

# 'A society is not civilised if women can't move freely'

Former Chief Justice Mostafa Kamal has wondered how this society, where women cannot move safely, can be called civilised, reports UNB.

"I agree on the growth rate of development. But if the indicator of civilisation is that no woman can move safely anywhere in the country, then how this society and country can be called civilised," he said.

The former Chief Justice was delivering the convocation speech at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) during its 6th Convocation Ceremony yesterday.

Justice Mostafa Kamal said a number of positive steps have been taken for empowerment of women. "But our mothers and sisters still can't move safely during daytime or at night."

Referring to the situation in some neighbouring countries, he said there he saw women move alone even at night and their security is not hampered.

The former Chief Justice told the BUET graduates that dignity of people "came down to the level of our politics." He said: "I believe a strong and firm political will can protect us from this law and order situation and the hated game of character assassination."

# Preparations underway for SMF rally Jan 27

Massive preparations to hold a grand rally of freedom fighters and people (Muktijoddha-Janata) at Barisal on January 27 have generated enthusiasm among the pro-liberation forces, reports BSS from Barisal.

Organised by Sammilito Muktijoddha Front (SMF), the grand rally will be held at Bangabandhu Uddayan.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address the grand rally as chief guest.

Leaders of SMF has launched a hectic mass contact programme in five districts of Barisal Division from January 18 to organise the biggest ever FF-people's rally, the sixth in a row in divisional headquarters.

As part of the mass contact programme, Chairman of SMF and Political Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr S A Malek exchanged views with different pro-liberation political parties, socio-cultural and professional organisations and addressed nine rallies in Barisal, Barguna and Patuakhali during the last 48 hours.

# VHP sets deadline for temple construction

ALLAHABAD, India, Jan 20: Hardline Hindus at a religious summit today gave the Indian government until March 12 next year to "remove all obstacles" from the construction of a controversial temple on the site of a razed mosque, reports AFP.

Construction of the temple to the Hindu warrior Lord Rama would begin on "any auspicious day" after March 12, which marks a major Hindu festival, on the site of the former Babri mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya, a statement issued at the summit said.

The 16th century mosque was razed by Hindu fundamentalists on December 6, 1992. The sacrilege sparked nationwide sectarian riots which left at least 2,000 people dead.

The deadline was imposed at a summit sponsored by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, World Hindu Forum) at the Maha Kumbh Mela Hindu pilgrimage on the banks of the Ganges River near the town of Allahabad.

A resolution adopted unanimously by the summit of 4,000 Hindu holy men and other religious leaders said 2002 marked the golden jubilee of the renovation of Somnath Temple to Lord Shiva.

VHP general secretary Pravinbhai Togadia said the temple "may not be an agenda of the government but surely it is an agenda of Hindu society."

He was referring to a New Year warning by Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee that a status quo on the temple-mosque row would have to be maintained.

"The parties which choose not to abide by our deadline or go against it will be finally wiped out from the political map," added Togadia.

# BUET convocation ceremony

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said. The government achieved a growth rate of 5.92, the highest in last 25 years, she added.

The poverty has reduced, per capita income increased and export is increasing day by day.

The Prime Minister said foreign and local investment has also increased remarkably during this present government.

She said the government has undertaken effective programmes for the spread of education and for raising the literacy rate. "In last four and half years, literacy has gone up to 64 per cent from 47 per cent."

Country's export earning has reached to 5.75 billion US dollars in 1999-2000 while it was only 3.88 billion dollars in 1995-96, she said. The government would be able to exceed the export target in the current year.

For the development of science and technology, she said,

the government is setting up 12 science and technology universities across the country. "We are considering to turn three of these universities into information technology and multi-media based universities."

Sheikh Hasina said allocation in the science and technology sector has been increased by seven times by the present government.

The Prime Minister entered the convocation hall wearing the traditional convocation robe and following the convocation procession.

