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## Fiendish florists

By Special Correspondent

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has allotted a piece of land in front of Dhaka Club and Diabetic Hospital to a person in the name of an office for 'Bangladesh Phool Sarbaraho Samity' (Flower Suppliers Association).

The land is along the footpath of busy Maulana Bhashani Avenue. So long, there had been a nursery at the place. Now, the new occupiers have raised a high enclosure with CI sheets in a move to construct a concrete structure for the office of the hitherto unknown association.

Earlier on December 16, some people built a structure there with bamboo and CI sheets for 'Jubo League Park Avenue Shakha Office'. They called it Jubo League Ward No 56 unit office.

When asked, an official at DCC's Estate Department said the land has been allotted to one Jahangir for raising a nursery. But he failed to say anything when asked why the high enclosure was raised while a nursery needed open space. He also could not say whether there was any plan to construct a market at that place.

When The Daily Star journalists went to the spot yesterday to see what was going on inside the high enclosure, some people grabbed the photo-journalist by the collar of his shirt, threatening him not to take snaps.

"If you venture further, we will teach you a lesson that you will never forget in life", one of them told the journalists, ordering them off the area.

Jahangir could not be contacted. There was no address in the signboard that was hung in the name of his association. Earlier, the DCC had to stop construction of a 'flower market' beside the Shishu Park on the other side of the Maulana Bhashani Avenue following newspaper reports.

The Prime Minister ordered in April last year that no market could be built in the city's open spaces and parks.



Nursery it was supposed to be, but the piece of land adjacent to the Dhaka Club is occupied by the so-called Bangladesh Flower Suppliers' Association. The motive again is vulgar commercialisation of public land.

—Star photo: Amran Hossain

## Defiant IFIC

Accused in criminal cases promoted

By Rafiq Hasan

The International Finance and Investment Corporation (IFIC) Bank has made an accused in at least two criminal cases its executive vice-president, ignoring an order from the Prime Minister's Office.

A recent Bangladesh Bank (BB) investigation revealed that Mujibur Rahman, executive vice-president of the bank, is also facing charges for illegally sending foreign currency abroad.

The probe found that Rahman was promoted to the post of executive vice-president and charged with Law and Recovery Department of the bank despite an order from the Prime Minister's Office not to promote him as he is facing charges in a case under trial.

The report said he was elevated to the post "concealing" the order and that the promotion took place on the basis of recommendation made by the law adviser of the bank.

A two-member BB team visited the head office of the IFIC Bank and its branches at Motijheel, Moulavi Bazar (in Dhaka) and Narayanganj and submitted a report to the central bank governor.

The central bank launched the investigation after a shareholder of the bank filed a petition to the BB governor.

The report found Rahman to be involved in financial corruption while he was manager at Narayanganj and Moulavi Bazar branches. The bank incurred huge financial losses owing to his inability to take timely decision.

The BB report also said Rahman, while he was the manager at the Moulavi Bazar branch, approved and renewed 22 SOD worth Tk 13.50 crore in favour of various organisations under Beximco Group although they did not exist at all. An FIR was filed with Lalbagh thana against him and the advance officer of the branch.

However, Rahman said he had given a "proper" reply to the allegations brought by the central bank, without going on details.

During his tenure at Moulavi Bazar branch, three letters of credit (L/Cs) valued Tk 22.40 lakh were opened in favour of Surma Enterprise. Worthless cement instead of the registered commodities was imported against those L/Cs.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption, being informed, filed a case with the nod from the Prime Minister's Office. The case filed in Chittagong accused Mujibur Rahman and another official of the bank of paying foreign currency against those L/Cs.

While Mujibur Rahman was manager at Narayanganj branch, 12 L/Cs accounts were "time barred" and the bank suffered a loss of Tk three crore. And instead of taking timely action, he requested the bank for write off the verdule of those accounts, the report said.

## 'Biogas Safety Guidelines' approved

The National Scientific and Technological Council at a meeting yesterday unanimously approved the "Biogas Safety Guidelines" which would be helpful for research on genetic engineering, reports BSS.

The meeting was held at the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) with Minister for Science and Technology Lt Gen (ret'd) Mohammad Noor Uddin Khan in the chair.

