

ESTABLISHMENT SECY SPEAKS OF 'VISION 2021'

## 'Admin being prepared to build digital Bangladesh'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Establishment Secretary ASM Ali Kabir yesterday said they have started preparing the civil administration to implement the 'Vision 2021' and build a 'digital Bangladesh' as planned by the Awami League-led grand alliance government.

"Vision 2021, the charter for change and digital Bangladesh are being talked about nowadays to help build a prosperous Bangladesh. We have started preparing the administration to be capable to work to this end," he said at a press briefing at the establishment ministry.

"Although this job is a lengthy and complicated one, we are hopeful of its success and will continue to work tirelessly in this regard," he added.

Secretary Ali Kabir also claimed that the acts of chanting slogans, holding banners and showering flowers by the employees welcoming the new ministers at the Secretariat were not tantamount to violation of service rules.

"They have been involved in trade union for long. I don't think such acts are

punishable offences. These are not the big issues," he said while replying to a question from a reporter.

He, however, said action would be taken if any complaints are filed in this regard.

The establishment secretary, who was forced into retirement by the previous BNP-Jamaat government but got back his job during the tenure of the caretaker government after challenging the decision in the High Court, also said that the process of transfer, posting and promotion is being made in the right way during this government.

"There is no political pressure or partisan influence on the administration," he said, adding that 10 additional secretaries were promoted to secretaries while 72 joint secretaries were made additional secretaries during the ongoing shake-up in the administration.

He also said that the process of promoting 80 deputy secretaries to joint secretaries is in the final stage.

When asked about officers being made OSD, he said none have been made offi-

cers on special duty (OSD) wrongly.

"There are many reasons behind someone being made an OSD. The number of such officers is now much less than during the tenure of the previous governments," said Ali Kabir, who was the chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTA) before being appointed as the acting establishment secretary on January 12.

The AL government, in its first reshuffle in the administration, appointed Ali Kabir as the acting establishment secretary. Later, he was made secretary of the ministry.

At the press briefing, Ali Kabir also said many efficient officers who were denied promotion in the past are now getting their due promotion. But he denied that political considerations have played any role in the process.

He said the Superior Selection Board (SSB) will now hold meetings regularly so that promotion is given on regular basis and there should be no backlog of such cases.



Participants at a roundtable titled 'Making Upazila Parishad Operational: Challenges and Prospect', organised by The Daily Star at the conference room of its office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

## Cox's Bazar on top of list of natural wonders

BSS, Dhaka

Cox's Bazar sea beach yesterday scored top position in group 'G' in the ongoing competition of selecting world's seven natural wonders.

The success came following massive publicity made by Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) at home and abroad as per directives of the government and unstinting support by the people of all strata, a BPC press release said.

BPC Chairman Shafiq Alam Mehedi congratulated all for this success and urged the countrymen to continue voting through Internet to keep Cox's Bazar at the top of the list.

## PM to hand over Ekushey Padak Feb 20

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hand over the Ekushey Padak-2009 among 13 eminent personalities at Osmani Memorial Auditorium at 11:00am on February 20, a day ahead of the Amar Ekushey February, the International Mother Language Day.

The awards will be given to the eminent personalities in recognition to their outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

Bangladesh Betar will broadcast the award giving ceremony live on that day, said a press release yesterday.

According to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the award comprises Tk 40,000 in cash, a gold medal weighing 3 tolas and a citation.

The recipients of the Ekushey Padak-2009 are: Dr Borhan Uddin Khan Jahangir (education), Prof Dr Syed Anwar Hossain (research), Mahub-Ul Alam Chowdhury (language movement/posthumous), Ashrafuz Zaman Khan (journalism/posthumous), Begum Bilkis Nasir Uddin (music), Manik Chandra Saha (journalism/posthumous), Humayun Kabir Balu (journalism/posthumous), Begum Selina Hossain (literature), Shamsuzzaman Khan (research), Dr Quazi Khaliqzaman Ahmad (poverty alleviation), Mohammad Rafi Khan (M R Khan) (social service), Mansur-Ul Karim (fine arts), and Ramendu Majumdar (theatre).

## Indian, Turkish presidents greet Zillur

UNB, Dhaka

Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil and Turkish President Abdullah Gul have congratulated President M Zillur Rahman on his assumption of the office of President.

In a message to Zillur, Pratibha said India and Bangladesh share historically close and friendly relations.

She expressed her country's commitment to the further strengthening and deepening of the close and friendly relations between the two countries.

"We look forward to our two countries working closely together for the mutual benefit of our peoples and prosperity of the region," she said.

In a separate message, the Turkish president said, "I am fully confident that during your tenure, our already existing brotherly relations will be further reinforced."



