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Down to Earth

Conservation of Historical Relics

By ASM Nurunnabi

A recent report in The Daily Star stated that Chhoto Katra and Boro Katra, two famous remains of the Mughal rule in the city, face extinction as they are yet to be protected officially as historical sites. It can hardly be overemphasised that preservation of past culture is important to nourish a sense of identity, national pride and self-esteem. There is, therefore, an overwhelming need for creating a general consciousness among the people for participation in conservation activities relating to the past heritage.

Those who have made studies in this regard sadly note that we have so far failed to adopt a comprehensive programme to conserve old important marks as a whole of the capital city of Dhaka. According to one researcher, Dhaka's spectacular expansion in area and population since 1947 had been the appropriate time to conserve the old plan of the city in the new one, with its architectural and cultural wealth. It was remarked that this could have easily been done with some restrictions in the old area only, with little obstruction in modern planning. Since this was not done and since things have progressed far, their is little left now to conserve.

According to a research study, 259 sites and monuments now stand in the country as protected monuments and the Department of Archaeology is entrusted with the task of looking after them by carrying out necessary repairs and restorations. It is reported that simultaneously with the works of preservation, conservation and restoration of the enlisted

monuments, the Department of Archaeology continues to add more and more monuments to the protection list. The addition of new monuments is definitely a positive step forward. It, however, needs to be supported with the provision of adequate funds and urgent acquisition of such old property, were necessary. It needs no emphasis that all buildings, old or new, need maintenance. The need of the older buildings is obviously greater.

Experts stress that monuments for effective preservation need careful maintenance not only of their structural remains but also of their original environment, but sadly enough, though the Antiquity Act of 1968 prohibits construction on or near a monument, we find much of the original surroundings of our monuments had disappeared long ago and there has been a lot of additional constructions even on the monuments and within the premises as well as outside.

It is understood that, besides Chhoto Katra and Boro Katra, mentioned in the newspaper report, there are other monuments in the Dhaka city, proposed for inclusion in the protection list after careful field investigation, studies and research. These include North Brooke Hall, Ruplal House, Rose Garden, Sutarapur Zamindar Bari, Shankha Nidhi Bhaban, Radha Krishna Mandir and Bhaja Hari Lodge. The problem in this case is reportedly that the ownership of all these monuments in most cases has not been transferred to the Department of Archaeology.

In this context, it has been

suggested that we may consider adoption of suitable laws and regulations entrusting our local bodies with responsibility to enlist and preserve the monuments of local importance and let the government concentrate more on the monuments of national importance. In this connection, it has also been suggested that efforts should also be made to attract and receive international cooperation and support in the light of a universal perspective implying the conservation of culture for the nation as well as for the world community at large.

It may be noted that some years back, the Department of Architecture, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) formulated a project for a conservation study entitled the 'Conservation and study of Dhaka City - its historical Buildings'. The study financed by the Ford Foundation with a three-year project period, was aimed at identifying, selecting and documenting significant buildings of old Dhaka.

It may not be out of place to point out that due to a restrictive policy based on legislation introduced a century ago, a building must be 100 years old to be designated as historic property. As a result, a significant portion of the country's architectural heritage remains outside the scope of architectural conservation. To emphasise the importance of conservation and restoration of old monuments of Dhaka, it has been observed by scholars that a nation's glory cannot be built on the self-destroyed debris of the past.

The Daily Star

Release BNP men or face agitation: Mannan

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 28: BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan today said the jails in Bangladesh are crammed with opposition leaders and workers while 'false' cases are hanging on hundreds of others, reports UNB.

Addressing a public meeting at Gouranga Bazar in the town, he alleged that the Awami League government had arrested unspecified number of BNP supporters in last eight months on 'false' charges, creating unprecedented accommodation crisis in prisons.

With false cases hanging on their heads, hundreds of BNP men are now forced to lead the life of fugitive to avoid arrest, Bhuiyan said, alleging that the government was abusing the Special Powers Act frequently using it to harass political opponents.

