

## NATIONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL ENDS

## Call to build a nation free from injustice, corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day National Youth Festival styled 'Tarun Mela' ended in the capital yesterday with a call to work together to build a nation free from injustice, inequality and corruption.

Views sharing meeting, question-answer session, town hall meetings and cultural programmes were held amid festivity on the concluding day.

The International Republican Institute (IRI) organised the festival in association with USAID at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

Speaking as the chief guest of the day, Bangladesh cricket captain Mohammad Ashraful called on the youths to put in their best efforts to move the country forward.

"Bangladesh cricket team is also a team of youths and we have been trying to continue to move forward on the international stage," he said.

IRI Resident Country Director Jeff Vanness and former cricket

captain Naimur Rahman Durjoy also spoke in the morning session.

Later, a view exchange meeting on 'Thoughts of young generation: Gender perspective' was held with the participation of students from different institutions. Steps Towards Development organised the meeting.

Sejuti Mostofa, a student, said that in this patriarchal society, women are being deprived of many facilities, whereas men have been enjoying all kinds of opportunities.

"Parents should teach their children, especially the boys, that women are also human being and give them the opportunity to grow up as a human being," she said.

Imrul Kabir from Dhaka University (DU) said gender discrimination is commonplace in the family. So, the parents can play an important role in eliminating such discrimination.

Kanak A Islam, a student of Rahshahi University, said men and women are complementary to each other. Women have also played an equal role in all movements since

1952.

Ratna, a student of Jagannath University, said change in the mindset is a must to ensure equal rights of women in society.

Ranjan Karmaker, executive director of Steps Towards Development, Prof Dr Mehtab Khanam of DU, Munira Hossain Munni, a film activist, and Dr Nitai Das also spoke at the programme.

In the town hall meetings, academics, doctors, political leaders and former bureaucrats discussed the problems of Dhaka city.

In the first meeting, Dr Mohit Kamal of National Mental Institute spoke about drugs abuse and its prevention while Kamrul Islam Siddique, former secretary and president of Bangladesh Water Partnership, spoke about the traffic congestion.

Sharmin Nilurmi, associate professor of economics department of Jahangirnagar University, gave a lecture on water logging problems.

Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, acting office secretary of BNP, Dr Dipu Moni,

women affairs secretary of Awami League, and Shirin Akter, joint general secretary of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, took part in another town hall meeting.

Media personality Abdun Noor Tusher, who moderated the meetings, urged the political parties to create a space for students so that they can contribute to the development of the country.

About 33 percent of youths will cast their votes for the first time in the upcoming election, he said and called on them to elect honest and ideal candidates.

Dhaka Youth Citizens Forum adopted a 'Dhaka Youth Declaration' identifying five main problems of Dhaka city - mosquito, drug addiction and unabated drug trade, electricity crisis, traffic congestion and water logging.

Around 40 organisations working on various issues such as democratic practices, development, health, civil and human rights took part in the festival. They set up stalls and arranged creative programmes.

Rupantar, an NGO, arranged cultural programmes where artists performed Gambhira song, Baul song and Pot song.

Rupantar, Management Resources and Development Initiative, Steps Towards Development, Democracywatch, EWG, Nielsen, e-Zone, CCD, Nation Pulse and Jubo Nagorik Forum assisted in organising the festival.

## Warrants for arrest of Haji Selim, his wife

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued warrants for arrest of former Awami League (AL) lawmaker Haji Mohammad Selim and his wife Gulshan Ara Begum in a case filed against them for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in their wealth statements.

After scrutinising the case docket and other relevant documents, Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court accepted the charge sheet and issued the warrants for arrest of the couple.

The court passed the order following the plea of the IO for issuance of arrest warrants against the couple and an order to attach their properties, as they have been absconding since the case was filed.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that Selim had concealed Tk 1,04,13,936 in his wealth statement submitted earlier to the ACC. Selim's wife was accused of abetting her husband for accumulating wealth through illegal means.

ACC Assistant Director Mahabubul Alam filed the case with Lalbagh Police Station on September 24 last year.

The complainant in the first information report (FIR) said Selim accumulated wealth worth over Tk 14.65 crore, which is disproportionate to his known sources of income. The FIR also added that Selim concealed information about his actual wealth and properties worth over Tk 8.70, 39,758 in the wealth statement he submitted to the ACC.

