge
Rajbari	Md Mafizul Islam, Sub Judge	Chittagong	A K M Jufkar Ali, Sub Judge
Faridpur	Md Arifur Rahman, Senior Asstt. Judge	Thakurgaon	A Razzak Mia, Senior Asstt. Judge
Madaripur	Khan Md Abdul Mannan, Sub Judge	Panchagarh	A K M Shamsul Islam, Sub Judge
Gopalganj	Md Ataur Rahman, Senior Asstt. Judge	Khulna	Sheikh Jalaluddin, Senior Asstt. Judge
Shariatpur	Md Abdur Momen, Sub Judge	Bagerhat	G M Salauddin, Asstt. Judge
Sylhet	Md Ferdous Ahmed, Senior Asstt. Judge	Lalmonirhat	Nazrul Islam, Senior Asstt. Judge
Habiganj	Abul Hosen Bepari, Sub Judge	Dinajpur	Azfar Hossain, Sub Judge
Moulvibazar	Mahabubul Alam, Senior Asstt. Judge	Jessore	Shamsul Huda, Senior Asstt. Judge
Sunamganj	A K M Mostafa Dewan, Sub Judge	Narail	Md Shahinur Islam, Sub Judge
Noakhali	Md Shahinur, Senior Asstt. Judge	Magura	Md Motahar Hossain, Senior Asstt. Judge
Laxmipur	A H M Mostaq Ahmed, Sub Judge	Jheridaha	Md S M Abdur Rouf, Sub Judge
Feni	Nuruzzaman, Senior Asstt. Judge	Kushtia	S M Mostafizur Rahman, Senior Asstt. Judge
Comilla	Harun-Al-Rashid Mazumdar, Sub Judge	Chuadanga	Israel Hossain, Sub Judge
Chandpur	Md Sayadur Rahman Khan, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	Luffar Rahman, Senior Asstt. Judge
Brahmanbaria	Md Ashraf Hossain, Sub Judge	Jhalakati	Anwarul Haq, Sub Judge
Chittagong	Md Sadik Golam Sarwar, Senior Asstt. Judge	Bhola	Mosharaf Hossain, Asstt. Judge
Cox's Bazar	Rashedul Hasan Patwari, Sub Judge	Pirojpur	Nimal Kanti Chowdhuri, Sub Judge
Bandarban	Mainuddin Islam, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barguna	Md Mahiuddin, Senior Asstt. Judge
Rangamati	Biplab Goshwami, Sub Judge	Barisal	Mazbur Rahman, Sub Judge
Khagrachhari	Helaluddin, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	Md Belayet Ullah, Senior Asstt. Judge
	Narendra Chandra Das, Sub Judge	Barisal	Md Idris Alam, Sub Judge
	Shawkat Ali Chowdhuri, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	Masudur Rahman, Senior Asstt. Judge
	Nazrul Islam, Sub Judge	Barisal	MD Noor Mohammad Morot, Sub Judge
	Syed Aminul Haq, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	Ilyar Ali Mir, Senior Asstt. Judge
	Md Fazur Rahman, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	A B M Nizamul Haq, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
	Md Yasin, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	Reza Tarik Ahmed, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
	Kader Newaz, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	Abu Sufian, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
	Jahangir Alam Molla, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	A Rashid, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
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	Giasuddin Ahmed, Sub Judge	Barisal	
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	Md Nurul Huda, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	Maimul Kabir, Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
	A B M Sazedur Rahman, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	Shafiqul Islam, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
	Md Asgar Ali, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	Mahabubul Kabir, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
	Dewan Ali Reza, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	Hosne Ara Akhtar, Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
	Md Farid Ahmed Shibli, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	La Mong, Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
	Hasan Shahid Ferdous, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	Rustam Ali, Asstt. Judge	Barisal	
	Latif Ahmed Khan, Sub Judge	Barisal	
	Rezaul Kabir, Senior Asstt. Judge	Barisal	

The Electoral Enquiry Committee will investigate any pre-election irregularities on the basis of complaint received or on its own initiative and submit its report on the same to the Election Commission. The Election Commission will take legal action against the accused person or persons on the basis of the investigation report of the Electoral Enquiry Committee. General public are invited to submit their complaint to the Electoral Enquiry Committee about any irregularity they happen to find in the ensuing National Assembly Elections.  
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Md Irshadul Haq  
Secretary

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