Earlier, she laid the foundation of new administrative building of BUET at West Palashi. The first phase of the 12-storied twin building will be completed at a cost of Tk 3.1 crore. Apart from administrative works the building will have facilities of holding classes for 1000 students.

# Clash over possession of land in Faridpur: Four killed

Faridpur, Jan 20: Four people were killed in a clash between two rival groups of villagers at village Dobra in Boalmari upazila of the district yesterday, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Ratan Sheikh, 56, his brother Daliluddin, 52, day labourers Abdus Salam, 25, and Billal, 19, of the village.

Police said two rival groups one led by Alim, Nannu and Chand Mia clashed with another groups led by Ratan Sheikh in the morning over possession of 56 decimal land.

Both groups used lethal weapons during an hour-long clash.

Police arrested one person in this connection and sent the bodies to the Faridpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with Boalmari upazila.

# Lalon's shrine

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"We appeal to the authorities to remove all under-construction structures from the shrine area and install those at an alternative site," the statement said.

Sources in Kushtia said the huge project involves 'some influential men of the ruling party' who would never like to see it slip away from their hands.

"The Lalon Academy which did nothing to preserve Lalon's shrine and his works is in charge of the project. The Academy has involved ruling party men in lucrative deals. Now they do not want the project stopped," said a source in Kushtia.

"Lalon's followers are not people to sit inside an auditorium. For over a century bards and other followers of Lalon preferred to sit under trees, sing Lalon's songs and meditate. The idea of constructing a 500-seat auditorium is nothing but a pretext to make money out of a weird thought," said a lawyer in Kushtia over phone.

# The bomb

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gated iron. It was not a dynamite with analogue timing devise, he said.

The devise was fused probably with oil-soaked cloth, or a card board with gun powder around it," he said.

"The person who threw it had to ignite it earlier," he said. "Had it been an analogue timing devise, the causality would have been much more in a crowd like this."

However, a witness said that the bomb might have been wrapped in a bag and planted under the carpet on which the participants were standing. It might have exploded due to sudden pressure, the witness said.

# Law Minister

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Court by pro-opposition lawyers, filing of a case under Public Safety Act (PSA) against 16 lawyers and a BNP MP and a writ by them.

Meanwhile, the Law Minister told a group of newsmen at his residence yesterday evening that the Prime Minister already made her opinion clear on the appointment of judges in the Supreme Court.

"The Constitution was not violated in their (the two lawyers) appointment. If top lawyers of the country want to meet her even after her public statements at two rallies, they are welcome", he said.

# PM shock

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but did not rule out the involvement of Jamaat-Shibir or bourgeois parties in and out of power who do not like the CPB and left parties emerge as the third force.

He, however, said the incident was part of a design to disrupt stability before the next general elections. "We hope a clear picture would emerge shortly after a high-level inquiry into it."

The CPB leader also blamed police for its inaction after the bomb blast at Paltan Maidan, saying even they did not come in aid with ambulance despite fervent request for carrying the injured people to hospital.

# Melancholy

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eight years, the president announced a disbursement of federal funds: at least dlr 110 million to finance hiring of 1,400 police officers nationwide.

Clinton also recalled his first radio address as president in January 1993, in which he discussed the social challenges the country faced and his "abiding faith" in the people's ability to turn things around.

"Now, my job as your president draws to a close, and the work of our new president begins," Clinton said. "Thanks to your work, he takes the reins of a nation renewed, ready to move into a new century and a whole new era in human affairs. I join every American in wishing him Godspeed."

Clinton did not mention the greatest travail of his presidency the investigation into his efforts to cover up his affair with Monica Lewinsky. That case concluded Friday with a deal through which Clinton avoided indictment by giving up his Arkansas law license for five years and admitting in a writing that he gave false statements under oath about the affair.



State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Rafiqul Islam speaking at an open dialogue on 'Crisis in power sector: Ways to overcome', organised by the daily Prothom Alo, in the city yesterday. From left (sitting) are Nuruddin M Kamal, former chairman of PDB, Md Aziz Khan, Chairman of United Summit Power Co, Brig (ret'd) M A Malek, Chairman of PDB, Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Chairman of REB, Azimur Rahman, former vice-president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Kazi Zahirul Azam, Member of DESA.

