

Political schism obstacle to dev

Speakers tell BBC Sanglap

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The two main political parties are tarnishing the country's image abroad and the political schism has been creating an obstacle to the country's economic development.

Mahfuzul Karim from Gazipur said this at a BBC Sanglap (dialogue) held at Cox's Bazar sea beach yesterday.

Littérateur Biswajit Sen said the government comes to power securing people's votes as well as mandate. But conflict between the government and the opposition makes parliament ineffective.

The opposition party boycotts the parliament on different excuses while the treasury bench members also remain absent from the House. As a result, democ-

racy is not practised properly, he added. The BBC Sanglap on the 'Image of Bangladesh' started at 4:45 in the afternoon with the participation of 200 people of different professions from across the country.

Mithila Farzana conducted the programme where young IT entrepreneur Intekhab Mahmud, Bangladesh Brand Forum Secretary Shariful Islam, dance exponent Munmun Ahmed and band singer Shafin Ahmed were the panellists.

An audience of the dialogue Abdullah Al Mamun said though there are deep cleavages among the political parties, the countrymen are united.

The government and the opposition should have unanimity about fulfilling the aspirations of the people, he added.

Intekhab said the ruling party alone should not be blamed for political divisions, adding that the people and the media have a role to play in this connection.

Actually, people want a unity. If a party does good work, another party should laud it, said Munmun.

Naimul Haq Chowdhury said tourism capital-famed Cox's Bazar should be built up in a planned way.

Mid Abrar Hossain said the country's culture was threatened by the western culture. The intrusion of foreign culture is a threat to our national cultural identity.

"Our mother tongue Bangla needs to be spread across the world through different music and culture which will enhance the country's image," said Shafin.



Sector Commander Abu Osman Chowdhury and Maj (Retd) Ziauddin inaugurate the reunion of freedom fighters of the 9th Sector hoisting the national flag and the sector flag at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

