# NATIONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL ENDS

# Call to build a nation free from injustice, corruption

Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of Brac, speaks at a reception at

Some technical issues

Boston on Tuesday. Sitting on his right is Nobel laureate Prof Amartya Sen.

DHAKA-KOLKATA TRAIN SERVICE

yet to be resolved

Says Indian team leader

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

India expressed their optimism

about commissioning the cross-

border train service on April 14 after

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

tary of the communications minis-

try, 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

At the end of the first-day meet-

ing, Ismail told reporters that the

Dhaka-Kolkata passenger train must

start rolling on Pahela Baishakh and

they were trying to resolve the unset-

tled issues before the envisaged date.

tion for starting the train from Pahela

Baishakh. An agreement between

the two countries would be signed in

Rain likely

ing the period, Met Office said.

major cities and towns yesterday were:

UNB, Dhaka

tomorrow.

City/Town

Chittagong

Cox's Bazar

Rajshahi

Khulna

Barisal

Sylhet

Dhaka

Year," he said.

the next 12 days to the Bangla New

"We are taking all-out prepara-

ATKM Ismail, additional secre-

one of the missing links.

The two-day bilateral talks

the first day's meeting yesterday.

Rail officials of Bangladesh and

day of the Bangla New Year.

UNB, Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day National Youth Festival styled 'Tarunner 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

Abed architect

of modern and

beautiful world

Nobel laureate Prof Amartya Sen

has said Fazle Hasan Abed, founder

and chairperson of Brac, is one of

the architects of a modern and

honoured to have many wonderful

persons and role models, he said,

while speaking as the chief guest at a

reception at Boston in the USA in

honour of Abed, founder of the

sation of the world, reports News

Kennedy School of Government

and the Ash Institute hosted the

of Bangladesh are enjoying better

healthcare facilities because of

Brac's contribution to poverty allevi-

ation and the education and health

sectors. The people of many neigh-

bouring countries are still deprived

and projects of Brac," the eminent

economist said, adding that Abed's

Bangladesh has earned world-

contribution to the welfare of peo-

wide acclaim for the system of

micro-credit pioneered by Nobel

laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus and

the largest non-governmental

organisation of the world estab-

Hasan Abed said Brac has been

moving forward as the largest NGO

with an array of projects aiming to

ensure the dignity of people

now being carried out in Bangladesh

which can be an example for many

envoy to France

appointed the next Bangladesh

as the Ambassador of Bangladesh

to the Socialist Republic of

Hasina, Khaleda

Three hundred Islamic Ulamahs

yesterday urged the government to

release two top leaders of Awami

League (AL) and BNP, and declare

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

now in the grip of severe crisis as

the price situation has gone out of

government should immediately

declare a specific poll date by lifting

the state of emergency and releas-

include Alhaj Misbahur Rahman

Chowdhury, Advocate Nurul Islam

Khan, former secretary to the

government Mokhlesur Rahman

Talukder, Maulana Ismail Zahedi,

Shaikhul Hadith Maulana Sirajul

Islam and Prof Anwar Hossain.

The signatories to the statement

ing two leaders," they added.

The Ulamahs said the country is

"To get rid of this situation the

Vietnam, said an official

Currently he has been working

M Enamul Kabir has been tothetalks.

countries in the world, he added.

Kabir made

Ambassador to France.

Release of

demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

the date of general election.

declared immediately."

the reach of poor people.

announcement.

UNB, Dhaka

A campaign to eliminate poverty is

through eradicating poverty.

Speaking on the occasion, Fazle

"I have visited different schools

of such facilities, he added.

ple is unforgettable.

lished by Abed, he said.

Harvard University's John F

Prof Amartya said general people

largest non-governmental organi-

World, a US-based news agency.

reception at a hotel.

adding that Abed is one of them.

Bangladesh and her soil are

The Nobel laureate said this

Says Prof Amartya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

beautiful world.

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 Kamal of National Mental Institute 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 congestion. discrimination.

Rahshahi University, said men and women are complementary to each other. Women have also played an equal role in all movements since secretary of BNP, Dr Dipu Moni,

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 spoke about drugs abuse and its prevention while Kamrul Islam Siddique, former secretary and president of Bangladesh Water Partnership, spoke about the traffic

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

Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, acting office

Indian delegation leader RN

Varma told the reporters that they are

very much confident about starting

train from April 14 and for this they

are in Dhaka. "Our target is 14th April,

and we are working towards the

sure that April 14 is the date for com-

missioning the train. He said both the

governments and the railway

authorities are making efforts, but

"some technical issues are yet to be

Express with a capacity of 410 pas-

sengers would run between Dhaka

and Kolkata through Darshana

border, once a week from both sides,

and it would be a 13 to 14 hours'

on Saturdays and start the return

journey on Sundays. Another train

will leave Kolkata on Saturdays and

return on Sundays. The train will

start from both sides at 8:30am

Das, AK Singh, Naresh Salecha, P

Gupta and Aseem Mahajan while

from Bangladesh side Safiz Uddin

Ahmed, joint secretary of the com-

munication ministry and M Sarwar

Mahamood, director of the foreign

and the next meeting will be held in

New Delhi in October.

