

# 'Good governance needed to fight urban poverty'

By Staff Correspondent

More people-oriented research on urban poverty was emphasised at a seminar yesterday on "Urban Governance in the Developing World."

The seminar was jointly organised by the Global Urban Research Initiative (GURI) and the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), Dhaka.

Within the next 15 years over half the world's population will be living in urban areas. Developing countries in particular are experiencing the fastest growth of large cities and mega cities, speakers at the seminar said.

Rapid urbanisation results in high incidences of poverty, environmental problems and social unrest, said Professor Nazrul Islam, Director of CUS and Coordinator for the Asian Region of GURI, in his introductory presentation. He stressed the importance of good governance as essential to urban growth and development.

"Relations between civil society and the state, the

governors and the governed in the context of urban growth and poverty is essential for the improvement and development of cities," stated David Chiel, Representative of the Ford Foundation in Dhaka. He went on to add that although the urban poor play a critical role in the country's economy, their needs and wants are largely ignored.

Dr Humaira Islam, Executive Director of the Shakti Foundation, also called for a focus on human factors and relationships as an essential element of urban governance and suggested more research action oriented programmes in order to generate more realistic and useful data relating to urban governance.

The seminar was attended by representatives of the government, NGOs, donor agencies, international organisations, academic and research institutions and the private sector.

## Move to enhance direct trade Asia-Europe summit in Bangkok Mar 1-2

BANGKOK, Jan 11: The first-ever summit of 25 nations from Asia and Europe, to be held in Bangkok March 1-2, will focus on enhancing direct trade and investment in Asia. Thai officials said today, reports AFP.

Foreign Ministry Deputy Permanent Secretary Saroj Chavanaviraj told reporters that talks were intended to be "free-flowing" and to touch on politics and cultural concerns as well as economics.

"Leaders may raise any topic during the summit," he said, but participants have "agreed to give the priority to supporting trade and investment."

Thai officials described European investment in Asia as negligible. "Only one per cent of external European direct investment was invested in the Asian region during 1982-1992," Saroj said.

Asia-Europe trade in 1992, the last year for which complete figures were available, amounted to 238 billion US dollars, or around 19.8 per cent of total European trade and a level similar to Europe's trade with the United States, Canada and Mexico, the officials said.

The officials acknowledged that differences could emerge over human rights and democratisation when the talks turn political, but Saroj was optimistic that no country would be singled out for direct criticism.

Participants would not "sidestep" problem areas, he

said, but would hold "straightforward" talks.

Regional security and nuclear non-proliferation, including the issue of nuclear testing, are expected to be on the informal agenda as well, the officials indicated.

France plans to complete a controversial series of nuclear tests in the South Pacific before the summit.

Process on to recruit 20000 workers for Malaysia

Malaysia is recruiting workers from Bangladesh on priority basis. Labour and Manpower Minister Mir Shawkat Ali said in Dhaka yesterday.

The minister told UNB that the process of recruiting 20,000 workers from Bangladesh for Malaysia had already begun.

Malaysia, where at present 170,000 Bangladeshis are legally employed in various public and private establishments, had agreed to take further 20,000 workers from Bangladesh.

The agreement was reached during Mir Shawkat Ali's recent visit to Kuala Lumpur.

About press reports that a large number of Bangladeshis have been detained in camps in Malaysia, the minister said the authorities concerned are taking care of the inmates of the camps

## Mahathir's call to build new Asia

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Jan 11: Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said today that Asians must unite and build a new Asia, but warned they would face opposition from the Western news media, reports AP.

Speaking at a forum on the future of Asia, Mahathir said, "This new Asia must continue to be an achieving Asia, a continent of progress, bringing massive and comprehensive development to all Asians."

"We should come together, not to confront others, not to form a trade bloc, not to be obsequious and arrogant," he told more than 100 delegates from 10 nations.

Mahathir, a strong critic

of the West and the Western media, said the Asian Renaissance would face opposition from "the tyranny of the Western controlled international news media."

The rebirth of Asia was not going to be easy, but it can be achieved with hard work, he told the forum organised by the Malaysian government backed Institute of Strategic and International Studies.

