



Bush promises 'fresh start' as he takes office today

WASHINGTON, Jan 19: Washington geared up today for some high-level partying and street-level protesting around the weekend inauguration of Republican George W Bush and the next US president, reports AFP.

"I am honoured to serve and I am ready to start," Bush said Thursday at a musical extravaganza at the Lincoln Memorial that kicked off the inaugural celebrations and featured a performance by Latin pop star Ricky Martin.

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Some 15,000 invited guests and members of the public braved the chill of the winter afternoon to hear Bush speak in the shadow of the statue of Abraham Lincoln, the nation's first Republican president, credited with holding the nation together during an 1861-1865 civil war.

"A new administration is an opportunity for change and a new direction," Bush said. "That is the promise I have made, a promise I will keep to give America a fresh start."

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Inside Today

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Dead Utopias Rule Bangladesh
Dr Badrul Khan writes from Sydney
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Supplement

A two-page supplement on the 6th convocation of BUET on Pages 8 & 9

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 20		5.36 pm
Jan 21	6-43 am	

Prayer Timings

January 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-10
Zuhr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-05	4-20
Maghrib	5-40	5-45
Esha	7-15	7-35
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Take the money or die

Four 'with mobile phones' threaten widow of DB source Jalal to withdraw case or 'meet the same fate'

By Staff Correspondent

Halima Khatun, wife of DB source Shafi Ahmed Jalal who was killed allegedly by some DB officials in 1999, said that four men 'with mobile phones' came to her house on Thursday and threatened to kill her if she did not accept Tk 8 lakh and withdraw the murder case.

She said one of the four persons identified himself as the 'brother of the DB Inspector' and threatened her that she would meet the same fate as Kalam, the only eyewitness to the murder of Jalal.

Kalam was gunned down on August 16 in Tejgaon area last year.

Jalal's son Abbas is the complainant in the case and four members of Jalal's family are witnesses in the case.

The four men also threatened her that her hands and legs would be severed if police were deployed at her residence, she alleged.

"I cannot live here. My son and other children have gone into hiding after the threat by the four men. I am looking for a house elsewhere to move out as soon as possible," said Halima Khatun.

Following a report on the Jalal murder case in The Daily Star on January 11, the High Court on

January 15 issued a rule nisi on the government to explain why a new Public Prosecutor (PP) should not be appointment as per the informant's choice.

The High Court also directed the Investigation Officer of the case to ensure security of the witnesses.

The High Court had also directed the authorities concerned to produce all documents of the case before it within 24 hours.

After killing Jalal over 'claim of shares', five men allegedly dumped his body into the overhead water reservoir at DB Office in the city. The decomposed body was recovered several days later.

The five men accused and charge-sheeted in the case are DB Inspector Ziaul Hasan, DB Havildar Bilal Hossain, DB Constable Abdur Rab, DB Driver Constable Abdur Malek and the canteen manager at DB office, Anwar Hossain.

Halima Khatun yesterday said that after the court order, some policemen led by a Sub-inspector came to her house the day before. He told her that due to manpower shortage they could not deploy any policemen at her residence. If she has any prob-

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina went round some stalls at the Dhaka International Trade Fair-2001 in the city after opening it yesterday. Photo shows the PM admiring a set of bangles at a stall. -- Star photo

Pvt sector urged to help boost investment, export

PM opens month-long trade fair in city

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government has created a liberal, deregulated and investment-friendly climate for quick industrialisation and boosting exports, reports UNB.

Inaugurating the month-long Dhaka International Trade Fair-2001 (DITF-2001) in city yesterday, she made a call to local and foreign investors to come forward and avail the investment incentives given in selected thrust sectors.

She told her business audience at the opening function of the fair that attracting more foreign investment, setting export-oriented industries and increasing volume of exports are the main objectives of the indus-

trial and trade policies adopted in light of free market economy.

To promote export, a good number of exportable have been identified as thrust sectors and prospective items brought under crash programmes, Hasina said, urging the private sector to play the prime role in investment and export.

Terming the rapidly growing information technology as a promising export sector, the Prime Minister said the government is providing logistic supports for exploring overseas market for exporting computer software and data processing.

