

2006 ANNOUNCED AS 'TECHNOLOGY BOOK YEAR' Build knowledge-based nation

Khaleda tells Dhaka Book Fair inaugural function

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia urged all to read and learn more to overcome the country's shortcomings in resources, capacity and knowledge to build an enlightened nation.

She made the call while inaugurating the 12th Dhaka Book Fair 2006 yesterday. The National Book Centre under the Cultural Ministry organised the fortnight book fair on the Shilpakala Academy premises with the theme 'Books for Peace and Development'.

The book fair will remain open to all everyday from 2.30pm to 8.30pm and 11.00am to 8.30pm on holidays.

"Apart from our endeavor for poverty alleviation and overall development, we, on various occasions, have articulated our vows to build a more knowledge-

based nation," Khaleda told the inaugural function.

She said the government laid emphasis on both formal and non-formal education. So the government has taken uninterrupted initiatives for easy availability of and increasing propensity for reading book in the nation.

"Whatever initiative taken by the government or non-government sector is nothing else but to ignite a torch, but the duty to keep the torch alight and remove the darkness is yours," the Prime Minister urged the readers, writers, publishers and the learned people.

"Our government has celebrated its last four years in flourishing, publicising and expanding of books through different programmes," Khaleda said. And this thrust should be maintained.

While announcing this year as Technology Book Year, she expressed her desire that more and more technology-based books would be published this year laying emphasis on information technology and biotechnology.

Book will be the tool of peace and development if the educated people concentrate on book reading and involve themselves with social welfare through applying their knowledge.

"Let's get in touch with welfare process, gain knowledge, feel peace and widen the development process," Khaleda said.

Earlier, she gave away "Science Book Year-2005 Award" to five science writers.

The award carries a gold medal, a certificate and Tk 50,000.

The recipients are Prof Nurul Islam (Medical Science), Prof AM Harunur Rashid (Physical Science), Prof Kazi Zakir Hossain (Zoology), Dr Mamunur Rashid (Agricultural Science) and Prof M Qamrul Islam (Engineering).

She also awarded 12 students who got talent-pool scholarship in primary and junior scholarship examinations.

Presided over by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman, the inaugural function was also addressed by Acting Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry ATM Ataur Rahman and book publisher M Liakatulla.

Ministers, MPs, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, politicians, diplomats, poets, writers and publishers were also present.

SC to deal with new voter-list preparation today

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court will reopen today after a fortnight winter vacation and deal on the first day with the most contentious political issue of the time regarding new voter-list preparation, which already got off across the country yesterday amid massive opposition protests.

As the court sits in the morning a couple of writ petitions challenging the "unilateral" decision of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) to prepare a fresh electoral roll ahead of next general election will come up to be adjudicated by High Court division of the SC.

On December 15, the High Court deferred the admissibility hearings of the two Public Interest Litigation (PIL) writs till the reopening of the court on January 2, a day after the enumeration of voters was scheduled to begin.

And the nationwide drive for voter-information collection began yesterday as per the schedule, amid the Awami League-led opposition protests.

The cause shown for holding back the hearings was that the copies were not served to the CEC and the Election Commission (EC) secretariat for reply.

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil MP filed one of the writ petitions while his party lawmakers Advocate Rahmat Ali and Asaduzzaman Noor moved another to wage a double-pronged legal battle.

The CEC has been made respondent while Election Commissioners AK Mohammad Ali and M Munsef Ali pro-forma respondents in the cases.

The AL lawmakers also challenged the validity of "controversial" appointments of over three lakh enumerators, supervisors, assistant registration officers, registration officers and upazila election officers by the EC secretariat for accomplishing the task.

The EC yesterday kicked off collecting voter information at grassroots level with a target to publish the final voter list on June 1, 2006.

Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam and Barrister Rokumuddin Mahmud will appear for the petitioners while Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed MP stand for the CEC and the EC secretariat.



