

'SAMATATE SANGSAD' LAUNCHED

# Take part in all nat'l activities to establish true democracy

Prof Yunus urges winning and defeated political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned economist Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said true democracy would be established in the country when both the winning and defeated political parties participate in all national activities.

Prof Yunus, the pioneer of microcredit and managing director of Grameen Bank, also urged the countrymen to exercise their franchise in the elections to strengthen democracy.

The Jatiya Sangsad would become the real symbol of democracy only when the participation of common people in national activities is ensured, he added.

Prof Yunus was speaking at the chief guest at a publication ceremony of a book entitled 'Samatate Sangsad' by Mir Mobassher Ali, a former professor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), at Sheraton Hotel in the city.

The book has two parts -- one is about cultural heritage and another is about the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban and the life of world-renowned architect Louis I Kahn.

Launching the book, Prof Yunus said, "This book is a significant addition to our understanding of culture, especially the architectural works."

"We have only one piece of world-class architectural work in our country -- the Sangsad Bhaban -- which is also our pride, but it is regrettable that the common people

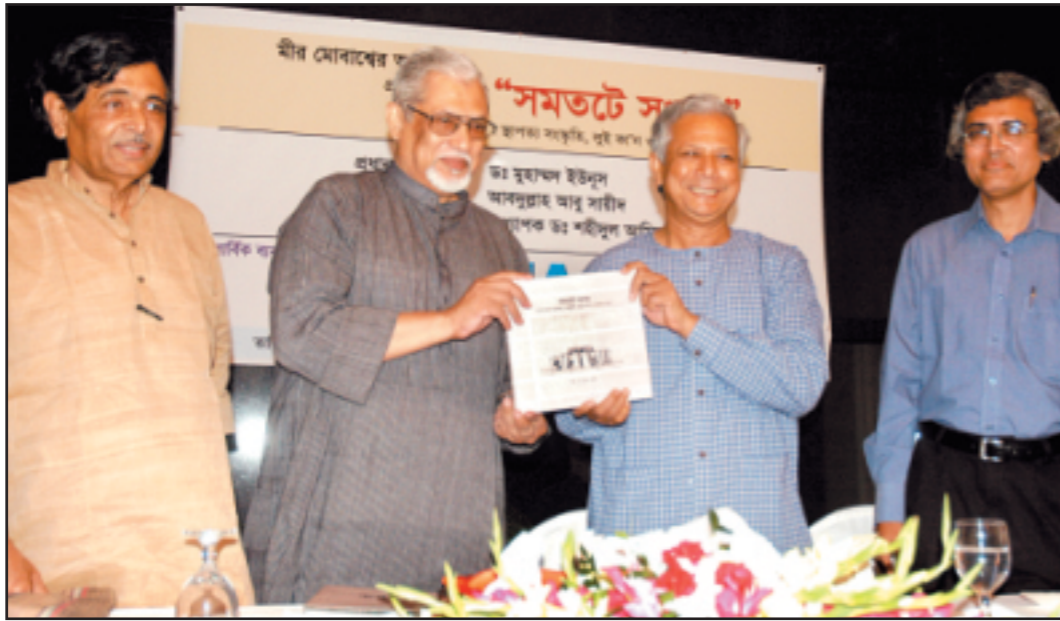


PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muhammad Yunus and Prof Mir Mobassher Ali hold a book titled 'Samatate Sangsad' at the publication ceremony of the book at Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday while Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, left, and Prof Shahidul Amin, right, look on.

have no access to the building," he said, adding that the Sangsad Bhaban should be open to all.

Prof Yunus urged the architects to develop low-cost houses, considering the rapid growth of population.

Lauding the works of Louis I Kahn, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed said the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban is one of the 100 best architectural works worldwide.

But the common people have no right to enter the Sangsad Bhaban, he said. It is regrettable that the black money holders have the access, he added.

Prof Dr Shahidul Amin, dean of the Department of Architecture at Buet, said there are lots of books or writings on Kahn, which are all in English, but Mobassher has probably done the first job of writing on

Kahn and Sangsad Bhaban in Bangla.

Speaking on the occasion, author Mobassher Ali said, "The Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban is a wonderful work of Kahn and it also plays an important role in our national life."

Anisul Haq, deputy editor of the Prothom Alo, and Enamul Haque of ENAProperties also spoke.

GOYESHWAR, MIRZA KHOKON GET BAIL

## Order on withdrawal of case Aug 22

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday heard a government petition for withdrawal of the bomb blast case filed against BNP Joint Secretary General Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, DCC Ward Commissioner Mirza Khokon and five others.

After the hearing, Judge Mohammad Aman Ullah of the Fifth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, fixed August 22 for order on the issue filed by the government on July 17.

