

# Ensure participation of persons with disabilities in digitisation

## Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable in Chittagong on Thursday said the dream of a digital Bangladesh would not be fulfilled without ensuring participation of persons with disabilities in the mainstream development process.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury said people from all walks of life have to work unitedly to ensure rights of the persons with disabilities.

He said, "I will work to rehabilitate the persons with disabilities in the port city if an organisation provides me with the real statistics of such persons here."

Mohiuddin said this as the chief guest at a roundtable on 'Right to information of persons with disabilities: Present perspective and our duties' at a hotel in Agrabad.

Shapthik 2000, Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) and Chittagong Society for the Disabled (CSD) jointly

organised the roundtable in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Editor of the weekly Mainul Ahsan Saber chaired the roundtable where CDD Executive Director AHM Noman Khan read out a concept paper.

Lawmaker Shamsul Haque Chowdhury from Chittagong-11 called on all to ensure the constitutional rights of the persons with disabilities.

Chittagong University Vice Chancellor Abu Yusuf Alam

said, "I will take proper initiative to fulfil the quota of the students with disabilities in the admission process."

CC Panel Mayor Rekha Alam said the dream of digitisation of the country would not be possible excluding the persons with disabilities.

At his concept paper, Noma said the country's 1.40 lakh people are suffering from various forms of handicaps, including visual, physical, intellectual or mental impairments.

# Two muggers bullet-hit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two alleged muggers were bullet wounded as police fired on them while fleeing after snatching valuables from a pedestrian at Sutrapur in the city on Thursday.

Identified as Alamgir Hossain, 35, and Mohammad Topu, 38, the victims were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as they received bullets at their legs.

Police said they opened fire when a three-member gang of muggers was fleeing after mugging a pedestrian at Nandalal Ghosh Lane around 7:00am.

Two of them were caught as they received bullets but another could flee, police said, adding that a machete was recovered from their possession.

Talking to The Daily Star, injured Topu claimed himself innocent.

# Call for constitutional recognition, separate land commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Adivasi Chhatra Parishad (ACP), student wing of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad (JAP), here yesterday placed their 10-point demand, including constitutional recognition and formation of a separate land commission for plain land indigenous people.

It called on the government to observe the International Day of the World's Indigenous People tomorrow at the national level.

The ACP leaders made the call at a rally at Shaheb Bazar here to mobilise opinions for their demands.

They also demanded steps for securing seats at different

education institutions and positions in government jobs.

Earlier, ACP also formed a human chain at the same venue.

Dr Sujit Sarker, a Rajshahi University teacher, Dr Sayed Shafiqul Alam, general secretary of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Enamul Haque, general secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) district unit, Abul Kalam Azad, president of CPB city unit, Kamarullah Sarker, president of Rajshahi Theatre, Rabindranath Saren, general secretary of JAP, Harendranath Shing, president of ACP, and Manik Saren, secretary, took part in the programmes.

# One kg heroin seized

UNB, Comilla

BDR members seized one kilogram of heroin in a drive at the rail station in the town yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of 33 Rifles Battalion, led by Commander Lt Col Fikhruddin Ahmed, searched a sack of vegetables at the booking office at about 1:30pm and found the heroin kept hidden in it, BDR sources said.

However, none was arrested in this connection.

# Oikya Parishad protests disrespect to Krishna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, Bagmara Upazila unit, yesterday postponed Sree Krishna's birth anniversary programmes scheduled for August 13 to protest alleged acts of disrespect to Krishna by the brother of local lawmaker.

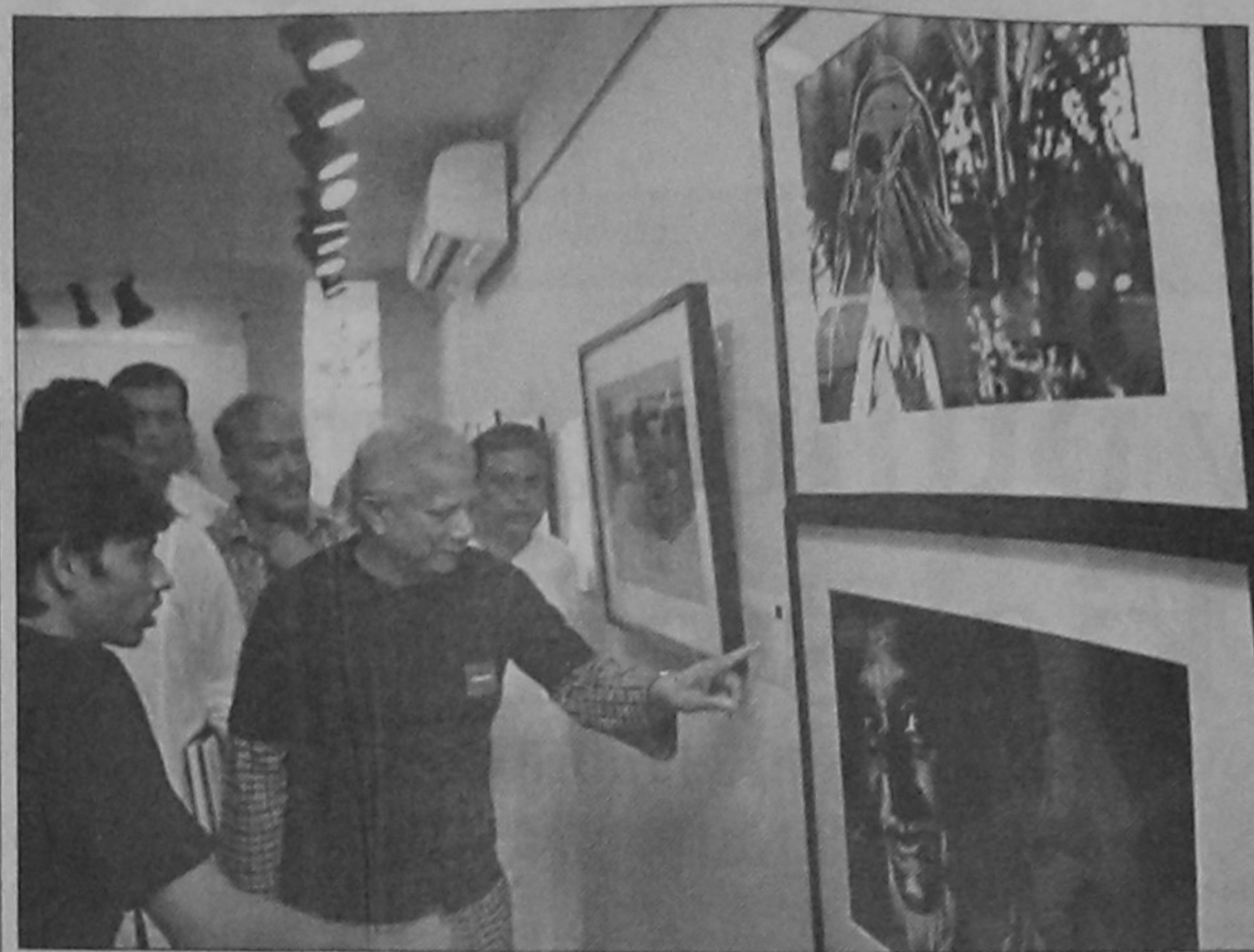
In a press conference, the Parishad leaders alleged that Emdadul Haque, brother of Awami League lawmaker Enamul Haque, tore up an invitation card containing Krishna's portrait on Thursday and hurled abusive words when two Parishad men handed over the card to him and invited him to the August 13 programmes.

The Parishad leaders also said they invited Emdad, who is a supporter of Jamaat-e-Islami, as he is now an influential person in Bagmara.

The Parishad also took out a procession in Bagmara Sadar upazila and announced that protest programmes will also be held on August 13.

When contacted, Emdadul Haque denied all the allegations. "I just threw away the invitation card as I was unaware of the matter. I did not take it up or humiliate anyone," he said.

"I also do not have any connections with Jamaat-e-Islami or Razakars, but I am involved with Tablig-e-Jamaat," he said replying to a question.



Nobel laureate Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus admires a photograph after inaugural ceremony of a photography exhibition titled 'Perspective' of the graduating students of Pathshala, a photography institution, at Drik Gallery in the city yesterday.

# Prof Yunus for recognition of photography as branch of art

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus has said the government should recognise photography as a branch of art as it is photography through which the meaning of life is communicated to people.

"There is no other better source of information than seeing in own eyes. Success of an artist is his ability to show things through his own eyes. He will see life in his own way and that will touch and toss everyone else. And that is art and that is how an artist sees," said Prof Yunus in his speech as chief guest while speaking at the graduation ceremony of the students of Pathshala, a photography institution in the city yesterday.

This is the first time Pathshala organised such a programme titled 'Perspectives' on the occasion of the graduation day.

A photo book titled 'Per-

spectives' containing photographs taken by the graduates, was also launched at the ceremony with Prof Yunus unveiling its cover.

"I do not think there is any other branch of art which is comparable to photography," said eminent photographer Bijon Sarkar.

"Photography is one of the most important medium through which Bangladesh is known to other parts of the world. Through photography this country has gained a distinct identity internationally," said eminent photographer Shahidul Alam.

He said Pathshala is not only a place to learn photography but also an institution to build up a human being.

Shahidul regretted that the government did not recognise Pathshala as a photography institution though it is producing international-standard photographers.

# Road accidents kill 29

FROM PAGE 16

The deceased were Nurul Islam, 22, the rickshaw van puller who died on the spot and Lokman Hossain, 22, one of the passengers. Among the injured two were reported to be in critical condition.

In Kishoreganj, Surma, an 11-year-old girl, died on the spot as a speeding bus ran over her in front of Hossainpur Upazila Health Centre Friday morning.

Police seized the bus but the driver managed to flee.

In two separate incidents on Thursday in the city, two unidentified men died as one was hit by a covered van on Dhaka-Mymensingh road near Balaka Bhaban at airport while the other was knocked by a train near Saidabad rail-crossing around 4:30pm.

In Faridpur, at least six

people were killed and 30 others injured as a bus carrying devotees plunged into a ditch on Dhaka-Khulna highway at Noapara in Bhanga upazila Friday around 2:00pm.

Of the deceased, three were identified as Mannan Bapari, 15, Keramat Ali, 25 and Aftab Fakir, 38.

In Pirojpur, two people were killed as a bus rammed their motorbike near Badhal Bazar under Morelganj upazila in Bagerhat district Friday.

The victims were Touhid, 30, son of Meser Sharif, and Alauddin, 25, son of late Yusuf Ali of Pirojpur pouroshova. Police recovered the bodies and returned them to their families.

In Narsingdi, two children died and another got seriously injured while

crossing the Dhaka-Sylhet highway as a speeding pick-up van ran over them.

The deceased were Runa, 8 and her sister Ranu, 6. The injured child Hiron, 7, was sent to DMCH. Police said the speeding the van of RFL Company knocked over the kids while they were returning home with Khodeza Begum from an invitation.

Enraged locals barricaded the highway for an hour and a half following the tragic accident. Police recovered the bodies and sent them to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital for autopsy. A case was lodged with Shibpur Police Station in this regard.

UNB and our correspondents from Savar, Khulna, Manikganj, Kishoreganj, Dhaka, Faridpur, Pirojpur and Narsingdi contributed to this report.

# DBBL launches fully secure credit card

METRO DESK

Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited (DBBL) launched fully secure computer processor-based Nexus-Pro Visa Credit Card on Wednesday, says a press release.

It has also launched EMV technology for its ATM and POS systems.

With this launch, an end-to-end technological revolution in the card industry has begun in the South Asian region. DBBL is the first and only bank in South Asia with the full end-to-end EMV system in place for both acquiring and issuing.

The normal credit card technology has not changed in the last 40 years and causes nearly \$1 billion of fraud every year. DBBL's Nexus-Pro card, designed with the collaboration of Visa and MasterCard is powered and protected by a computer processor micro-chip. With DBBL's next generation hi-tech protection system, a DBBL cardholder does not require to bother for losing money due to fraudulent transactions.

The Nexus-Pro Credit Card is accepted at all DBBL POS & ATMs network as well as at all the Visa & MasterCard locations all over the world. Three types of cards are available for the customers: Gold, Platinum and Titanium.

Interested customers can get the application forms and related information from all DBBL branches. For branch locations and telephone numbers, please visit [www.dutchbanglabank.com](http://www.dutchbanglabank.com) and contact DBBL Card Division at 7170024, 7170025, 9555145.

# Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Md Zakaria Khan, associate professor of the department of Islamic history and culture of Dhaka University (DU), passed away at Birdey Hospital yesterday at the age of 65.

Khan was also a member of the executive committee of Bangladesh Itihash Parishad and a house tutor of Surys Sen Hall for a long time.

He is survived by his wife and three daughters.

His body was sent to his village home at Mokhadia in Mirarsari, Chittagong, for burial.

In a condolence message, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof AAMS Afeef Siddique has expressed deep shock at the death of Zakaria Khan and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

# Fatema Begum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Fatema Begum, mother of Dhaka University teacher Rahmat Ali and Rajshahi city Workers' Party general secretary Liakat Ali, passed away at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital on Wednesday night at the age of 85.

She left behind eight sons, two daughters and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death.



Injured students receive treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Around 12 students were injured in a factional clash of BCL at Dhaka University on Thursday. (Story on Page 1)

# Hosaf's sketchy study raises questions

FROM PAGE 1

energy ministry that deals with oil and gas-related policy issues gave the appointment. The cell last week made a presentation on the IMCL review to the energy secretary and formally submitted the full review to the ministry Sunday.

Khalashpir coal field was discovered by Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB) in 1989.

The then BNP-led alliance government on October 11, 2003, secretly gave Hosaf the licence to explore Khalashpir coal zone in 2,500 hectares of land. Hosaf applied for mining lease for the area in the same year for mine development.

