



Artist Rafiqunnabi strokes his brush on a canvas to inaugurate an art exhibition at Institute of Fine Arts of Chittagong University yesterday. The exhibition is part of a three-day celebration marking the institutionalisation of fine arts in Chittagong through the establishment of the former Department of Fine Arts in Chittagong University and Chittagong Art College.

PHOTO: STAR

LAND USE AND PROTECTION

Grassroots consultation on draft law stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Legal experts and civil society members yesterday demanded grassroots-level consultation before finalising the draft law on land use aimed mainly at protecting the country's farmland.

The ever-decreasing cultivable land, which now stands at 60 lakh hectares from 90 lakh hectares in 1980, poses threats to the country's food security amid rising population and climate change impacts.

Unplanned industrialisation and housing is also causing serious problems. Together, the concerns prompted the land ministry to draft a law on farmland protection and land use.

At a workshop, the civil society members appreciated the move but raised a number of confusions, which they said, need clarification. The programme was organised by Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) in the city's Cirdap auditorium.

"The draft law speaks against changes to the natural features of land, but developers have already filled up a lot of rivers, canals, and low-lying areas. The law says nothing about such filled up low land", said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (Bela).

Barrister Sara Hossain suggested having a special arrangement allowing the victims of land grabbing to complain to the authorities. The issues of the landless, homeless, and slum dwellers also should be considered during its enactment, she said.

The speakers also criticised non-implementation of several other land-related laws because of interference by the politicians and influential people.

SM Rezaul Karim, former chief judicial magistrate, said that though decrease in farmland is a serious concern, there are vast areas of land under government acquisition remaining unused. The authorities concerned have to consider this issue while going for any acquisition, he said.

Hemayet Uddin, an NGO official from Patuakhali, said there are over a dozen of laws on land, but those have many contradictory provisions that create serious problems to those going to the court over land disputes. He suggested eliminating the contradictions in the laws.

Rights activist Sultana Kamal chaired the session while ALRD Executive Director Shamsul Huda, among others, spoke.

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Gen Mubeen apprises president of incidents in army

BSS, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General M Abdul Mubeen yesterday apprised President Zillur Rahman of the recent incidents that took place in the army.

The army recently foiled a conspiracy by some retired and in-service officers of the force to topple the democratic government.

During the meeting, the army chief invited the president to attend the commandant conference and national flag accord ceremony of Army Medical Core at Ghatail Cantonment in Tangail.

General Mubeen also apprised the president that at his invitation the Saudi Arabian Army chief is expected to visit Bangladesh soon.

The army chief also said he would visit Thailand at an invitation of his Thai counterpart in March.

The army chief informed the progress of implementation of ongoing development programmes of the Bangladesh Army.

He sought cooperation of the president, who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, for the ongoing development of the Bangladesh Army.

Zillur assured the army chief of his all out cooperation in ongoing endeavor of modernisation of the army.



Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the first death anniversary of Bhabani Sankar Biswas, former minister of health, labour and social welfare between 1962 and 1965, says a press release.

On the occasion, a condolence and religious function will be held at his residence in Mohammadpur in the city.

He was the father of Dulal Biswas, president of National Federation of Youth Organisations in Bangladesh.

He was born at Majheegati village at Gopalganj of Faridpur in 1918 and graduated from Calcutta University in 1944.

Bhabani Sankar was elected MLA in 1954 and 1962 as an independent candidate.



Human chain

Bangabandhu Nagorik Sanghati Parishad will hold a human chain; Venue: before Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Human chain

National Citizen Society will hold a human chain; Venue: before Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Government Secondary Assistant Teachers' Association will organise a discussion; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 3:00pm.

Human chain

National Garments Workers Unity Movement will hold a human chain; Venue: before Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Memorial lecture

Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research will organise a memorial lecture; Venue: National Museum; Time: 4:30pm.

Sit-in

Nagorik Sanghati will stage a sit-in; Venue: before National Museum; Time: 11:00am.

Musical evening

Geetimalika will organise a musical evening; Venue: Chhayanaud auditorium; Time: 6:30pm.

Training programme

Centre for Neurodevelopment & Autism in Children will hold a training programme; Venue: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University; Time: 9:00am.

Meeting

National Alliance for Development Theatre will organise a meeting; Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy; Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Assistant Upazila Education Officer Samity will hold a discussion; Venue: Jigatola Community Centre; Time: 9:00am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Jatiyabadi Sangskritik Dal will organise a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote will hold a discussion; Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy; Time: 10:00am.

Memorial meeting

Journalist Pathik Saha Smriti Sangsad will organise a memorial meeting; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 2:30pm.