"In the near future, computer software and data processing like readymade garment will fetch huge foreign currencies,"

she told the function attended by foreign and local entrepreneurs, industrialists, diplomats and public representatives.

Hasina said emphasis has also been given on export of agricultural products and initiatives taken for increasing export of value-added agro-processed products instead of exporting primary items only.

She said a Tk 100-crore Equity and Entrepreneurship Fund had already been set up for development of these two sectors. She also referred to the formation of a task force headed by the Commerce Minister and National Export Council headed by the

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9 drown as trawler capsizes in Meghna

By Staff Correspondent

Nine people including five children drowned in the river Meghna when a trawler carrying about 100 people sank at Ramnewaz Ghat in Manpura island under Bhola district Thursday afternoon.

The trawler, FB Abid, capsized at around 3:30 pm when its driver tried to avoid collision with another boat anchored at the ghat. The trawler came from Tazmuddin island in the Bay of Bengal.

When contacted yesterday, Deputy Commissioner of Bhola Moizuddin Khan said nine bodies were recovered on Thursday night. Most of the other passengers swam ashore.

The bodies have been identified as those of Mahima Khatun, 45; her children Mukta, 10, Moina, 7 and Jalil, 4, her niece

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Contributions of Zia recalled

By Staff Correspondent

Rich tributes were paid to the memory of late president Ziaur Rahman yesterday on the 65 th anniversary of his birth.

Hundreds of people, joined by leaders, activists and supporters of BNP and its front organisations, gathered at his mazar premises in the morning, placed wreaths and offered fateha.

They recalled the contributions of Zia who introduced Bangladeshi nationalism, restored multi-party democracy and led the country towards progress and development.

Ziaur Rahman was born in 1936 on this day at Bagbari under Gabtali thana in Bogra district.

A Major in the then Pakistan army, Ziaur Rahman had proclaimed independence and declared an all-out war against

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An armoured personnel carrier guards Malacanang Palace in Manila yesterday. Philippine President Joseph Estrada's (inset) government collapsed earlier yesterday after nearly his entire cabinet resigned and the military withdrew its backing for the scandal-tainted leader.

Estrada may flee country as army joins protesters

MANILA, Jan 19: Faced with crumbling political support and mass protests, President Joseph Estrada refused to quit today but the vice president said she was the "new commander-in-chief" and reports swirled that the scandal-plagued leader might flee, reports AP.

Four armoured personnel carriers rolled onto the grounds of the presidential palace this evening, purportedly to provide extra security for Estrada, but they mysteriously left within minutes.

Two Philippine Airlines jets and a smaller corporate jet were waiting at nearby Villamor Air Base, and immigration officials were told to go there and prepare to process some people leaving the country late today or possibly early tomorrow, said sources who spoke to the Associated Press only on condition they not be identified.

Local television reported that Estrada or perhaps family members had decided on a hasty departure. A presidential spokesman claimed the president was still at the palace.

Estrada went on national television earlier and said he would step down after a snap election in May, which he urged Congress to call. But Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued a statement rejecting the idea and calling herself the new Philippine leader.

"The president has not only lost moral authority to govern, but now has no government," she said.

There were reports of a deal to

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Rajuk flouts its own rules, allows high-rises in six-storey zone

By Staff Correspondent

Violating restriction on construction of buildings beyond six storeys, Rajuk has approved at least 17 plans for 10 to 20 storied buildings in Dhanmondi residential area under the cover of "privately owned plots."

The high-rise residential buildings, each on six to eight katha plots (2,160 to 4,320 square feet) at the extension of Road 14, are now at various stages of construction. These are located beside a 20-feet wide road.

Rajuk officials said the plans were approved between 1996 and 1998 on the basis that the lands were privately owned. They said there was no provision for obtaining Environmental Certificate at that time.

Rajuk sources also said that on the approved plans, it was falsely shown that the adjacent roads were more than 30-feet wide. The entire area belonged to the Adel family, which managed to retain the property during the then government's land acquisition drive, which began in early 1950s.

Experts said restriction on building height has been imposed

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A number of high-rise buildings are being constructed in the city's Dhanmondi area in violation of rules. -- Star photo