He said so far, more than 100 BNP members were killed in attacks by the Awami League activists across the country. "We don't know how much money is being paid for being in the opposition and how many people will be killed by them (ruling party) in future."

He demanded immediate release of the BNP leaders and activists, and withdrawal of 'false' cases against them. Otherwise, the government will have to face a tough street agitation, he said.

The BNP secretary general said that within only eight months, the government of Sheikh Hasina made the life of commonman miserable, endangered independence and

Shima's death JS probe body meets today

The second meeting of the parliamentary committee, formed to probe the death of Shima Chowdhury will be held at 11 am today in the No 1 Standing Committee Room at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, reports BSS.

Chairman of the committee Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad will preside over the meeting. The parliamentary committee was formed on February 18 last. Shima Chowdhury, a garment worker died in 'safe custody' in Chittagong Jail on February 7.

RAF captain

Indian Airforce planes during that time and it was a surprise that we could land," Backer said adding that he could see people clearing the rubble.

"Somebody had a radio... We managed to make contact and land within 30 minutes... There was just as much space for only the aircraft to land."

Backer said he has to go back to the files to provide the accurate dates during which they had carried out the evacuation operation. "It was sometime before the Christmas and there was a ceasefire at that time."

"It is only six months that I joined the Royal Airforce," Backer said. Earlier, he had served the Royal Airforce Central Flying School for nine years, he added.

The evacuation operation added feathers to his cap and he became the captain of the C-130 aircraft within the next three months, Backer said.

Cricket

43.2 overs. The Pakistan total revolved round a brilliant 91 by skipper Asif Mujtaba. The former Pakistan Test cricketer, in his polished 104-ball innings, hit five fours. For India, off-spinner Noel David took three wickets for 32 runs in his quota of nine overs.

In reply, India were 124 for the loss of five wickets before rain ruined their hopes of a chance to retain the title. India had earlier won the second edition of the regional meet in 1994. The first one in 1992 fell through mid-way due to unavoidable circumstances.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who graced the concluding ceremony of the week-long meet, gave away prizes among the winners.

Pakistan skipper Asif Mujtaba was both the Man-of-the-final and Man-of-the-tournament awards for his batting performance.

JEC to meet in Dhaka

From Page 1
to the Central Asian states. A full-fledged trilateral agreement is due to be signed among these countries to implement the provisions of transit facility which, the minister said, is going to expand the scope of trade and provide easier access of Bangladeshi products to the Central Asian states at cheaper prices.

India, the minister said, had already signed a similar trilateral transit agreement and negotiations are going on with other Asian states including Malaysia about the signing of such transit agreements with his country for access to Central Asian states.

Speaking about further expansion of transit facilities, he said Iran was geographically suited to link up Europe and Asia if India and Pakistan, among others, agreed to give passage.

The Iranian minister said that for greater economic benefits, it was imperative to open up the 'frontiers of communication' between countries. He said Iran had signed a 20 billion dollar agreement with Turkey for

sovereignty of the country, and put the hard-earned democracy in jeopardy.

Amid repeated slogans and clappings, he said so far, the BNP has not given any tough programme considering the suffering of the people.

But BNP would have to reconsider its position about launching a greater movement if the prevailing situation continues, he said adding it is not possible for the main opposition to sit idle or keep silent under such oppressive conditions.