Rally

Communist Party of Bangladesh will organise a rally; Venue: before Matsya Bhaban; Time: 2:30pm.

Memorial meeting

'Govt to ensure safe water, sanitation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanok yesterday said the government is pledged-bound to ensure safe water and sanitation facilities in the country.

Speaking as chief guest at a launching workshop of Bangladesh Wash Alliance (BWA) at the city's Cirdap auditorium, he said the government has taken necessary steps to provide safe water and sanitation facilities for

the people to remove diseases with the assistance of local and international development organisations.

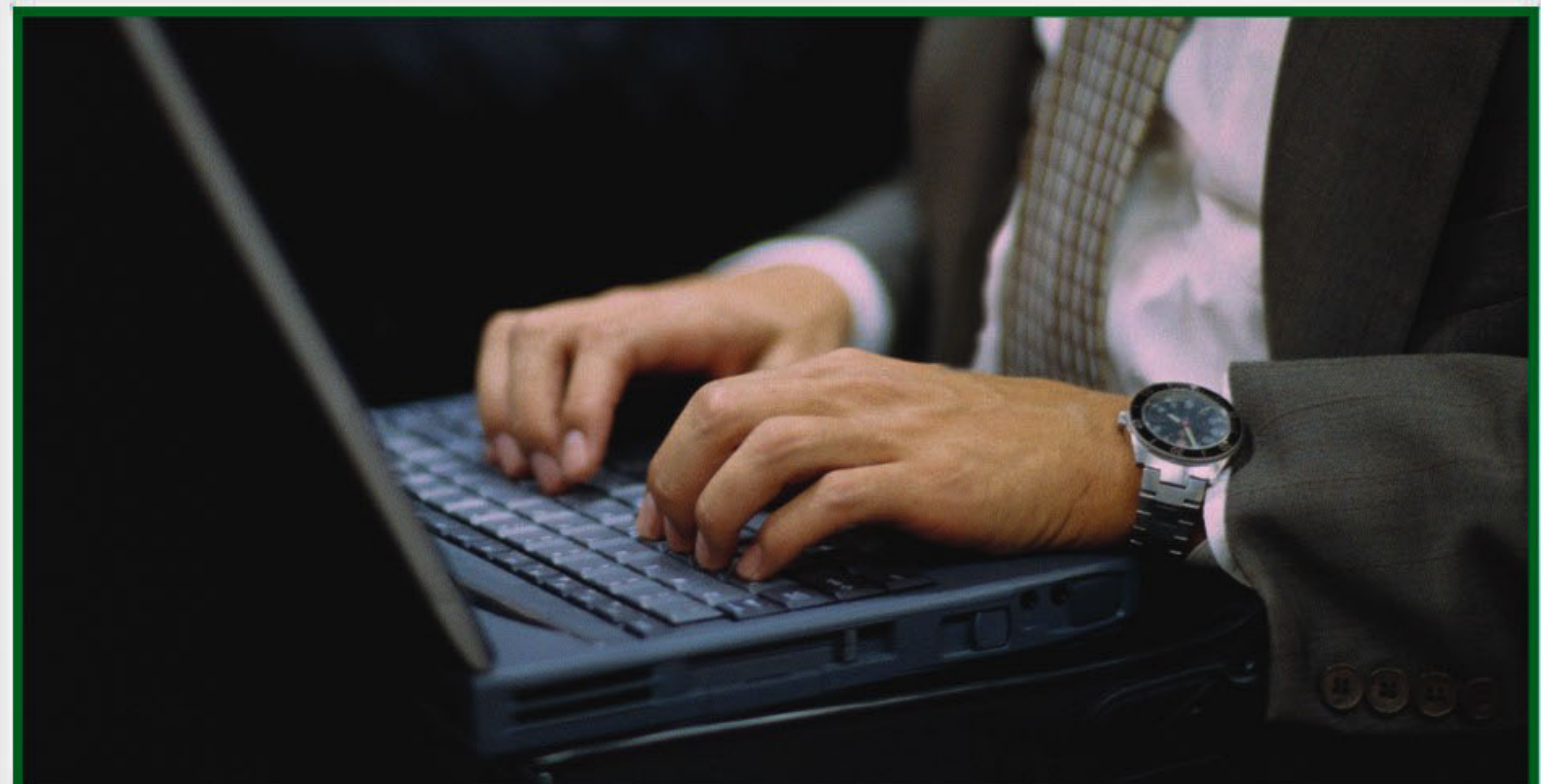
Bangladesh Wash Alliance, an associate body of Dutch Wash Alliance of the Netherlands, is working with nine other non-government organisations for improving water, sanitation and hygiene in six coastal districts of the country.

