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Millennium faces



Meher Ali, 95, has seen it all, almost through the past century. The man has lived through the two World Wars, the famines and many natural disasters, and the Liberation War. The nonagenarian, now in Dhaka after traversing via Calcutta a long way from her village home in Munshiganj, says he's too tired to have dreams anymore. Dipali, in the 10th year of her life, has just begun and not seen much. At Kuakata, the emerging tourist resort, she says she hasn't seen television as yet.



Dipali, in the 10th year of her life, has just begun and not seen much. At Kuakata, the emerging tourist resort, she says she hasn't seen television as yet.

— Star photos by Sk Enamul Haq and AKM Mohsin

Did Yusuf dig his own grave?

By Naimul Haq

Having been in the fray of politics for nearly 40 years, health minister Salauddin Yusuf, regarded as one of the non-performers in Cabinet, got a year-end treat to be reduced to a minister without portfolio.

Sources said his removal from the ministry of health on December 29 came as no surprise as he himself dug his grave by putting this key ministry into total disarray.

The World Bank in its annual performance report was highly critical of poor performance of the health ministry in certain crucial areas.

An earlier Bank report had said some of the audit reports still remained unresolved. Experts also criticised the health minister for not being serious enough in utilising resources in the right place and in the right time.

Sources said, Yusuf set his eyes on procurement of different kinds of medical equipment right after he assumed office. He would dig into all files related to purchases to make sure suppliers of his choice get the contracts. He would not even hesitate to award contracts violating all norms of his high office and put pressure on officials to bow to his 'verbal' orders.

On many occasions Yusuf ignored advice of senior officials in taking vital decisions. He even transferred overnight mid-level administrators one after another who dared to differ on controversial orders.

Some of the latest examples are removal of primary health-care director Dr Zakir Hossain, who according to sources contributed a lot towards drawing up the health reform programme. Hossain was dumped as an officer-on-special-duty (OSD).

Soon after Yusuf took office he fired the then director general, health directorate, Prof. A K Shamsuddin Siddique and made him OSD until he retired after two and a half years. Siddique's fault was that he did not share the minister's views.

The chief of finance in health directorate, Dr Mamtaz Haq, also faced his wrath, an instant transfer order, as she refused to sign controversial financial documents. The director of hospital and clinic division Dr Ali Zafar was removed within two months of his posting after he refused to comply with his 'verbal' orders, sources said.

Zafar, also head of technical committee dealing with all foreign medical equipment purchases of central medical stores depot (CMSD), did not entertain request to award certain contracts to firms Yusuf favoured, sources said.

Director general of health services Prof AKM Nurul Anwar was yet another victim. He was removed and made OSD just one and a half years before his retirement.

The state minister for health

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Reigning supreme the women power

By Nazmul Ashraf




Bangladesh's politics witnessed commendable emergence of its women folk to the leadership echelons, with two of them being at the helm of state affairs during the concluding decade of the millennium that has just been rung out.

Incumbent Sheikh Hasina and her predecessor Khaleda Zia became prime ministers for the consecutive terms since the nation saw the fall of dictatorial rule by General Ershad in 1990.

The two most powerful ladies are still dominating the national politics and are expected to continue doing so in the years to come. Both of them inherited family tradition in politics to put an end to their typical role of housewives.

Hasina joined politics after her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in the August, 1975 military coup while Khaleda following her husband late President Ziaur Rahman's assassination in a similar incident in 1981.

Before they could make it to the office of prime minister, Hasina and Khaleda both had to tread a long way, taking to the streets in robust movements against autocracy. Khaleda's road to power took her seven years on streets, but for Hasina the struggle was for a longer period — 14 years.

Assuming office, both the ladies appointed a number of their women colleagues in the party as ministers and took various steps for ensuring uplift of the women folk in all spheres of national life.

Inspired by their successes, larger number of women joined politics — starting from the centre, down to the rural areas. Women's participation increased in the last parliamentary elections increased considerably and many of them got elected. Their participation in voting and day-to-day political campaign also increased.

Grassroot level women activists also got elected in larger numbers to the local government bodies like the Union Parishads and the Pourashavas, thanks to the reserved seats in the two local bodies.

Besides, more such representatives are in the offing through the forthcoming elections to Upazila Parishads, another tier of local government.

With these developments taking place in the last decade, women's increased representation in politics at all levels — from parliament down to the UPs — are now being talked about.

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Tension mounts in port city over polls

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Dec 31: Tension mounted in the port city amid incidents of violence today as the ruling and opposition parties took to streets in a stand-off over holding of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls, due on January 3.

After explosion of bombs and razing of sidewalk election camps by opposition activists at several places, announcements by the ruling AL and the Opposition alliance for holding allies at Laldighi Maidan at the same time tomorrow created panic in the city.

Both the sides claimed that they got permission for rally.

planned earlier.

Police and witnesses said opposition activists during a big anti-polls procession exploded bombs, damaged vehicles and razed some election camps of ward commissioner candidates erected on the sidewalks at Momin Road and in Jamalkhan area.

The procession towards Laldighi Maidan that started from the Jame Mosque premises after Juma prayers was intercepted by police at Bokshirhat crossing.

Being obstructed, the demonstrators held a brief rally where opposition alliance leader and Chittagong city unit BNP President Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin called for resisting the 'farical' election. The protest march then terminated at Gani Bakery crossing.