Executive Director of Bangladesh Computer Council Prof Abdus Sobhan briefed the meeting about the latest situation of Y2K problem and its compliance in the sectors concerned including the health sector.

Prof Sobhan recently visited different hospitals, including Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and BIRDEM to see for himself the Y2K situation.

## Millennium toll!

By Abul Kalam Azad

A number of 'terrorist groups' of Dhaka University have been collecting funds from traders and businessmen of different markets and shops around the campus to celebrate the advent of the new millennium.

Sources at the university said that the groups belonging to the ruling party-backed student organisation, Bangladesh Chhatra League, have chalked out elaborate programmes to welcome the millennium in a joyous manner.

Sources said that the programmes would include rich dishes, cocktail parties and night-long singing and dancing at the residential halls, notwithstanding the Holy Ramadan.

A total of seven groups led by various armed cadres of BCL and another one of Dhaka College are collecting thousands of taka as toll per day from markets and shops situated in the vicinity of their campus, sources said.

Insiders said that the group leaders themselves and their 'collectors' are collecting money and 'other things' to celebrate the last 31st December tonight in a 'grand way'.

## Skinny health ministry

Crucial posts lie vacant as new leaders take charge

By Naimul Haq

With a series of hectic changes in the crucially important positions, including that of the Minister-in-charge, the health ministry is apparently heading for a period of none-too-impressive performance.

There is a big crisis in the leadership echelons of the ministry in matters of 'smooth completion of the on-going health programmes' in the country now.

New faces seem to occupy the top positions all on a sudden in the ministry, right from that of the minister down to the post of the director general (health). None of them allegedly has the experience required for exercising executive powers in the affairs of the health sector particularly in the 15,000 crore taka reform programme known as Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP).

The newly appointed Health Minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim took over the charges yesterday, hardly a couple of weeks after the new health secretary, Syed Alamgir Faruk Choudhury took office!

The other most important person in health sector - the Director General (DG) Prof A B M Ahsan Ullah, is also now 'trying to have a grasp of the on-going reform process'.

The air within the ministry is rather thick with speculations and apprehension that the affairs of health and family planning would run into snags called 'amateurish leadership'.

Insiders in the ministry said that health programmes have already suffered blows one after the other in the recent months. Even the World Bank evaluation reports clearly stated this, indicating 'lack of efficient manpower' in running the affairs of the health sector.

"Success depends mostly on the efficiency of the leaders, but with all new faces around, especially in key-positions, it is really hard to tell if health sector would see the projected success in the years to come," said a source in the ministry.

With the departure of Mahfuz Sobhan, the post of additional secretary has also been lying vacant for over a month now.

The other most important position in the directorate of health - Director of Essential Package Services (EPS) Shamsul Haq, who is responsible for about 60 per cent of all health related programmes, has been vacated just prior to the changes at the top.

Goals of many of the vital primary healthcare services, a key indicator in achieving the Health for All (HFA) would also be badly affected until the new man in-charge gets 'experienced enough' to handle things with confidence, knowledgeable sources indicated.

## BNP says nothing new

Reply to Speaker's second letter

By Staff Correspondent

BNP, in response to the Speaker's second letter, is going to reiterate its call for creating an atmosphere suitable for holding a meaningful dialogue to pave the way for its return to parliament.

The atmosphere can be created if the five preconditions set by the BNP are fulfilled, BNP leaders said.

The reply to the letter is expected today and like in the first reply, Opposition Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain this time will also write on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia.

The draft of the reply, prepared by Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, was approved at a meeting last night. Khaleda Zia finalised the reply in consultation with Prof Chowdhury, Khandaker Delwar and BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Emerging from the meeting, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said the Speaker in his second letter did not write anything new and the message was 'not clear'. "Speaker's letter is not satisfactory and helpful for discussion. He didn't say anything about our five preconditions which are very important for the country and its people," he said, adding, "We want to know clearly from him about their response to our preconditions."

## BNP forgives Akteruzzaman

Opposition BNP yesterday withdrew suspension order on Major (ret'd) Akteruzzaman MP asking the outspoken leader to devote himself to party activities, reports UNB.

