

## ● What's on today... ●

**BUP seminar:** Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad will hold a seminar on Floods 2000: South-Western Region of Bangladesh. Venue: BUP auditorium, House No 33, Rd No 4, Dhanmondi R/A. Time: 9.00 am-1.30 pm.

**Painting competition:** Kendriyo Kanchi Kanchar Mela will hold a painting competition to mark the 71st birth anniversary of Abdullah Al-Muti. Venue: Mela premises, 37/A, Segunbagicha. Time: 9.30 am.

**FEJB AGM and seminar:** Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh will hold its 17th annual general conference. It will also hold a seminar on "Greening National Budget." Venue: VIP conference room of National Press Club. Time: 10.00 am.

**Dialogue:** Democracy Watch will hold a dialogue on Problems of Traffic in Dhaka. Chief guest: DCC Mayor Mohammad Hanif. Venue: 7, Circuit House Road, Ramna. Time: 10.00 am-1.00 pm.

**BUET convocation:** The sixth convocation of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) will be held. Chief guest: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Venue: BUET premises. Time: 10.30 am.

**Discussion meeting:** Narsingdi Zila Jubo Foundation will hold a discussion meeting to mark the 32nd death anniversary of Shaheed Asad. Venue: Muktagan. Time: 3.00 pm.

**Open discussion:** Transparency International Bangladesh in association with the tri-monthly magazine Bichoyon will hold an open discussion on Discipline in Society and Morality. Venue: Planning and Development Academy auditorium, Nilkhet. Time: 3.00 pm.

**Open dialogue:** The Daily Prothom Alo will hold a roundtable on "Crisis in the Power Sector: Ways Out." Venue: Kabi Sufia Kamal auditorium, National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 3.00 pm-6.00 pm.

**Founding anniversary:** Bigyan Chetona Parishad will hold a rally to mark its fifth founding anniversary. Venue: Novara Hall, National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 4.00 pm.

**Premiere:** Step Towards Development will hold the premiere of its documentary film Perception: The Other Canvas on six female painters of the country. Venue: National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 5.00 pm.

**Workshop:** Centre for Medical Education will begin a 3-day workshop on Holistic Approach. Venue: Seminar room of the Centre, Janashasthya Protishthan Bhaban (2nd Floor), Mohakhali.

**Farewell programme:** The students of the MSc final part students of the Geography Department of Eden Women's University College will bring out a farewell procession to mark the end of their course. Venue: Eden College premises to Jatiya Press Club. Time: 10.00 am.

**Workshop:** BIDS, PPRC and IDS, Sussex will hold a brain-storming workshop titled "Making Rights Real: Accountability, Participation and Citizenship Issues in the Context of Bangladesh." Venue: LGED seminar room (Level 4), Agargaon. Time: 9.30 am-4.00 pm.



President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed speaking at the 17th Rotary District Conference 2001 held in Hotel Sheraton yesterday. -PID photo

## Rajuk flouts its own rules

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considering environmental impact and how utility services are equipped in that area to provide those services. A landowner, in no way, should be exempted from the restriction, they said.

The buildings are being constructed in violation of not only the restriction on height, but also of the Building Construction Rules. The law provides for minimum "clearance distance" of buildings of various heights from public roads. For instance, for a 20-storey building, the adjacent road must be at least 75-ft wide.

Neighbours and experts said that once completed, the buildings would accommodate about 500 more families in the area. This additional load of

population will not only create a chaotic living condition but also have a serious environmental impact.

The additional load in such a small 'enclave' will also have a severe impact on electricity-gas-water supply, telephone lines, road space, parking space and sewerage lines in the area which is already facing severe shortage of these amenities.

The building height in the remaining part of PWD-controlled Dhanmondi residential area is restricted to six stories.

Rajuk's Authorised Officer SM Asaduzzaman and other officials expressed concern over 'creation' of a high-rise 'enclave' in Dhanmondi. They said they have stopped approving any building plan above six-storey.

Rajuk officials blamed the then authorities who, "failed to impose the height restriction on privately owned property in the area." One Rajuk source said the former Authorised Officer, Nurunnabi, now living in the USA permanently, approved so many plans in the area.

Prof J. M. I. Reza Choudhury, Professor of Civil Engineering at BUET, told The Daily Star that as per law, approval from all relevant utility companies must be obtained before starting construction of a high-rise building.