Mahathir said Asian nations must assert their democratic rights to be equal.

"We must point out that it is undemocratic of others to stop us from forming a talking shop like the East Asia Economic Caucus when they themselves are forming protectionist blocs," Mahathir said.

## Fresh CU exams schedule

CHITTAGONG, Jan 11: The University of Chittagong has refixed the dates of some of the examinations of the different academic years due to unavoidable reasons, a university press release said last night, reports BSS.

According to a fresh schedule, terminal examination (session 1991-92) of the Department of English will now be held on February 7.

The press release further said that the viva-voce examination of the MSS (Preliminary) in the Department of Sociology for the year 1993 will now be held on Jan 20 instead of Jan 15.

The examination of M A (Preliminary) for the year 1993 of the Department of Oriental Languages has now been postponed. A fresh date of the same would be announced later on, the press release added.

## ML team meets President

A delegation from the Bangladesh Muslim League (ML) called on President Abdul Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday and handed over a memorandum to him, reports UNB.

The delegation, headed by party president Alhaj Abdul Kader, discussed with the President the latest political situation in the country, said a party press release.

During the meeting, party secretary general Muhammad Avenuddin said the solution of the present political crisis lies only in resignation of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and appointment of a neutral non-partisan premier.

He hoped that the President would play an important role in restoring atmosphere of stability and mutual understanding among parties.



Newly-elected Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto bows to members of the lower house at the national Diet following his getting majority votes yesterday.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Hasina at BCL rally Illiteracy main obstacle to alleviating poverty

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday advised the Chhatra League activists to devote themselves to their studies first and to help remove illiteracy on the side.

Sheikh Hasina was addressing a rally of the Bangladesh Chhatra League at the Ramna Batomul yesterday afternoon organised to mark its 48th founding anniversary.

Identifying illiteracy as the number one obstacles to alleviating poverty, Hasina said, "If we are voted to power, we will try to eradicate illiteracy within 10 years. The student community would play a vital role in this regard, she added."

The AL chief said that her party wants terrorism-free educational institutions and alleged that the ruling BNP has not taken any effective

step to make the campus violence-free.

Hasina said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formed the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission to establish a people-oriented, secular education system, according to UNB.

But, she said, the Commission report could not be introduced after the killing of Bangabandhu. She demanded introduction of a national education policy based on the report of Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission.

Turning back to politics the Awami League chief said during its five-year rule BNP had destroyed the democracy, snatched people's voting right and grabbed their property.

She alleged the Prime Minister betrayed with the joint declaration of the three alliances. She (PM) neither scrapped the Indemnity Ordinance, nor gave the inde-

pendence of the judiciary and autonomy of the state-owned media, said the former Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

About the arms recovery drive Hasina said it was not possible to maintain neutrality during illegal arms recovery under a party government.

She alleged her party activists were being harassed in the name of arms recovery and demanded arms drive after the formation of caretaker government to ensure neutrality and effectiveness.

BCL president Enamul Huq Shannan presided the rally, conducted by its general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna. Central Awami League leaders were present.

Earlier, the Chhatra League activists brought out a colourful rally in the city chanting anti-government slogans.

## Mitterrand buried

JARNAC, France, Jan 11: Former President Francois Mitterrand was buried in his home town in south-western France today, in a ceremony blending the nation's tribute with the private grief of his family and friends, reports Reuters.

Under drizzly skies, the three women in Mitterrand's life — his widow Danielle, his companion Anne Pingeot and their daughter Mazarine — led mourners through the tranquil town of Jarnac, which owes its wealth to the local brandy trade.

As a military band struck up chopin's funeral march in the main square, a gust of wind suddenly blew the tricolour flag off Mitterrand's coffin of polished wood. Danielle stepped forward to put it back in place with the help of officers.

Alongside her stood her two sons, and close by Pingeot holding 21-year-old Mazarine tightly. It was the first, and probably last, public appearance by Mitterrand's companion, who wore a black hat and veil, and her student, daughter.