He was suspended from BNP last June for making statement against party's frequent hartal call.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday sent a letter to Akteruzzaman withdrawing the suspension order after reviewing his recent activities, said a party source.

He came to limelight several times in last three and a half years by making statements against party decisions and for his pro-liberation stunt that sometimes enraged the party leadership.

## Siddique barred from holding Paltan meeting

By Staff Correspondent

Kader Siddique was barred from holding his party's scheduled public meeting at Paltan Maidan yesterday.

Police and plainclothesmen along with some people said to be workers of ruling Awami League took away the microphones and loud speakers from the venue at about 2 pm. They also prevented the workers of Bangladesh Kirsik Samik Janata League from setting up a podium there.

Siddique, president of his newly formed party, was scheduled to hold the Maidan meeting to protest foiling of convention of BKSJL on December 24.

Siddique was refused permission to use the ground designated for holding of rallies at authorities, the National Sports

Council, said it was already booked for a sport event.

Having failed to hold the meeting, Siddique along with his followers marched down the Motijheel streets before holding a street rally near the Stadium Market.

Siddique said the "undemocratic face of the government has been unmasked yet again" and blasted the government for not allowing him to hold his scheduled "protest" meeting and preventing his people from joining the public meeting.

Dr. Kamal Hossain, president of Gano Forum, in a statement yesterday protested against the incident and expressed his solidarity with Siddique.

## Hunt for illegal liquor lockers

By Staff Correspondent

The hunt is on for illegal liquor traders in the city's posh areas in order to curb drinking on New Year's Eve, said a source with the Department of Narcotics Control.

According to department officials, they've searched Banani, Gulshan, Baridhara and Uttara. Raids will also occur in other areas of the city, they said.

A squad led by Abdul Awal and Golam Kibria, both assistant directors of Dhaka intelligence department of DNC, recovered 576 cans of beer and 238 bottles of foreign made

whisky worth about Tk 3 lakh from a house at Baridhara.

The squad also raided House No 10, Road-6 in Baridhara yesterday, recovering illegal whisky and beer from the servant quarter's located on the first floor. They also arrested Mohammed Hossain, the son of Abdul Halim.

Department officials said Hossain was a member of an organised illegal liquor trader in the area. He picked up liquor from a Dhaka warehouse and distributed it to different parts of the city, they added.

## 'City Hall open to all'

By Staff correspondent

There is no way to identify terrorists entering the Nagar Bhaban, announced the Dhaka City Corporation in a clarification yesterday.

