Autistic children perform at a cultural function at the Public Library auditorium in the city yesterday. Autism Welfare Foundation organised the event to mark the Autism Awareness Day.

Constructions on croplands a threat to food security

Says Matia Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Setting up new structures on agricultural lands has been posing the biggest threat to the food security, as the amount of cropland is declining fast due to the construction of new industries and houses, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said vesterday.

"I am against allowing construction of any new buildings on croplands. If we allow it, we will not get be a food surplus country very soon and the goal any land for agriculture few years later," she said at the inaugural session of a farmers' training on Agriculture Information and Communication Centre (AICC) at the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) auditorium in the city.

The Agriculture Information Services (AIS) villages to the cities, she said. with support from the UNDP and FAO has set up information centres in ten villages on pilot basis so that the farmers can get information on agriculture through Internet. A Bangla website on ogytohelpbuildadigital Bangladesh. agriculture was also launched yesterday.

Matia Chowdhury said she would not allow any new building in the name of setting up such centres. Rather, the Union Parishad buildings can good governance and better service delivery. be used for this purpose, she added.

The tragedy is that all want to set up new build- tively can increase food production and reduce ings and procure vehicles whenever any new projects are launched, she said, adding that residential quarters were built for sub-assistant directors of DAE at upazilas few years ago, but those are not being used

DAF officials sometimes use inconsistent MushtagAhmed.

statistics, which is totally unexpected, said the

"Don't give false information to the farmers. Increase your knowledge base and train farmers how to apply that knowledge," Matia Chowdhury said and hoped that the farmers would bring a revolutionary change to agriculture by using information technology.

The minister also hoped that Bangladesh will of building a digital Bangladesh will be achieved even before 2021.

New agro-processing industries should be set up across the country for value addition to agricultural products and to check migration from State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh

Osman underscored the need to educate rural people and farmers about information technol-UNDP Country Director Stefan Priesner said the use of information technology in service

delivery system is an effective way of ensuring Introducing information technology effec-

poverty, he said. Cabinet Secretary Abdul Aziz, AIS Director Nazrul Islam and DAE Director General Mohammad Sayeed Ali also spoke at the programme chaired by agriculture secretary CQK

Keraniganj fire: Two succumb to injuries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two victims of the South Keraniganj fire incident succumbed to their burn injuries after fighting for life for over 24 hours at hospitals in the city

vesterday. The deceased were identi-

Dhaka Medical College sourcessaid. Hospital (DMCH).

Lalmatia in Mohammadpur from a gas oven broke out in around 5:45am, the room Lutfa died.

mother-in-law Mabia. Lutfa ment while another was South Keraniganj early died at Rashmono Hospital at undergoing treatment at Maghbazar while Mabia at Rashmono Hospital, hospital

Eight other injured were 10 of a family, sustained burn she struck a gas-lighter to light were shifted to the shifted to the City Hospital at injuries as the fire originating the gas stove at the kitchen Rushmono Hospital where

Wednesday.

Lutfa, 52, one of the victims and wife of house owner to DMCH from where Lutfa Eleven people, including Motahar Sikdar, 65, said when and her husband Motahar

fied as Lutfa Begum and her from DMCH for better treat- Motahar's house at Telghat at instantly caught fire with a bang, leaving all the 11 residents injured.