Meantime, the same court granted bail to Goyeshwar and a BNP leader Abu Syed Khan Khokon upon a bond of Tk 1 lakh with two guarantors when they surrendered to the court after seven years of the case transferred for its quick disposal.

According to the prosecution, a group of BNP and Jubo Dal leaders led by Goyeshwar and Mirza Khokon hurled indiscriminate bombs on the on-duty policemen at the BNP's central office at Nayapattan about 5:30pm on December 24, 1996 when the policemen tried to rescue a man from their custody.

Later, a case was filed against Goyeshwar, Mirza Khokon and 11 others under the Explosive Substances Act. The investigation officer pressed charges against them on December 30, 1999.

The home ministry in a letter on June 19 this year informed the district magistrate of Dhaka that it had decided to withdraw charges against Goyeshwar and six others as the charges were "politically motivated".

The ministry asked the district magistrate to hand over the matter to the metropolitan public prosecutor (PP), who will arrange withdrawal of the case with the permission from an appropriate court.

# 'Landless should unite to ensure right to khas land'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called for a change in the government policy as well as the attitude of the government officials to ensure distribution of khas land among only the landless people.

They also called on the landless to unite to establish their right to khas land.

Samata, a non-government organisation, organised the discussion on 'Accelerating khas land distribution among the landless' in cooperation with Dhaka divisional administration at Biam auditorium in the city.

Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, principal secretary to the prime minister, said the landless people should be organised in asserting their rights to khas land.

The unity of the landless can force the land grabbers, who are usually influential people in society, out of khas lands, he said.

He also called on the NGOs to raise awareness among the landless in this regard.

Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association for Land Reform and Development, called on the government officials concerned to take measures to protect the lands of ethnic minorities.

Farida Akhter, executive director of Ubiniq, said the poor people should fight not only against the local land grabbers, but also against the evil designs of the multinational companies trying to control agricultural activities.

Murtuza Hossain Munshi, chairman of Land Reform Board, said, "In most cases, we allocate khas land

to the landless people, but they either sell it to the influential people or lose control of the land due to poverty and other reasons."

Md Alimussan, commissioner of Dhaka Division, said co-ordinated efforts of the government and non-government organisations can help eradicate poverty from the country.

Niaz Hossain Mia, president of Krishak Federation, said a uniform map system should be introduced to help upzila, district and divisional level committees take decisions

regarding khas land in order to protect the lands from encroachers.

Executive Director of Samata Md Abdul Kader chaired the discussion while Samata Director Sohail Ibn Ali, Chairman of Land Co-ordinating Committee Md Afzal Hossain, District Commissioner of Munshiganj Hanif Uddin Manju, President of Karmojibi Nari Shirin Akhter and Rekha Chowdhury of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad also spoke.

## Wife of slain Kushtia BNP leader meets PM

UNB, Dhaka

Latifa Mamun, wife of a BNP activist who was shot dead by the criminals in Mirpur upazila of Kushtia nearly two years ago, called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday.

Latifa apprised the Prime Minister of her family's distress and sufferings following the killing of her husband.

Khaleda gave her a patient hearing, expressed sympathy and assured her of extending possible help to overcome the sufferings. She also enquired about her family's well-being and education of her children.

Responding to Latifa, the Prime Minister also assured her that the trial process of her husband's murder would be expedited further.

Khaleda donated Latifa a cheque

for Tk 1 lakh to meet the needs of her family.

Latifa's husband Al Mamun-or-Rasul alias Babu Khan was the president of Kushtia's Mirpur thana unit BNP.

## 1716 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested some 1716 people, including three listed criminals, from across the country on various charges in the last 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

During the drive, the law-enforcers also seized 10 firearms, two others arms, 29 bullets and 12 explosives, said an official handout.

## Free, fair polls ensured under caretaker govt

President tells Japanese FM

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday expressed his confidence that free and fair elections would be held, as in the past, under the constitutionally guaranteed and time-tested caretaker government system.

Iajuddin made the remarks when Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso made a courtesy call on him at Bangabhaban.

He told the FM that "Government is committed to strengthening democracy and upholding the freedom of press."

He invited Japanese observers to observe the next general election.

Despite multiple constraints, the country has managed to ensure a steady economic growth of over 6 percent during the last two financial years, Iajuddin told Taro.

In reply, Taro hoped that the next general election would be free and fair in Bangladesh, and said "track records are good" in this regard.

He assured that Japanese observers would observe the upcoming general election in Bangladesh, as in the past.

Taro praised the ongoing development, including infrastructure.

He enquired about the health of President and wished him full recovery soon.

Iajuddin said Japan is one of Bangladesh's major development partners and praised the positive impact made by Japanese ODA on the socio-economic development.