# Estrada forced out

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His highly charged opponents and smaller groups of supporters got into shoving matches early Saturday near one road-block, where rocks and one small explosive were thrown. Police fired at least one warning shot but there were no reports of injuries.

The end was inglorious for the man who won popular support as a champion of the poor but ended up being tried on corruption charges. The situation worsened Tuesday as senators serving as judges narrowly refused to open bank records that prosecutors say would have proven Estrada's guilt, and the impeachment trial collapsed.

Protests swelled and Estrada was devastated Friday by a string of high-level defections. At least a quarter million people demanded his resignation during a raucous rally at the site of the "people power" revolt 15 years earlier.

Some 75,000 marched on the palace Saturday with tens of thousands more lending their support along the roadsides or rallying elsewhere.

As Estrada tried to negotiate as favorable an exit as possible raising issues said to have included his departure from the nation as well as requests to take some of his fortune demonstrators began the march that symbolized his defeat.

Some rode in trucks and waved big flags and banners, but most were on foot, shouting and giving thumbs-down signs for Estrada, known by the nickname "Erap."

The emotional crowd eventually reached a barricade not far from the palace gates and pushed through, yelling "Peace!" at the riot police who quickly retreated.

"This is the only way to show President Estrada that he has to step down for the good of the country and the love of the nation," said one protest leader, Teddy Casino.

Estrada tried to buy time Friday with two appearances on national television. He offered to restart his impeachment trial, then later urged Congress to call snap elections in May, saying he would stay out of the race.

It was a clear attempt to thwart Macapagal-Arroyo, the daughter of a former president who headed an opposition group made up of such diverse elements as big business and left-wing labor and communist forces.

Sources earlier said three airplanes were put on standby at nearby Villamor Air Base, and that immigration officials were told to go there and prepare to process some people leaving the country soon.

The US Embassy issued a statement hoping for continued good relations with the Philippine government.

"The United States is pleased that the presidential crisis... has been resolved without violence and in accordance with democratic and constitutional procedures," the statement said.

Minutes after Estrada went on television for the first time Friday, military chief Gen. Angelo Reyes abandoned the president and joined the anti-Estrada demonstration.

Chanting and dancing protesters jubilantly declared victory, after hanging the president in effigy and conducting a mock trial that found him guilty. The rally echoed demonstrations against Marcos, who fled when the military turned against him.

# Kibria for 'eco-friendly' budget

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stroke engines had been banned. The government will not permit it any more.

About the steps to clean the city's environment, the minister said the government has offered loans for CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) conversion of two-stroke engine auto-rickshaws through the Sonali Bank. Another window will be opened at Janata Bank for providing soft term credit for this to autorickshaw operators submitting necessary papers, he added.

But he regretted that there had been little response to the government offer of loans and urged environmental journalists to write on the operators' failure to avail the opportunity.

On the alleged smuggling of CKD (completely knocked down) two-stroke engines, Kibria urged journalists to investigate it so that the government could take steps.

The minister hoped that environmental journalists would continue to identify factories which have installed waste treatment plants and which have not. This would make the government's job easier, he said.

He urged members of FEJB to investigate other vital issues like impact of pesticides and fertilizers on agriculture.

Kibria said improvement of environment was related to elimination of poverty and expediting economic growth. In this connection, he pointed out that his predecessor had unusually expanded credit facilities in 1994-95, asking bank managers to fulfil their quota and its impact was seen in 1997-98 with so many defaulters. "Now we have restored banking discipline, strengthened Bangladesh Bank, set up Artha Rin Adalat, made legal provisions concerning bankruptcy and tightened legal steps. All these have led to positive results," he said.

The minister mentioned that Sonali Bank has now recorded a 10 per cent fall in defaulted loans and Agrani Bank 29 per cent. "By 2002, we would like to reduce it to 15 per cent," he added.