Locals rushed the injured



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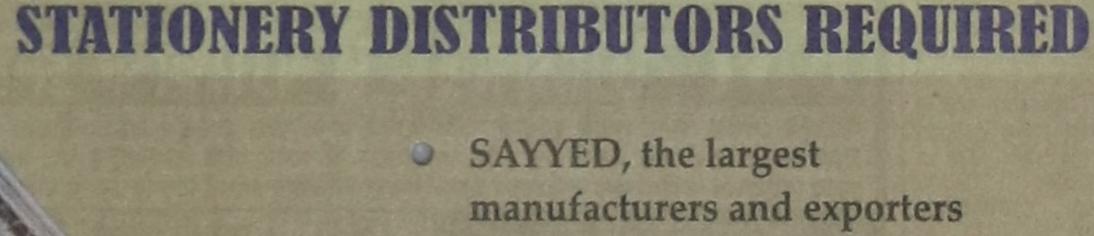
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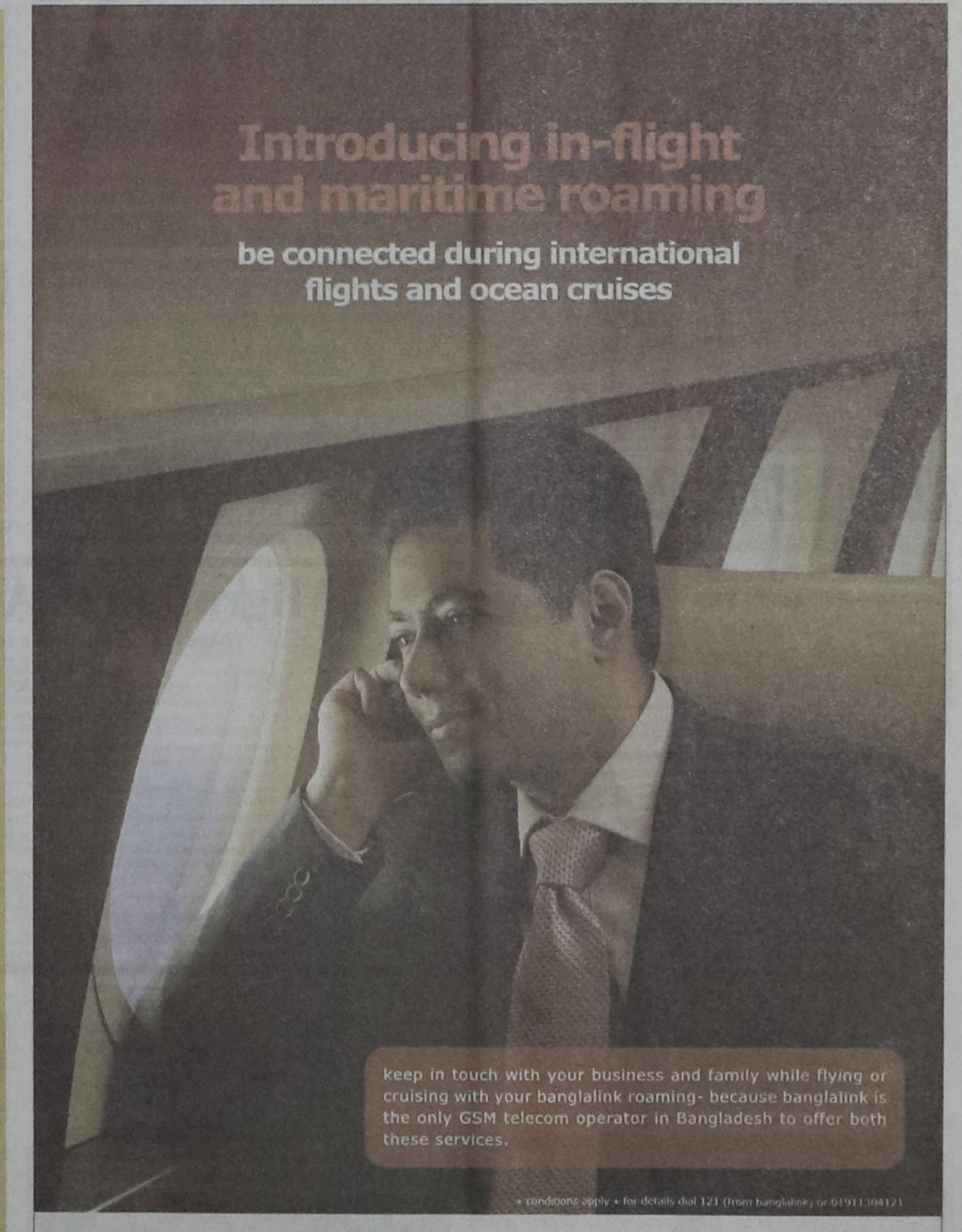
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