Khaleda discusses political, economic situation with French envoy

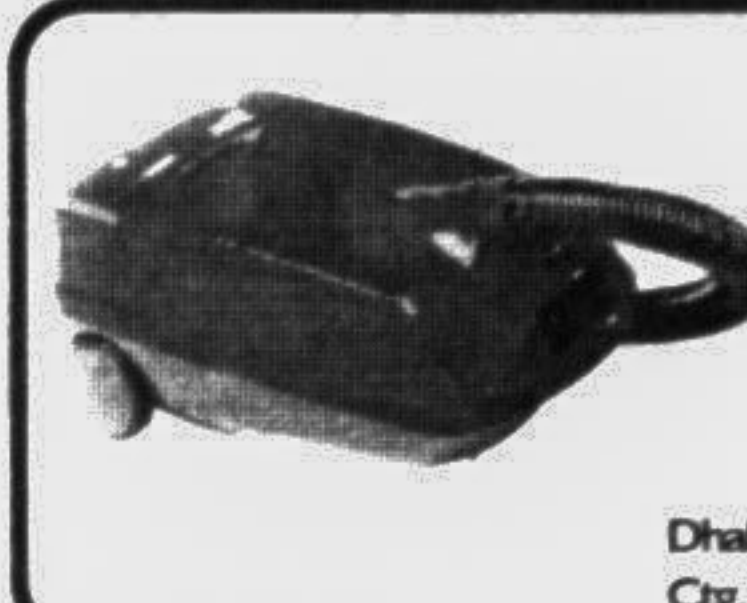
French Ambassador to Bangladesh Renee Veyret paid a courtesy call on BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia at her Cantonment residence yesterday, reports UNB.

They discussed present political and economic situation of the country in a cordial atmosphere, a BNP press release said.

Begum Zia reiterated BNP's policy to welcome foreign investment in Bangladesh and expand economic cooperation with foreign countries.

She said the ruling party should give up its present policy of "unleashing terrorism and intimidation and refrain from undemocratic activities" so that political parties could work smoothly for promoting democracy and development in the country.

The Opposition Leader apprised the envoy of the deteriorating economic condition for which, she alleged, the ruling party is "solely responsible."



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Charles opens exhibition on 'Muslims in Britain'

Prince Charles inaugurated an exhibition on "Muslims in Britain" at the British Council here yesterday morning, reports UNB.

This is a part of an important attempt to create a link between the West and the Muslim world," Prince Charles said while addressing the distinguished guests and Muslim scholars at the inauguration.

The 10-day exhibition, arranged by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, demonstrates lifestyles of about 1.5 million Muslims living in the United Kingdom.

Earlier, such exhibitions were arranged in 11 Muslim countries, including Egypt, Qatar, Pakistan and Indonesia. "It's a very interesting exhibition... I'm very glad to open it," said Prince Charles who is the patron of the Islamic Centre in Oxford.

The heir to the British throne also pointed out the close ties between Britain and the Muslim world, and expressed his happiness that Muslims in Britain have been contributing to the economic growth of the Kingdom.

After cutting the tape, the Prince went round the stalls.

JCD factions at DU reach 'preliminary settlement'

By DU Correspondent

The feuding groups in Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in Dhaka University reached a 'preliminary settlement' yesterday and went back to their respective halls, sources concerned said.

The rival factions fought a gunbattle on Wednesday over 'control' of JCD-dominated halls. Two persons were arrested in this connection.

As per the settlement Dandey group will 'dominate' Surya Sen Hall, Zakir group Zia Hall, Titu group Mujib Hall and Babu group, known as Barisal group, will dominate Jasimuddin Hall.

The three groups in Zia, Mujib and Surya Sen Halls are known as Tangail-Kishoreganj group led by Benazir Ahmed Titu, a central leader of the JCD. This group is trying to 'eliminate' Barisal group from the campus, some insiders said.

Barisal group is determined to continue its hold in Jasimuddin Hall and if possible expand it to other JCD-dominated halls, they added.

Of the 11 DU halls for male students, eight are dominated by the ruling party-backed Chhatra League and four by the pro-BNP JCD.

JP confce

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cord a 'public reception' to Ershad at the Manik Miah Avenue in the city on March 18. A programme for similar receptions in Khulna and Barisal has been scheduled for April 2 and April 3 respectively, the sources said.

HM Ershad in his speech at the meeting reminded the party leaders and workers that the support given to Awami League was "not unconditional" and that it would "vary from issue to issue."

According to Ershad, withdrawal of tariff on certain Indian goods by the government would adversely affect the growth of industries in the country. He also said it would be "impractical" to allow the facilities at the Chittagong port for other countries without increasing its existing capacity.

