

# People to decide whether Yunus succeeds in politics

Says US Congressman Steve Chabot

UNB, Dhaka

US Congressman Steve Chabot, who left for Washington early yesterday ending his one-day whirlwind tour, said the people of Bangladesh are to determine whether or not micro-finance pioneer Professor Muhammad Yunus will make a good political leader as well.

Talking to reporters at the Radisson Hotel on Thursday evening — much the same time as Yunus floated his party — he noted that the Nobel laureate has been successful in his arena of micro-credit, but it is to be seen if he is equally successful in politics. Prof Yunus has brought honour and prestige for Bangladesh by winning the Nobel for peace.

Recalling his first meeting with Yunus back in 1989, he said the professor made tremendous success in helping women to have their own business through micro-credit, and the practice has been a model around the world. "But whether or not that leadership in his arena will transform into a political leadership remains to be seen," Chabot said.

Asked for his opinion about some perception that the western countries support Prof Yunus in trying his luck in politics to bring about a qualitative change in Bangladesh's political culture, he said, "US will be an observer. We support democracy, free election and human rights. We like to

see those continue in Bangladesh."

The leading American Congressman further said Washington would not determine which party to go to power or how many parties will be here in this country.

With regard to the Nobel laureate economics professor's debut in politics he drew a regal analogy, saying that in the United States, some people had thought that an actor should not get into politics. However, Ronald Reagan became a good president of the United States.

"And ultimately the professor's success will be determined on whether or not he will be able to draw people's support to make him a good political leader," said Chabot, who had nearly an hour-long meeting with Prof Yunus over the lunch Tuesday.

"We are not pushing our policy on your government... our role is to encourage to hold election sooner," the American lawmaker said about the much-debated election matters here.

During his shuttle mission through Dhaka's sociopolitical circles, the Congressman met with Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and business leaders. All his talk focused on the current political situation and the matter of holding the stalled parliamentary elections.

Chabot said the United States likes

to see the elections sooner than later, as Bangladesh, after all, is a democracy and democracies have elections. "We won't like to see drag on the election for long period of time," he told the reporters.

About his meeting with Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina — the two paramount leaders of the two rival political camps — the Congressman said both the leaders now preferred elections in the near future without specifying the time.

In this context, he observed that the incumbent caretaker government is now cracking down on corruption and undertaking some reforms that are also important. But he felt that these should be addressed in a short period of time.

Asked if foreign investors could feel discouraged in the event of a long absence of an elected government, the US lawmaker said, "I think one of the things that speak highly about Bangladesh is that it is a democracy and it has elected leaders, which is respected by the United States and countries around the world."

If Bangladesh has no elected government year after year, it would give the wrong signal to those countries, the people and companies who might be interested in making investment in this country, he observed.

## Saarc states finalise plan to check drug abuse

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Saarc countries have favoured educational programmes for children and empowerment programmes for women and other vulnerable groups to check drug abuse in the region.

Representatives of Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka made the suggestions at the daylong meeting on 'Drug Demand Reduction and Rehabilitation of Victims of Drug Abuse' in New Delhi yesterday, official sources said.

Veena Chhotray, secretary to social justice and empowerment ministry, inaugurated the meeting which discussed issues of common concern relating to drug abuse in Saarc region and underlined the need for concerted efforts to fight the menace.

The delegates also briefed the meeting on the actions taken in their respective countries to reduce demand for drugs and rehabilitate the victims of drug abuse.

The meeting finalised recommendations for implementation by relevant Saarc bodies for awareness generation, counselling intervention and rehabilitation of the victims of drug abuse.

## Book on Bangabandhu launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A book titled 'Father of the Nation' by Afzal Hossain Khan was launched in the city yesterday.

The book would give the readers an insight into the life and works of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, speakers at the publication ceremony of the book said.

They also said it is shame for the nation that Bangabandhu, the architect of independent Bangladesh, was killed on August 15, 1975 and the verdict in Bangabandhu murder case is yet to be executed.

Prokashana Utsab Udjapan Parishad organised the publication ceremony at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University. Speaking as the chief guest, General (Retd) KM Shaifullah Bir Uttam said a vested quarter, who killed Bangabandhu, has always been trying to erase his name from the history of Bangladesh.

"We can't imagine Bangladesh without Bangabandhu. The name of Bangabandhu is interlinked with the name of Bangladesh," he said.

Economist Reza Kibria, son of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, said Bangabandhu pursued real politics for the welfare of the people and the nation, but most politicians of today are corrupt.

Sarwar Wadud Chowdhury presided over the programme addressed by Parishad Convener Syed Manzur Morshed, Publisher Syed Rahamatullah Rajan and Prof Sohel Mohammad.

## Health adviser visits Justice Habibur Rahman

UNB, Dhaka

Health and Family Welfare Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Dr ASM Matiuur Rahman yesterday visited former chief adviser to a caretaker government justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, who is undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city.

