

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Taposh Das, a television, radio and stage drama actor died

of an incurable disease in a hospital in the capital on Sunday. He was 50.

He left behind his two sons and wife, said a press release. Taposh was a member of Theatre, a theatre group.

The ritual will be held on December 27 at Terial Bazar of Shitakunda in Chittagong.

The members of Theatre condoled the death of Taposh.

Kanok Provha Ghosh
BSS, Dhaka

Kanok Provha Ghosh, mother of Prof Santi Narayan Ghosh, chairman of Bangladesh Development Bank Ltd (BDBL), died of old-age complications on Saturday. She was 95.

She is survived by three sons, and eight daughters, said a press release yesterday.

BDBL Managing Director Dr Zillur Rahman, BDBL Officers Association and Bangabandhu Parishad condoled the death of Kanok Provha.

Death anniversary
METRO DESK



Today is the 5th death anniversary of valiant freedom fighter Md

Tofazzal Hossain.

A doa mahfil will be held at his residence at Merher village under Nalchity upazila in Jhalakhati, said a press release.

Tofazzal was also a former teacher of Nalchity Merchants' High School.



Youth Initiative against Communalism forms a human chain on Chittagong Press Club premises yesterday demanding a ban on all religion-based political parties including Jamaat-e-Islami, and completion of the trial of war criminals soon.

PHOTO: STAR

ENGLISH LEARNING

Prothoma publishes BBC Janala's book II

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the assistance of the BBC Media Action and the daily Prothom Alo, Prothoma Publication has published the second part of "BBC Janala Engreji Shekhar Boi".

The book was launched through a ceremony at the Prothom Alo office in the capital on Saturday.

According to officials of Prothoma Publication, the first part of the book, which was published in December 2011, gained much popularity among people who are keen to learn English.

The book is the collections of the already published lessons on English learning of BBC Janala in the Prothom Alo's "Majay Majay Shekho" page, they said.

With CDs, it will be available at Tk 150, they said. BBC Media Action's English in Action Project Chief Richard Lace said about 40,000 copies of the first part of the book have been sold.

BBC Media Action Country Director Faisal Ahmed said the book was not written for any specific class, but for people from all walks of life.

Prothom Alo Associate Editor Abdul Qayyum, Managing Editor Sajjad Sharif and News Editor Selim Khan also spoke on the occasion. Prothoma Publication Chief Coordinator Zafar Ahmed conducted the event.

On-arrival visa

FROM PAGE 20
said Kamal Uddin Ahmed, additional secretary of the home ministry. On-arrival visas may not be issued for all initially, said home ministry officials. Patients, businesspeople and government officials will be given priority.

Indian media yesterday reported that the central government was planning a new travel agreement with Bangladesh, enabling citizens of both the countries to get visa on arrival.

The facility in the beginning would be available for Bangladeshi patients who go to India for treatment, elderly citizens above 65 and children below 12 years with parents accompanying them, said Indian officials.

Shinde and Alamgir had talks in Delhi a fortnight back about the Bangladesh government providing

Indians with on-arrival visas.

Plans are afoot to extend this facility to businessmen and tourists travelling in groups. Such visas may remain valid for two months and travellers who have never overstayed a visa would be eligible for this.

Talks are being held on the possibility of exempting businessmen from reporting to the local police. There are also plans to allow Bangladeshis to enter India with on-arrival visas through Haridaspur-Benapol border, as Kolkata to Dhaka buses ply the route.

Other points can be Gede-Darshana border in case visitors travel by train and the Kolkata and Delhi airports. Similarly, a visa-on-arrival centre may also be opened in Tripura as there is a direct bus link between Agartala and Dhaka.

Virus builds heart's own

FROM PAGE 20
rhythm, US researchers report.

The heartbeat is controlled by electrical signals and if these go awry the consequences can be fatal.

Scientists injected a genetically-modified virus into guinea pigs to turn part of their heart into a new, working pacemaker.

The study was published in the journal Nature Biotechnology.

A human heart is made up of billions of cells, but researchers say fewer than 10,000 are responsible for controlling the heartbeat.

