

## Renovation of Nimtali Deuri begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

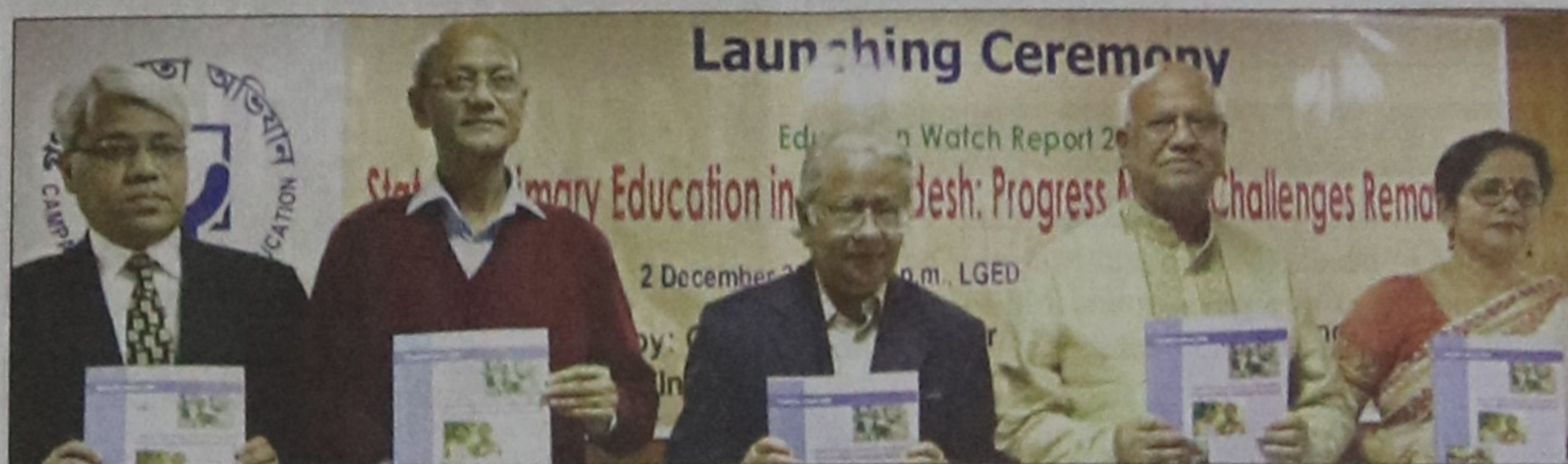
Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (ASB) has undertaken a special project to restore the historic gateway 'Nimtali Deuri' as part of the celebration of 400th anniversary of Dhaka city.

The project was launched yesterday at a programme at the gateway.

Nimtali Deuri is a famous Mughal architecture built in between 1765 and 66. It was the gateway to Nimtali Palace.

ASB President Prof Sirajul Islam, General Secretary Mahfuza Khanam, University Grants Commission Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam, Prof M Shamim Z Basunia of Buet, architect Prof Abu

Sayed M Ahmed, archaeologists Prof Shah Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, Dr Shafiqul Alam and Bulbul Ahmed, Custodian of Lalbagh Fort Museum Nazma Shahin, Coordinator of Celebration of 400 Years of Dhaka City Prof Sharif Uddin Ahmed and Deputy Chief Coordinator Dr AKM Golam Rabbani were present.



Education Watch Report 2008 prepared by Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) was launched at the LGED auditorium in the city yesterday. (From left) Samir Ranjan Nath, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Education Watch Chairperson Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Finance Minister AMA Muhith and Campe Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury hold copies of the report at the ceremony. (Story on Page 2)

BCL programmes to celebrate victory  
DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student body of ruling Awami League, chalked out a month-long programme yesterday ahead of the celebration of the month of victory, says a BCL release.

The programmes include processions and rallies across the country demanding trial of war criminals and execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu murder case and photo exhibitions.



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## HIV-positives still face stigma

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Rahim (not his real name) had been suffering from tooth decay and he needed to undergo root canal treatment without any delay. But he failed to receive any treatment even in a month despite his desperate attempts to be cured.

He visited five hospitals in the city but all of them turned him away. The reason: Rahim, 34, is an HIV-positive.

Failing to endure unbearable tooth pain, he finally decided not to reveal his HIV status while seeking treatment and it worked.

"I had to adopt this unfair means, otherwise any hospitals or clinics would not treat me," said Rahim, now working with an NGO.

"I went to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Suhrawardi Hospital and three other private clinics at Mirpur. But they turned me away after I informed them of my HIV status. So, I decided to hide my HIV status. Finally, I could receive root canal treatment at a dental clinic in the city," he said, recalling that it was August 2007.

As a migrant worker,

Rahim had been in Saudi Arabia for five and a half years. After he was diagnosed with HIV during a medical check-up in 2004, the Saudi government sent him back.

"After my return to the country what hurt me most was that everybody tried to avoid me as if talking to me would cause them to contract HIV. Even the hospitals and clinics deprived me of the right to seek treatment," he said.

Like Rahim, there are an estimated 1495 people who are living with HIV/AIDS in the country. They continue to experience stigmatisation in society and are deprived of their basic rights despite massive awareness campaign, treatment and other initiatives taken by the government and non-government organisations.

"Hiding one's HIV status is quite alarming and it could cause massive spread of the infection, as the doctors are yet to follow universal precaution completely. If they don't know whether the patient is an HIV-positive, their carelessness can increase the risk of transmission of HIV," said Prof Nazrul Islam, virologist and former

vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Habiba Akhter, executive director of Ashar Alo Society, said only the Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) has been providing treatment to HIV-positives, but their entry to the other public and private healthcare centers is almost prohibited as even the doctors and nurses stigmatise them.

The situation hasn't changed much since 1989, when the first HIV-positive person was identified in the country.

According to a study, some 16.8 percent of people living with HIV/AIDS decided not to go to any hospitals to seek treatment.

The deprivation and stigmatisation was so intense that 21 percent of HIV-positives even thought of committing suicide once or several times, it said.

Ashar Alo Society, Family Planning Association of Bangladesh, James P Grant School of Public Health of BRAC University and UNAIDS conducted the study on 238 HIV-positive people in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Khulna.



Late Yasmin Rahman  
Wife of M. Faizur Rahman

We request all our relatives, friends and well wishers to pray for Yasmin Rahman (Chunni), the dearest member of our family who passed on to eternity 10 years ago on this day.

### QULKHANI



The Qulkhani of Advocate Mr. Khaney Alam Khan, retired Chairman, Board of Land Administration and former Divisional Commissioner of Dhaka Division will be held on 3rd December, Thursday at 4 p.m. at his own residence – House No.47, Road-15A (Old 26), Dhanmondi Residential Area, Dhaka. The family members have requested all to attend the qulkhani & pray for the departed soul.

C-1885

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