The adviser spent some time beside him and inquired about his treatment. He also asked the doctors to ensure proper treatment of the former chief justice.

Justice Habibur Rahman sustained injury in his hipbone when he fell down at the lawn of Hotel Peninsula in Chittagong on Thursday morning.

## 35 injured as picnic bus falls into ditch

CU CORRESPONDENT

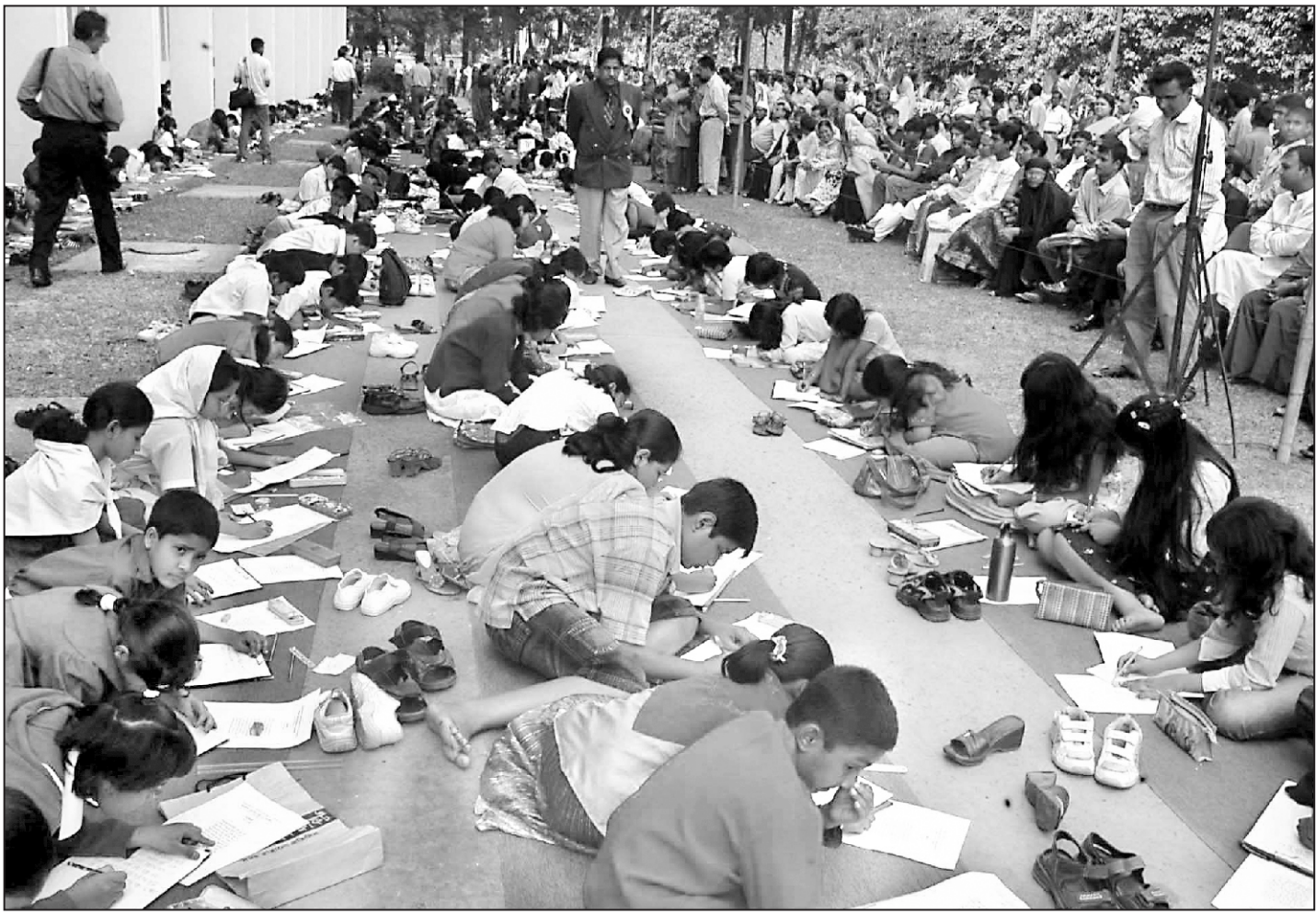
At least 35 people were injured, eight of them critically, in a road accident at Rangunia upazila of the district yesterday morning.

According to sources, a Kaptai-bound picnic bus fell into a 25-foot roadside ditch at Kantakhali area at around 10:00am.

The injured were sent to Chandraghona Mission Hospital and Health Complex.

Four of the critically injured were identified as Tonmoy Das Gupta, 45, his son Prottoy Das Gupta, 8, Pradip Das, 45, and Debi Sarker, 35.