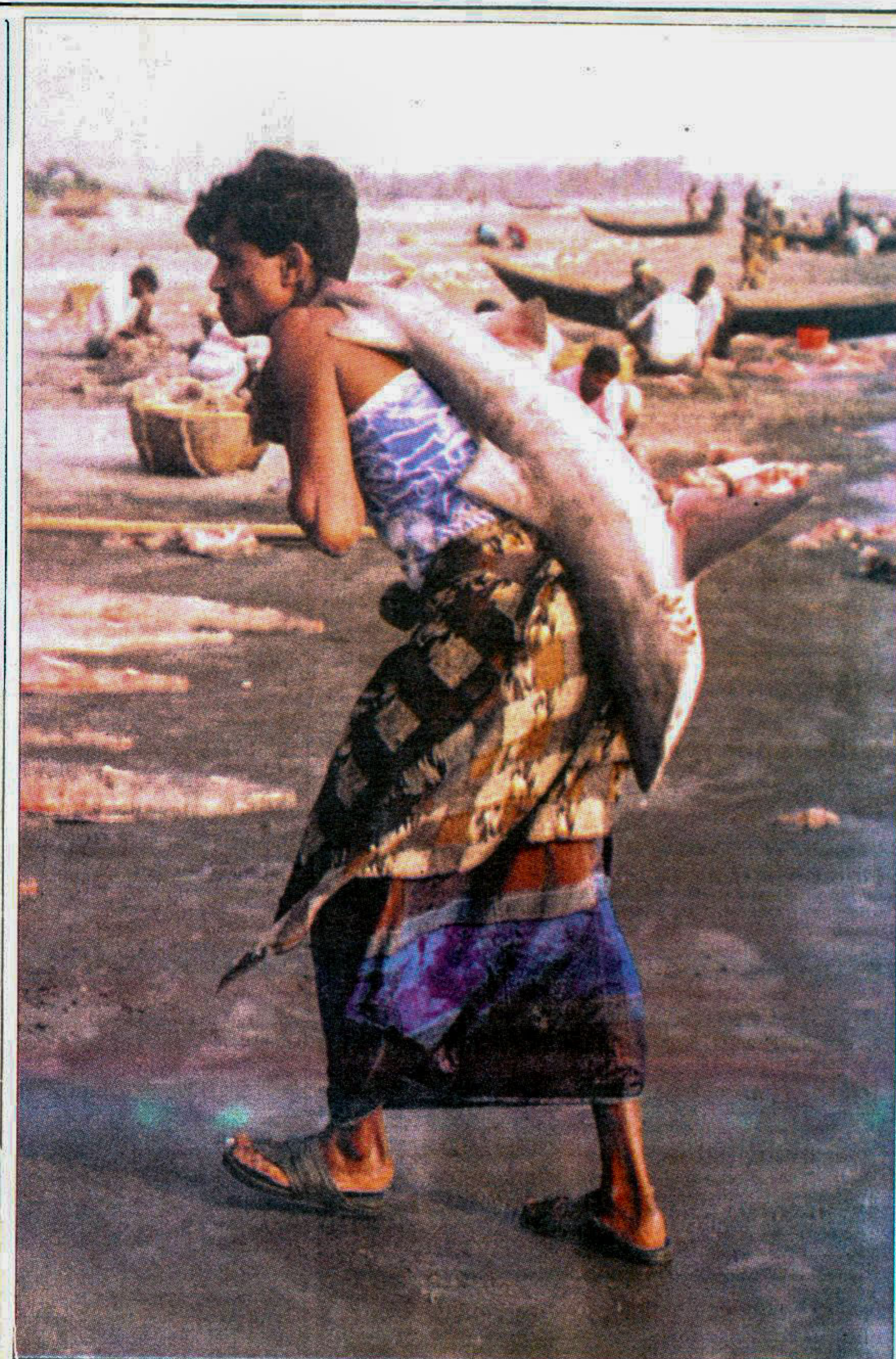
"DCC is a service oriented organisation. People come here to get services from birth registration to death certificate. So every citizen of the country has the right to enter into the City Corporation building," stated the clarification.

City Corporation doesn't sympathise with terrorists of any political ideology, added the clarification.

## Anti-hartal Citizens' rally in Ctg Jan 1

CHITTAGONG, Dec 30: The Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry will hold a citizens' rally at its auditorium at 12 noon on January 1 protesting hartal, terrorism and extortion, reports UNB.

On the same day, the Federation of Shop Owners' Association will bring out a 'bhukha' (hunger) procession from Biponi Bitan at 11 am protesting the two-day hartal on Sunday and Monday.



Hunted hunters

Fishermen of Kuakata make brisk business on sun-dried sharks and shark fins. Yet another conflict between economy and ecology. The picture was taken yesterday by courtesy of the helicopter service of Best Aviation Ltd.

—Star photo: A K M Mohsin

## Political foes get together

Retd army FF officers vow to uphold ideals of martyrs

Leading retired Armed Forces officers belonging to different political parties who fought against the Pakistani occupation forces during the War of Liberation yesterday vowed to preserve and uphold the ideals of the martyrs in the new millennium, reports BSS.

"It is a great occasion for the heroic Armed Forces officers who sacrificed their golden days for achieving the independence of the country," Air Vice Marshal (Ret'd) AK Khandokar, MP, said at a get-together of the leading freedom fighters of the armed forces at a city hotel yesterday evening.

"We have to materialise the objectives for which we took part in the War of Liberation in 1971," said Liberation War veteran and former BNP minister Lt General (Ret'd) Mir Shawkat Ali.

Ali, a sector commander of the War of Liberation, said, "We may have political differences and beliefs, but we are united on the question of the spirit of the War of Liberation."

It was the first ever gathering of the Muktiyoddha Armed Forces officers of different political parties aimed at taking fresh pledge against the anti-liberation forces.

exchanging views, said, "Our target should be to uphold the contribution of those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the motherland."