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## Contributions of Zia recalled

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the occupation forces. He was a valiant freedom fighter and the chief of 'Z' Force in the War of Independence in 1971.

He was awarded the gallantry award "Bit Uttam" for bravery during the nine-month war.

He was assassinated on May 30, 1981 in an abortive military coup in Chittagong while he was President of Bangladesh.

To celebrate Zia's birth anniversary, the central committees of BNP and its front organisations began an 11-day programme on January 16. The programmes include milad mahfil, discussion meetings, blood donation, cultural programmes and rallies.

All city and district units began three-day programmes yesterday. Thana units also observed day-long programmes

on the day.

In the capital, the day's programme began with hoisting of party flag at the party central office. The programme included milad mahfil, Quran Khwan, blood donation and discussion meeting.

Leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations placed wreaths and offered fete at the mazar in the morning. A special prayer was held and a blood donation programme was organised on its premises.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia along with top party leaders, MPs and activists placed wreaths and offered fete at the mazar at about 10:15am.

The leaders included Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, M Saifur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, and Prof M A Mazed.

Ahmed Siddique, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Sadeque Hossain Khoka and Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain.

Wreaths were then placed by leaders of city BNP, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Juba Dal, Sramik Dal, Krishak Dal, Mohila Dal, Jasas, Zia Shishu-Kishore Sangathan, Ulema Dal, Sechhashebik Dal and Zia Parishad.

In the afternoon, BNP organised a discussion meeting at the Engineers' Institution with party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

It was addressed by, among others, Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Hamidullah Khan and Prof M A Mazed.

## Estrada may flee country

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get Estrada his political career ruined by a scandal centring on money, mistresses and mansions to leave imminently.

"A peaceful negotiation is taking place for a quick resignation of the president within the next few hours," said one of the protest leaders, Gov Jose Lina of Laguna Province.

Another protest leader, Pastor Saycon, said Estrada had been offered a plane to leave and

indicated at one point he wanted to go to Australia. The talks broke down when Estrada's foes asked him to sign a letter of resignation, Saycon told local television.

"He's still requesting if he could bring some money with him so it's best that the negotiation was called off," Saycon said.

Some 250,000 anti-Estrada demonstrators crowding around a monument to the 1986 revolt that toppled late dictator Ferdinand Marcos responded by shouting "No negotiations!"

She wasn't buying it, and it was also unclear whether Estrada's partial concession would satisfy the protesters.

The end for Estrada, however it eventually plays out, became inevitable earlier in the day.

Military chief Gen Angelo Reyes abandoned the president's camp and joined the protesters, saying Estrada and his family should be allowed to "exit with dignity."

Other leaders seeking Estrada's ouster called for reconciliation in the Southeast Asia island nation that has endured political turmoil since a provincial governor went public in October with charges the president took millions in gambling kickbacks and tobacco tax money. The president denied the allegations but found himself tried on impeachment charges.

The case collapsed at least temporarily when senators serving as judges voted narrowly on Tuesday to exclude bank records that prosecutors say would prove Estrada was corrupt. The prosecutors resigned and protests against Estrada built daily.

Speaking on national television for the second time on a riveting day of political intrigue, Estrada said earlier he wants the election in May, when Filipinos will fill half of the Senate seats and all of the House of Representatives. Experts questioned if this is constitutionally possible

because the president and vice president had not quit.

"Since I still have the support of a significant segment of our people, I don't think that the present polarization can be healed by a new leader who will take over without an electoral mandate from our people," Estrada said, clearly intending to shut out Arroyo.

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Al-haj Abul Hossain, acting chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, speaking at a programme to mark the 4-day long first aid training programme organised by BDRCS recently.

## Nirmul's fresh vow to try war criminals

Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday observed its founding anniversary taking a fresh vow to hold trial of war criminals, reports UNB.

A discussion meeting was held at the TSC of Dhaka University with poet Shamsur Rahman in the chair.

Addressing the meeting, Shamsur Rahman called upon the young to continue their struggle for establishing truth, justice and welfare.

Barrister Shawkat Ali, Syed Hassan Imam, Kazi Mukul, Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, Golam Quddus and Afzal Hossain, among others, addressed the function.

"We have never been so close to peace," Ben Ami said by peace, reports AFP.