Chittagong Ujjiban Sangskritik Sangha hired the bus to go to Kaptai for a picnic from the port city.



Children take part in a handwriting competition organised by National Museum on its premises in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# 'Mothers main architect of children's career' 27 receive 'Ratnagarva Ma Award'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-seven mothers received 'Ratnagarva Ma Award-2006' at a function in the city yesterday in recognition of their contribution and sacrifice to establish their children in their own fields.

Women and Children Affairs Adviser Geeti Ara Safiya Choudhury handed over the awards including two special prizes as chief guest to the recipients at the Grand Azad Hotel.

The recipients of the special prizes are Anwara Begum (posthumous), mother of writer Emdadul Haque Milon, and Hazera Khatun, a mother who established her only son as a lecturer in a government college working as maid.

Other winners are Rizia Ahmed, Alhaj Fozilatunnessa Bani, Begum Nurjahan Khan, Alhaj Jahan Ara Begum, Mrs Aktarunnessa, Alhaj

Amatullah Begum, Alhaj Maksuda Begum, Monwara Begum, Mrs Fazilatunnessa, Nurun Nahar Hadi, Prof Zohora Anis, Joinab Begum, Nurun Nahar Talukdar, Syeda Jannatul Ferdous, Prof Raihana Salam, Moriom Begum, Ayesha Khatun, Shahida Khanam, Begum Jahanara Islam, Nurun Nahar Begum, Lutfunessa Begum, Chemon Ara Begum, Begum Asia Khatun, Jahanara Begum and Begum Dilruba Islam.

Appreciating the initiative, the adviser said a mother is the most effective guiding power to build their children as a proper human being.

"A mother is the main architect of her children's career but in most of the cases their contributions are ignored. I believe this recognition will inspire them," she added.

Chairman of Azad Group of Companies and initiator of the award, Abul Kalam Azad said there were

more than 8500 applicants who fulfilled the requirements of having at least three sons or daughters graduate and well established in their own fields for getting the award.

"I hope this award will inspire every mother to build up their children as successful ones," said Azad.

Shykh Seraj, director of Channel I, was present at the function as special guest.

The award, funded by Grand Azad Hotel, included a crest, a certificate and a hamper of Azad Products.

Besides, the winners will enjoy four-day three-night free stay at the Grand Azad Hotel along with a companion and a lifetime supply of different products of Azad Group of Companies.

Children of the winners will also enjoy a 15-per cent discount on all products of the group.

## Attack on SCF activists condemned

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) yesterday condemned attacks on its leaders and activists by Islamic Chhatra Shibir cadres in two colleges, says a press release.

In a joint statement, front President Khalequzzaman Lipon and General Secretary Nikhil Das also demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the culprits who attacked the front activists during the first year admission test at Feni Government College and Rangpur Carmichael College.

Shibir cadres of Feni Government College tore down the seat plans made by the front and attacked the front leaders, including Redwanul Kabir Chhoton, general secretary of college unit.

On the other hand, Shibir leaders of Carmichael College tore down seat plans and manhandled some of the front leaders.

## CU math dept reunion in April

BSS, Chittagong

A reunion of the ex-students of Mathematics Department of Chittagong University (CU) will be held on the second week of April.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the ex-students of the department recently.

Chairman of the department Dr Mohammad Mohiuddin presided over the meeting.

A committee and a number of sub-committees have been formed to make the "Reunion-2007" a success.

Interested former students of the department have been requested to contact General Secretary of Reunion-2007 Organising Committee Prof Ashraful Islam at mathcu07@yahoo.com or 01716-481608.

## Film festival begins at TSC today

A five-day Bangla film festival titled 'Amar Vashar Chalachitra 2007' begins at Teacher-Student Centre of Dhaka University (DU) today, says a press release.

The festival, organised by Dhaka University Film Society (DUFFS), will feature 20 films of the two Bengals.

Language veteran Abdul Matin will attend the inaugural session of the festival as the chief guest. DU Pro-Vice Chancellor AFM Yusuf Haider and DUFFS Moderator Prof AAMS Arefin Siddiq will also be present as special guests.

Four films will be screened everyday at 10:00am, 1:00pm, 4:00pm and 6:30pm. The festival will conclude on February 28.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Today is third death anniversary of journalist Shah Anisur Rahman.

He was the Rajshahi correspondent of the daily Ittefaq. On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at Resam Patty Jame Masque in the afternoon.

Local journalists' associations and other organisations will also hold discussions to mark the day.

# Five murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people, including a woman, were murdered in separate incidents in and on the outskirts of the city yesterday.

Police recovered the body of Wasim Mia, 28, an expatriate working in Kuwait, from a playground near his house at Kadamtola in Shyampur around 5:00am.

Police said they found marks of stabbing in the body and a pipe gun and a bullet beside the body.