In this context, he mentioned Japanese assistance for infrastructure projects and underscored the need for exchange and linkage in the field of education between the two countries. He appreciated Japanese cooperation in this connection.

He thanked the Japanese government for her valuable support towards Bangladesh's bid for ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) membership.

The president invited the emperor of Japan to visit Bangladesh.

## AL leader Joli laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Body of Awami League (AL) leader Joli Kabir, who succumbed to injuries on Monday after a road accident on Friday, was laid to rest at the Shahjahanpur graveyard in the city yesterday.

Her first namaz-e-janaza was held at Bangabandhu Avenue in front of Awami League party office in the city, where people from all walks of life, including leaders and activists of 14-party opposition alliance attended.

AL President Sheikh Hasina, General Secretary Abdul Jalil, AL senior leaders Matia Chowdhury, Obaidul Kader, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Zahangir Kabir Nanak, opposition alliance leaders Rashed Khan Menon and Hasanul Haq Inu were present when Joli's body was put in front of the party office after the janaza.

Afterwards, her body was taken to her village home in Comilla, where her second namaz-e-janaza was held.

Her gulkhwani will be held at her husband's house at Shahjahanpur Railway Colony after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Joli Kabir, organising secretary of Mahila Awami League, left behind her husband, two sons and a number of admirers to mourn her death.

Her husband Advocate Humayun Kabir is the vice president of Jatiya Sramik League and president of Railway Sramik League.

Joli met a tragic road accident at Daudkandi in Comilla when she was going to Noakhali for organisational activities. She was rushed to the Apollo Hospitals in Dhaka where she breathed her last on Monday afternoon.

## BNP announces anti-terrorism programme

Bss, Dhaka

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday announced a three-day programme protesting terrorism, anarchy and conspiracy against the next general election.

As part of the programme, BNP will hold rallies and processions at all upazila and district headquarters on July 29 and July 30 respectively, said a party press release.

The party will arrange rallies and processions at all divisional headquarters and metropolitan cities on August 2. The Dhaka rally will be held at Mukhtang, the release said.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperative Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has requested the party leaders and workers as well as the countrymen to make the programme a success.



PHOTO: PID

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso made a courtesy call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

# Poor governance hinders dev in Bangladesh

Says DFID country chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Holding of free and fair elections and good governance are essential for peace and development of Bangladesh, said David Wood, country chief of British Department for International Development (DFID) yesterday.

"Political leaders must ensure a favourable atmosphere so that everybody can exercise their rights of franchise," he said.

David was talking to media men after inaugurating a DFID-funded technical school for Ucep on the outskirts of Rajshahi city.

"Many poor people in the country have not enough to eat, but they have the capability to develop," he said, adding that poor governance is obstructing development in Bangladesh.

David said DFID is now spending US \$ 200 million annually in health, education and water sectors apart from development of governance and growth of small business in the country.

He said DFID is working with the government in preparing performance indicators for public finance management as its chance of getting future aid will depend on 'such governance-related benchmarks'.

"We have plans to increase the aid significantly, but we want to be assured that the fund is utilised fully," he said.

Earlier speaking at the inaugural function of Ucep technical school, David said DFID's top priority is to help women and landless people and promote education.

He lauded Ucep's activities terming them as 'practical, effective and pragmatic' towards eradicating poverty and supporting the poorest as well as underprivileged youths.

He said Ucep graduates earn the ability to run small industries and business and thereby contribute to poverty alleviation.

The inaugural function was also addressed by Chairman of Ucep Board of Governors M Sirajul Islam, Executive Director Brigadier Aftab Uddin, Programme Director Mahbul Haque and Rajshahi University teacher Prof

ANM Saleh. UCEP Rajshahi Technical School is providing training facilities to 160 boys and girls in different trades including auto mechanics, welding, electrical and electronics and tailoring.

David accompanied by DFID Education Advisor Barbara Payne also visited the school and talked to the students.

Some girl students including Jesmin Akhtar, Soma, Elina, and Rokeya told them that they were attracted to the technical education just after completing class VIII from Ucep general schools for building them up to meet growing financial demands of their families.

Brigadier Aftab explained that Ucep is not making scholars, but skilled manpower.

"We have plans to run SSC and vocational education together as we will introduce technical education in all general schools," he added.

Ucep operates 32 general and five technical schools including nine para-trade centres in the country involving some 26,000 working children.



PHOTO: STAR

Expatriate singer Annafi Wahed Dona and singer Elham Nusrat Nondita sing at a musical session titled 'Nabin Protiva' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. The programme was organised by Sargam, a musical monthly magazine.



PHOTO: STAR

Teachers and employees of non-government schools and colleges march towards Shikha Bhaban in the city yesterday to press their demand for 100 per cent salary from the government exchequer.