Hosaf does not have mining experience.

The company in association with Shandong Ludi Xinwen Mining Group of China in July 2006 submitted the feasibility report to the Bureau of Minerals Development (BMD) with a plan to develop an underground mine. The report was prepared by China Jinan Mining Development Corporation engaged by Hosaf. During the study, Hosaf took help of Geotech-India, NamNam of North Korea, Geo-Mineral Engineering of China and IMCL.

Many officials and experts had then pointed out that the Hosaf study was a copy of that for Barapukuria coal mine project in which it acted as the local agent, questionably, for all the contractors involved.

The Techno Economic Feasibility Study was prepared

mainly on the basis of Geological Survey of Bangladesh's (GoB) geological reports published earlier and subsequent exploration work (no internationally acceptable standard was followed and the exploration activities were carried out without any kind of monitoring by the GoB)," one expert said.

The experts also questioned quality of the study and claimed that Hosaf had drilled only three boreholes to come to its conclusions. But the company claimed to have drilled 14 boreholes. Even Hosaf's own claims do not stand as a strong basis for such a study as the feasibility study of Asia Energy was done on the basis of 108 such holes.

Hosaf's study remained shelved, but the BMD did not cancel its licence for Khalashpir coal zone. The caretaker government last year initiated the process of reviewing Hosaf's study through the Hydrocarbon Cell. The caretaker government had awarded several power contracts to enterprises owned by Hosaf chief Moazzem Hossain, who is an accused in the sensational corruption case concerning Barapukuria coal mine.

Some officials expressed surprise that the government spent about \$95,000 to pay IMCL for reviewing a private company's feasibility study. "When Asia Energy submitted its study report, the government formed a committee headed by Buet Professor Nurul Islam to review that

study. There was no cost involvement. But the Asia Energy study was much bigger and detailed that needed professional scrutiny. The Hosaf study is visibly a sketchy report," noted an official.

Explaining why Hydrocarbon Cell was given such a job when it should have been done by the BMD, one source said, "BMD did not have enough funds to carry out a review. Hydrocarbon Cell had some Norwegian donation."

IMCL observations Sources said IMCL in its review suggested that additional drilling should be carried out by a reputable and proven drilling contractor with modern and well-maintained equipment, who is qualified to operate in accordance with Joint Ore Reserve Committee (JORC), an internationally acceptable coal resource assessment code.

The review says previous boreholes that yielded unacceptable levels of core recovery should be re-drilled; an additional exploration must be carried out in accordance with internationally acceptable standards such as JORC utilising downhole geophysical logging in every hole as Hosaf drilled holes without logging; samples should be taken, logged and prepared as per JORC and supervised by a JORC-accredited senior geologist; analysis of collected samples should be undertaken by at least two accredited international laboratories observing

the standard rules of analysis.

IMCL further says some coal samples indicate that coal at Khalashpir might have metallurgical coking properties and should be re-tested with fresh samples; underground mining would be preferred method of coal extraction particularly with respect to the surface environmental and social considerations; the Hosaf study's production design parameters are out of date with respect to current longwall technology, or inappropriate to meet the overall production targets; spontaneous combustion and air temperatures are likely to be the dominant underground environmental issues which interact, and it is to be reflected in the design process.

The company should have made environmental and social impact studies for construction, operation and mine closure stages, and the relevant department has to consult the local people to consider problems threatening the environment in and around the mine, the review says.

Further professional studies are needed to address hydro-geological issues including hydraulic conductivities and aquifer behaviours. There is no information about Acid Mine Drainage in the study, IMCL notes.

Mining subsidence impacts should be addressed during Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and engage the local population and all

stakeholders in open discussions to ensure that land owners and workers are fully informed at all stages of project development and implementation; the surface layout of the study is based on Barapukuria mine surface facilities. Many of these facilities are unnecessary, IMCL observed.

Hosaf's study In its study, Hosaf claimed that Khalashpir coal reserve occurs at depths between 257-480 metres with an estimated total reserve of 451 million tonnes - proven 277 m tonnes and indicated 174 m tonnes. Of the reserve, seam I, II and IV are considered to have a potential for mining 277 m tons.

The IMCL review puts this estimate at 337 million tonnes for seam I, II and IV, showing that Hosaf's assessment is grossly different.

Hosaf suggested underground mining with initial production target of two million tonnes a year, which would be raised to four million tonnes in the 10th year of production.

Regarding underground mining risks and environmental impact assessment, the study said the spontaneous combustion and subsidence risks are high, including high methane emission and high underground mine temperature hazards. But it gave no details of management plans for the mining hazards and environment issues, stating 'proposed damage and hazards, reclamation plan etc have been duly undertaken.'

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