Jubilant students of Dhaka University through the Aparajeya Bangla on the campus at midnight on Saturday to welcome the New Year.

'Ethnic minorities yet to get constitutional recognition'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, a noted academic, yesterday said the fascist aspect of the country is apparent through its failure to provide constitutional recognition to its ethnic minorities.

"Using the word 'indigenous' we are pushing backward the ethnic minorities who are the marginal population and living faraway from the centre," he said while speaking at the launching ceremony of the books published by the Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) at the National Press Club.

SEHD launched six books on human rights, environment, ethnic minorities and reporting recently.

These included: Sex-Workers in Bangladesh-Livelihood: At What Price, Bangladesh Shrimp Fry (Stolen forests of Bangladesh), Bon, Boninash O Bonobasir Sangram (Forest, its destruction and struggle of the forest people) and Reporting Guide.

Prof Islam said human rights violation of the marginal people is revealed through the books and it would let us know the fact that is always suppressed by the government.

On the issue of sex work he said it is not a work or profession at all. It is the worst and primitive form of exploitation of women in the society. Legal aid, recognition of the work and health care are not enough for the women involved in selling sex, he added.

"The newspapers should present featured report more and more as we are getting tired of going through hard news," said Prof Asaduzzaman

Mohammad Ali while discussing the book on Reporting Guide.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed criticised the books 'Critiques of Politics and Practices', 'The Case of Forests, Ethnic Communities and Tea Workers of Bangladesh' and 'Shrimp Fry Collection and Its Trade' where attempts were made to create credibility through statistics as well as numbers.

But the game of numbers is a politics itself, he said, adding that the research should furnish the alternative ways for the oppressed to overcome the hindrances.

Presided over by Prof Sakawat Ali Khan, the function was also addressed by Prof Firdous Azim and Prof Khondker Mokaddem Hossain.

18th BCS Forum AGM Jan 27

The Annual General Meeting and reunion of the 18th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) forum will be held at the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) in the city on January 27, says a press release.

Over 300 officials representing 19 cadres are expected to attend there-union.

The interested officials have been requested to contact Nur (Economic) 0171884169, Mahmood (Information) 0152352765, Selim (admin) 0171530597, Alim (Health) 0171528367, Nasir (Judiciary) 0187120144, Sarwar (Education) 011883881 for registration and other necessary information or visit forum's website www.geocities.com/bcs18bd.

MMC SURVEY 2005 3 journos killed, 370 tortured, 164 get death threats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three journalists were killed and 370 others were injured in 165 incidents of torture on journalists across the country last year, according to a survey by Mass-line Media Centre (MMC).

Besides, 11 journalists were arrested, warrant of arrest issued against seven and cases were filed against 17 journalists, said the report.

Journalists across the country had to carry out their works amidst grave panic as police failed to arrest

or trace the killers, it said.