## Motia Chy out of danger

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The medical board formed for the treatment of Awami League president member Motia Chowdhury said she is out of danger now and advised her full rest, a press release signed by Mona Sarkar said.

She was first taken to Holy Family Hospital and then Ibrahim Cardiac Centre after she fell ill on Tuesday morning.

After completing all tests the doctors yesterday declared Motia out of danger and transferred to cabin. Her family sought prayer for her recovery from illness to the countrymen and party activists.

Motia's family requested visitors not to meet her before she fully recovers.

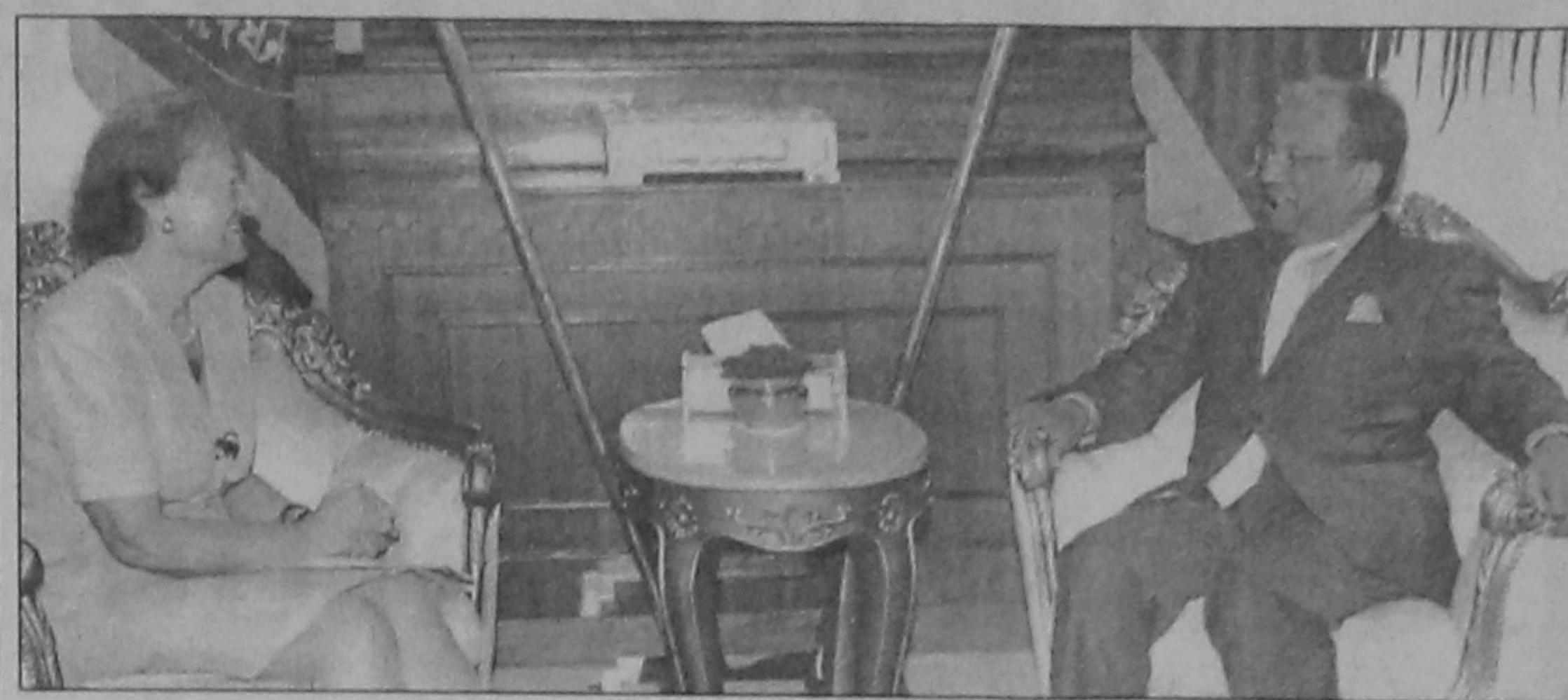
## Prof Imtiaz new VC of IUT



Prof Dr M Imtiaz Hossain was appointed vice chancellor of Islamic University of Technology (IUT) at Gazipur, a subsidiary of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), says a press release.

OIC Secretary General Prof Dr Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu appointed him according to the nomination by the Government of Bangladesh.

Before joining at IUT Prof Hossain was the dean of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at Buet.



