

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 322nd death anniversary of Shaheed Asad. Venue: Muktangan. 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: Novera 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 long 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: From 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.

..... and tomorrow

**Inauguration:** Grameen Software will inaugurate its Novell Education Academic Partner (NEAP) programme. Venue: Grameen Bank auditorium (2nd Floor), Grameen Bank Complex, Mirpur-2. Time: 3.00 pm.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country during the next 12 hours till 6pm today, reports UNB. Moderate to thick fog may occur over northern part and the river basins of the country, Met Office said forecasting little change in night temperature. The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 29.7 degree Celsius at Sitakunda and the lowest 6.3 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5.36 pm and rises tomorrow at 6.43 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:			
City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning Evening
Dhaka	26.5	15.3	53 52
Chittagong	29.0	11.0	71 59
Rajshahi	25.5	08.8	64 64
Khulna	26.8	10.6	74 67
Barisal	26.4	10.0	87 80
Sylhet	28.2	12.0	69 50
Cox's Bazar	28.8	15.0	64 66

\$151m WB loan for poverty alleviation

WASHINGTON, Jan 19: The World Bank on Thursday approved a 151 million dollar loan for Bangladesh aimed at reducing poverty, Reuters. The concessional loan is the country's ability to aimed at boosting access to credit and ensuring sustain its micro-lending programmes. The project builds on an earlier \$105 million loan from 1996 that helped provide microcredit loans to about 2.2 million borrowers by the end of last year. In addition to extending small loans to the nation's poorest people, the new loan will help the government design a regulatory and supervisory framework to improve the credit-worthiness of nongovernmental organisations and micro-finance institutions disbursing the loans on behalf of the World Bank.

6 inter-district dacoits held in Gopalganj

**From Our Correspondent** GOPALGANJ, Jan 19: Police arrested six inter-district dacoits and recovered a country-made pistol from their possession at village Majeegati under Kashiani upazila of the district at midnight lastnight. Acting on a tip-off, police raided the village and arrested the dacoits while the gang is preparing for committing dacoity in the village. The arrested dacoits are Alir Rahman, 25, A Jalil 22, Shihabar Rahman, 25, Faruk, 21, Mofizul, 20, Waliur Rahman, 21, Selim, 24, Nazmul, 22 and Shipu, 23.

BCL armed cadre 'Mota' Selim held in Khulna

**From Staff Correspondent** KHULNA, Jan 19: Mostafizur Rahman alias Mota Selim, an alleged armed cadre of BCL city unit, was arrested on Thursday from Young Boys' Club housed in the KDSA building. He was wanted in more than 10 criminal cases, police said. On February 8, 2000, Selim kidnapped Forest Ranger Rashed Ahmed for not paying toll and issuing a permit for timber from the Sundarbans. The BCL armed cadre is one of the accused in a rape case and Shibir leader Zaman murder case filed with Sonadanga thana in 1993. Selim was arrested with illegal firearms from a house at Dharmasava cross road under Khulna thana in 1997.

CPB rally at Paltan today

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) will hold a 'grand rally at Paltan Maidan today, reports UNB. Leaders of the party and various socio-political organisations, and eminent intellectuals will address the rally. Party president Monzurul Ahsan Khan will chair it. Prof Mozaffar Ahmed, Rashed Khan Menon, Sarder Fazlul Karim, Sirajul Islam Chowdhury and Syed Hassan Imam will address the meeting to express solidarity with the party's view. The rally will be followed by a procession, said a party press release.



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

Rajuk flouts its own rules

From Page 1 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-storied building, the adjacent road must be at least 75-feet 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 Jamilur 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. "I think all these tall buildings will have an impact on utility services and environment in the area. The authorities should review the situation and find a suitable solution," he said.

Contributions of Zia recalled

From Page 1 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 "Bir 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 Khwani, blood donation and discussion meeting. Leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations placed wreaths and offered fatiha 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 fatiha at the mazar at about 10.15am. The leaders included Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, M Sairur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Chowdhury Tanveer

Ahmed Siddique, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Sadeque Hossain Khoka and Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain. Wreaths were then placed by leaders of city BNP, Jatiyataabadi Chhatra Dal, Juba Dal, Sramik Dal, Krishak Dal, Mohila Dal, Jasas, Zia Shishu-Kishore Sangathan, Ulema Dal, Secchhashebak 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

From Page 1 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

24 kidnapped bawalis, fishermen rescued from Sundarbans

SATKHIRA, Jan 19: Police rescued 24 kidnapped Bawalis (woodcutter) and fishermen from Balabari area of the Sundarbans after a fierce gunfight with the kidnappers on Thursday, reports UNB. Police today said three Bawalis and fishermen were injured during two-hour long gunfight on the bank of Malancha river. The gunfight took place when police raided the area to rescue the kidnapped people. At one stage, the terrorists released the abducted people and fled to the deep forest. The injured identified as Abdul Khaleq, 45, Bachha Khokon, 32, and Abdur Razzaq, 40, of Datoneykhali in Shaymnagar upazila were admitted to Shaymnagar Hospital. The 24 Bawalis and fishermen were kidnapped from the Sundarbans on January 13 for Tk 10 lakh ransom.

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. 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 recon- ciliation 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.

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 1985 revolt that toppled late dictator Ferdinand Marcos responded by shouting "No negotiations!" Arroyo, daughter of a former president, has led an opposition campaign joined by such unlikely allies as big business and left-wing communist groups. A presidential spokesman said the president was having dinner with his family inside the palace, Malacanang, when the personnel carriers, reportedly full of presidential guards, moved in and positioned themselves in front of Estrada's residence. A guard outside said they were there to help protect Estrada, a former action film star who won office as a champion of the nation's impoverished millions. 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

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. Later, a colorful procession was brought out which paraded the streets from Shahbagh to Central Shaheed Minar.

Civil society

From Page 12 for the benefit of garment employees, ninety per cent of whom are women. Rotary International President's personal representative, Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" I Bolante, Rotarian District Governor Hasan Maniruzzaman, past District Governor Iftekharul Alam and conference chairman A K M Shamsuddin also spoke on the occasion. Rotary representative teams from Canada and Japan are attending the "Protitee 2001" meet.

Timber seized

From Page 12 The recovered logs were being taken to Dangnam Forest Office, UNB Bagerhat correspondent added. The operation will continue for another two days, sources said. Meanwhile, Mongla Port security patrol team caught two alleged pirates with a shutter gun and four bullets while they were roaming around suspiciously in a trawler in the river Poshur Thursday night. The arrested identified as Enayet Khan, 35, of Morelganj upazila and Mostafa of Bagerhat sadar were handed over to Mongla police. Police said the arrested persons were involved in piracy in different areas adjoining the port. A case was filed with local police against them.

Congress hopes

From Page 12 discuss 'mahajot' idea with Mamata. The Trinamool Congress chief's statements yesterday on ties with BJP must have been music for BJP, especially in its West Bengal unit, where there have some anxiety about her posture towards the saffron party, given the strained equations between her and BJP leader and federal minister from the state Tapan Sikdar. The present chief of West Bengal BJP is Ashim Ghosh who considered a protege of Sikdar. Evidently, Mamata is guided by her admiration for Vajpayee and the good relations between her and BJP central leadership. A section of BJP leaders in West Bengal have been wondering about Trinamool's electoral strategy in the state in the wake of the controversy that had been triggered by Vajpayee's controversial remarks on Ram temple issue in November last year, the remarks which were protested by Mamata's party. Given the fact that Trinamool Congress will be eyeing for minority votes in the state, there has been some uncertainty in BJP circles, which were admitted only privately, about Mamata's stance. Her remarks yesterday must have been reassuring for the BJP.

9 drown

From Page 1 Ranu, 5; Rahima Khatun, 30 and her mother-in-law Sufia Khatun, 70; Nahida Akhtar, 10 - all from Manpura -- and Shah Md Babul, 45, a school teacher from Tazmuddin. Manpura police seized the trawler after it was salvaged Thursday night. Police said owner of the trawler-- Shamsuddin Chowdhury-- could not be traced. For about 60,000 people of Manpura in the Bay, there is only one state-run sea-truck, which is out of operation for quite sometime now, official sources there said. People have to take the risk of travelling in overcrowded trawlers to go outside their tiny island.

Take the money

From Page 1 lem, she should contact the nearest police out-post, the Sub-inspector advised her. "All of us are in fear. If those people come to kill us, how can I inform police?" she asked. Exactly at 10-07 am yesterday, in presence of this correspondent, two armed policemen led by two plain-clothed men arrived at Halima Khatun's Mohammadpur residence on foot. The team leader of the policemen identified himself as Havidar Farid. Farid told Halima Khatun that she should inform the nearby police out-post if she has any problem in her house. "Just send a small kid to inform us. We are always round the corner," Havidar Farid told Halima in presence of this correspondent.

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. "We have never been so close to peace," Ben Ami was quoted by the Turkish news agency Anatolia as saying on his arrival in Ankara for meetings with Turkish officials. Later, after talks with Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, he said that, "on the basis of the parameters of (US) President Bill Clinton ... we have come very, very close (to peace)." "The gaps are there, they need to be bridged, but we are very close," he added. Ben Ami said he had received from the Turkish leadership a commitment to try to bring the two parties closer. A meeting of Israel's "peace cabinet," which was to decide on

Centres for Hons exams to remain unchanged: NU

National University authorities have said its decision to continue holding honours examinations in the previous centres have not been changed, reports UNB. "The centres of 1999 will remain valid this year also. There is no confusion about this," said a university press release yesterday. The NU authorities called upon all concerned not to be misguided by the rumours about changes of honours examination centres. Those hospitalised are Zahir, 45; Ramji, 50; Kamola, 40; Noori, 40; Nurunnesa, 40; Imran, 6, and two unidentified persons aged about 44 and 30 respectively.

PM opens DITF

From Page 1 Prime Minister herself, to resolve any problems relating to export. Finance Minister S A M S Kibria, Commerce Minister M A Jalil, Commerce Secretary Ghulam Rahman, FBCCI President Yussuf Abdullah Harun and EPB Vice-Chairman A B Chowdhury also spoke at the opening function of the month-long exhibition of domestic and foreign products. Products of some 431 companies are being put on display in 40 pavilions, 62 mini-pavilions and 329 stalls at the designated Sher-e-Bangladesh fair ground for DITF-2001 that has a greater participation than last year. More than 63 firms and organisations from 22 foreign countries and as many as 383 local business houses and organisations are participating in the international trade fair. 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

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 after 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."



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.