The Fifth Republic was first to pay tribute to the socialist president, who died of cancer aged 79 on Monday, with an honour guard of the armed forces in the square. Officer cadets served as pallbearers after a military plane flew his body from Paris.

In accordance with Mitterrand's last wishes, the flag was then removed from the coffin and the last bodyguards to serve him carried it down a narrow alley to the Roman Catholic church.



French military academy students yesterday carrying the coffin of former president Francois Mitterrand, who died January 8 at the age of 79. The body was taken from his Paris home to the Villacoublay military base outside Paris, where it was flown to the Southwestern city of Cognac for burial.

— AFP/UNB photo

## Privatisation of NCBs

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A 10-member working group, with an executive director of the Bangladesh Bank as its chairman, was given responsibilities to prepare and then implement the plan for privatisation of Rupali Bank. The working group was also asked to prepare an outline for the privatisation of two other NCBs in the following years.

The auditors, already appointed, will compute the net worth and arrive at the capital adequacy in the light of both the previous method of asset-based adequacy system and the newly introduced risk-based system capital adequacy system.

A financial advisor will be appointed soon to oversee the privatisation process, ministry sources said.

According to the World Bank's suggestion, the financial advisor will analyse the specifics of the bank including organisational, financial and physical restructuring, and technology, access to markets and training.

He will also decide on the appropriate strategy for the sale, — whether to sell it to a

strategic investor or to off-load it through the stock market.

Until the privatisation is completed, the government will continue the ongoing loan recovery efforts," the official said without elaborating.

After revaluation of its assets, a recapitalisation programme to meet the capital adequacy requirement will be undertaken.

Meanwhile, a WB aid memoir on the FSDP has placed importance on the Rupali Bank's privatisation since "the government lacks the experience to value enterprises and the past experience of de-nationalisation of Pubali and Uttara fails to inspire confidence."

About Janata and Agrani, the government has not yet decided whether to divest these two banks partially or fully. But they may be sold through the stock market offering up to 49 per cent of their paid-up capital for public subscription.

This will be done in two phases with corresponding private sector representation in the Board of Directors and Management," said a government position paper on the issue.

A programme will also be initiated to improve the quality of new loans and strategic directions will be given for lending during the interim period.

"The Bank Nationalisation Order will also be reviewed and, if necessary, will be amended to facilitate converting the banks into public companies," said a ministry source.

About manpower adjustment, the working group will review the current manpower levels and recommend redundancy plan. It will also prepare a programme for early retirement and retraining for redundant bank staff. The manpower adjustment programme is expected to go into operation from July 1996.

Janata has 896 branches including four overseas with a paid-up capital of Taka 259.4 crore. It earned a profit of Taka 1.07 crore and has 17950 officials and employees on its payroll.

Agrani, having 902 branches, made a profit of Taka 3.6 crore in 1994. Its paid-up capital is Taka 248.4 crore and it has 13870 employees and officials.

## Benazir asks army to remain alert against India

ISLAMABAD, Jan 11: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto told the country's armed forces today to maintain a high level of preparedness against India's "imperial" ambitions, reports AFP.

Bhutto lashed out against India in a speech at a dinner she hosted to bid farewell to retiring army chief general Abdul Waheed who is handing over the command of the 500,000-strong force to General Jehangir Karamat.

The present global transition "has been opportunistically seized by some regional actors to reassert their own ambitions and their own agenda for expansionism and hegemony," she said, according to the official text.

At a time when most of the world was discussing armed limitations and reduction in conventional forces "our neighbour proceeded with one of the world's greatest rearmament programmes," she added.

## Opposition yet to respond to talks offer, says Shamsul

The opposition leaders have not yet responded to the government's offer for sitting across the negotiating table for resolving the issue regarding participation of all parties in the coming parliamentary elections. Information and Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam said here yesterday.

When asked by BSS to comment on the outcome of the government's efforts to bring the opposition to the coming elections, the minister said that BNP Secretary General Barister Abdus Salam Talukdar and he himself had talked to the Awami League leaders Sunday over telephone inviting them to come to the negotiating table. Three days have passed since then, but we are yet to receive any reply from them (Opposition), he said.