Ms Leigh Stubbleford in her speech laid emphasis on greening the national budget to help achieve development.

She said equal attention must be paid to economic development, social development and conservation of environment. Environmental degradation leads to significant impact on health and this should be taken into consideration while weighing development, she noted.

Quamrul Islam Choudhury said since the inception of FEJB in the early eighties with active patronage by SAMS Kibria, the then Executive Secretary of ESCAP, the organisation has been contributing to improvement of environment. He called for more emphasis on environmental issues in the national budget.

Later, the annual general meeting approved the general secretary's report, treasurer's report, audit report and amended constitution of FEJB.



Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to mark the 65th birth anniversary of late president Ziaur Rahman.

# Underworld gang member shot dead

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improving, hospital sources said. Bahdur was son of one Anwar Hossain Pahari.

The sources said Javed returned from India on Friday after treatment.

Chanchal, the main associate of Subrata Bayen, is also an accused in the Papri murder case. Papri, a model, was killed in Uttara in the city last month.

There may be more killings any time in the city as both the gangs are consolidating their position following the incident, the sources said.

Control over some city markets for extortion, dollar business in the curb market and smuggling through Zia International Airport (ZIA) are the main reasons behind the rivalry between the two gangs for years, the sources said.

Both the gangs have strong links with top political leaders and enjoy their blessings, they said.

Members of the gangs are wanted in connection with multiple crimes. Police say they can not be arrested unless order comes from the top.

Sources said Maghbazar is "controlled" by Subrata Bayen, top leader of the Seven Star and Eskaton by Five Star's top leader Liakot Hossain. The gangs are locked in violent clashes frequently.

# Commercialise PDB

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Aziz Khan disclosed that the country is deprived of ten to twelve percent of its total industrial production due crisis in the sector which is equivalent to about Tk 500 crore.

Due to absence of investment, the sector is not getting tk 15 billion for maintenance the total asset of country's power sector which worth about Tk 250 billion, he said.

Aziz Khan mentioned that the country's private sector, which is interested to get involved in the power sector, should get the same opportunities as the foreign companies.

K A Saleque, a Petrobangla official, opined that a movement should be launched against industries which are responsible for non-technical systems loss.

Mohammad Alauddin, general secretary of the Jatiya Biddyt Sramik League, said that only one lineman is discharging his duties at Shariatpur Municipality where there are about 11.5 thousand consumers. He also accused authorities of abusing PDB's 'reward and punishment scheme.'

He along with some other employees' association leaders opposed the idea that privatisation can improve the situation in power sector.

Nuruddin Kamal said, "The government has no clear commitment in the power sector which has resulted in its poor condition."

He also said all the prescription of the consultants were not correct. He put emphasis on structure, discipline and motivation for improvement in the sector alleging that extreme indiscipline is prevailing in the PDB.

Some other participants questioned the rationale behind formation of DESCO when DESA itself proved a failure.

Member Engineering of DESA said that this year the suffering of the people due to power in the city would be lesser, as some projects were likely to be completed soon.

Besides, he hoped that the situation would improve to a great extent by 2002 when the Ninth Power Project, financed by ADB finance, would be completed.

# Fundamentalists behind bomb attack on CPB rally: Nasim

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim asked police to go for a drastic action against the culprits responsible for the bomb attack on CPB rally, killing four people yesterday.

"Police have been asked to dig out the conspiracy and bring the culprits to book," he told UNB soon after a meeting with the senior police officials at his residence over the deadly incident.

He said an inquiry committee would be formed and the primary indication was that the fundamentalist forces were behind the gruesome killings.

In support of his contentions, the Home Minister said the Hawker's Kalyan Samity is linked with Jamaat politics and the two vendors who were killed shortly after the incident died in front of that Samity office.

"The communal and fundamentalist forces who were responsible for eight murders in Chittagong, killings at Udichi function in Jessore and who had planted explosives to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Kotlipara are involved in this incident," he said.