Home made bombs were also hurled at a police camp at CDA residential area at about 3 pm today. Bomb were exploded at Chittagong stadium, CCC office premises, election commission office and Lalkhan Bazar crossing last night, police said.

Award League also staged a demonstration at Momin Road this afternoon protesting attack

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Countrywide 7-hour hartal on Jan 3

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has called a countrywide seven-hour hartal beginning at 6 am on January 3 to protest holding of Chittagong City Corporation polls.

The decision to call the new year's first hartal was taken at a meeting of the Liaison Committee yesterday at 29 Minto Road, the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in parliament, with BNP vice chairman M Shamsul Islam MP in the chair.

The Chittagong unit of the opposition alliance has already called two-day hartal on January 2-3 to protest as well as to resist the CCC polls. The polls will be held on January 3.

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Quake rocks Cox's Bazar again: 200 houses damaged

COX'S BAZAR, Dec 31: An earthquake today rocked the sea resort town of Cox's Bazar and adjoining areas including Moheshkhali, reports BSS.

The quake hit the town at 6.50 am and lasted about 40 to 45 seconds.

The people of Moheshkhali experienced the quake followed by a big bang. People came out of their houses in panic and

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Viva 2000

By M Anwarul Haq

What would be new in the new year?

Among other things, the year 2000 is expected to witness three Eid festivals. This would be a record in many calendar years.

The ensuing Eid-ul-Fitr falls on January 9. There is a chance of having another Eid-ul-Fitr at the close of the year, Islamic Foundation officials said.

The next holy month of Ramadan is expected to begin on December 1 and conclude within December 30, with Eid-ul-Fitr falling on the last day of the year at the latest.

The Eid-ul-Azha this year would be celebrated in the middle of March, two months ten days after the Eid-ul-Fitr.

For most, three Eids would be a gift of joy to reckon with. Three Eid festivals means three festival holidays and for many, at least three festival allowances. But for many it would be a burden on their pockets.

Those who follow the Gregorian calendar have missed three New Year celebrations as the holy month of Ramadan bridged the old and new years in the last three consecutive years. Many were disappointed that the holy month dampened their festive spirit in welcoming the new millennium.

For them too, there is good news in the New Year. This year's December 31 could be spent in full festivity as the Ramadan is due to end at least a night before the coming New Year.

Welcome 2000. Welcome the new millennium.

নতুন সহস্রাব্দের সূচনা লগ্নে

বসুন্ধরা'য়

আবার সেই সুবর্ণ সুযোগ

আমাদের সম্মানিত সকল গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের জানাই ইংরেজী নববর্ষ ও নতুন সহস্রাব্দের আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা।

বাসুন্ধরা ডিপ্লোমেটিক জোন সংলগ্ন রাজউক অনুমোদিত বসুন্ধরা প্রকল্পে সীমিত সংখ্যক প্লট "আগে আসলে আগে পাবেন" ভিত্তিতে চলতি বাজার মূল্যের প্রায় তিন ভাগের এক ভাগ মূল্যে বরাদ্দ চলছে।

এ সুযোগ ১২ই ডিসেম্বর ১৯৯৯ইং থেকে ৩১শে জানুয়ারী ২০০০ইং পর্যন্ত

বেসরকারী খাতে দেশের সর্ববৃহৎ আবাসিক প্রকল্প, রাজধানীর ভবিষ্যত প্রাণকেন্দ্র **বসুন্ধরা** প্রকল্পে রয়েছে-

- ২৫ ফুট থেকে ১০০ ফুট পর্যন্ত প্রকল্পের নিজস্ব রাস্তা।
- প্রকল্প সংলগ্ন উত্তর পাশে রাজউক প্রত্যাবিত ৩০০ ফুট রাস্তা।
- পূর্ব পাশে রাজউক প্রত্যাবিত পূর্ব বাসিধারা।
- প্রকল্পের অভ্যন্তরে বনামখনা স্কুল, কলেজ, হাসপাতাল ও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, যেমন - ইন্ডিপেন্ডেন্ট ইউনিভার্সিটি অব বাংলাদেশ (আইইউবি), নর্থ সাউথ ইউনিভার্সিটি, ইন্টারন্যাশনাল স্কুল ঢাকা (আইএসটি), ডিকার্লোসা নুন স্কুল ও কলেজ, সানি ডেল স্কুল, হার্টকো ইন্টারন্যাশনাল স্কুল, বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এ্যাপোলো হসপিটাল ও পাইওনিয়ার ডেন্টাল কলেজ।

ভবিষ্যতের এই আলোকিত নিবাসে আপনিও খুঁজে নিন আপনার ঠিকানা-

সম্মানিত প্লট ক্রেতাপণ - ঢাকা ও তার আশে-পাশে যে কোন জায়গায় প্লট ক্রয়ের চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়ার আগে আমাদের প্রকল্পটি পরিদর্শনের অনুরোধ রইল।

বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য যোগাযোগ করুনঃ

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Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
23	01	-	5-27
24	02	5-17	5-27
25	03	5-17	5-28

Prayer Timings

January 1

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-16	5-25
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-42	4-00
Maghrib	5-27	5-32
Tarabi	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation