

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury speaks at the inaugural session of a conference titled 'Right to Information: Law, Institution and Citizens' at Hotel Sheraton in the city yesterday. On her right are Convener of Right to Information Forum Shaheen Anam, former adviser and Manusher Jonno Foundation Chairperson Syed Manzur Elahi, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad and TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman. (Story on page 16)

EC to monitor activities of DCC poll candidates

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission plans to appoint observers to monitor the activities of the candidates for election to the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). The DCC election is likely to

be held by the end of this year.

Talking to reporters yesterday Election Commissioner Brig Gen (Retd) M Sakhawat Hossain said they are planning to deploy observers to quietly observe and collect records and activities of individual

candidates and their election campaign.

Violation of electoral code of conduct will also be monitored, he added.

He said DCC election by the end of this year will depend on the passage of necessary law

during the current session of parliament.

Replies to a question Sakhawat said EC will take prompt steps to expel any returning officer and assistant returning officer if allegations against them are found.

TIPAIMUKH DAM

Dhaka won't accept anything that threatens environment

Says Razzak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdur Razzak, chairman of the standing committee on the Ministry of Water Resources, yesterday said that the government would do everything possible if the Tipaimukh dam proves to be a threat to Bangladesh's environment.

Discussions would be the main process to realise the demands and the government will not accept anything that might have a negative impact on the country's environment, he told the reporters after a roundtable.

Media Forum for Human Rights and Environmental Development (MHED) and WBB Trust jointly organised the roundtable titled 'Source of safe drinking water: task to save rivers, canals and wetland' at the National Press Club.

Abdur Razzak, also a presidium member of ruling

Awami League (AL) and former water resources minister, urged all to be positive and work unitedly to this end.

"Nothing can be achieved by showing warlike attitude. We have to be positive and be united for the greater interest of the country," he said, adding, "We have to solve the problem through discussion."

He said a parliamentary delegation will soon visit the project site in Indian state of Manipur and representatives of all party will be there in the visiting team.

Asked whether there is any BNP lawmaker in the delegation, he said they have asked BNP to propose a name and they are hopeful BNP will suggest a name soon.

Moudud demands team of experts

BNP leader Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday demanded forming a team of experts for visiting the Tipaimukh dam

site and said his party would join the team only if it is a team of experts rather than a parliamentary one.

He also suggested the government to go to international forums with the issue if needed.

Moudud said this at a roundtable on 'Indo-Bangladesh Relations: Recent Developments' organised by Centre for Strategic and Peace Studies (CSPS) at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

He also said the team that is formed to visit the Tipaimukh site would only legitimise the dam nothing else.

Former vice chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said there should be political division in certain issues but when it is a national issue the country needs to get united.

Manarat' University Vice Chancellor and former Red Crescent Society Chairman

Prof Mohammad Abdur Rob presented the keynote paper at the roundtable while former secretary and Chairman of CSPS Shah Abdul Hannan moderated the discussion.

Former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, journalist Sadek Khan and Jamaat-e-Islami Joint Secretary General Md Kamaruzzaman also spoke.

Gono Forum

Gono Forum leaders have urged the government to take effective steps to resolve Tipaimukh dam issue through bilateral discussions by giving national interest the highest priority.

They made the call at a party meeting at its office in the city on Saturday where they also demanded the government ensure immediate trial of war criminals.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, Abdur Rouf, Mofizul Islam Khan Kamal and Subrata Chowdhury spoke at the meeting with Pankaj Bhattacharya in the chair.

Expressing concern over the law and order situation, they demanded amendment is some important laws like the one that reduced the power and activities of local government and the one that proposed provision in the budget to whiten undisclosed money.



Winners of the 5th International Children Art Biennale Painting Competition-2009 pose for photograph with Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at the prize giving ceremony at Bangladesh Shishu Academy in the city yesterday.

5TH INT'L CHILDREN ART BIENNALE PAINTING CONTEST 'Competitions strengthen friendship, harmony'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 91 children from 33 countries, including Bangladesh, were awarded in the 5th International Children Art Biennale Painting Competition-2009 at a programme at Bangladesh Shishu Academy in the city yesterday.

Nattanon Googtarn, an eight-years-old boy from Thailand, bagged the Grand Prix prize in all six groups A, B, C, D, E and F categories.

Apart from the Grand Prix, there were one gold, three silver and eleven bronze prizes in each group in the competition.

As many as 40 Bangladeshi children won gold, silver and bronze medals for their excellent paintings in the contest this year.

In 'A' group, the gold medal went to Georgina Mezo, five-year-old girl of Hungary, while the gold medal went to the seven-year-old Bangladeshi girl Ashil Ahsan Mubin in 'B' group and the eight-year-old girl Shelly Lesmana received the gold medal in 'C' group.

In 'D' group, Amit Sutra Dhar, a 12-years-old Bangladeshi boy, received the gold medal, while the 13-year-old girl Onprawee Sachan of Thailand won the gold medal in 'E' group and the gold medal in 'F' group went to the 18-year-old Bangladeshi Boy Sohel Ahmed.

