



Suman, a boy with disabilities, holds out packets of popcorn to an autorickshaw passenger at an intersection near the FDC at Karwan Bazar yesterday. He lost one of his legs and a foot in a train accident some five years ago. But instead of being a burden on other people, he struggles to earn a living. He lives with his grandparents after the death of his parents.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# Law soon to ensure rights of persons with disabilities: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government would formulate a law to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and they would also get the opportunity to have their say on it.

Process is also underway to introduce quota for them in government services, including civil service, she said while inaugurating the 5th National Convention of the Disabled at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

The government has already introduced quota for this special group for the posts under the 'class four' category, Hasina said.

"Steps have already been taken to recruit visually impaired people as teachers in resource schools. Quota will also be introduced for physically challenged persons for the posts of teachers in primary schools," she said.

The prime minister said information technology-based tele-centres would be set up in every union to create employment opportunities for the physically challenged persons.

She said physically and mentally challenged people would be included in the next census and the Disabled Welfare Act would be reformed.

She also stressed the need to change the people's attitude towards this challenged group.

The National Grassroots Disability Organisation and the National Council of the Disabled Women in association with the Action on Disability and Development (ADD) organised the convention.

About 2000 persons with disabilities from 32 districts took part in the convention.

Speaking on the occasion, Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid said the government has taken various steps for the empowerment of this underprivileged group.

More special schools and colleges would be set up in different districts to ensure their right to education, he added.

"The government has also a plan to establish industries in every district to provide employment opportunities for the physically challenged people," he said adding that the government has also a plan to extend interest-free loan facilities to them and to

start e-banking for women with disabilities.

Umme Kulsum Ranjana, president of the National Council of the Disabled Women, highlighted the problems and discrimination facing the people with disabilities.

ADD Country Director Mosharraf Hossain said social movement is needed to ensure the rights of the people with disabilities.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at the 5th National Convention of the Disabled at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## Islami Andolan procession disrupts traffic movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic movement was disrupted at Malibagh intersection and its adjacent roads in the city yesterday for around one and a half hours as police intercepted there a protest procession of Islami Andolan Bangladesh heading towards the Indian High Commission to lay a siege.

When the procession reached the area from Mukhtangan, police intercepted it by putting up barbed wire fences on both sides of the road.

Police set up the barricade at around 12:30pm and lifted it at 2:00pm causing severe traffic congestions in the intersection and its adjacent areas.

Around 3000 processionists led by Charmonai Pir Maulana Syed Rejaul Karim, who is also Amir of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, were protesting the construction of Tipaimukh Dam in the Monipur state of India and demanding the withdrawal of the Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty.

Earlier, the processionists held a rally at Mukhtangan at around 12:00noon.

Addressing the rally, the speakers criticised the government for its weak foreign policy and said if the dam is constructed at least 22 districts of

the country will turn into desert.

They also demanded withdrawal of the Indian high commissioner.

The speakers said the government is trying to make the country a part of India by allowing the construction of the dam and connecting the country with the Asian Highway.

They also slated the government's draft education policy and demanded its cancellation.

They said the government excluded Islamic education from class one and two and included other subjects leading the students to un-Islamic culture.

## Jagjit performs Ghazal on Nov 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prominent Indian Ghazal singer Jagjit Singh will perform at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city on November 4.

He will perform here in an invitation of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

The BKMEA invited Singh on the occasion of its 5th Knitexpo to be held at Sheraton Hotel from November 2 to 4.

## AUG 21 ATTACK HC issues rule on govt over Salam Pintu's bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain within two weeks why former BNP deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu should not be granted bail in August 21 grenade attack case.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Rais Uddin issued the rule upon a bail petition filed by the defendant.

Pintu was arrested on January 17 last year in the grenade attack case. On October 13 this year, the HC, upon an application, directed the authorities concerned to interrogate Pintu at the jail gate in the cases against him and also asked the authorities to make arrangements for his treatment, if he (now in Dhaka Central Jail) is ill.