Newly appointed Ambassador of Italy Dr Itala Maria Marta Occhi calls on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at the latter's office in the city yesterday.

## Govt firm to protect rights of people with disabilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

First World Autism Awareness Day and 10th National Day for the People with Disabilities was observed in the country yesterday with a view to creating awareness about autism and developing the autistic children through behavioural intervention.

Speaking at a discussion organised on this occasion in the city, Chief Adviser's (CA) Special Assistant Brig Gen (ret'd) MA Malek said a special action plan should be taken for the welfare of the autistic children.

He said Bangladesh ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities as its 8th member, and committed to protect the rights of the people with disabilities.

The country would soon ratify the optional protocol of the convention, he added.

The discussion was organised by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Jatiya Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation, Directorate of Social Services and National Forum of the Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD).

The experts said autism is a neuro developmental disorder which usually appears in a child by the age of three.

Autism is not a psychological

disorder at all, they added.

The experts said the rate of the autistic children has been increasing in the world and it is found that one out of 250 children is autistic.

They suggested that autism should be included in school textbook curriculum and mass media should disseminate information on autism to create awareness in this regard.

NFOWD President Khandaker Zahurul Alam presided over the discussion which was also addressed by Secretary to social welfare ministry MA Hai Hawladar, Joint Secretary Masuda Binte Kadir, Managing Director of Jatiya Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury and Associate Professor of Jahangirnagar University Sharmin Neelomi.

The discussion was followed by a procession that started from the Betar Bhaban at Argarao and ended at the Directorate of Social Service.

Member organisations of Jatiya Protibondhi Forum and children with disabilities including their parents took part in it.

To mark the day, the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) organised a Wheel Chair procession at Savar. The rally was inaugurated by CRP Founder Valerie A Taylor.

Bangladesh Society for Child Neurology, Development and Disability organised a scientific seminar at the Dhaka Medical College Gallery on Autism where National Professor Dr MR Khan was present as chief guest.

Prof Kazi Deen Mohammad, Prof MQK Talukder, Dr Shamim Ferdous, executive director of Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation, Naris Rahman, senior child psychologist, Dr Rowan Hafiz, chairperson of Autism Welfare Foundation, and Dr Shiraji Munira Chowdhury were also present.

Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC) also organised a discussion meeting, exhibition, documentary show and cultural function in association with NFOWD and Actionaid at the Russian Centre of Science and Culture.

Speakers at the discussion said autism should be diagnosed earlier so that behavioural intervention could be taken properly for the development of autistic children.

They said establishing child development centre in the district hospitals is a must in this regard.

To mark the day, Autism Welfare Foundation (AWF) has started different programmes from Tuesday that will continue till Friday to create awareness about autism in the society.

## Preparations on to celebrate Pahela Baishakh

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University has begun its preparations for celebrating the Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bengali New Year - the biggest festival of Bengalis.

The students of the institute yesterday painted pictures, made masks of owl, fish and other motifs and formed structures of different symbols of Bengali folk culture. They began their artistic works a week ago and are still working days and nights to make the festival a grand success.

To raise funds for the celebration, prominent artists of the country and the institutes' students have put their works on sale at the Zainul Art Gallery. The entire expenses of the celebration will come from the proceeds of the art exhibition, the students said at a press conference at institutes' teacher lounge yesterday noon.

"We are going to collect the fund for arranging festival by selling our works. We are not taking any sort of sponsor from any company. The entire cost will be collected from selling our works. So, we urge people to buy the works of the country's prominent artists and our students and help organize the festival," said Prof Abdus Shakur, director of the institute and convener of the 'Baishakh Ujjapon Parishad'.

The institute has been celebrating the festival since 1989. The masked procession of the students of the institute has become a tradition of welcoming Bengali New Year.

## Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Sheikh Kashir Ahmed alias Kalo Manik, a businessman and Awami League leader, passed away due to old age complications at the residence of his son in the capital on Tuesday night at the age of 76.

He left behind his son and three daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Sultanpur village in Sathkira after namaz-e-janaza yesterday afternoon.

Sathkira district Awami League leaders and businessmen expressed deep shock at his death and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.



## Justice Murshed's death anniversary today

Today is the 29th death anniversary of former Chief Justice Syed Mahbub Murshed, an eminent jurist, says a press release.

On the occasion Quurankhwani and fatehakhwani will be held and the Syed Mahbub Murshed Memorial Committee will place wreaths at his grave at Banani in the city.

