



Hasina Ahmed, wife of missing BNP leader Salauddin Ahmed, and their children meet party chief Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the capital yesterday, the eighth day of his disappearance. The family claims that the BNP joint secretary general, who had been acting as party spokesperson and issuing press releases announcing hartal, was picked up by law enforcers from a house at Uttara on March 10, an allegation police have denied.

PHOTO: BNP

## DNCC mayor aspirant Annisul Huq mapping city problems

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amra Dhaka, an election campaign platform for Dhaka North City Corporation mayoral aspirant Annisul Huq, yesterday launched a weeklong survey to identify the civic problems.

Around 200 "volunteers" will visit door to door and listen to the city dwellers about the problems and their recommendations, said a press release.

Addressing a training session for the field investigators at Lotus Kamal Tower in the capital, Annisul Huq said he would chalk out short-, mid-, and long-term plans to solve the problems.

The election is likely to take place in late April or early May.

# Foster care for autistic children in offing

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to introduce foster care system in the country for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and who do not have own families, and is also planning other programmes for their welfare.

According to the health ministry sources, the government has taken the plan as part of its effort for making such children, including autistic children, able to contribute to the country's socio-economic development.

Gradually, the government will introduce the foster-family care service in the country and a concept paper is being prepared in this regard, a senior official of the ministry told the UNB.

Foster care is a system in which a minor has been placed into a ward,

group home, or private home of a state-certified caregiver referred to as a foster parent. The placement of the child is usually arranged through the government or a social-service agency. The institution, group home or foster parent is compensated for expenses.

The state via the family court and child protection agency stand in loco parentis to the minor, making all legal decisions while the foster parent is responsible for the day-to-day care of the minor.

The official, who wished not to be named, said the government, apart from developing the human resource in the country, has taken some other plans for the country's autistic children.

According to a document obtained by the UNB, the government will start free autistic schools

in some 103 disabled service and help centres across the country.

The disabled service and help centres have already been established in all districts and in some upazilas, and the government has taken steps to gradually extend these centres to all upazilas.

The government also decided to establish special schools for autistic children in all districts.

As the government does not have any statistics on how many people are affected by autism in the country, a survey is being conducted to estimate their number. The survey will be completed very soon, it added.

The government also decided to intensify mobile therapy service and e-therapy programme along with autism related services for early detection and early intervention.

The government already introduced one-stop therapy service in 2010 to provide free physiotherapy, hearing test, visual test, counselling, training and assisting materials to challenged persons in remote areas.

"To intensify the programme, a process is at the final stage to arrange for 32 mobile therapy vans in the current fiscal year (2014-15)", the document said. It also mentioned that 12 acres of land have been allocated for the construction of a multi-purpose sports complex at Savar (Baroigram and South Ramchandrapur) in Dhaka for setting up rehabilitation centres, football and cricket fields, entertainment zones, swimming pools, multi-purpose gymnasiums, mosques, residential quarters, guesthouses and hostels for challenged and autistic people.

## Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Utpal Kanti Shaha, former deputy general manager of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation, died from heart disease in the capital's Labaid hospital on Monday night. He was 62.

He left behind his wife, a son and a daughter.

Utpal, elder brother of Bogra Bureau Chief of ATN Bangla News Chapal Kanti Shaha, was cremated in Malotinagar area of Bogra town yesterday.

## Death penalty

FROM PAGE 4

secretary Nurul Islam Rakib for the murder.

They also demanded that legal action be taken against Mahibul Islam Masum, publicity secretary of district Ulema League, after his arrest.

On Saturday, police recovered the decomposed body of Abu Sayeed, 9, a class-IV student of Shahi Eidgah Hazrat Shahi Mir Govt Primary School at the house of police constable Ebadur at Jharnapar in the city after he was kidnapped on Wednesday. Police arrested Ebadur, Rakib and Geda in this connection.



Mariam Khal, a drainage canal in Pathargata of Chittagong city, has been choked with garbage and water-hyacinths and narrowed down through encroachment on both banks, resulting in waterlogging in the neighbourhood even after light rains. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

## Children get first graphic

FROM PAGE 3

"We want to take the information to our children and youths through different channels and modes. This graphic novel is a part of that initiative."

Eminent cartoonist Ahsan Habib said graphic novels on legendary personalities had been published in different countries, and it started in Bangladesh through the biography of Bangabandhu.

Azmal Tanjim Shakir, a seventh grader at National Ideal School, said, "This book is presented in such an interesting way that I feel very cheerful while reading it and seeing the comic strips."

The first episode portrays the childhood and growing up of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The next ones will focus on the vision and mission that paved the path towards his great leadership.