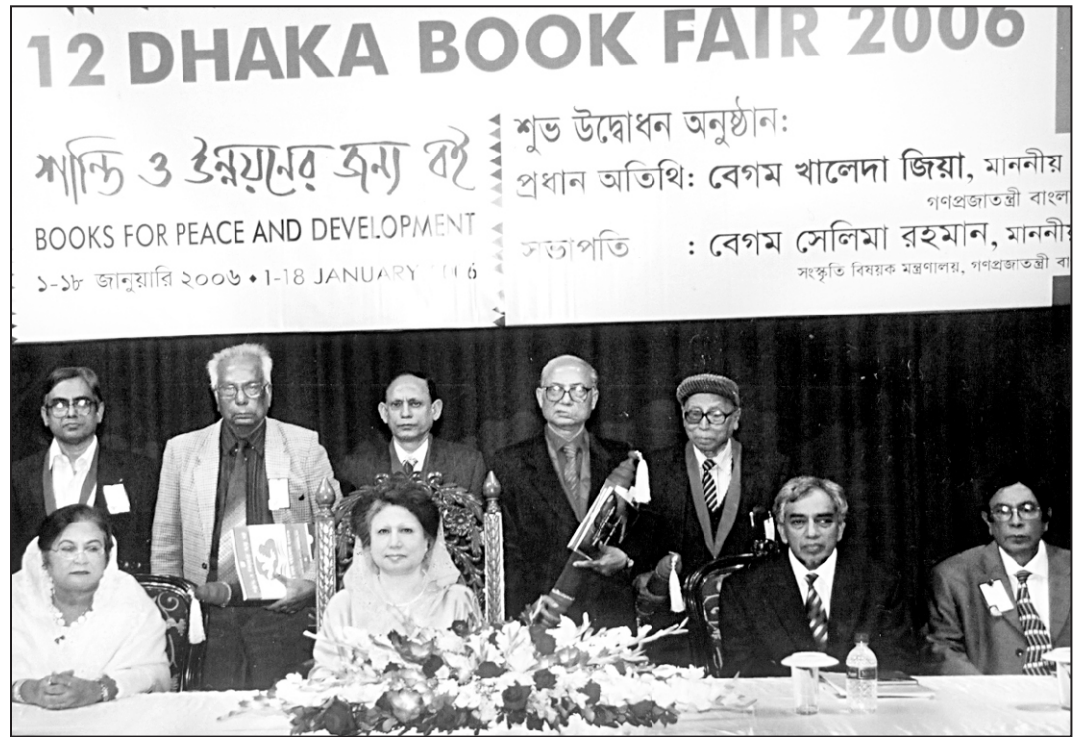
A total of 370 journalists fell victims of 165 torture incidents last year.

Bombers killed Sheikh Belal Uddin, chief of the daily Sangram's Khulna bureau, assailants slaughtered Golam Mahfuz, editor of the daily Comilla Muktakantha, and Faridpur Bureau Chief of daily Samakal Goutam Das was brutally killed at his office-cum-house.

133 journalists were attacked, 164 received death threats and 36 others were also threatened.



Leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh place wreaths at the Sanghati Stambha in the city yesterday. The Stambha was set up in memory of the two Chhatra Union leaders who were killed in 1973 during an anti-imperialism demonstration in the capital.



Winners of the Science Book Year-2005 Award pose for photograph with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the inaugural function of the 12th Dhaka Book Fair 2006 in the city yesterday.



Shaukat Osman's birth anniversary today

The 89th birth anniversary of Shaukat Osman, an eminent writer, will be celebrated today, says a press release.

Shaukat Smriti Bidyalaya has chalked out a two-day programme to mark the day.

As per the programme, wreaths will be placed at Martyred Intellectuals Graveyard at Mirpur in the city at 9:30am.

A discussion on the life and works of the writer will be held at World Literature Centre at 6:30pm on January 9.

Editor of the Sangbad Bazur Rahman and Editor of the Jugantor Abed Khan will attend the discussion as chief guest and special guest respectively.

Besides, poets Hasan Hafiz and Nasir Ahmed, artists Rafiqun Nabi and Hashem Khan, Bulbul Osman and architect Yeafesh Osman will reminisce their memories with the great writer.

BNP, Jamaat leaders force one to sign deal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Local BNP and Jamaat leaders of Sherpur upazila of Bogra allegedly forced a man to sign a deed of Tk 75,000 in fine on Saturday night.

BNP activist Fazlu, who arranged an arbitration meeting to realise the money, earlier threatened the victim, Makhlesur Rahman of Bishalpur, but local BNP leaders did not let him go to police.

Makhlesur said he had arguments with Fazlu of nearby Kandua village a few months ago over buying paddy.

Fazlu filed a false case against Makhlesur for not giving him paddy despite taking Tk 80,000 and went to Makhlesur's house several days for the money.

Makhlesur took the matter to a local BNP leader.

Local BNP and Jamaat leaders arranged an arbitration meeting at upazila BNP office Saturday night and forced Makhlesur to sign the deed of Tk 75,000 fine.