Age and disease can lead to problems such as the heart pumping too fast or too slow -- and it can even stop completely, in what is known as a cardiac arrest.

The solution is an

implanted battery-powered pacemaker which will jolt the heart to keep it in line.

Instead, a team of researchers at the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute tried to restore the heart's own ability to dictate the beat by creating new pacemaker cells.

They used a virus to infect heart muscle cells with a gene, called Tbx18, which is normally active when pacemaker cells are formed during normal development in an embryo.

When heart cells were infected with the virus they became smaller, thin and tapered as they acquired the "distinctive features of pacemaker cells", the reports said.

When the virus was

injected into a region of the hearts of seven guinea pigs, five later had heartbeats which originated from their new pacemaker.

One of the researchers Dr Hee Cheol Cho, from Cedars-Sinai, told the BBC he expected the same method to work in the human heart as they used a human gene, Tbx18, to generate the effect.

However, far more animal testing would be needed before the technique would ever be considered in people.

Dr Cho added: "Electronic devices are limited to their finite battery life, requiring battery changes."

"Complications such as displacement, breakage of the leads are not uncommon. All these problems could be solved by a biological pacemaker."

Fingers crossed

FROM PAGE 1
"Only God knows what will happen. It solely depends on luck," said Monwara Begum from Shewrapara, who wishes to have her six-year-old son admitted to class-I at a renowned school.

Like her, thousands of parents in the capital lose sleep over their children's school admission.

All private and public schools in the capital have already completed interviewing students to measure their basic knowledge and verify their age.

Though some private schools have already started holding lottery -- a mandatory system for selecting preschoolers for class-I in all schools -- most of the sought-after schools will hold lottery within a few days.

State-run schools across the country will hold lottery on December 27. However, admission to other classes, except for class-IX, would be done through tests like in previous years.

As the time for school admission nears, Monwara is getting more and more tensed.

She ran from one school to another in the neighbourhood, talked to the parents of the children studying in the schools, bought admission forms from four schools and then had her son, nursery student of a kindergarten, interviewed.

But before Monwara could pick a school, she had to consider many things -- track record of the schools, quality of education and teachers, expenses and also dis-

tance.

Now all she can do is wait.

"I am just keeping my fingers crossed. My worries will not go away until he is admitted to a good school," she said.

As a parent, Abdus Sobhan is no less anxious than Monwara. His son just finished his final class-II exams at Baby Care Kindergarten on Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur.

Sobhan did not let his son enjoy any free time, as he wishes to get his son admitted in class-III in a good government school, preferably Mohammadpur Government Boys High School.

"I have no alternative but to send my son to a coaching centre. Tell me how many children want to study after their final exams," he said.

Sobhan said he had to turn down his son's request for visiting his grandfather's house.

But he was still unsure whether his son can make it to a prestigious school. "It's intense competition," he said.

The reasons for such worries are not just because enough schools are not there in the capital but also because only a handful of schools maintain a certain standard of education. These good schools are coveted by parents all over the capital. Parents are desperate to get their children in good schools for a better future.

In Dhaka, there are 24 government high schools that have 7,988 seats. Of the 24 schools, 13 offer education for class-I, accommodating around

1,475 beginners.

This year, as many as 19 beginners will try their luck for a single seat in the public schools under the lottery system. A total of 28,124 forms have been selected for lottery against 1,475 seats.

Though there are numerous private schools in the capital, only a few of them are believed to be good schools. The government does not have any specific data about the number of seats in these schools.

The government schools attract a large number of applicants as they are cheaper and provide better education compared to the private schools.

Parents highly appreciated the lottery system that freed a preschooler from the torment of taking admission tests.

The competition in other classes in the state-run schools is also high, as a total of 73,925 forms had been sold against 7,988 seats in 24 public schools in the capital. It means nine students will compete for one seat.

The picture is all the same in reputable private schools such as Viqarunnisa Noon School, Ideal School and College, Motijheel, Holy Cross Girls' High School. These schools will hold lottery according to their own schedules.

The stiff competition will be a one-time experience for some, while others will have another year to try their luck, as the number of seats remains almost unchanged.