Some of the important presidium members like Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzam Hossain, Roushan Ershad, Sheikh Shahidul Islam were seen present on the occasion but they did not speak. Anwar Hossain Manju and Nazim Rahman Manju, secretary general and additional secretary general respectively of the party were also present, the sources said.

Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, a senior presidium member who was made acting chairman of the party while Ershad was in jail, however, did not attend the meeting on health ground, the sources said.

Indian defence budget

From Page 1

Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda marginally increased defence spending by 270 million dollars to 8.4 billion dollars in the last budget, marking one of the lowest increases in decades.

India spent 2.36 per cent of GDP on defence in the last fiscal year, compared to 6.88 by Pakistan and 5.63 by China.

Experts say a 16 per cent increase on defence spending would be realistic because of the falling value of the rupee against the dollar and normal and military inflation of around seven per cent. Chidambaram announced a 66.4 billion US dollar budget that balanced expenditure and revenues exactly.

He slashed taxes across the board, cutting maximum personal income tax from 40 per cent to 30, promised to cut government expenditure and took steps to boost share markets.

A member of an eight-party minority coalition, Chidambaram also pledged to pump 1.8 billion dollars of credit into agriculture, "the lifeblood of the economy."

He also began chipping away the country's insurance monopoly by allowing selected Indian companies to compete in the health insurance sector.

Chidambaram also said that he was determined to bring the fiscal deficit down to under four per cent in the long term. It currently stands at about 18.7 billion dollars, or six per cent of gross domestic product.

He said the fiscal deficit would come down to 4.5 per cent during the fiscal, adding: "I have not wavered in my commitment to continue on the course of fiscal correction."

Former Confederation of India Industry president Subodh Bhargava, who heads leading Indian car maker Maruti Udyog, said: "It's a very good growth oriented budget, it should boost the capital markets and investment."

KG Ramanathan, chief of the state-run India Petrochemicals Ltd, said: "It is a very positive budget. I gave it eight points on

a scale of 10.

"The change from regulation to overall management is an indication that the reforms are continuing and will continue."

Chidambaram, however, warned India was facing problems with its rising oil demand and its underperforming power sector.

Chidambaram said: "Two areas of great concern are the sharp drop in domestic crude oil production and the sluggish performance of the power sector."

He said it was a 'great concern,' adding: "The country's demand for petroleum products is growing at over eight per cent per annum, which is faster than the growth of domestic supply. We cannot choke this growth."

He said India had to reduce its dependence on foreign oil and announced the country had to boost its supply, announcing a batch of measures to help exploration.

Masjid-e-Nabubi's Chief Imam conducts Juma prayers at Baitul Mukarram

The visiting Chief Imam and Khatib of Masjid-e-Nabubi at Madina Munawwarah, Dr Alam Sheikh Ali Bin Abdur Rahman Al-Huzaiifi, yesterday conducted Juma prayers and Khutba at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, reports BSS.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Mohammad Nurul Islam, Secretary to the Ministry of Religious Affairs Abdus Shakur, former State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad MP, Nazimuddin Alam MP, Director General of Islamic Foundation M Morshed Hossain were, among others, who attended in Juma prayers at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

The Chief Imam of Masjid-e-Nabubi, in his Khutba, said all problems of the people can be solved by following the Islam properly.

Chakma: Tripura assures help

From Page 1

mayor A B M Moinuddin Chowdhury, ruling party MPs Kalparanjay Chakma, Dipankar Talukdar and Bir Bahadur, Jatiya Party whip advocate Fazle Rabbi MP, and Awami League leader Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser.

The delegation also included Special Affairs Division Secretary Kazi Golam Rahman, DG of South-Asian Desk at the Foreign Ministry Shamim Ahmed, Joint Secretary at the Home Ministry Anwarul Islam and Special Affairs Division Director M Mashiur Rahman.

BSS from New Delhi adds: The visiting Bangladesh delegation yesterday met the tribal refugees staying in six camps.

The delegation accompanied by senior Indian officials, held a series of meetings with the refugee leaders. Such meetings would continue till March 2.

