



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Dhaka-Aricha highway being repaired at Aminbazar in the capital's outskirts yesterday. Roads and highways department took up the maintenance work to ensure safe and smooth movement of vehicles carrying home-bound passengers during the Eid season.

## Khaleda flies for Saudi Arabia today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is scheduled to leave Dhaka for Saudi Arabia today.

"The chairperson will leave the capital for Mecca at 7:30pm," her Press Secretary Maruf Kamal Khan Sohail said. She will stay there for about ten days of Ramadan to perform Umrah and Itiqaf (special prayers), he said adding that the former prime minister is expected to return here after the holy Shab-e-Qadr.

According to her schedule, the BNP chairperson will stay in Saudi Arabia as royal guest and perform the Itiqaf at the Masjid-e-Nabvi at Mecca just like every year, Maruf Kamal said.

During the visit, Khaleda will be accompanied by several others including her younger brother Shamim Eskander's wife and their sons.

## New Tagore research centre in Paschimbanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Rabindratirtha, the second largest Tagore research centre outside Santiniketan, was inaugurated at New Town near Kolkata in the Indian state of Paschimbanga on the 71st death anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore yesterday.

Set up on five acres of land at an estimated cost of Rs 30 crore, Rabindratirtha houses a large auditorium, exhibition hall, film and music archive, art gallery, library and cinema hall.

A bronze statue of the luminary is erected in the centre of a large lake in the

complex.

"One will find another Santiniketan at Rabindratirtha," Paschimbanga Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said while inaugurating the research centre.

It was set up to carry forward the thoughts and philosophies of Rabindranath Tagore, she said.

Dormitories for boys and girls had been constructed at the centre while an international conference centre would be set up soon, Mamata added.

The project plan of Rabindratirtha was conceptualised by renowned Indian painter Jogen Chowdhury.

## AL, BNP only crave power

Manna tells discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criticising the ruling Awami League and the opposition BNP, Nagorik Oikko Convenor Mahmudur Rahman Manna yesterday said the two major political parties only crave power and do not consider the welfare of the people.

"Our ruling party is failing to understand the people's reactions while the opposition is doing politics not for the welfare of the people but for power," the former AL leader said.

Manna also alleged that since independence the state has been continuously trying to make the jummo people 'Bangalee' without taking effective measures to protect their rights.

Addressing as chief guest, Manna made the remarks at the discussion organised by Coalition of Local NGOs, Bangladesh (CLNB) at the Jatiya Press Club ahead of the International Indigenous Day.

Without taking any stable position on the issue of minority, the government's ban on observing International Indigenous Day is condemnable, Manna said.

Harun-or-Rashid, chairman of CLNB, alleged that a group of people at home and abroad are trying to divide the majority of Bangladeshi people and the minority communities by making the term indigenous a debatable issue but the minority communities also took part in the Liberation War to free the country.

Beyond the debate on indigenous communities, it is necessary to ensure land rights of the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts and the plain lands, said Subal Sarkar, general secretary of Bangladesh Landless Association.

Prof Mantazuddin Patwari, a teacher of Bangladesh Open University, said the jummo communities should focus on their development by coming to the mainstream using government facilities without engaging in the controversy of indigenous or minority communities.

Nargis Jahan Banu, director of non-government organisation Proshika, Saiful Islam Shishir, a development worker, Prof Raton Tanu Ghosh, a teacher of Mohammadpur central university college, spoke among others.

## Heroin worth Tk 38 lakh seized, 5 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members yesterday recovered 2,800 small packs of heroin worth Tk 38 lakh and arrested five drug peddlers including three women from Lauwai area of Dakkhin Surma Police Station of Sylhet yesterday afternoon.

The arrestees are Bulu Begum, Shyamoli Begum, 26, Mazeda Begum, 50, and her son Zalal Miah, hailing from Gopalpur area under Nasirnagar Police Station of Brahmanbaria and Samad Ali of village Paboi under Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar district.

Arrested Bulu Begum has been controlling the heroin trade at the Sylhet Railway Station and its surrounding areas for long, Rab said quoting her accomplices.

The arrestees were handed over to the Dakkhin Surma Police Station, said Assistant Superintendent of Police Kazi Bazle Maola, also the Rab-9 media liaison officer.

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