# Bush to live and lead

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In excerpts of the inaugural address released in advance, Bush said he will "live and lead" by firm principles: "To advance my convictions with civility, to pursue the public interest with courage, to speak for greater justice and compassion, to call for responsibility, and try to live it as well."

He told Americans that "what you do is as important as anything government does."

"I ask you to seek a common good beyond your comfort, to defend needed reforms against easy attacks, to serve your nation, beginning with your neighbour."

"I ask you to be citizens," he said, "Citizens not spectators. Citizens not subjects. Responsible citizens, building communities of service and a nation of character."

In the inaugural address, Bush offered a special message to Americans who "doubt the promise, even the justice, of our own country," the minority, and especially black citizens who voted overwhelmingly against him.

He disputed those who "seem to believe that our politics can afford to be petty," saying the stakes are too high for that attitude, that there must be leadership to strengthen education, and to make sure that the economy does not "drift and decline."

His most specific promises were: Action to "reclaim America's schools," Reform of Social Security and Medicare, tax cuts "to recover the momentum of our economy" and reward the effort of working Americans and a national defense "beyond challenge," and action to confront "weapons of mass destruction," the national missile defense system he advocates.

# Khaleda, others condemn

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for salvation of the departed souls and expressed sympathy for the members of the bereaved family.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations have also condemned the bomb incident at the Communist Party rally.

Leaders of BNP, Dhaka City unit at a meeting yesterday expressed concern over the bomb attack at the rally. They condemned police action on CPB leaders and activists.

The BNP leaders demanded a judicial probe into the incident and punitive action against the persons responsible.

Convenor of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalah, Nirmul Jatiya Samannaya Committee Syed Hasan Imam and Member Secretary Abdul Mannan Chowdhury condemned the bomb attack at CPB rally and demanded arrest and exemplary punishment to the culprits.

Advocate Elina Khan and Advocate Sigma Huda also protested the bomb attack.

Prosit Krishna, convenor of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) in a statement yesterday condemned the bomb attack at the CPB rally.

Krishna in the statement said the government has been taking revenge on opposition elements all over the country including the Chittagong Hill Tracts in a fascist way.

United Labour Forum (ULF), Bangladesh Chhatra Moitry (BCM) Progotir Poribrajak Dal, Nari Progoty, Suchana Adhayan Chakra, Aneshon Adhayan Chakra, Bitorka Patrika Gosthy also condemned the bomb incident and extended support to the hartal call and other programmes announced by the left leaning alliance.

# Blast at CPB rally

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tear gas shells on them.

Three vehicles of Bangladesh Cricket Control Board also came under their attack.

Roads in the areas looked deserted for some time after the incident.

Later, CPB leaders addressed an impromptu protest rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club. They announced an eight-hour hartal from 6 am today protesting the incident.

They however said they were not blaming any quarters for the incident at the moment. They would first try to ascertain who were involved, they said.

CPB will also hold a protest rally at Muktangan this afternoon.

At DMCH, university students, cultural activists and many others donated blood for the injured. CPB leaders and workers appealed to all for blood and financial help for the victims.

Leader of the Opposition and BNP chief Khaleda Zia and many other political leaders visited DMCH last night to see the victims.

In an instant reaction, CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim told The Daily Star, "It must be an act by evil-forces who do not like the rise of progressive forces in the country."

Workers Party General Secretary Rashed Khan Menon, who also addressed the Paltan Maidan rally minutes before the explosion, said "Success of peoples' movement could not be stalled by exploding bombs and killing communist party activists."

The bomb exploded moments after CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan had embraced Menon on the dais amidst slogans by party workers for unity of all left forces in the country.

Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury of Dhaka University, addressing the rally, called upon the left forces not to side with any big political party in the next general election.

Yesterday's bomb explosion was the second such incident at a political party rally in the city since 1980. Twelve people including a young journalist were killed in an explosion at a rally of the then opposition party Democratic League in front of Baitul Mokarram mosque on May 23, 1980.