A milad mahfil will also be held at this residence after Asr prayers.

Dr Adam Ali Khan



Today is the third death anniversary of Dr Adam Ali Khan, one of the organisers of the Liberation War, and an Awami League leader of Mathbaria upazila in Pirojpur, says a press release.

On the occasion, special prayers will be held at his residence and local mosques in Mathbaria tomorrow.



## Education fair

The inaugural ceremony of the four-day second Dhaka International Education Fair 2008 will be held. Venue: Bashundhara City. Time: 11:00am.

## Conference

War Crimes Facts Finding Committee organises a press conference to disclose some names of war criminals. Venue: WVA auditorium. Time: 12:00noon.

## Roundtable

Nagorik Forum organises a roundtable on free, fair and acceptable elections for democracy. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

## Memorial meeting

A memorial meeting of Jalal Uddin Ahmed, former chairman of Bangladesh Muktidhara Central Command Council, will be held. Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity. Time: 3:00pm.

## Abed architect of modern and beautiful world

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Prof Amartya Sen has said Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of Brac, is one of the architects of a modern and beautiful world.

Bangladesh and her soil are honoured to have many wonderful persons and role models, he said, adding that Abed is one of them.

The Nobel laureate said this while speaking as the chief guest at a reception at Boston in the USA in honour of Abed, founder of the largest non-governmental organisation of the world, reports News World, a US-based news agency.

Harvard University's John F Kennedy School of Government and the Ash Institute hosted the reception at a hotel.

Prof Amartya said general people of Bangladesh are enjoying better healthcare facilities because of Brac's contribution to poverty alleviation and the education and health sectors. The people of many neighbouring countries are still deprived of such facilities, he added.

"I have visited different schools and projects of Brac," the eminent economist said, adding that Abed's contribution to the welfare of people is unforgettable.

Bangladesh has earned worldwide acclaim for the system of micro-credit pioneered by Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus and the largest non-governmental organisation of the world established by Abed, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Fazle Hasan Abed said Brac has been moving forward as the largest NGO with an array of projects aiming to ensure the dignity of people through eradicating poverty.

A campaign to eliminate poverty is now being carried out in Bangladesh, which can be an example for many countries in the world, he added.

## Kabir made envoy to France

UNB, Dhaka

M Enamul Kabir has been appointed the next Bangladesh Ambassador to France.

Currently he has been working as the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, said an official announcement.

## Release of Hasina, Khaleda demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

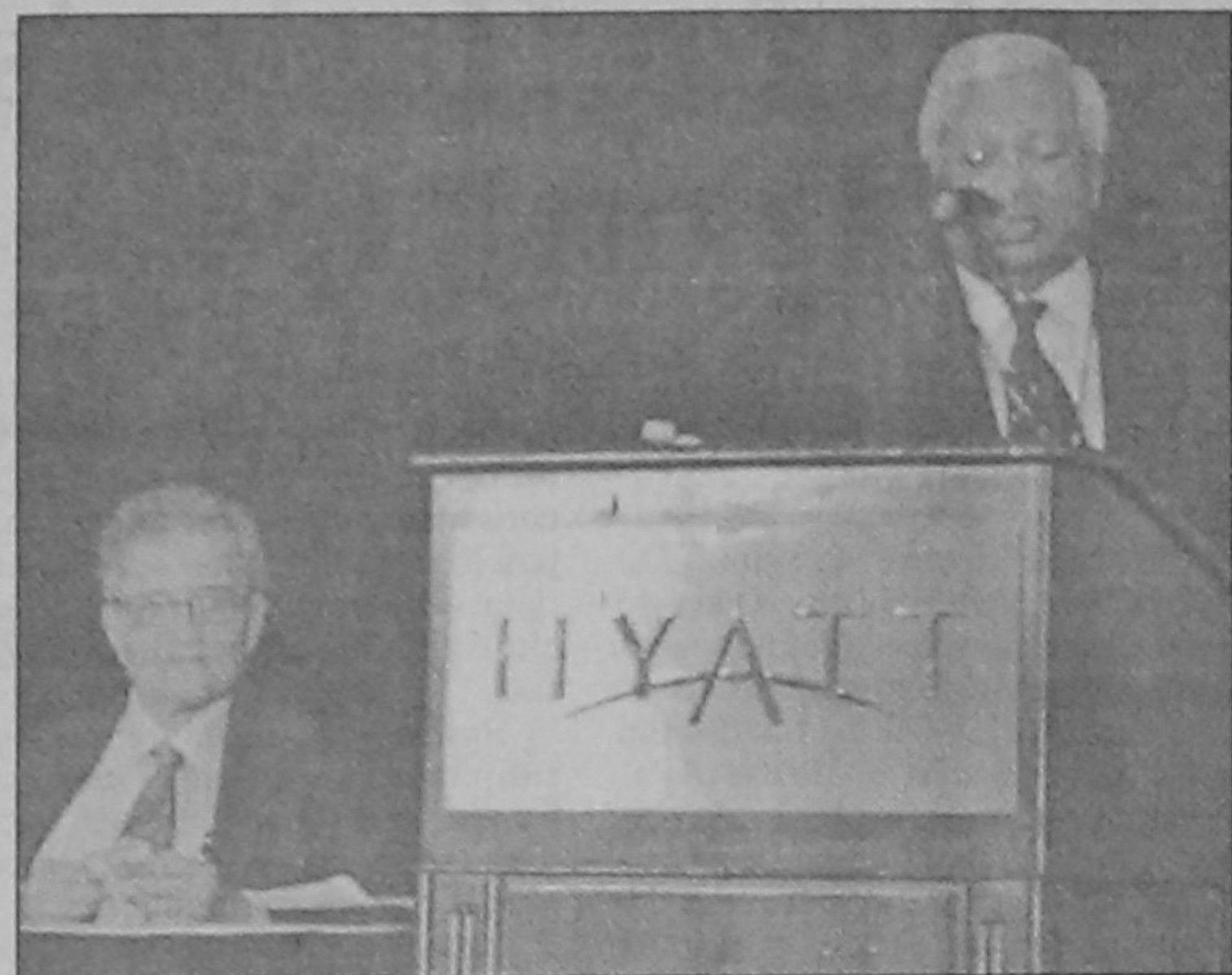
Three hundred Islamic Ulama yesterday urged the government to release two top leaders of Awami League (AL) and BNP, and declare the date of general election.

