

450 BC CIVILISATION

Govt to preserve Narsingdi site

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will preserve the archaeological site in Narsingdi where the country's oldest road, dating back to 450 BC, was unearthed last month.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman assured the excavators of this during her visit there yesterday, when they asked her for immediate government steps to preserve the site.

Selima hailed the excavation team of Jahangirnagar University (JU) Department of Archaeology for

its epoch-making work 'in quest of the country's root' and for unravelling further evidences of the region's glorious past.

"This findings will help us know better our thousands of years-old history and make us proud of our civilisation," Selima wrote in the visitors' book.

Joint Secretary Masudur Rahman of the ministry and Department of Archaeology Director Dewan Delwar Hossain accompanied the minister.

A JU team led by Associate Professor Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, who has been scraping and hammer-

ing at the site since 2000, discovered the 18 metre by 6 metre and 30-centimetre thick road on March 21 at Wari village in Belabo Upazila, 70km north-east of the capital.

Discovery of the road along with a fortified citadel and a raft of artefacts dating back to 450 BC promised to redefine the history of eastern India and emboldened the excavators' claim that Narsingdi was a part of the Brahmaputra civilisation and formed the eastern fringe of Mauryan Empire.

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PHOTO: STAR

Police load barbed-wire fences into a truck on Dhaka University campus yesterday to put them up as roadblocks at Russell Square during an anti-government hartal today.

Tackle Taliban or US troops will do it

America's Afghan envoy tells Pakistan

AFP, Washington

US-led forces in Afghanistan will move into Pakistani territory to destroy Taliban and other extremist groups if Islamabad cannot do the job by itself, the US envoy in Afghanistan warned Monday.

"We have told the Pakistani leadership that either they must solve this problem or we will have to do it for ourselves," said Zalmay Khalilzad, also the special presidential envoy in Kabul.

Khalilzad said the US-led coalition was prepared to help Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf.

"We prefer that Pakistan takes responsibility, and the Pakistani government agrees," he said.

"However, one way or the other, this problem will have to be dealt with," he added.

Only last month Khalilzad angered Pakistan by charging that Taliban and al-Qaeda fugitives were launching attacks into Afghanistan from Pakistani soil.

He said that although Pakistan's

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HAJJ MISMANAGEMENT

JS body blames secretary, envoy to Saudi Arabia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary probe body yesterday accused some top government officials, including the secretary of the religious affairs ministry and Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia, of irregularities and neglect in this year's Hajj management.

The parliamentary standing committee on religious affairs ministry yesterday held a closed-door meeting to discuss the probe report of a sub-committee it had formed on Hajj management. It decided to send the report to the prime minister recommending legal actions against the persons responsible.

The three-member sub-committee found no fewer than five top officials of the ministry and Bangladesh embassy in Saudi Arabia responsible, a sub-

committee member told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity.

The standing committee asked the officials, including Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Sajedul Karim, to leave the meeting room. The 20-minute closed-door meeting, held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, decided not to disclose anything about the discussion, as the top officials of the ministry and embassy were accused of Hajj mismanagement.

"We are serious about the issue and trying to find out the persons involved in corruption in this year's Hajj management," Shahiduzzaman, a member of the sub-committee, said after the meeting.

He declined to disclose anything about the closed-door meeting, though. "It is our decision not to disclose the name of anyone

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Myanmar PM visits CEPZ, leaves for home

UNB, Dhaka

Myanmar Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt visited Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) yesterday, the last day of his three-day tour of Bangladesh, and showed keen interest in setting up such exclusive economic zone in his country.

He appreciated the success and achievement of Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) in "strengthening the economic base of the country," said a BEPZA release.

Earlier, Executive Chairman of the BEPZA Brig General (retd) M Zakir Hossain welcomed the Myanmar prime minister, who was accompanied by Bangladesh Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, to the CEPZ.

Zakir Hossain, in his welcome speech, called upon the Myanmar entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh Export Processing Zones (BEPZs), particularly in Chittagong, because of its close proximity to Myanmar.

During his visit, the Myanmar prime minister, who is leading a 40-member delegation, discussed

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Govt firm on trial of sensational cases : PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said the government is firm on trial of all sensational cases to award punishment to the culprits.

She mentioned that the government had set up speedy trial courts for quick trial of the sensational murder cases, which Awami League government had failed to do.

The prime minister expressed the views while talking with the newly elected office bearers of Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) at her office yesterday.

She said 42 sensational murder cases have so far been disposed of in the trial courts, which are now pending with the higher court.

"The government wants quick disposal of those cases at the final stage," Khaleda told the reporters.

A 17-member delegation of the committee led by its President Alamgir Hossain and General Secretary Saleh Shibly made a courtesy call on the prime minister.

Others members of the delegation are Vice President Ziaur Rahman Modhu, Joint Secretary Pathick Saha, Finance Secretary Abu Kawser, Organising Secretary Mahmudur Rahman Khokon, Publicity and Publication Secretary Sheikh Mamunur Rashid, Research and Training Secretary Tarun Sarkar, Cultural Secretary Hasan Mahmud, office secretary Moshir Rahman, executive members Nushrat Arshiana Chowdhury, Muzib Masud, Moniruzzaman Uzzal, Madhusadan Mondal, Aminul Huq Bhuiyan, Enamul Huq Enam and Homayun Kabir.

Khokon.

The prime minister said her party and government always believe in press freedom and stand for the welfare of journalist community.

Regarding repression on journalists in different incidents raised by the reporters, she said sometimes journalists may be harassed or come

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PHOTO: STAR

An under-construction sewerage line at Jurain in Dhaka comes to a halt as extortionists forced workers to stop work in the wake of their failure to give them money. Houses and shops lining the ruptured road are at risk.

Traffic jam cuts can save Tk 1,000cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country can avert a yearly loss of about Tk 1,000 crore caused by the everyday traffic congestion in Dhaka by developing a modern urban transport infrastructure.

The city's principal roads lack bus bays and bus stoppages, automatic traffic signalling system, street lights, enough footpaths and a good drainage system, said Quamrul Islam Siddique, executive director of Dhaka Urban Transport Co-ordination Board (DTCB), quoting a survey at a press briefing yesterday.

Since last month the board has started working on formulating a

long-term multi-modal urban transport plan, titled Strategic Transport Plan (STP), that will cost several thousand crores of taka to implement, Quamrul said, adding the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan had already shown interest to invest in it.

At present roads in the city cover only eight percent of its space, compared to a 22 to 25 percent space required for a planned city. The total length of city roads, including primary (main), secondary, feeder and other narrow lanes, is 3,002km now.

The number of motor vehicles in

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Islamist group's new deadline for declaring Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khatme Nubuwwat Committee Bangladesh yesterday threatened to launch a broader movement if the government does not declare Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim by June.

"Declare them non-Muslim or pay for it in the next general elections," Muhammad Shamsul Haq, chairman of the new anti-Ahmadiyya group, told the ruling coalition from a press conference at the National Press Club.

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Outlaws issue death threat to Duta president

DU CORRESPONDENT

Outlawed Sarbahara Party members issued death threat against the Dhaka University Teachers Association (Duta) President Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique in a letter received on Sunday.

The letter reads, "Though Humayun Azad managed to survive, you won't."

The DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, Duta and DU high

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Prayer Timings		
April 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-40	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		