Local BNP and Jamaat leaders were not available for their comment.

5 killed, 21 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed and 21 injured in separate road accidents in Sirajganj and Jessore yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Sirajganj reports, three people were killed and another was injured in three road accidents in the district yesterday.

An unidentified man aged about 55 was crushed under the wheels of a Dhaka-bound silk city train from Rajshahi at Coddan Sananandapur railway station area at 10:30am, police and witnesses said.

One person was killed when a Bogra-bound passenger bus hit a rickshaw from behind on a bridge at Kazipur intersection in Sirajganj municipality.

Meanwhile, motorbike rider Abdur Rahman, 35, of Kashihata village in Sadar upazila died on the spot and his companion was injured seriously when a truck hit their bike from behind at Pachila Bazar on the Sirajganj Hati Kumrul road. The injured was rushed to the Sadar hospital.

OUR JESSORE CORRESPONDENT says, two people were killed and at least 20 others injured in a road accident at Malanchi on Jessore - Benapole Road early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Golam Mostafa, 30, of Teghori village under Sadar upazila in Jessore and Ismail Hossain, 27, of Kalaroa upazila in Satkhira.

The accident occurred at

around 5:30am when the driver of the bus carrying 25 traders from Satkhira lost control over the steering and dashed a roadside tree leaving Galam Mostaf killed on the spot and injuring 20 others.

Of them, Ismail succumbed to his injuries in the Jessore General Hospital while 12 others are undergoing treatment in the hospital.

DHAKA TODAY

Medical conference

Bangladesh Medical Association will hold "18th Medical Conference and Annual General Meeting" with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia as chief guest. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.

Conference

North South University organises first international conference on 'Next Generation Wireless System'. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) organises a seminar on 'Large dams in North East India: Implications for Bangladesh' with Dr Md Khalequzzaman, professor, Lock Haven University, USA, as keynote speaker. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

Shahidur, Nasreen to be buried today

BNNEWS, Dhaka

The namaz-e-janaza of Petrobangla Director (Planning) Kazi Shahidur Rahman and his wife Nasreen Shahid killed in a road accident on Friday will be held at the Petrobangla Centre at Karwan Bazar in the city at 11:00am today.

They will be buried at the Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard after the second namaz-e-janaza at the Kakrali mosque after Johr prayers.

The bodies of Shahidur and Nasreen will be taken to the Banani house of his elder brother from the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) before namaz-e-janaza.

Shahidur's daughter settled in London was scheduled to come to Bangladesh.

Their Qulkhawani will be held at the residence of Shahidur's elder brother at Banani after Maghrib prayers tomorrow.

Shahidur, Nasreen, former managing director of the Bapex and senior general manager of the Petrobangla MA Baset and his wife Mahfuja Baset were killed in a road accident near Narsingdi on their way to Sylhet.

Their two sons Amit and Nahin are now under treatment at the Orthopaedic Hospital in the capital with serious injuries.

Baset and his wife Mahfuja were buried at the Banani Graveyard on Saturday.

Qulkhawani of Baset and his wife will be held at his residence Baily Heights, Flat no. E-1, 18th Floor in the city after Maghrib prayers today.

Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

M Abu Taher, a freedom fighter and former principal of Nalitatbari College in Sherpur, passed away due to cancer on Saturday at his Nalitatbari residence at the age of 63.

He left behind his four sons, wife and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried on Nalitatbari Jame Mosque premises after Namaz-e-Janaza at the mosque.

Information Secretary Muhammad Haider Ali expressed deep shock at the death of Taher.

Qulkhawani

BSS, Dhaka

Qulkhawani of Abdus Sultan Mullick, a former section officer, will be held at his 6 Avoy Das Lane residence at Tikatuly in the city, after Asr prayers today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the qulkhawani.

Mullick passed away due to old-age complications at his residence on Friday at the age of 91.

Weather Today section with a graphic and a table showing temperature and humidity for various cities in Bangladesh.