Pintu filed a petition with the HC in August, seeking bail in this case.

Advocate Khandaker Mahbub Hossain appeared for Pintu while Additional Attorney General AKM Zahurul Hoque stood for the government.

## Partisanship, vested interests threat to press freedom

### Speakers say at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Partisanship and vested business interests of a section of the media are posing a threat to the freedom of the press and affecting the quality of journalism, which eventually create obstacles to national unity and good governance, media experts said at a seminar yesterday.

Bangladesh saw a revolutionary change in the media, especially in the private sector, after the revival of democracy in the '90s, but partisanship of the media houses and business interests are tarnishing the image of journalism, they said.

The National Press Club organised the seminar on 'Bangladesh's Mass Media is at Crossroads' on its premises to mark its 55th anniversary.

Speaking on the occasion, Editor of The News Today Rezauddin Ahmed referred to a new newspaper, which is yet to come out, and said its publisher was

surprised to know that only Tk 100 crore is enough to publish a newspaper. Money is not a matter of concern for him.

"That publisher has earmarked an annual allocation of Tk 1,200 crore for his newspaper. This is beyond imagination. This money will come from rivers and canals," he added.

Mizanur Rahman Shelley, chairman of Bangladesh Media Commission, in his keynote speech said, "Private investment played an important role in development of the media in mid-nineties. But only a few newspapers and weeklies could establish themselves while others are used as a tool to achieve political, commercial and personal gains."

Such newspapers can neither maintain their standards nor provide salaries and other facilities to newsmen and other employees, he added.

He also said it is a good sign that the government has been issuing licences to more television channels, but they may

fall under the grip of those who are the supporters of this government, which will only boost partisanship in the media.

Even the government agencies publish advertisements in the newspapers of their choice by ignoring the advertisement guidelines, which only serves partisan and vested interests, said Shelley, also the editor of the Asian Affairs, a quarterly.

Journalist Swapna Kumar Saha alleged that licences are being issued to television channels and newspapers on political considerations.

In absence of a policy, the number of media houses is increasing, but the standards of journalism are not improving, he said.

National Press Club President Shaikat Mahmud, General Secretary Kamaluddin Sabuj, freedom fighter Abdul Hye, Advisory Editor of The Independent Golam Tahabur and journalist MA Aziz also spoke.

## Meena Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Meena Day will be celebrated across the country today with the theme 'Child friendly education', says a press release.

The theme has been chosen as there are still many children who are not going to school but it is possible to bring every child to school if schools are more inclusive using child friendly teaching techniques.

On the occasion, Unicef organised a programme at LGED conference room at Agargaon in the city.

Around 400 children along with their parents, teachers and education officials will take part at the programme. The children will participate in different events, including drawing, reciting and perform on the Meena themes.

The day is celebrated every year in the country since 1998 after Meena became the most popular animated girl character who stands for child rights and gender equality.

## Two killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mob beat a snatcher to death and injured the other at South Badda while police recovered the body of a youth wrapped in sack from Dholai Khal in the city yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Mohammad Russel and Faruque Hossain.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Kazi Wajed Ali of Badda Police Station said an agitating mob beat Russel to death while he along with his accomplices were trying to snatch with a toy pistol at around 6:00am.

The OC said they seized the toy pistol from the spot while they rescued injured Milon who is undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) in critical condition.

The body of Russel was sent to DMCH for autopsy.

The other accomplices managed to escape. Meanwhile, Sutrapur police recovered the body of Faruque from Lalmohan Saha Street at Dholai Khal area.

Quoting Faruque's younger brother Zahid, police said Faruque came to his house on Sunday and he was supposed to appear before a Dhaka court in a case.

After receiving a cell phone call at noon, Faruque came out from the house at Ahmednagar in Mirpur-1, and since then he was missing.

Police said Faruque was an accused in a drug and a murder case.

