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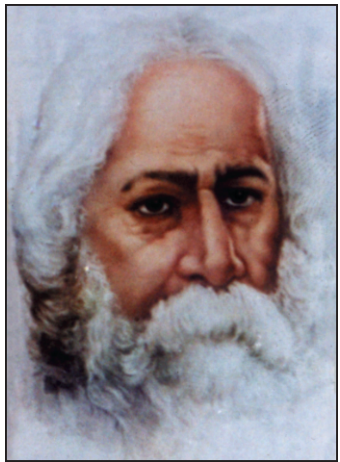
REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XI No. 44

DHAKA TUESDAY MAY 8, 2001

www.dailystarnews.com

16 PAGES PRICE: Tk 6.00



## Tagore's 140th anniversary of birth today

BSS, Dhaka

The nation will celebrate today the 140th birth anniversary of Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore today in a befitting manner.

The government as well as different socio-cultural bodies have chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate "Pachishey Baishakh", the birthday of Bishwakabi Rabindranath Tagore who is the composer of the country's national anthem.

Besides, national dailies will publish supplements while Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and other private channels will air special programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

As part of the national level programmes, the ministry of cultural affairs will organise a two-day discussion and cultural function depicting the life and works of the great poet, whose songs inspired the

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## Budget session starts June 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into its budget session on June 6. According to an official announcement, President Shahabuddin Ahmad yesterday called the 23rd and probably the last session of the seventh parliament. The last session of the JS ended on April 12.

The upcoming session, scheduled for a 10:00am start on June 6, is expected to pass two separate bills seeking autonomy for state-run Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar.

Besides, another bill to provide government funding for the Institute of Child and Mother Care will also be placed in the House, parliament sources said. Donor organisations have so far funded the institute.

The fate of a long-pending bill seeking extension of tenure of the reserved seats for women in the JS will also be decided in the next session. The treasury bench introduced the bill in the House a year ago but failed to pass it due to lack of support from the main opposition BNP.

Should the bill fall through, the eighth JS will have no reserved seats for women, who constitute half of the country's population.

The crucial issue of women's quota is likely to influence election-eering for the upcoming polls, as the two leading parties have already

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 8		6.31 pm
May 9	5-19 am	

Prayer Timings		
May 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-30	6-35
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

## Draft laws for BTv, Betar autonomy okayed

# Key provisions mark departure from commission's recommendations

REAZ AHMAD

The cabinet yesterday approved two draft laws seeking autonomy to Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television. Autonomy to the state-run electronic media was one of Awami League's major electoral pledges in 1996. However, some key provisions in the draft laws do not conform to the recommendations set forth in late 1997 by the Radio-TV Autonomy Commission, a body instituted by the government.

Some members of the commission regretted that the proposed laws not only came at the fag end of the government's tenure but also marked a significant departure from the commission's recommendations.

The two draft laws approved yesterday - Bangladesh Betar Authority Act, 2001 and Bangladesh Television Authority Act, 2001 - contemplate formation of two separate authorities for the two institutions. Each authority would have a chairman with some members to assist in running the affairs of the two electronic media.

The Radio-TV Autonomy Commission, on the contrary, recommended a National Broadcasting Commission to run Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar.

The provision that the government would recruit the chairmen and members of both the Bangladesh Betar Authority and the Bangladesh Television Authority is also not in line with the autonomy commission's recommendations. The commission, headed by former civil servant M Asafuddoula, sug-

gested that the President appoint one chairman and six members of the National Broadcasting Commission.

"It would have been better, if the President had the appointing authority, instead of the government, as we suggested," said Ramendu Majumdar, a member of the autonomy commission.

Majumdar also opposed formation of two separate authorities instead of one broadcasting commission. "The broadcasting commission that we recommended for would have been enough to run the two media."

He regretted that the government had not deemed it necessary to seek views from the autonomy commission while drafting the laws. "We were told that we would be consulted when the bills would be sent to the parliamentary standing committee for scrutiny."

Asaduzzaman Noor, another member of the commission, echoed Majumdar's sentiments. However, he said that there must be some logic behind the government's decision to have two separate bodies to run Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television.

Noor avoided a direct comment on the issue of appointment of chairmen and members to the Betar and BTv authorities, but said that it would better ensure freedom of the electronic media if government withdrew its control.

Both Majumdar and Noor, however, lauded the government's move, belated it was though, and hoped that the country's electronic media, independent of government control, would play a key role.

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Piling work goes on in full swing at a lakeside plot at Gulshan in the city.

## Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake development

# Project deliberately delayed to keep allotments 'secret'?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk is deliberately delaying implementation of the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake development project fearing that its 'secret allotment' of lakeside areas as residential plots would become public, sources concerned said.

The government took up "Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara and Uttara Lake Area Land Use Planning and Development Project" at an estimated cost of Tk 120 crore. But even after eight months, a section of Rajuk officials believed to be involved in 'secret allotments' are deliberately delaying the process of providing the consultants with official map.

Despite instructions from the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, these officials are also delaying the signing of contract with the consultants and are not cooperating with them in starting the work.

The sources said the "consolidated map" provided by Rajuk does not match the reality in the lake areas, particularly in Gulshan Banani Baridhara areas. The consultants were "surprised" to find that many areas shown on the map as lakeside have been secretly allocated. At present there is a rush of construction of buildings on the recently allocated plots.

Behind the Manarat School at Gulshan, several developers are rapidly constructing housing complexes. Near the small culvert on Kamal Ataturk Road, lakeside land has been allotted. Rajuk sources said the allotments took place in 'top secrecy.'

"The real map of Gulshan lake has been kept in the safe of a top Rajuk engineer. Even till recently, the original map was tampered to allot plots," one source said.

The government's development project has upset officials involved

in 'plunder of the lakeside green space or the lake itself' for allotment of residential plots.

The source further said, "When apprised of the actual situation at the lakeside in a recent meeting at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, the minister and top officials expressed their ignorance about the plot allotments."

Whenever Rajuk officials involved in the allotment process realised that the development project would bring to light the facts about Gulshan lake, they alerted the beneficiaries. Rush to construct buildings and grab the lakeside before the project starts can be seen at several places in the area.

A Rajuk official said, "We have given plots in Gulshan Banani and Baridhara areas only to 11 distinguished persons recently."

Nasim says

## Any attack on sovereignty to be retaliated

UNB, Rowmari

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday said any attack on the country's independence and sovereignty must be retaliated although the present government believes in peace, not war.

Addressing a public meeting at Rowmari CG Zaman High School ground, he said Indian BSF intruded into Baraibari village unwarrantedly on April 18. Three BDR jawans laid down their lives in repulsing the Indian attack.

"Three BDR jawans sacrificed their lives but did not bow down their heads," he said adding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will confer upon the three martyrs the highest honour of the state for their dedication to the motherland.

He said there may be problems in the border since Bangladesh has a long border with India, but this problem cannot be resolved by launching attacks.

He said existing border problem could be resolved through implementation of the Indira-Mujib agreement.

## More rain forecast

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Heavy to medium rainfall was reported from almost all parts of the country including the capital yesterday.

The weather will remain foul with more rain in most parts of the country today and tomorrow, with the exception of some areas of Khulna division, the Department of Meteorology said yesterday.

The Met Office also warned of further increase in rainfall. The weather will improve gradually as from Thursday.

In Dhaka city, rains coupled with high winds with a gust reaching up to 79 km per hour were recorded at the Zia International Airport control tower at 3 p.m.

In the capital, the rains burst early afternoon and continued until

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# Mamun surrenders to court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Chittagong

Alleged terrorist Mamunur Rashid Mamun surrendered to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court here yesterday morning.

A custody warrant was issued immediately after his surrender at 10 am and he was taken to jail under police escort, police and court sources.

No prayer for his remand was made as the investigation officer concerned was not available at the time of surrender, police said.

The sources said Mamun was accompanied by an aide of the Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) and another official when he arrived at the court building. His surrender was reportedly organised by the Mayor, they said.

Mamun, CCC Ward Commissioner and Jubo League leader, was sued under the Public Safety Act (PSA) for assaulting two journalists of daily Purbakone here on April 18. He was hiding since then.



Mamunur Rashid

He is also wanted in connection with 20 other criminal cases, police said.

On the night of April 18, Mamun accompanied by his cadres, stormed into the daily Purbakone office and assaulted two senior journalists -- Iskander Ali Chowdhury and Jalal Ahmed.

The sources said a top leader of the ruling party in the city was behind Mamun's surrender.

## Mamun's surrender not enough, people feel

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Chittagong

Despite Mamun's surrender to court, people of the city, specially victims of his terrorist acts, say they will not feel secure till the arrest of all members of 'Mamun Bahini' and recovery of illegal arms from them.

The Bahini has a large collection of weapons. Unless they are arrested, they will continue their terrorist activities in about 10 sq km central area of the city, many residents told this correspondent today.