Replying to a question whether the government was considering any further efforts to bring the opposition to the elections, Shamsul Islam said: "We have given enough concession to the Opposition. Now it is up to the Opposition to come to the negotiating table to discuss the problems."

Meanwhile, according to press reports, ruling party negotiators have proposed an advisory council headed by the President with all executive powers in his (President) hand.

But the Opposition side reportedly opposed the proposal and said the proposed advisory council must be headed by a chief advisor who will exercise executive powers.

## BNP may agree

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the latter signed an accord to go by the opinion of the court.

Otherwise, he viewed, exchange of written proposals on the formation of the proposed advisory council to oversee the coming elections and further deferring the polls date would not result in any solution.

When asked, a BNP negotiator expressed his dissatisfaction saying talks with the Opposition were held taking each other into confidence and no written documents were asked for. He, however, suggested to wait for his party's formal stand on the issue.

On the other hand, the Opposition is unwilling to go for further negotiation unless a specific written proposal from the BNP is received and authorised by the Prime Minister.

## SC sets deadline for decision on Kashmir polls

NEW DELHI, Jan 11: The Supreme Court set a two-week deadline Thursday for a final decision on whether elections can be held in Kashmir, where Muslim separatists are waging a guerilla war, reports AP.

The court instructed the federal government and the Election Commission to thrash out their dispute, or else the court itself would decide which one has the authority, news agencies said.

## One killed in Barisal fire

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 11: One person was burned alive and property worth about Tk 30 lakh were gutted in a devastating fire at Patarhat bandar midnight last night.

According to the TNO of Mehendiganj, the fire originated from a tea stall near Rajlaxmi Cinema Hall in the bandar area and suddenly engulfed at least eleven shops.

One Jamal, 10, of the tea stall died and 10 others were injured seriously in the incident, sources said.

## The Midnight File

### Gaddafi urges Iraqis to attack Jordan

BAGHDAD, Jan 11: Iraq's state-run newspapers published today a speech made by Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in which he urged Iraqis to take up arms and attack Jordan. Baghdad newspapers carried Gaddafi's call to arms on their front pages, quoting the Libyan Colonel as saying Jordan had turned itself into a "nest" where a conspiracy against Iraq was being hatched, reports Reuters.

## Syria ready to speed up peace talks with Israel

DAMASCUS, Jan 11: Syria said Wednesday that it was ready to accelerate peace negotiations with Israel, reports AP.

The comments in several state-run Damascus dailies were published as US Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in the region on his latest peace shuttle.

The unusually upbeat tone of the editorials, reflecting the government position, clearly signalled Syrian expectations of progress.

"Christopher will find that Syria is always ready to step up the pace of negotiations, to waste no more time and to use all available chances to achieve a just and comprehensive peace," the Tishrin daily noted.

Christopher flew into Israel on Wednesday and was scheduled to meet with Syrian President Hafez Assad in Syria on Friday.

Tishrin said Christopher's mission, his 15th since the US-sponsored peace process began in October 1991, comes amid "a better and more upbeat climate, a matter which underscores the need for capitalizing on the current positive climate to achieve progress and to eliminate all obstacles on the road to peace."

Christopher said Tuesday that Syria and Israel were ready to make the tradeoffs needed for a settlement and urged them to speed up their talks.

Syria and Israel resumed

## 6 arrested

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Three of the arrested — identified as Chunnun Miah, 55, Iman Ali 50, and Zafar, 35 — were taken on two-day police remand. They were held early yesterday and produced before the chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court, police said.

The three other arrested are Kalu, 35, Pintu, 32, and Mizan, 37. Police were interrogating them till last night, sources added.

Meanwhile, police suspected that a terrorist group in the area went to the building for extortion and they started indiscriminate firing when locals resisted them. The building houses few trading places, police said.

## One killed

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the back door. The attack was a sequel to previous enemy, sources said.

Police rushed to the spot and arrested about eight persons. However, the gunmen fled the scene by the same vehicle.

