

## 62nd birth anniversary of Hasina observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 62nd birth anniversary of Prime Minister and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina was observed across the country yesterday.

AL and different organisations celebrated the day in absence of the party chief who is now in New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly.

The ruling party organised a milad mahfil and special munajat at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the city after Asr prayers.

Dhaka city unit AL also organised a milad mahfil at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue after Asr prayers and distribute food among the destitute.

Jubo League held a discussion at Engineer's Institution to mark the day where acting party president Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury was present as the chief guest. Party presidium members and senior leaders also took part in the programme.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote organised a discussion meeting at its Gulshan office and prayed for the well-being of Hasina. Sree Sree Dhakeswari National Temple and Ram Sita Mandir conducted special prayer sessions to observe the day.

Islamic Foundation also conducted a doa mahfil after Zohr prayers at the national mosque seeking blessing of the premier as well as the peace and prosperity of the countrymen.

The central command council of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad organised a milad mahfil to observe the day.

Bangabandhu Lekhok Parishad also observed the day by cutting a cake and holding a recitation programme at Shilpakala Academy.

Bangladesh Chhatra League brought out a procession and milad mahfil to mark the day.

Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was born at Tungipara in Gopalganj on this day in 1947.

She was elected president of AL at a council session of the party in February 1981 while she was in exile. She returned home on May 17, 1981.

Hasina led AL to power and became the prime minister in June 1996, two decades after Bangabandhu along with other family members and relatives was assassinated in August 1975. She became the premier again after winning the December 29 parliamentary elections.

The AL chief escaped an assassination attempt on her on August 21 in 2004 when a rally of her party came under grenade attacks in the city that left 24 leaders and activists dead.

## Seminar on smuggling of tobacco products

BSS, Dhaka

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and World Health Organisation (WHO) will jointly organise a seminar titled 'Resistance of smuggling of tobacco products in Bangladesh' at the DAM auditorium here today.

DAM President Kazi Rafiqul Alam will preside over the seminar while Adviser to the Prime Minister Prof Dr Modasser Ali will be the chief guest on the occasion.

National Professor Dr MR Khan and Director General of the Department of Narcotics Control M Humayun Kabir will be present as special guests. Noted lawyer and Executive Director of Law and Trust Bangladesh Barrister Tania Amir will deliver the keynote speech at the seminar.

Talking to BSS, DAM President Kazi Rafiqul Alam said a series of issues related to the illicit tobacco trade and adverse impacts of its use would come up for discussion.

"Nearly one third of the total tobacco trade in Bangladesh is being operated via international smuggling, resulting in fall in prices and rise in demand," he said.

# Sorry state of childhood cancer treatment

Experts say around 7,000 children are affected with cancer in Bangladesh a year. Of them, 70 percent is curable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a roundtable yesterday said though 80 percent of the childhood cancer can be cured in developed countries, the situation is quite different in Bangladesh for lack of awareness, proper treatment and diagnostic facilities.

Every year, around 6,000 to 7,000 children are affected with cancer in Bangladesh. But unfortunately most of them are deprived of getting proper treatment, though 70 percent of childhood cancer is curable, they added.

The experts said this at the roundtable titled 'For the children suffering from cancer' organised by the Prothom Alo at its conference room in the city.

Prof Afiqul Islam, chairman of the department of Paediatric Oncology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, said some 268 patients came to his unit from January to August this year. Of them, only 112 patients continued treat-

ments while most of them went away after it was diagnosed cancer.

"As parents find it difficult to manage the huge amount of money for cancer treatment, they often prefer to take their children back to their village homes," he said, adding that the price of an anti-cancer drug is also high and often the patients are forced to buy a drug at six times higher rate.

Artist Mustafa Monwar said the government should take necessary steps to provide anti-cancer drugs for the affected children and at the same time early detection of the disease be ensured.

Faridur Reza Sagar, managing director of Channel i, stressed the need to work in a coordinated way for the children as well as to increase awareness in society in this regard.

Iftekharul Islam, managing director of Sanofi-Aventis, said cancer survivors could also play an important role in increasing awareness.

"Every hospital should have a separate portion for children where they would find a homely environment and the drugs must be made available for them," said Prof MR Khan, a child specialist, adding: "Even privately if we begin sponsoring one child who needs long-term treatment, it would be a good starting point."

If the government takes steps, it is not much difficult to raise fund for the treatment of cancer patients, said Prof ABMF Karim.

The experts at the programme underscored the importance of better environment in the hospitals as many of the childhood cancer patients die of infection.

They also suggested activating different organisations working on cancer awareness and treatment.

The suggestions include decentralisation of cancer treatment, community participation, imposing more tax on cigarettes and alcohols and to utilise at least 2 percent of the tax for treatment of cancer



PHOTO: COURTESY

The Prothom Alo organises a roundtable titled 'For the children suffering from cancer' at its conference room in the city yesterday.

patients.

Editor of the Prothom Alo Matur Rahman moderated the roundtable where Dr Mostofa Zaman of World Health Organisation, Prof MA

Mannan, Salma Chowdhury of Ashic Foundation, Prof MA Hai of Bangladesh Cancer Hospital and Welfare Home, Dr Quamruzzaman, Dr Mollah Obaydullah Baki of

National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital, Kazi Rafiqul Alam of Dhaka Ahsania Mission and cancer survivor Rifat Kabir also spoke.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

The road at North Begunbari in the city's Tejaon area remains waterlogged for long, but the authorities seem indifferent. The picture was taken yesterday.

## 'Reinstate officials in previous posts before BMA polls'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) yesterday demanded the government reinstate all the transferred presidents and general secretaries of district-level BMA offices in their previous posts before the BMA election on November 5.

The BMA leaders placed an 11-point demand at a press briefing at the National Press Club in the city for a free and fair election.

Acting Secretary General of BMA Mostaque Rahim Swapan said soon after the announcement of the polls, the Awami League government transferred a huge number of central and district-level officials of BMA to different areas.

"The transfer of district-level officials has created a deadlock in collecting membership and their renewal which is the main obstacle to conducting a fair election," he added.

Other demands of the leaders include reinstatement of the central working committee officials and members and freeing BMA General Secretary Zahid Hossain from jail before the polls.

They demanded withdrawal of the false and conspiracy cases against Zahid Hossain and working committee member Dr Firoz Mahmud Iqbal, halting the initiatives by a group of doctors to manipulate the election and steps to create a level-playing field to give the opportunity for all the parties to take part in the polls.

They also demanded steps to stop repression and physical harassment on

doctors immediately, transfer of reputed physicians for the sake of quality higher education and treatment and stop corruption, nepotism and partisan politics in health sector.

Other demands include recruitment of doctors through special BCS examination instead of ad hoc basis recruitment and inclusion of BMA in finalising the health policy.

"As a national organisation of the doctors of the country, BMA wants a fair election. That's why, BMA

leaders wrote letters to the director general of DGHS and the health minister in this regard. But they did not pay heed to our appeal," said BMA President Dr AKM Azizul Haque.

BMA Vice-President of Barisal division Dr Mohamad Rafikul Kabir Labu, Organising Secretary Dr Farhad Halim Donor and Publicity Secretary Syed Mohammad Akram Hossain and Treasurer Dr Harun Al Rashid were also present at the programme.

## Disaster centre to train African officials

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC) is going to transcend its origin to further cater to the cause of community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) by training 12 high-level government officials of six African countries -- Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Sudan -- on disaster risk management (DRM).

This will be a training of the trainers (TOT) programme to be held in Uganda from October 5 to 10. It is an initiative of EEFORM, a European Union-funded programme for IGAD

(Inter-Governmental Agency for Development) region, says a BDPC press release.

BDPC was selected through an international competitive bid for the job for its long experience in CBDRR.

BDPC's role in the 2nd Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) in June this year, especially that of its Director Muhammad Saidur Rahman as the moderator of the 'High-Level Panel for Enabling Community-led Resilience Through Preventive Action', drew the global attention to BDPC.

GPDRR was participated by over 1,800 people from 170 countries.

Bangladesh is a world leader in DRR. African countries recognise the need for focusing more on disaster risk reduction/disaster risk management to harness the capacity and resilience of their people.

This is an opportunity of BDPC to train and thus influence the DRM policies and practices through the 12 top-level government officials of IGAD region and contribute to consolidation of the global demand for CBDRR.

## New Ruet VC takes charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Prof Dr Sirajul Karim Chowdhury took charge as the vice chancellor of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) yesterday.

Earlier on August 27, President Zillur Rahman, who is also the chancellor of RUET, appointed Prof Sirajul as the vice chancellor of the university as his predecessor Dr M Fazlul Bari resigned due to illness.

He was the chairman of Mechanical engineering department at the university before taking charge.

## OVERDUE PROMOTION

# DCC engr threatens boss with arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An aggrieved superintendent engineer (SE) of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) on Sunday threatened the chief engineer with a pistol during a negotiation for promotion, protesting taking army officers on deputation.