Most of the members of the Bahini have many criminal cases against them. Some of them have already formed separate armed groups, they claimed.

They also complained of "inaction" of the administration and police in the past in containing terrorist activities of the gang members.

Carde-based politics and shelter by political godfathers helped Mamun emerge as a terrorist and maintain his Bahini, they said.

Sources concerned said, till the assault on two journalists of

Purbakone on April 18, Mamun move freely although there were 18 cases against him.

Of these cases, two were filed in 1985, three in '87, seven in '88, one in '89, four in '91, one in '92, police sources said.

Mamun turned into a millionaire from a slum boy. He had started life as a petty mugger at Zakir Hossain Road in front of his slum at Nasirabad. At school, he had stabbed one of his teachers for not promoting him.

After entering the local MES College, he got a boost in terrorism under the shelter of Ayub Ali who was a central leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League, student front of Awami League.

When rivalry grew between a former AL MP and a party stalwart over domination in politics in the city, Mamun took the side of the stalwart.

His terrorist activities increased under the shelter of the AL stalwart and a minister.

## How the 'drama' was staged

UNB, Chittagong

Mamunur Rashid Mamun came out of his hideout and went to the residence of City Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury at Sholashahar at 8 am yesterday.

During his 20-minute stay there the Mayor asked Mamun to surrender to the court. After exchange of hot words with the Mayor, he finally agreed to surrender.

The Mayor then asked Abu Naser, Magistrate of the Chittagong City Corporation, to come to his residence 'for preparation' of Mamun's surrender.

The Magistrate, along with Iftekhar Saimul Chowdhury, Additional Public Prosecutor attached to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, rushed to Mayor's residence.

At 9 am Mamun accompanied by the Magistrate, PP, APS of Mayor, Mamun's uncle Kabir Ahmed drove to the court building in a police van. At the Bar Association Office, they

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## ICDDR,B gets first Gates Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ICDDR, B has been selected for the first Gates Award for Global Health for its major and lasting contribution in the field of health.

This was disclosed at a press conference at the ICDDR, B yesterday.

The one million dollar award will be presented in Washington on May 31 during the Global Health Council's annual conference on "Healthy Women, Healthy World: Challenges for the Future". UN Secretary General Kofi Annan will be the key note speaker at the programme, ICDDR, B officials said.

Over 100 organisations across the world, including Medicine Sans Frontier (MSF) which got the Nobel Prize in medicine last year, was nominated for the award for 2001 and ICDDR, B was finally selected for it, they mentioned.

"We were deeply honoured when we learned that our centre had been selected as its (award) first recipient", Director of ICDDR, B David Sack said at the press conference.

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# Businessman, four others murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people including a businessman were murdered in the city yesterday.

Motijheel police recovered the body of Rafiqul Islam, 50, managing director of the Asia Pacific Medical Supply Limited, from his fourth floor office at 82 Motijheel C/A.

Police said Islam left his residence at the Railway Officers' Colony Sunday morning for office but he did not return home. His employees found the entrance gate of the office open yesterday. Called by them, police recovered his body from under a computer table.

Police said the incident took place sometime at night. They could not find out the reason behind the killing. However, they are investigat-

ing if there is any dispute over the business. Four people of two families owned the business: Islam, his wife, his friend, and his wife, added the police.

There were clear marks of injury in his hands and throat. Police suspected that he might have been strangled to death. The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Islam was son of late Abdus Satter in Sirajganj. He was father of only son Mahin, a student of the Ideal School.

In another incident, Ramna police recovered the body of a caretaker from an apartment at Naw Raton Colony at Bailly Road in the city.

Samad, 30, son of Mohammad Ali of Debidar in Comilla, was found dead in his room on the top of the garage. There were marks of large

nails in different parts of his body.

Quoting neighbours, police said Samad and his friend Robin returned to the Bailly Heights Apartment of the colony like other days after a short outing at about 12:25 last night.

Robin came out of the room in Samad's uniform immediately after and told other security personnel that he would return in the morning. Robin was staying with Samad for quite sometime.

Ramna police sent the body to the DMCH for autopsy. Harun-ur-Rashid, elder brother and also a security guard of a nearby residence, filed a case with Ramna police.

In yet another incident, a gar

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Motorised and non-motorised vehicles make way through knee-deep water near the Gulistan crossing in the city yesterday. Hours of moderate to heavy rain inundated many a major thoroughfare in the city.