The incident sparked off tension in the entire area.

When contacted, Double Morning police said a case was registered in this connection.

## GDP growth

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The American Bangladesh Economic Forum (ABEF) and the US Embassy in Dhaka have jointly organised the trade show, the fifth such annual display of American products and services in Bangladesh.

ABEF president Forrest E Cookson, vice president Nurul Islam and US Embassy officials were also present at the inaugural session.

The first session of the trade show from 10 am to 5 pm was open to exclusively for businessmen. It was opened to the general public from 5 pm to 8 pm. A large number of people visited the trade show on the first day.

The organisers said they have to introduce an admission charge of Tk 10 per person this year to keep the rush of the people under control.

Talking to The Daily Star many exhibitors at the show said they were getting good response from the visitors.

The US firms participating in this year's show include American Life Insurance Co, IBM, Procter & Gamble, Motorola, American Airlines, Dell, Microsoft, Wang, Kelvintor, Cargill, Citibank and Federal Express.

Some 16 top-ranking American business executives will also be visiting Dhaka during the three-day trade show for a closer appraisal of business and investment opportunities in Bangladesh.

ABEF President Forrest E Cookson rated the Bangladesh market as a fast growing one and said the US investors and entrepreneurs are interested to participate in this market.

The United States imported nearly 1.1 billion US dollars worth of goods from Bangladesh in 1994 against its exports of 233 million dollars.

The trade show will remain open to visitors from 10 am to 8 pm everyday till Saturday.

## HSC candidates boycott test examinations

JHALAKATHI, Jan 11: Jhalakathi Women's College students boycotted their test examinations on Wednesday for the coming Higher Secondary Certificate examinations, protesting the setting-up of the same questions for the four Education Boards, reports UNB.

In support of their demand, the students of the college also brought out a procession on the campus. Meanwhile, the Jhalakathi Government College students have been boycotting their test examinations.

The agitating students have been demanding separate question papers for each board as before.

## Advice to submit Haj form by Jan 25

Persons intending to perform haj during 1996 under government management have been advised to deposit a total of Taka 62,815 with the same bank where they have already deposited or plans to deposit the house rent money, reports BSS.

The last date for submitting house rent amounting Taka 16,000 has been extended to January 15, an official handout said yesterday.

The haj pilgrims have been further advised to fill up the haj form positively by January 25 and submit the same to the office of the concerned deputy commissioner on the same date. No haj form will be accepted after that date, it said.

The deputy commissioner's office will then send the haj forms with the list of valid haj applications to the haj office at 37, Nowab Katra (Nimtah), Dhaka within January 30 by special messenger for necessary actions.

## 1 killed, 25 hurt in Perojpur

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Jan 11: One person was killed and at least 25 were injured, two of them seriously, in a clash between two groups of people over a land dispute in Mathbaria of Perojpur district yesterday noon.

Witnesses said, supporters of Nabi Hossain and Manazuddin of Mathbaria — who were in conflict over a land — locked in a clash yesterday noon in front of the house of one Abdul Mannan.

Abdul Mannan tried to control the situation but at one stage he was hit by lethal weapon. Later he was sent to Mathbaria thana health complex where he succumbed to his injuries.

Seriously injured Sagor, 30, and Awal, 25, were admitted to Mathbaria hospital.

## Zhirinovsky

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the congress: "I am addressing you, the Russian president. If you do not destroy all the fighters within a month, if you do not burn their bases, wherever they are, burn them with napalm... you Boris Nikolayevich will lose the election on June 16 and I will do it on July 1."

Speaking as a group of Chechen rebels held dozens of hostages in a convoy of buses at a village in southern Russia, Zhirinovsky was loudly applauded.

## Street march

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the BNP and the latest offer from the ruling party. Rono, however, said that the meeting was of a very informal nature.

Opposition leaders yesterday expressed dismay over a statement from the ruling party on the Opposition's demand for a written proposal for dialogue.

A statement from the Awami League said that the Opposition was astonished at the Information Minister's comment on Wednesday, where he termed the proposal as "insulting."

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