PHOTO: PID

Zia Ispahani, special envoy to the president of Pakistan, calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

## Work unitedly on poverty, terrorism

### PM urges S Asian nations

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all South Asian countries to work unitedly to eliminate poverty and terrorism that batter the region.

She made the call when Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari's special envoy Zia Ispahani called on her at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The emissary formally handed Hasina letters of the Pakistan president and PM felicitating her on becoming the Bangladesh prime minister.

The PM expressed satisfaction as in all of South Asian countries, at present, demo-

cratic forces are in power.

Hasina said poverty is the main enemy in South Asia and peace will have to be established across the region for sustainable development and prosperity.

"If peace is established, then people's democracy will be more strengthened and maximum welfare of the people will be ensured," she said while talking to the Pak envoy.

The Prime Minister described the assassination of Benazir Bhutto as "unfortunate" and recalled her personal relation with the former Pakistan premier.

Hasina conveyed her sympathy to the family members of Benazir Bhutto.

Sheikh Hasina mentioned that she herself had come under terrorist attacks several times.

"The terrorists have no boundary. All will have to work unitedly to face the terrorists," said the PM, who has already proposed the formation of a South Asian antiterrorism taskforce.

The prime minister and the Pak president's envoy also discussed various other issues, including bilateral communications, and trade and business.

PMO secretary Mollah Wahiduzzaman, Press Secretary to the PM Abul Kalam Azad and Pak High Commissioner Alamgir Babar were present.



PHOTO: STAR

Home Minister Sahara Khatun unveils the plaque of victim support centre at Tejgaon Police Station in the city yesterday.

## Countrywide drive against polybag begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Department of Environment (DoE) will start a countrywide drive against manufacturing and selling of polythene shopping bags tomorrow, says a press release.

To make the drive successful, the department has already taken some measures, including publishing advertisement, to create awareness among the people.

The director general of DoE issued letters to all the deputy commissioners and divisional

commissioners requesting them to start the drive across the country.

The divisional offices of the environment department will help conduct the drive, the release added.

A view exchange meeting was held in the DoE office yesterday in this regard with the participation of representatives of industry ministry, Dhaka City Corporation, Rab, BDR, Dhaka Mohanagar Doka O Bazar Malik Samity and Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters

Association.

They gave their assurance of providing all-out cooperation to make the drive successful.

Another meeting was also held to decide the reformation of the task force and conduct the drive against polybag every week.

Although manufacturing and selling of polythene bag are totally banned, different kitchen markets all over have been flooded due to lack of drives.

## Alliance for Smile brings hope for cleft-lipped children

### Surgeries free of cost until Feb 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alliance for Smile (AFS), a US organisation working with plastic reconstructive surgery, brings hopes for the children with cleft lips and palates.

A total of 150 cleft-lipped patients are receiving free treatment at Dhaka Shishu Hospital from February 14 under a special mission which was formally launched at the hospital in the city yesterday.

AFS medical team comprising 32 US surgeons in association with the hospital specialists and Rotary Club of Gulshan Lake City will conduct the free surgery mission until February 28.

Barbara Fisher, a member of the visiting team, said: "There

is an existing social stigma regarding people with cleft-lipped anomalies which forces them to remain socially isolated. They are widely ridiculed for their appearance. The surgery will bring back their smile and social status."

Apart from suffering socially, there are other physical problems they go through, he said people with cleft lips cannot eat properly so they are highly malnourished, adding that they also suffer from ear infections and pneumonia. Surgery liberates them from all these ailments.

Cleft lips and palates are anomalies that occur during the early weeks of embryonic development. Hereditary predispo-

sition is the main cause and studies also indicate that folic acid and vitamin B deficiency, use of anti-seizure medication, exposure to some infectious disease and certain environmental agents disrupt the normal development of the foetus.

Experts said a total of 5,000 children are born with cleft lips and palates every year in the country. Majority of them do not receive any medical assistance. Shishu Hospital can only provide treatment for 150 patients a year.

Asians have one of the highest rates of children born with cleft lips ratio stand at approximately 350:1, they added.