A total of 12 episodes will be published, said the organisers. Lawmakers, eminent cultural activists, academics, journalists and distinguished personalities attended the ceremony.

## \$50m Belarus loan to buy

FROM PAGE 3

Acting Secretary of Local Government Division Abdul Malek said there are 11 city corporations and 321 municipalities across the country. But there is no adequate vehicles and equipment to provide the necessary services for road construction and other purposes.

"Even some of the municipalities hardly have any vehicle, and they have

to rent vehicles at a higher cost from private sector to run their services," he said.

"In some cases, it's becoming very tough to maintain the standard and quality of the works and services," he mentioned in the proposal sent to the Cabinet Division to justify the government's move for the import of the vehicles from Belarus under ECC.

It was said in the proposal that the government will have to give a down payment of 15 percent to import the vehicles and equipment for which the supplier company will provide two years' warranty.

After expiry of the warranty period, the supplier will also provide necessary spare parts at factory prices and also set up its service centre in Dhaka.

## Forest conservation, resource

FROM PAGE 3

conserve natural resources.

President of Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) Kamrul Islam Chowdhury said, "Forests should

be seen as an agent of long-term sustainable development, not as a revenue-generating machine."

Prothom Alo Associate Editor Anisul Hoque urged the authorities to

include the importance of conservation in school textbooks.

The discussion was moderated by Abdul Quayum, another associate editor of Prothom Alo.

## NEWS IN brief

### Body found in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of an unidentified man, aged around 35 years, from a street near sector-15 in the capital's Uttara yesterday.

He was clad in a pair of jeans and a shirt and the hands and legs were tied up with a salwar and a kameez while a towel and a scarf were found around his neck.

Turag police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy and suspect that he was strangled.

### Bangladesh, Japan to sign radar system improvement deal

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Japan will sign an "Exchange of Notes" today on a project to improve meteorological radar system in Dhaka and Rangpur.

Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Shiro Sadoshima and the senior secretary of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) will sign the exchange of notes, said an ERD official yesterday.

The project (detailed design) has a budget of 24 million JPY (Japanese Yen).

The detailed design will be the first step towards installing the upgraded radar system.

### Boy 'drowns' in water tank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-year-old boy was found dead in a water storage tank on his house premises in the capital's Pallabi on Monday night.

Md Emon lived with his parents in a one-room house. He went missing around 9:00pm and after a two-hour search the locals removed the tank lid and found the body floating, said his uncle Mosharrif Hossain Musa.

He was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital and the body was handed over to the family after an autopsy.

### Road crash kills one in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

An unidentified man, aged about 34 years, was killed when a truck hit him while he was crossing Amtola intersection in Thakurgaon town leaving him dead on the spot on Monday night.

Police sent the body to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

## Fond remembrance

FROM PAGE 3

birthday of Bangabandhu, said Prof Abdul Hannan, director of the Directorate General of Health Services.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University provided free outdoor services to over 5,000 patients.

BSS adds: the birthday of Bangabandhu was observed yesterday with elaborate programmes demanding completion of the trial of the war criminals and execution of their verdict expeditiously.

The programmes of the day observed across the country include placing of wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu, holding of doa and milad mahfils, offering of prayers, discussions, cultural functions, book fairs, voluntary blood donation, medical treatments free of cost, painting competitions, distribution of prizes, screening of documentary films and playing of the historic March 7 speech of Bangabandhu.

The day's programmes of different organisations, including ruling Awami League, started at 6:30am with hoisting of the national and party flags.

People from all walks of life, particularly leaders and workers of different political parties, socio-cultural and professional bodies, paid glowing tributes to Bangabandhu placing wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu on the premises of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

The national dailies published special supplements while Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels and radio stations aired special programmes marking the birthday of Bangabandhu.

Bangabandhu Parishad organised a discussion on "Birth day of Bangladesh" at Dhaka Reporters' Unity with its General Secretary Dr SA Malek in the chair.

The day was observed in a befitting manner in district towns and upazila headquarters and Bangladesh missions abroad.

Dhaka University organised various programmes on the campus marking the birthday of Bangabandhu, reports our DU correspondent.

Vice-chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique placed floral wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

Prof Arefin in a discussion said the Dhaka University authorities wanted to confer an honorary doctorate degree on Bangabandhu at its convocation on August 15, 1975 but the great leader rejected it as he was the then chancellor of the university. On the day of 1975, Bangabandhu was assassinated, along with most members of his family by a cabal of army men.

Our CU correspondent reports: the Chittagong University authorities arranged various programmes, including a discussion and a drawing competition for children, to celebrate the birthday of Father of the Nation.

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