"The gaps are there, they need to be bridged, but we are very close," he added.

Ben Ami said he had received a colorful procession was brought out which paraded the streets from Shahbagh to Central Shaheed Minar.

A meeting of Israel's "peace cabinet," which was to decide on

## Middle East peace hopes hanging in balance

JERUSALEM, Jan 19: Peace prospects were in the balance today, with Israel delaying its response to a Palestinian proposal for 10 days of marathon talks, but with Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben Ami saying the two sides have never been closer to peace, reports AFP.

The official said only that "Prime Minister Ehud Barak needs to think about it over the weekend. He supports the contacts with Palestinians reducing violence."

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat said the Palestinians had not been formally informed of Israel's decision regarding the negotiations.

"They (the Israelis) have responded to us at this point," Erakat told AFP. "It was expected that they would today but they have not yet."

Meanwhile outgoing US

President Bill Clinton appealed in open letters Friday to Israelis and Palestinians to continue efforts to end their decades-long conflict.

(Earlier report on page 5)

## 15 hurt in road mishap in city

By Staff Correspondent

At least 15 people were injured, eight of them seriously, when a minibus and a 'human hauler' collided head on near the Nagar Bhaban in the city yesterday.

The eight were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The accident took place at about 3 pm when the Mirpur bound minibus hit the human hauler coming from the opposite direction, hospital sources said.

Those hospitalised are Zahid, 45; Ramij, 50; Kamala, 40; Noori, 40; Nurunnesa, 40; Imran, 6, and two unidentified persons aged about 44 and 30 respectively.

## PM opens DITF

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Prime Minister herself, to resolve any problems relating to export.

Finance Minister S A M Kibria, Commerce Minister M A Jalil, Commerce Secretary Ghulam Rahman, FBCI President Yusuf Abdulla Harun and EPB Vice-Chairman A B Chowdhury also spoke at the opening function of the month-long exhibition of domestic and foreign products.

"We want to build a poverty and illiteracy-free developed Bangladesh so that none can look down upon us," Hasina said. "My experience of ruling the country for four and a half years convinced me that if the people can be given a right direction, they can do the impossible."

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The Prime Minister said some 6,232 projects worth \$12,290 million were registered with the Board of Investment during her rule since July 1996.

Besides, 89,557 big, medium and small industries have so far been set up generating employment for several lakh people. She said GDP marked a growth of 5.92 per cent, per-capita income stood at \$386 and inflation rate was contained at 2.28 per cent.

Hasina said export-import performance also gained a remarkable progress, registering export of \$5,750 million in 1999-2000 against \$3,880 million in 1995-96. In July-November of the current fiscal year, exports earned \$2,762 million, which is 5 per cent higher than the target.

The Prime Minister said it was possible to achieve 14 per cent growth in industrial sector during the first half of the current fiscal year overcoming the impact of

## Bush for fresh start

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Representatives in 1998 and his acquittal in the Senate the following year.

As the clock ran down to the inauguration, Bush was celebrated by Martin and country singers reflecting his Texas origins.

Martin belted out his Latino smash "Cup of Life" which was used by Bush aides for almost every campaign rally to stress his claim to connect with Hispanic voters.

As Bush's transition parties got underway, security forces in Washington went on high alert for an expected flood of protesters hostile to Bush's policies.

Police, who say they expect more than 5,000 anti-Bush demonstrators at Saturday's festivities, plan to deploy nearly 3,600 officers, backed up by 2,500 Secret Service agents and reinforcements from neighbouring jurisdictions.

International Action Centre, an umbrella protest organising group, said it would be demonstrating against "the incoming Bush administration and its racist, sexist, anti-gay, militaristic, anti-labour and pro-big business policies."

Bush claims to be a compassionate conservative but his real compassion is reserved for the giant pharmaceutical, oil, banking and other corporations," the group said in a statement.

Bush spent Thursday morning at a meeting of the Republican National Committee and polishing his inaugural address at Blair House, a government guest house across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, spokesman Ari Fleischer said.

He is looking forward to the events of the next few days with a mixture of "graciousness, of humility and opportunity," Fleischer said.

"He really views this as the moment when everything that he believes in and ran on in the campaign can begin to get enacted into law."

## 6 inter-district dacoits held in Gopalganj