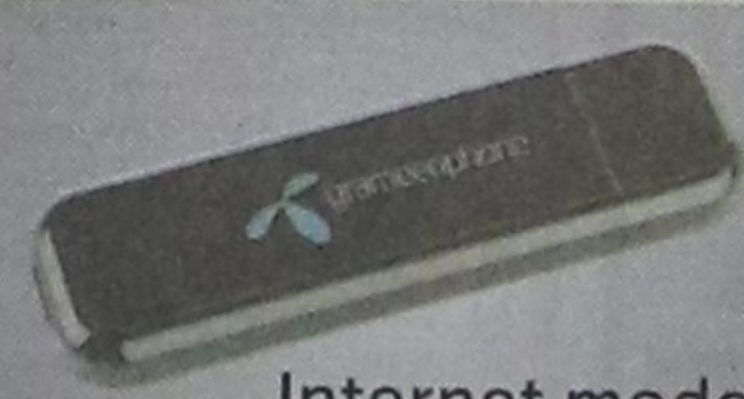
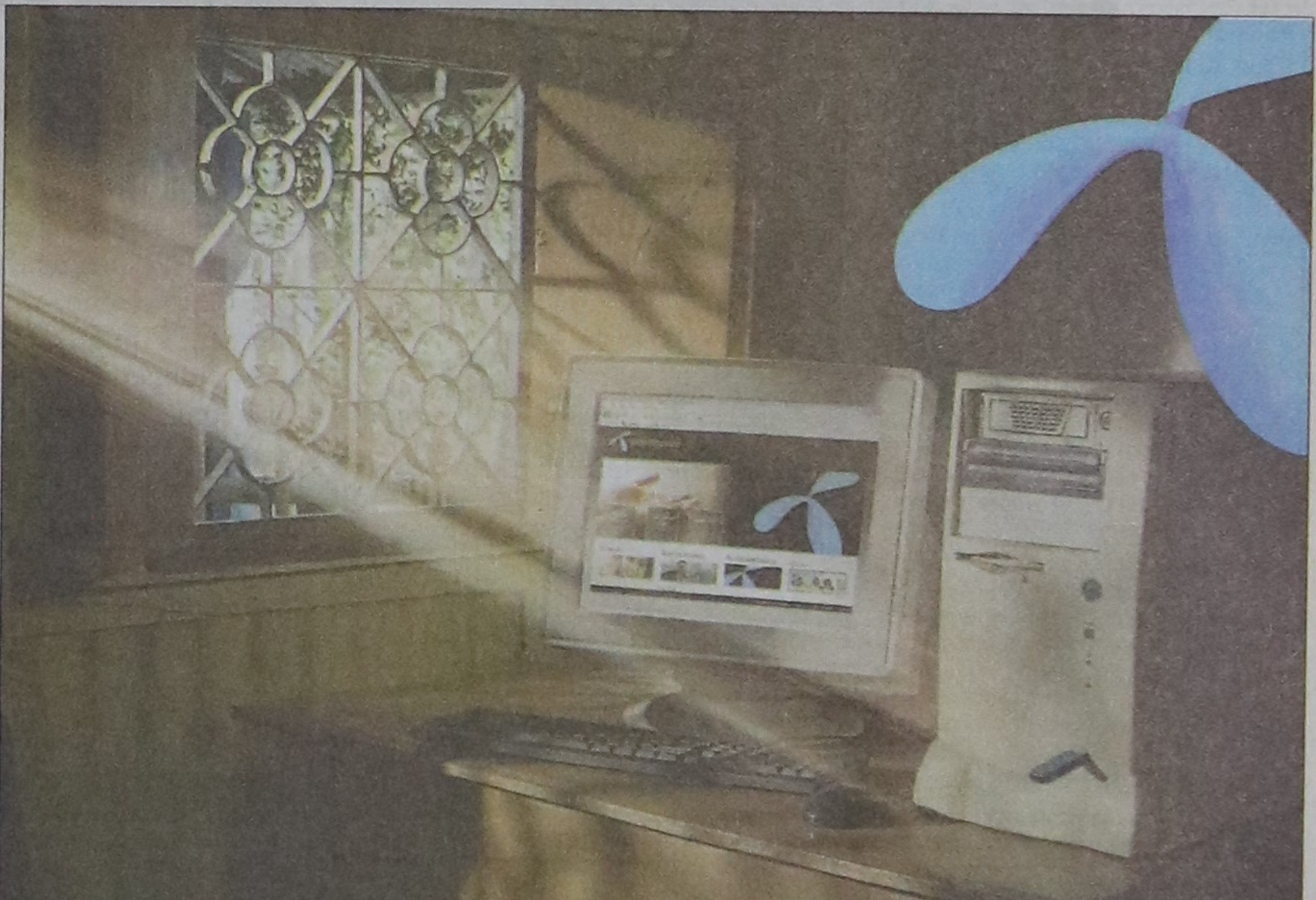
Speaking at the programme,

Health and Social Welfare Secretary Sheikh Ataf Ali said, "The work of these surgeons will bring the people from Bangladesh and the US closer."

US Charge de Affaires Geeta Pasi said, "This effort shows the philanthropic practices of the US. We would continue our assistance to Bangladesh in the health sector."

She also informed that the US provided around \$65 million to the country in the health care sector.

Chairman of the hospital management board Prof Mahmudur Rahman, Director Dr AR Khan, former district governor of Rotary Club Gulshan KM Jainul Aedin and president Dr Jainul Aedin also spoke.



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