The meeting will conclude today

Humidityin

percentage

Evening

83

71

64

57

58

58

68

Morning

65

66

74

70

66

On the Indian side were Suchitto

Train will leave Dhaka for Kolkata

Ismail informed that the Moitree

resolved".

ministry.

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or

squally wind is likely at one or two places over all the six divisions of

Slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country dur-

Highest temperature 35:5 degrees Celsius was recorded yester-

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

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some

Min

21.5

21.0

20.3

21.3

21.0

18.8

23.1

the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

day at Mongla and lowest 16.7 degrees Celsius at Rangpur.

Temperature in

Celsius

Max

32.8

30.6

30.5

33.6

33.5

30.0

33.2

Varma, however, wouldn't say for

target. We are on the right track."

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

METROPOLITAN/NEWS

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.

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

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 artistes 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

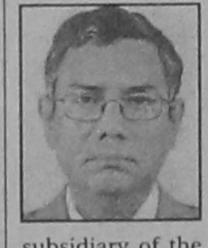
The medical board formed for the treatment of Awami League presidium member Motia Chowdhury said she is out of danger now and advised her full rest, a press release signed by Monaem Sarkar said.

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.

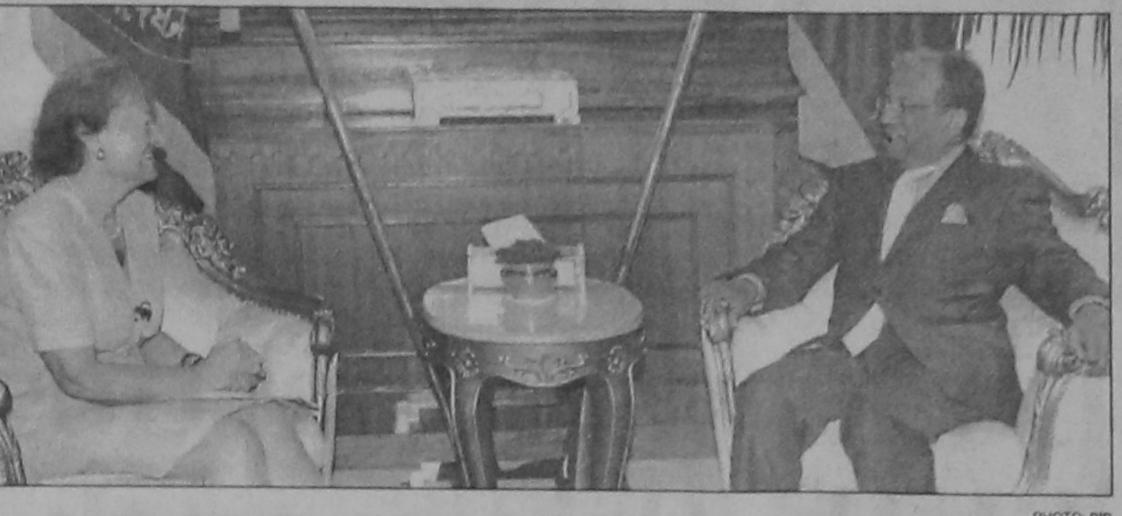
### Prof Imtiaz new VC of IUT



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. Hossain was the dean of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at Buet. | flats in Gulshan and Gopibagh,



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 Dhaka Youth Citizens Forum of people with disabilities occurred identifying five main

Says special assistant to CA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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 organ-regard. ised on this occasion in the city, Chief Adviser's (CA) Special Assistant Brig Gen (retd) 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 disabil-

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

the Ministry of Social Welfare, Jatiya Service. Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation, Directorate of Social Services and National Forum of the with disabilities including their Organisations Working with the parents took part in it. Disabled (NFOWD).

neuro developmental disorder which usually appears in a child by the age of three.

Autism is not a psychological ATaylor.

disorder at all, they added. The experts said the rate of the

First World Autism Awareness Day 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

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 Sharmind Neelormi.

The discussion was followed by a procession that started from the Betar Bhaban at Agargaon and The discussion was organised by ended at the Directorate of Social

> Member organisations of Jatiya Protibondhi Forum and children

To mark the day, the Centre for The experts said autism is a the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) organised a Wheel Chair procession at Savar. The rally was inaugurated by CRP Founder Valerie

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 MQKTalukder, Dr Shamim Ferdous, executive director of Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation, Narsis NFOWD President Khandaker Rahman, senior child psychologist, Dr Rownak Hafiz, chairperson of Autism Welfare Foundation, and Dr Shiraji Munira Chowdhury were alsopresent

Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC) also organised a discussion meeting, exhibition, League leader, passed away due to documentary show and cultural | old age complications at the resifunction 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.