Replying to question, former BNP minister and veteran freedom fighter, Oli said there is no question of party affiliation regarding the freedom struggle as we all always think and work for the betterment of our country and its people.

Major (Ret'd) Akhteruzzaman, MP, said, "We are trying to bring all the Muktiyoddha

Armed Forces officers to a platform to fight the anti-liberation forces imbued with the spirit of the War of Liberation." He said that the freedom fighters are committed to preserving the real history of our freedom struggle by foiling any sort of conspiracy of the anti-liberation forces.

Maj General (Ret'd) Shafiqul MP, Col (Ret'd) Abu Osman

Chowdhury, Col (Ret'd) Qazi Nuruzzaman, Brigadier (Ret'd) Khaliquzzaman, Col (Ret'd) Jafar Imam, Capt (Ret'd) Sazzad Zahir, Maj (Ret'd) Shamsul Arefin, Maj (Ret'd) Ahsanullah, Capt (Ret'd) Kabir, Capt (Ret'd) Ibrahim, Maj (Ret'd) Taher Akande, Maj General (Ret'd) Halim and Maj (Ret'd) Ziauddin also attended the get-together followed by an Iftar party.

## বাংলা একাডেমী ঢাকা-১০০০

### অমর একুশে গ্রন্থমেলা ২০০০

আয়োজনে : বাংলা একাডেমী, ঢাকা  
সহযোগিতায় : বাংলাদেশ পুস্তক প্রকাশক ও বিক্রেতা সমিতি এবং বাংলাদেশ সৃজনশীল প্রকাশক পরিষদ, ঢাকা  
স্থান : বাংলা একাডেমী গ্রাঙ্গন  
সময় : ১ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০০০ থেকে ২৯ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০০০

অমর একুশে গ্রন্থমেলা ২০০০-এ অংশগ্রহণ করতে আগ্রহী পুস্তক প্রকাশনা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে প্রকাশিত পুস্তকসহ বাংলা একাডেমী কর্তৃক সরবরাহকৃত তথ্য ফরম পূরণ করে একাডেমীতে জমা দেয়ার পর স্টল বরাদ্দের আবেদনপত্র সরবরাহ করা হবে। কেবল পুস্তক প্রকাশনা প্রতিষ্ঠান বইয়ের স্টলের জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবেন। অন্য কোনো প্রকার স্টলের জন্য আবেদন করা যাবে না। তথ্য ফরম ১ জানুয়ারি ২০০০ শনিবার থেকে ১০ জানুয়ারি ২০০০ সোমবার পর্যন্ত (স্বদের ছুটি বাদে) সদস্য-সচিব, অমর একুশে গ্রন্থমেলা পরিচালনা কমিটি ২০০০ বাংলা একাডেমী, ঢাকা-১০০০ থেকে সংগ্রহ করা ও জমা দেয়া যাবে। স্টল বরাদ্দের নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র ১১ জানুয়ারি ২০০০ মঙ্গলবার থেকে ১৭ জানুয়ারি ২০০০ সোমবার পর্যন্ত (ছুটির দিনসহ) কোষাধ্যক্ষ, বাংলা একাডেমী, ঢাকা থেকে ৩০০.০০ (তিনশত) টাকা মূল্য সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। আবেদনপত্র ১২ জানুয়ারি ২০০০ বুধবার থেকে ১৮ জানুয়ারি ২০০০ মঙ্গলবার (ছুটির দিনসহ) বিকাল ৩টা পর্যন্ত জমা দেয়া হবে। অংশগ্রহণকারী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে গ্রন্থমেলা পরিচালনা কমিটি কর্তৃক প্রণীত নীতিমালা ও নিয়মাবলি মেনে চলতে হবে।

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অমর একুশে গ্রন্থমেলা পরিচালনা কমিটি ২০০০

বাংলা একাডেমী ঢাকা-১০০০

ফোন : ৮৬১ ৯৩ ৬৪

৬৬-১২৪৪

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Shantamandir R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 8616772-4, Commercial: 8616771, Fax No: 88-02-8613035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet edition address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net