120 bullets recovered in Gazipur

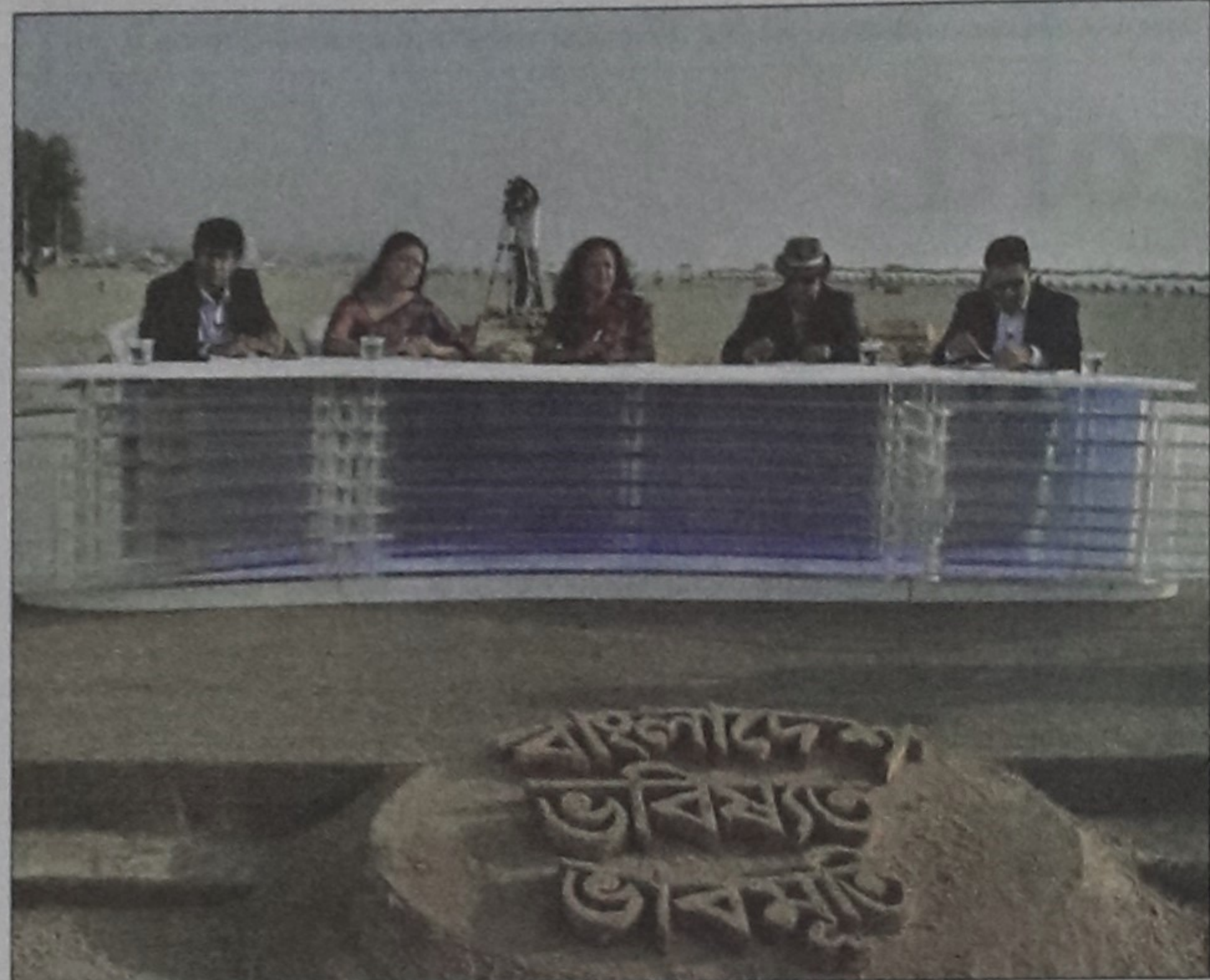
UNB, Gazipur

Police recovered 120 rounds of bullet in an abandoned condition at Sohagpur village under Kapashia upazila in Gazipur yesterday.

Belal Hossain of the village found the bullets of SMG wrapped in a polythene bag while cutting earth in the morning, police said.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the bullets.

Police suspected that the bullets might have been put under the earth during the War of Liberation in 1971.



Panellists at a BBC Sanglap (dialogue) at Cox's Bazar sea beach yesterday.

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REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH Concern over low allocation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An inter-governmental body yesterday expressed concern over the increasing population pressure on the developing countries, but lowering of budgetary allocation for reproductive health, especially in family planning.

"Developing countries are suffering again due to increasing population pressure. We therefore underline the need to reposition family planning as a priority in development," said Harry S Jooseery, executive director of Partners in Population and Development (PPD), at a press conference at a city hotel.

PPD, an inter-governmental alliance of 25 developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, held the press conference in observance of its 15th anniversary and South-South Day. Addressing the media, Jooseery said the world has lost a sense of crisis and urgency with regard to reproductive health. The resource allocation for family planning in international population assistance has come down from 55 percent in 1995 to less than five percent now.

Stating that half million women die annually from preventable causes and none hears about, he said, "It is a crime in the 21st century that

one woman dies every minute of the day."

Bangladesh is the best in the subcontinent for lowering its total fertility rate from 6.3 in 1975 to 2.6 now, while contraceptive prevalence is 56 percent now from eight percent in the mid-seventies, he added.

"But it does not mean that we sit behind. We need to invest more in reproductive health, maternal and child health to enhance the quality of life, which remains a prerequisite for sustainable growth and development."

Stressing the need for more partnerships among the regions and countries, Jooseery said the countries in the global south and northern countries face multiple crises where hunger afflicts one billion people - an unprecedented number -- while unemployment is up and trade is down as a result of the economic crisis.

Referring to climate change, he said many developing countries will suffer from the consequences of climate change more intensely, which could encourage divergence in the global economy.

"Solutions to these and other ills require stronger cooperation, starting with one's immediate neighbours," he said.

PPD officials Amadou Moreau, Farah Naz Hossain and Rahnuma Afroz also spoke.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Bank Asia in collaboration with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society organise blood donation programmes in Dhaka and Chittagong marking the 10th anniversary of the bank yesterday. AM Nurul Islam, vice chairman, Mashur Rahman, director, Erfanuddin Ahmed, president and managing director of Bank Asia, and Khondker Jakaria Khaled, director of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, are seen at a blood donation programme. About 300 officers and executives of the bank voluntarily donated blood.

Road crashes kill 2

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Two people were killed in separate road accidents in Gazipur yesterday.

The victims are Abdur Rahim, 30, imam of a local mosque, and an unidentified woman.

Witnesses said, Rahim, a bystander, was seriously

injured when a wheel of a truck burst on Dhaka-Mymensingh at South Salna at 9:00am. He died on his way to hospital.

In another accident, an unidentified woman aged about 40 died on the spot when a speeding truck ran over her at Telipara on the same highway yesterday evening.

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