In a joint statement they said, "Two top leaders of two major political parties and former prime ministers AL President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia should be freed unconditionally, and a specific date of the elections should be declared immediately."

The Ulama said the country is now in the grip of severe crisis as the price situation has gone out of the reach of poor people.

"To get rid of this situation the government should immediately declare a specific poll date by lifting the state of emergency and releasing two leaders," they added.

The signatories to the statement include Alhaj Misbahur Rahman Chowdhury, Advocate Nurul Islam Khan, former secretary to the government Mokhesur Rahman Talukder, Maulana Ismail Zahedi, Shaikhul Hadith Maulana Sirajul Islam and Prof Anwar Hossain.



Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of Brac, speaks at a reception at Boston on Tuesday. Sitting on his right is Nobel laureate Prof Amartya Sen.

## DHAKA-KOLKATA TRAIN SERVICE

UNB, Dhaka

The much-awaited Dhaka-Kolkata passenger train service is likely to kick-start on April 14 (Pahela Baishakh) as the two sides talked on a positive note about the formal run of the Moitree Express on the first day of the Bangla New Year.

Rail officials of Bangladesh and India expressed their optimism about commissioning the cross-border train service on April 14 after the first day's meeting yesterday.

The two-day bilateral talks between Bangladesh and Indian railway delegations began at the Rail Bhaban, trying to set the stage for operating the two-way friendship train service through restoration of one of the missing links.

ATKM Ismail, additional secretary of the communications ministry, is heading a six-member Bangladesh side and RN Varma, additional member (traffic) of the Indian Railway Board, leading his country's seven-member delegation to the talks.

At the end of the first-day meeting, Ismail told reporters that the Dhaka-Kolkata passenger train must start rolling on Pahela Baishakh and they were trying to resolve the unsettled issues before the envisaged date.

"We are taking all-out preparation for starting the train from Pahela Baishakh. An agreement between the two countries would be signed in the next 12 days to the Bangla New Year," he said.



## Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over all the six divisions of the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 35.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mongla and lowest 16.7 degrees Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:16pm today and rises at 5:47am tomorrow.

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	32.8	21.5	65	83
Chittagong	30.6	21.0	66	71
Rajshahi	30.5	20.3	81	64
Khulna	33.6	21.3	74	57
Barisal	33.5	21.0	--	58
Sylhet	30.0	18.8	70	58
Cox's Bazar	33.2	23.1	66	68