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 exposition, the students said at a press conference at institutes' teacher loungeyesterdaynoon.

"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 organise the festival," said Prof Abdus Shakur, director of the institute and convener of the 'Baishakh Udjapon 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

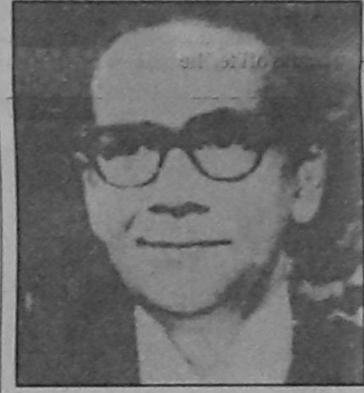
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Sheikh Kashir Ahmed alias Kalo Manik, a businessman and Awami dence 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 Satkhira after namaz-e-janaza yesterday afternoon.

Satkhira district Awami League leaders and businessmen expressed deep shock at his death To mark the day, Autism Welfare | 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 Qurankhwani 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 his 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

## DHAKA

#### 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 Muktijoddha Central Command Council, will be held. Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity. Time: 3:00pm.



Awami League leaders and activists stage a token hunger strike at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday demanding release of AL President Sheikh Hasina.

Khoka's wife, son and daughter were accused of assisting him for served with ACC notices on October committing the offences.

This was the first ACC case against the Dhaka mayor, who is discharging his duties even after his five-year tenure expired, as the

sections 26 (2) and 27 (1) of the ACC Act, 2004, section 109 of the Penal Code and section 15 of the ofland. Emergency Power Rules, 2007.

said Khoka submitted his income tax return first in 1990-91 where he shown his income as Tk 30,000. Now he has wealth worth over Tk 17.5 crore, which is beyond his known source of income.

declaring that he owns movable and immovable property worth about Tk9 crore. The statement shows immov-

able property worth about Tk8 crore and movable property worth about Tk 1.22 crore in the names of Khoka, his wife, and their children.

at Mawana, Gazipur, houses and

Khoka topped the list of 11 highprofile graft suspects who were

18 for submitting wealth statements in a week. The 11 are among 35 graft suspects on the ACC's fourth list published on October 4. DECLAREDWEALTH

tal, and 2,838 decimals (28.38 acre) Their movable property includes worth about Tk 53.26 lakh, and bank balance in DPS and Protirakkha

ment, his immovable property

Sanchay Patra. Khoka also showed 40 bank accounts in the names of himself, his wife and daughter, while there are fixed deposit (FDR) and savings scheme worth Tk 25 lakh and Tk 15 lakh in his son's name. The mayor

said he also owns two firearms. Of Khoka's houses, two are in Gopibagh, one three-storey building on RK Mission Road and a sixstorey building in Gulshan in the city, and one in Munshiganj.

Of the six flats in the capital, two each were shown in the name of his wife, daughter and son, while eight wife's name.

decimals of land in Munshiganj and

Gazipur in his wife's name. Khoka also mentioned that he has 27 bank accounts, including joint accounts, with different banks,

his wife has 11 accounts and his

daughter has two. He also said he and his wife own shares worth Tk 25 lakh, have business investment worth Tk 1.57 lakh and gold ornaments worth Tk 2.5 lakh, while there is a shop at Bashundhara City at Panthapath in hisson's name.

HISINCOMESOURCES Khoka's sources of income mentioned in the wealth statement include salaries he received as a minister, lawmaker and DCC mayor during 1991-2007 and money from selling one of his cars.

Other income sources include honorarium he received as a member of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) for two terms -- from 1975 to 1990 and from 1996 to 2001, commission he received as a businessman, business profits and house

His businesses mentioned in the wealth statement include importing salt through Brothers United since 1975, installation of deep tube-well under a project of plots in the capital were shown his Bangladesh Krishi Unnayan Corporation, and businesses with The wealth statement showed 32 different organisations including T&TandICDDR,B.

#### ACC files graft case against Khoka, family Dhaka, and two shops at 1,142 decimals in Gazipur in FROM PAGE 1 Khoka's name and 1,674 decimals in submitted to ACC in December last Bashundhara City Shopping Mall.

According to Khoka's wealth statesubsequent election has yet to be announced. The case has been filed under includes five houses, six flats and eight plots in and outside the capi-

The investigation officer further two cars -- a Lexus and a Toyota -

The mayor submitted his wealth statement to ACC on December 6

Shamsul told The Daily Star Khoka's ill-gotten wealth includes a piece of 87-katha of land in Before joining at IUT Prof | Bashundhara, Dhaka, a picnic spot