Smile, wryly

FROM PAGE 1
as per a diary note of Ramesh Saha, an official of Lavalin who had been arrested by the Canadian police for corrupt practices in the project, Abul Hossain's name was mentioned as the recipient of 4 percent out of 10 percent bribe from the sum fixed for the bridge supervision work.

The 10 percent is equivalent to Tk 38 crore.

The ACC in its enquiry mentioned that it could not find any direct link of monetary transaction with Abul Hossain.

But the World Bank has filed written complaint against him. Those who were quizzed by the ACC, none directly named Abul Hossain. They gave indication of his involvement. So, if he is to be made accused, more solid evidence will be needed.

While the ACC did not file any case against Abul Hossain, it however mentioned in its report that as the minister could not shrug off the responsibility of the corruption conspiracy.

As for the role of former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, the ACC said he used to visit the bridges division regularly and had introduced two officials of Lavalin to Syed Abul Hossain.

Abul Hossain claimed that Chowdhury had lobbied in favour of Lavalin. But there was no documentary evidence. Ramesh's diary also makes a mention of Chowdhury.

On July 23, Abul Hossain resigned from the cabinet after negotiations with the

WB on reviving its cancelled loan for the bridge. When the WB first raised allegation against Hossain in September 2011, it asked the government for his removal in order to move ahead with the loan.

It was the second time he had resigned as a minister. He was forced to resign as state minister for LGRD ministry in August 1997 over a controversy for using a private passport instead of a diplomatic book.

Abul's family company Sahco had also been at the centre of controversy since the company as a local agent of various power companies had secured a number of power deals. But invariably in almost all the cases, the other bidders that had not been represented by Sahco were disqualified technically, so that Sahco's company can become the lone bidder.

Most of the tenders, in which Sahco's companies participated, witnessed various anomalies or generated allegations.

In case of the Padma bridge construction supervision tender, a similar pattern of bidding manipulation was seen. The Bridges Division dissolved the tender evaluation committee thrice without any explicit reasons and appointed the fourth committee headed by Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury without giving it the complete information about all the bidders.

As a result, the deserving top bidder Halcrow was put behind SNC Lavalin.

Hatirjheel opens

FROM PAGE 20
small overpasses, a two-lane expressway, a two-way service road and an adjoining walkway. The project will also build two U-loops, which are small U-turn flyovers, at Rampura and Badda by the end of the next year.

The project has two areas -- north and south. The south area comprises a two-way road from Sonargaon Hotel to Tongi Diversion Road along the Hatirjheel lake.

It forms a road network from Tongi Diversion Road to Rampura bridge and is comprised of a one-way road with a two-way service road. A two-lane expressway from the diversion road

goes to Pragati Sarani via Gulshan.

In the north area, a road goes from Begunbari power plant to Merul Badda via Kunipara and Gulshan-1.

The new roads are expected to ease traffic movement in Moghbazar, Madhubagh, Ulan, Mahanagar, Rampura, Merul Badda, Gulshan, Tejaon and Begunbari.

It will take over three years to build a waste treatment plant at Dasherbandi, said Waseem Managing Director Taqsem A Khan.

Lifting station will beset up at Rampura for pumping out wastewater, headed.

Prof Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh University of Engineering and

Technology (Buet), whose team studied the project's feasibility, said the lifting station has to pump 5000 cubic metres of water daily, which will flow to Sutibhola canal through a two-kilometre-long underground pipe.

He said Buet will be able to design the lifting station by the next month and it may take around two years to set up.

Rajuk, Dhaka Wasa, Local Government Engineering Department and 16 Engineering Construction Battalion of the army are jointly implementing the project, of which Buet is the consultant.

Moody's upbeat

FROM PAGE 1
may take reserves closer to \$13 billion by end-2013, from \$10.3 billion at the end of fiscal 2012.

However, Moody's said the continued labour

unrest and the possibility of a messy transition to parliamentary elections in 2014 could derail the smooth progress in reforms.

Complexity regarding the Padma Bridge financing and loan scams in the state banks underscore poor governance and transparency issues, it said.



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