

PHOTO: STAR

Autistic children perform a dance number during a cultural programme at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

'Appoint children's ombudsman'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an experience sharing meeting yesterday urged the government to introduce children's ombudsman to preserve the rights of the children with disabilities.

They also called upon the government to formulate a special law to safeguard the rights of the children with disabilities and suggested using Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar

for creating mass awareness about their rights.

SEID Trust and ActionAid Bangladesh jointly organised the meeting titled 'Sharing with Joy' at Biam auditorium in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid said the government is very much sincere to ensure the rights of the people especially those who are being neglected in the society.

"The prime minister has strictly directed us to establish the ministry as a safeguard for the people who are lagging behind," the minister said.

The government has also taken an initiative to give the destitute elderly people and people with disabilities identity cards to ensure they get allowances and other facilities.

The guardians of the children with disabilities will get double allowances and they will be provided with ID cards

as they are the parents of the 'golden citizens' of the country, they minister added.

He also urged the guardians with disabilities to get the names of their children registered since the registration process is going on.

Lawmaker Sarah Begum Kabari said family members and the community people would have to play a responsible role to ensure the rights of the children with disabilities since it is difficult for the government to do the job alone.

Although the government had issued a circular in 2005 to allot a room in the government schools to ensure the right to education of the children with disabilities, the decision is yet to be implemented, said Rasheda K Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government.

ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir said every child with autism or other disabilities has a special power so it has to be utilised through proper steps or programme.

She said if the government introduces children's ombudsman or form a commission then children's rights will be ensured.

Over hundred of children with autism, intellectual and multiple disabilities took part at the programme and some of them shared the problems they experience everyday.

"People often treat us as lunatics, misbehave with us, throw rocks on our way but what they think is not right," said Sanjeed, 15.

He said he wants to go the school and mingle with other children as well as participate in sports and other social events.

The programme was followed by a cultural programme where autistic children participated.

Singer Nakib Khan and Mushtaq Hasan Muhammad Iftakhar, director general of NGO Affairs Bureau, also spoke on the occasion.

Cancer, heart disease, diabetes on rise for change in food habit

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said the prevalence of non-communicable diseases has been increasing in the society with the growing number of elderly people following changing lifestyle and food habit and the reduction of infectious diseases.

So, it is the time to take necessary steps to prevent non-communicable disease like cancer, heart disease, childhood obesity, diabetes and chronic pulmonary diseases, they added.

At the discussion titled 'Non-communicable diseases: Facts and ways to move forward' was organised by the Eminence in association with the World Health Organisation at the Spectra Convention Centre in the city, the speakers highlighted the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and interventions.

While presenting the keynote paper Prof Barkat-e-Khuda of Dhaka University said facilities for diagnosis and management of NCDs are inadequate at primary level.

"Logistics for diagnosis and management of all NCDs are also inadequate at higher level. Though some tertiary level specialised hospitals with advanced technology and skilled manpower are available for the treatment of NCDs, almost all of them are located in Dhaka city," he said.

Team Leader of Health Nutrition and Population Sector Programme Dr MA Sabur, Dr M Zaman of World Health Organisation, MM Reza, former health secretary, and Dr A M Zakir Hussain of Eminence were also present on the occasion.