Zahid filed a case with Sutrapur Police Station in this connection yesterday.

### OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO ALL

It is our pleasure to announce that the subscription of Grameenphone's Public Offering of shares has been completed on October 8, 2009.

We are delighted to receive a record number of more than one million applications from investors nationwide.

We convey our heartfelt gratitude to the Securities and Exchange Commission, BTRC, Bangladesh Bank, Dhaka Stock Exchange, Chittagong Stock Exchange, Citigroup Global Markets, Underwriters, Bankers to the Issue, Satcom IT Ltd, CDBL, RJSC and others for their all out support to us.

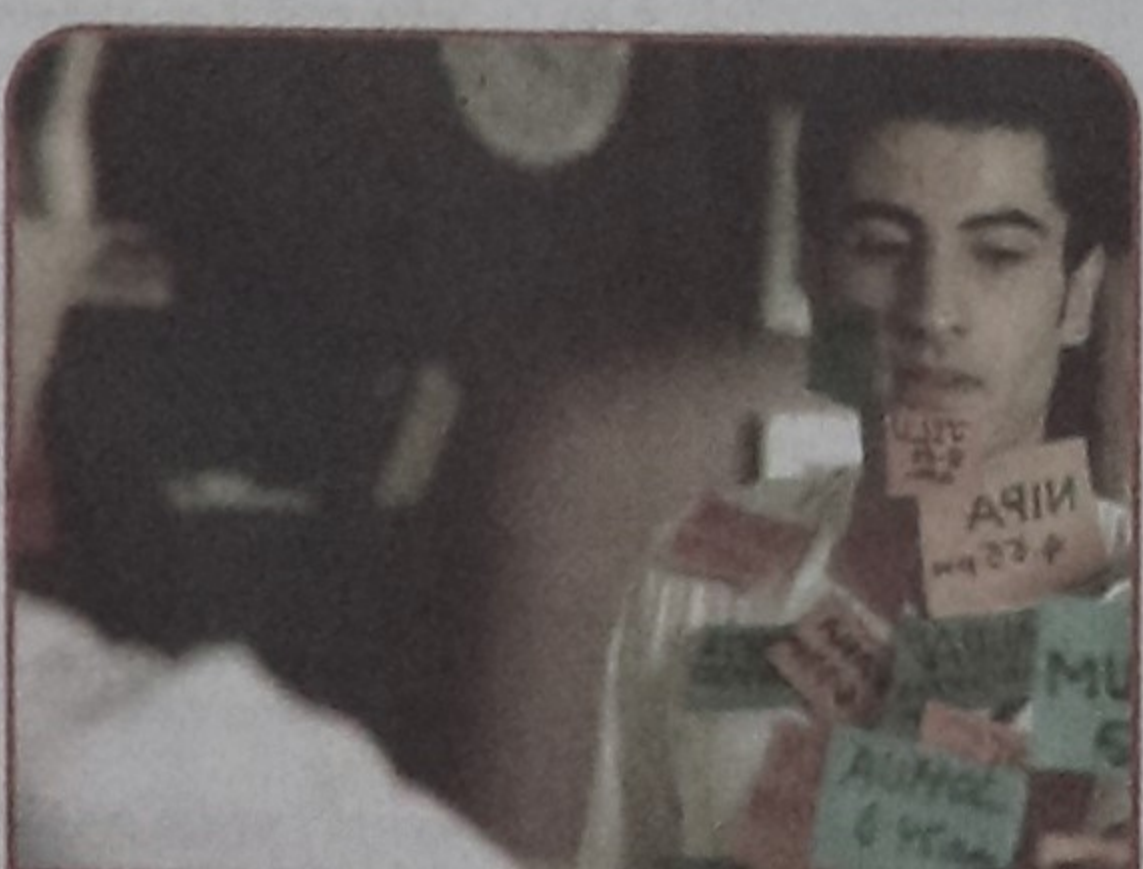
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