The delegation explained to the tribal refugees and their leaders about the Bangladesh government's fresh initiative to

solve the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) problems as well as the economic and rehabilitation package announced for them, a senior official was quoted as saying to the reporters in Agartala.

With the installation of Sheikh Hasina's government, the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts has improved and the entire atmosphere is congenial for the safe repatriation of the Chakma tribals. Chief Whip Abdul Hasnat Abdullah said during his meeting with Tripura Chief Minister, Dasrath Deb in Agartala on Thursday.

The Chief Whip told reporters that the recent talks between the Bangladesh government and the Parbaty Chhattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) was fruitful.

He hoped that the repatriation would start soon: The Bangladesh delegation also met the Tripura Chief Minister, Chief Minister, Baidyanath Majumder.

Ansars

From Page 1

tacted last night.

Extra police force was deployed in the area to avert further violence while a tense situation was prevailing there.

No case was lodged and none was arrested in this connection till the filing of this report last night.

UNB quoting unofficial sources put the death toll at seven, but this was denied by the duty officer of Savar thana when reached by telephone from Dhaka.

The police told the agency that the rest three victims were Ahmedullah, 35, Imamullah, 25, and Mir Ali, 35, also of the same village.

Prince Charles

From Page 1

reception hosted by the British High Commission held at the residence of J Noal, Managing Director of Lever Brothers, Bangladesh Ltd.

The Prince stayed at the reception for 54 minutes until 3:48 pm. The Prince talked to the elite at the reception and said he was impressed. He was seen sipping orange juice while talking to the guests.

The Prince left Chittagong for Dhaka at 4:30 pm.

Earthquake

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are down all together, he said.

The country's only private emergency relief organisation, Edhi Trust, has sent aid ambulances to the region and workmen from that organisation said at least 80 people are dead, but they expect the death toll to exceed 100.

The official death toll is 43, but emergency workers say it is much higher.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited the area and ordered quick emergency relief to the victims.

Lack of funds

From Page 1

diate replacement. "We have an electron microscope of 1940s," she said.

"I cannot keep post-graduate students in my department as their allowance is too low to sustain in the costly Dhaka city," said Rebecca. Most of the post-graduate students go abroad for higher studies because they get significant amounts there. Her Pharmacy Department does not enroll M Phil and PhD students every year due to lack of fund, she said here.

Shafi Chowdhury said there should be "close interaction" between the universities and the policy-makers and funds raised manifold to encourage research-based works.

"Our curricula is modern but laboratory instruments are old," said Abu Shara Shamsur Rouf of Pharmacy department.

The chairpersons said that they gave written representations highlighting the problems but to no effect.

Some students of these departments, talking to the correspondent, said that they did not get necessary equipment and teachers to supervise their work in the laboratories. Sometimes they have to work in groups, some of them said.



A ten-day Dance Festival organised by Shadhona began at the National Museum auditorium in the city yesterday with the superb rendering of Tagore dance drama 'Chondalika'. — Star photo

Tax officials

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would continue their efforts to achieve the target at the year-end.

The Prime Minister said the government is eager to develop a dynamic tax administration shifting the scattered tax offices to a central tax office building. The process of approving the project for tax head office is going on, she added.

Held at a local hotel, the function was also addressed by Finance Minister S A M S Kibria and Secretary of the Internal Resources Division and Chairman of the National Board of Revenue Shah Abdul Hannan as special guests.

Bangabandhu

From Page 1

Wahab Joarder and Begum Zohaida Rashid, wife of Lt Col (dismissed) A Rashid Khondaker.

The accused were earlier produced before the court of Habibur Rahman of the Metropolitan Magistracy on February 19 last. The court had fixed March 1 as the next date for producing the accused.

As soon as necessary formalities are completed, the case will be ultimately sent to the Dhaka District Court for trial, according to earlier reports.

UPDATE ON JOHN PLAYER GOLD LEAF DISCOVER THE SEVEN SEAS COMPETITION

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A TASTE APART.

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