Wasim remained missing since 9:00pm on Thursday when he went out of his house to buy cigarettes, said his elder brother Abdus Sattar.

He said Wasim returned home from Kuwait on January 24 and was supposed to go back by this week.

The reason behind the killing could not be known.

In another incident, Rafiqul Islam, 30, a mason, was beaten to death by his assistants at Dayaganj in Jatrabari, early yesterday.

Police said Rafiq's assistants—Milon, Palash, Rahman, Mizan and

Khalil — had a quarrel with him over payment of money.

As Rafiqul wanted to give the assistants Tk 100 each instead of Tk 120, they got angry and beat him to death, locals said. They caught the five and handed them over to Jatrabari police.

Meanwhile, Paltan police recovered the body of a unidentified man, aged around 35, from Pir Saheber Goli at Shantinagar in the city at around 8:00am. The body was found in a sack with hands and legs tied.

Police said the assailants might have strangled the man.

In Keraniganj, police recovered the body of Zummon Ali, 25, a resident of Amritapur, Keraniganj, from Amritapur sand field in the morning.

His family members said Zummon might have been killed by one Zia and his accomplices, as he

protested Zia's illicit affair with his (Zummon) wife, Sonia. Police arrested Sonia.

Midford Hospital morgue sources said they found 17 marks of stabbing in his body.

In another incident, Yarusnesa, 25, wife of Rafiqul Islam of Bonnakandi, Keraniganj, was beaten up by her husband over a trivial matter on Thursday night. She was taken to Keraniganj Upazila Health Complex where she succumbed to her injuries at around 7:00am yesterday.

Her father lodged a murder case with Keraniganj Police Station against Rafiq and three other members of his family.

Police sent all the bodies to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Mitford Hospital for autopsy.

## DHAKA TODAY

### Annual sports

The Annual Sports Competition 2007 of Mohammadpur Preparatory and Higher Secondary School will be held. Venue: School premises. Time: 9:00am.

### Memorial lecture

Swadesh Chinta Sangha organises Dr Ahmed Sharif Memorial Lecture and give away Dr Ahmed Sharif Memorial Award 2007. Venue: Conference Hall, Business Studies Building, Dhaka University. Time: 4:00pm.

### Monthly general meeting

The 12th monthly general meeting of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh will be held. Venue: Seminar Room of the Society. Time: 4:00pm.

### Discussion

Shadhinata Sangsad will hold a discussion and organise a cultural evening to mark the International Mother Language Day. Venue: Conference Lounge, Public Library. Time: 4:30pm.

### Conference

A two-day conference of South Asian Management Forum, jointly organised by North South University, Association

of Management Development Institutions in South Asia and Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, will begin. Venue: Ball Room, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 9:00am.

### Annual Athletic Meet

Annual Athletic Meet 2007 of Bangladesh International School will be held. Venue: School premises. Time: 3:00pm.

### Seminar

EARTH (Bangladesh) organises a seminar on 'Earthquake risk in Bangladesh- How prepared the citizen should be'. Venue: RC Majumdar auditorium, Dhaka University. Time: 3:30pm.

### Roundtable

Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) will hold a roundtable titled 'Sovereignty, democracy and election'. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargang Hotel. Time: 10:00am.

### Rotary Dhaka Central

The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club Ltd. Time: 1:30pm.

## Boy injured in bomb blast

BSS, Jessore

A minor boy lost three fingers of his left hand as a bomb exploded while he was playing with it on Thursday.

Police and hospital sources said Zahidul, 10, son of Gafur Ali of Circuit House area in the town, found a tin-pot near his house and started playing with it.

Suddenly, the pot containing explosives went off, leaving him injured.

He was rushed to Jessore General Hospital.

## AIUB convocation tomorrow

The 7th convocation of the American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) will be held at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city tomorrow at 10:00am, says a press release.

President Iajuddin Ahmed will preside over the ceremony.

A total of 753 students will receive their degrees at the convocation.

## Bangladesh Sanglap today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BBC World Service resumes its Bangladesh Sanglap at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city today.

The hour-long debate programme on current issues will begin at 5:45pm, says a press release.

Awami League advisory council member and former finance minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan, former adviser to the caretaker government CM Shafi Sami and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA) Director Syeda Rizwana Hasan will feature in the panel.

The programme will be aired on BBC Bangla radio at 7:30pm tomorrow and on Channel I at 8:00pm on Monday.

## WEATHER TODAY

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 30.7 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest of 11.8 degrees at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:58pm today and rises at 6:25am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature In Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.3	17.2	52	39
Chittagong	29.8	16.4	76	70
Rajshahi	29.2	13.4	79	67
Khulna	28.6	15.2	78	62
Barisal	29.5	14.2	74	65
Sylhet	30.7	15.2	52	47
Cox's Bazar	29.0	16.2	74	67