Attending the ceremony as chief guest, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni handed over the prizes to the winners. Bangladesh Shishu Academy has been organising the competition since 1998.

The competition was held with a total of 16,695 paintings and of them, 485 were selected for the exhibition inaugurated by Dipu Moni at the academy's art gallery.

The foreign minister said paintings play an important role in flourishing the hidden talent of the children as their early stage they can show their creativity using different colours.

The government has taken various steps for the welfare of children, includ-

ing providing quality and informative education, she added.

UNICEF Country Representative Carel de Rooy as the special guest said the competition not only awards children, but also creates opportunities to make friendship with other children of different countries which strengthens harmony.

Women and Children Affairs Secretary Rokeya Sultana said her office is trying to bring the children of remote areas to participate in such competitions.

Terming paintings most ancient languages on the earth, noted artist and Bangladesh Shishu Academy Chairman Mustafa Monwar said children do whatever they want and it is possible through drawings and paintings. So, everybody should create an opportunity for children from their respective levels.

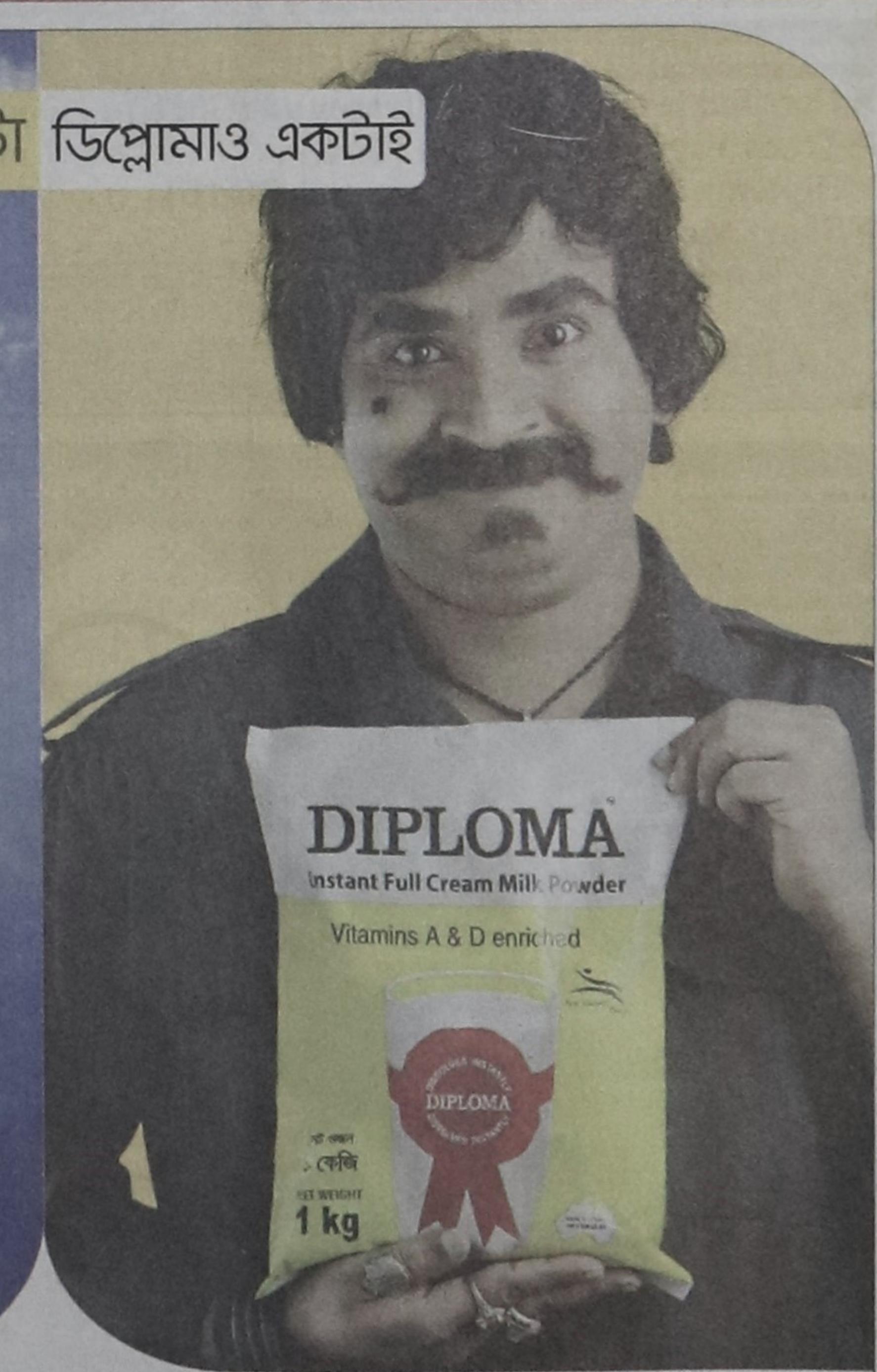
Director of the academy Tajul Islam and Thai Ambassador Chalermpol Thanchit also spoke.



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