On receiving a formal complaint from the chief engineer (CE) Brigadier General Md Abdul Quadir, DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka by evening the same day suspended Md Farukh Aziz, in-charge of SE and president of DCC Officers' Association.

The incident occurred at the Nagar Bhaban at around 11:30am, stated the complaint.

The CE's staff officer filed a general diary with Shahbagh Police Station in this connection on Sunday.

Duty Officer Assistant Sub-Inspector Nazrul Islam said that a sub-inspector had been tasked with the investigation and he would initiate the prosecution with the metropolitan magistrate if the incident turns out to be of grave nature.

Farukh refuted the allegation saying, "There was no altercation with the CE. He rather agreed to resolve the long overdue promotion in the DCC engineering department within a week."

"Nothing like posing threat to the CE took place," he said, "After we had finished the discussion with the CE, we went to the Chief Executive Officer along with him."

The CE also said that he would not go ahead for an engineer from army engineering corps to fill the position of additional chief engineer, said Farukh.

Farukh said that he along with around 50 other engineers went to the CE's room to negotiate the demand for promotion and express their discontent at the move to bring another officer from army engineering corps to fill the post of additional chief engineer.

The position of additional chief engineer has been lying vacant since January.

Brigadier Quadir told The Daily Star over phone, "Farukh threatened me over cellphone on Saturday night and he brandished a gun at me the following morning."

According to highly placed sources, Quadir agreed to pursue that Abdus Salam, senior most among the superintendent engineers as per confirmed service, would be promoted to

## EDUCATION POLICY

# Govt urged to extend time for giving suggestions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different student and guardians' organisations yesterday urged the government to extend the time for giving suggestions on the draft education policy 2009.

They said the deadline for giving suggestions, which is September 30, is very short and it is difficult to give comments within this period.

Different Islamic student organisations yesterday demanded the extension of time holding a meeting at the central office of Bangladesh Islamic Chhatra Shibir.

Ideal School and College Guardians' Forum also urged the government not to adopt the policy on September 30 and seek suggestions from people at the grassroots.

Meanwhile, pro-BNP teachers' organisation Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote headed by Principal Muhammad Selim Bhuiyan has demanded cancellation of the policy. They will hold a press conference in this regard today.

additional chief engineer.

But Farukh, who is yet to be promoted to superintendent engineer, opposed the idea.

Another SE in-charge, who was present with Farukh at the CE's office, requesting anonymity, said that although Farukh carried his licensed pistol during the incident, he did not brandish it.

"Our negotiation with the CE ended amicably."

Despite attempts over phone, neither DCC Chief Executive Officer Md Nurul Haq nor the mayor could be contacted.

## Khaleda demands enquiry

UNB, Dhaka

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday demanded an enquiry into Sunday's incident of reported death threat at gunpoint to a senior army official posted on deputation at the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) over a matter relating to promotion.

She further demanded exemplary punishment to the perpetrators.

According to reports, DCC Chief Engineer Brig Gen Abdul Quadir on Sunday received threat on his life at gunpoint at his office room by his subordinate superintending engineer M Farukh Aziz over filling up the vacant post of additional engineer at the DCC of which Aziz is one of the aspirants.

In a statement, Khaleda Zia, also leader of the opposition in Parliament, expressed deep concern over the incident that she said was committed by a pro-ruling party official serving as an engineer at the DCC.

She strongly condemned the act and alleged that presently panic prevails everywhere and there is no sense of security for anybody at any place, including localities, offices, business places and educational institutions following the "flexing of muscles by the ruling party men and their goons."

The former prime minister also demanded security to all citizens of the country.

Referring to a letter sent recently to the government by the diplomats serving here expressing concern over their security, Khaleda Zia said, "We want an end to such situations."

# World Space Week begins Oct 4

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Astronomical Society (BAS) will arrange a two-day programme from October 9 in observance of the World Space Week to create awareness among the students about the space, says a press release of the society.

Every year, the US-based World Space Week (WSW) observes the World Space Week from October 4-10 to popularise the space. The observance of the week was approved by the United Nations.

Bangladesh has been

observing the week since 2003. This year's two-day programme will be arranged at Enayetpur village in Sirajganj.

Under the programme, space art competition and launching of water rocket will be held on October 9 and space rally, discussion on space, quiz and other events on October 10.

BAS official secretary Mamun Ahmed Sharif told BSS that the programme is open for all and hoped that students from 30 schools across the country will take part in the programme.