The rural people are also vocal about getting of safe water and developed sanitation facilities, as they are now very careful about health and

environment, Nanok added.

Taksim A Khan, managing director of Dhaka Wasa, said the Wasa authorities will provide safe water to the city's dwellers as part of ensuring their health facilities.

Dr Khairul Islam, country representative of WaterAid chaired the programme while Carel Richter, deputy head of the Netherlands embassy in Dhaka, Mohamamd Nuruzzaman, chief engineer of Department of Public Health Engineering, Zuena Aziz, joint secretary of LGD also spoke.



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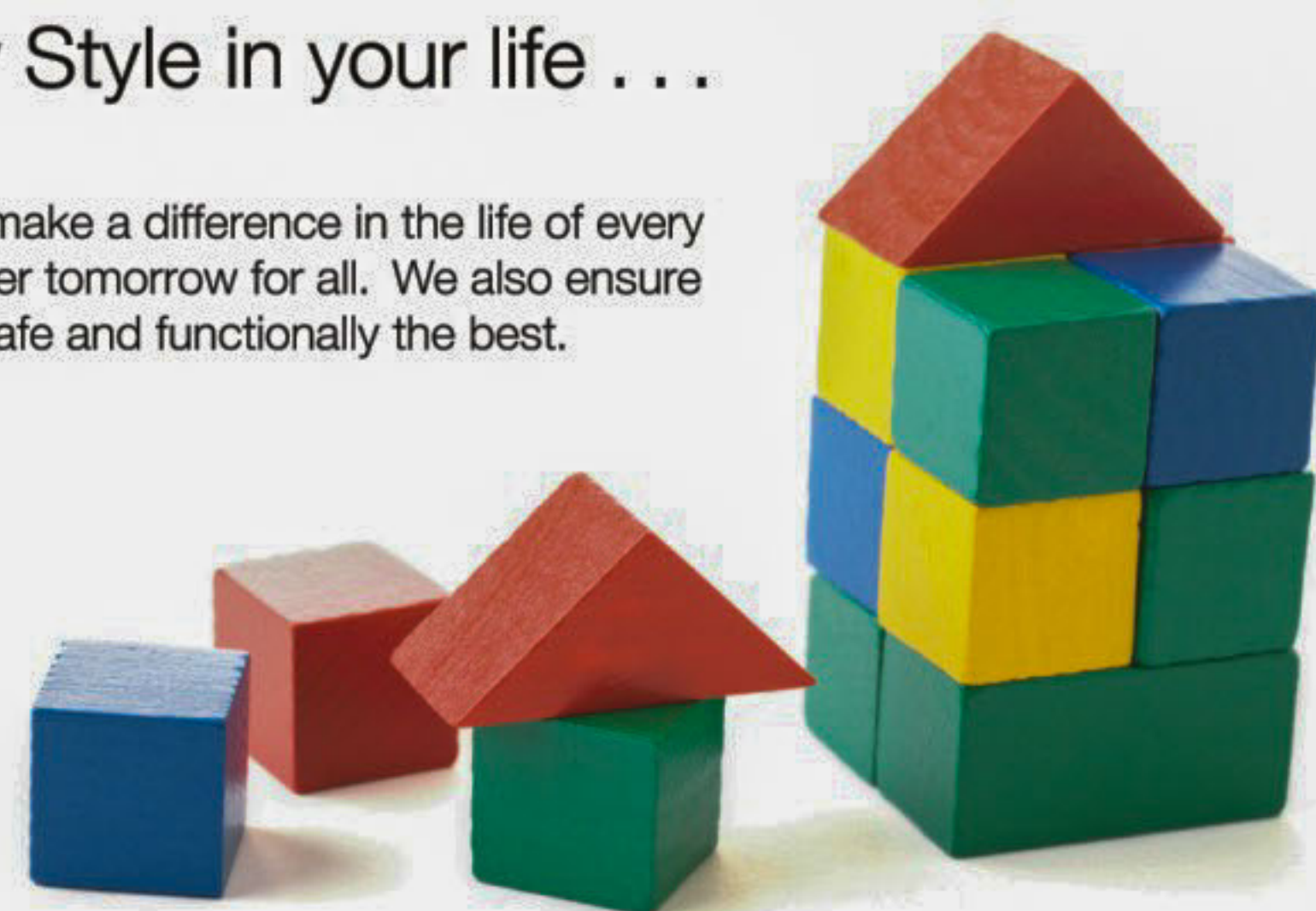
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