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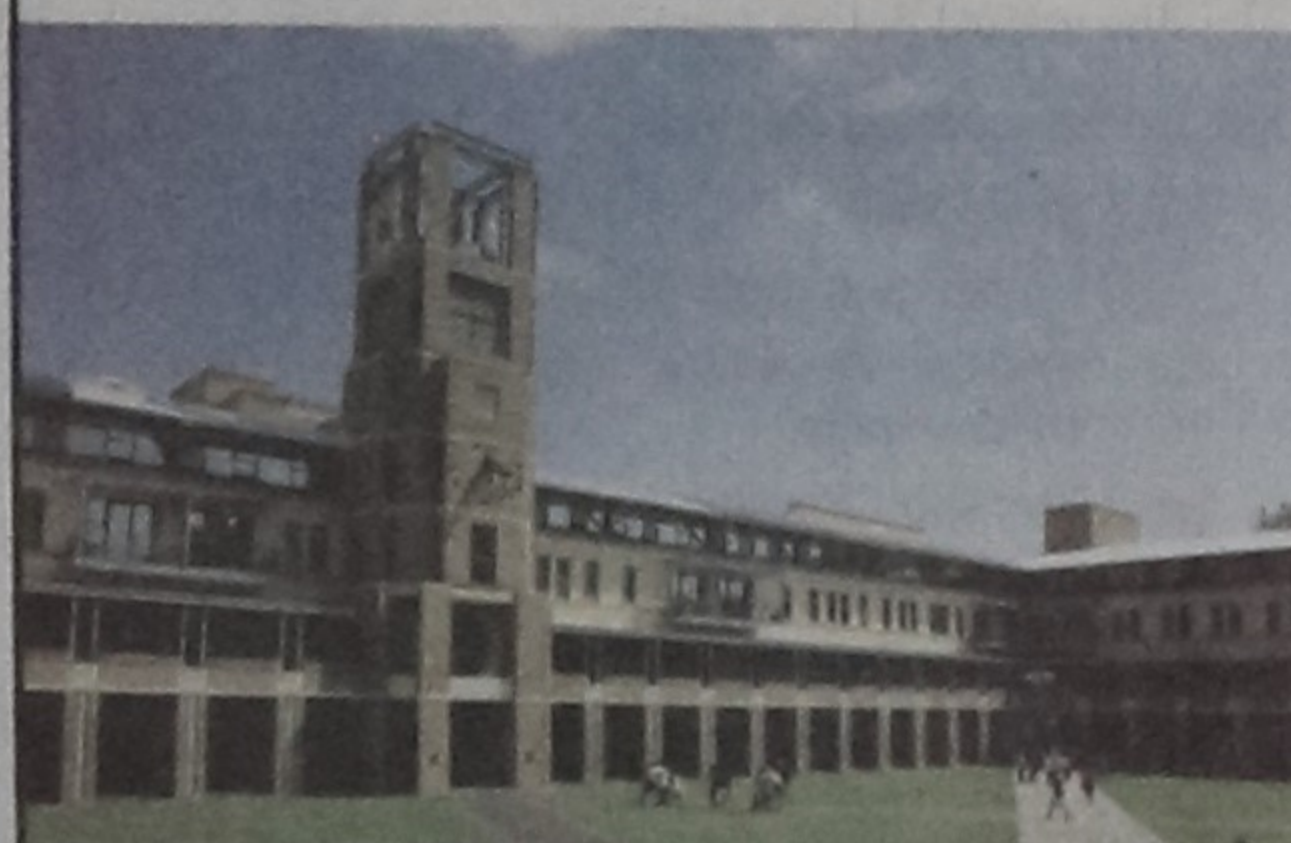
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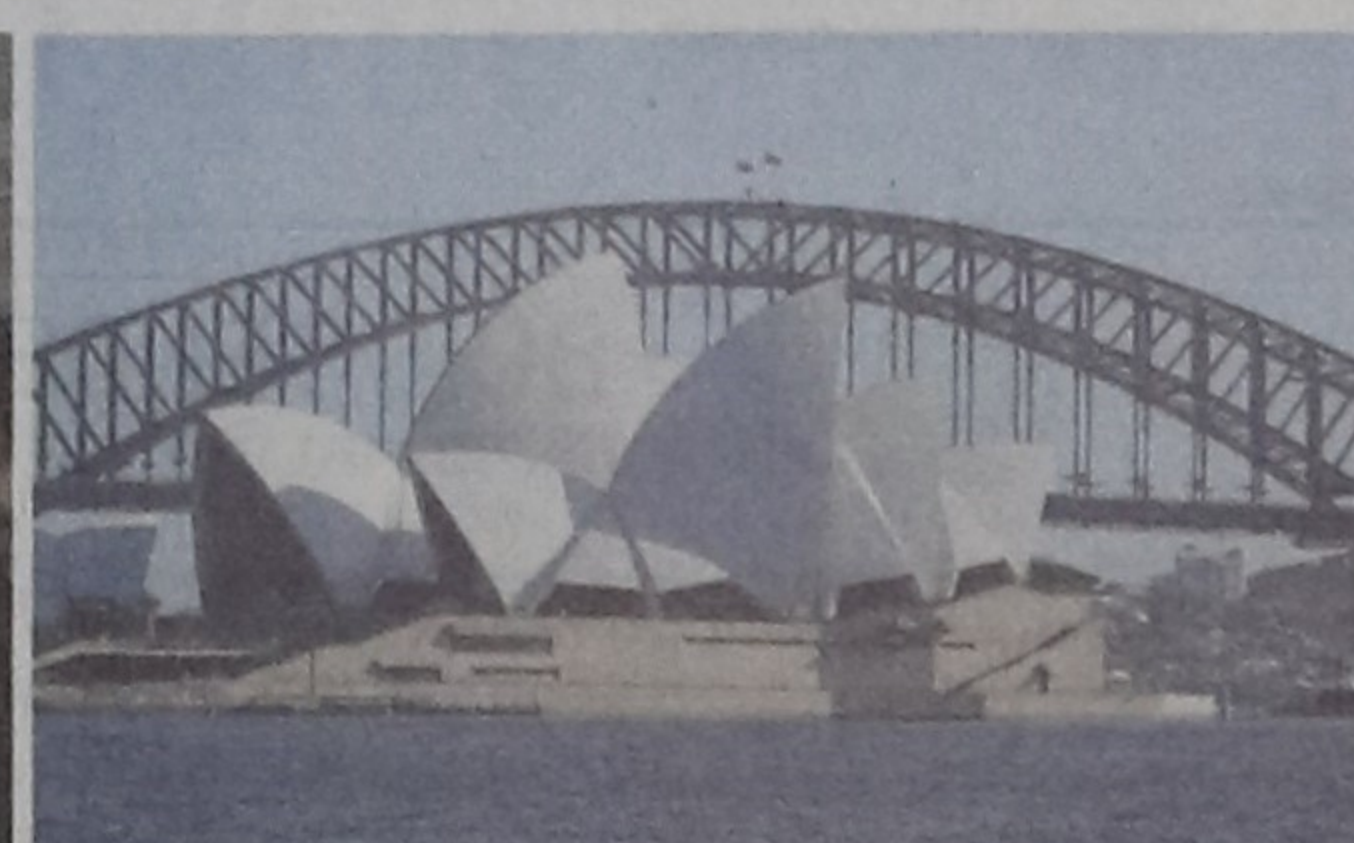
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