

3RD INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL BANGLADESH 2006 INAUGURATED

Turn film into a weapon for renaissance of humanity: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon filmmakers from home and abroad to turn film into a strong weapon of renaissance of the humanity, now passing through a critical time for strife all over the effete world.

The PM made the call while she was inaugurating the 15-day-long 3rd International Film Festival Bangladesh 2006 at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city.

"Now humanity crisis skirted worldwide. Our present time is roughed up with envy, malice, clash, war and bloodshed. Peace, humanity, friendship, equality and cry for love are striking at the closed door of power," she told the function. Noted filmmakers, producers and artists from home and abroad attended the function.

All have to thwart this backward journey of illuminating modern civilisation that has been left into the darkness, she observed and urged the celluloid men not to turn their

creativity to serve as the lacks of investors and vested interest.

The PM said an irresponsible syndicate is spreading pollution in films taking the advantage of profound weakness of cinema-loving people, which is more dangerous than that of environment pollution.

She told the audience that her government has already taken stern measures to stop production of filthy and copy films.

Khaleda said her government has been extending cooperation in making creative films and it will continue.

The theme of this year's international film festival is "Film for the People."

A total of 111 films of 60 different countries will be screened during the filming carnival, jointly organised by Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies and the International Federation of Film Societies.

The cinemas will be screened at the national museum auditorium, public library auditorium, Star Cineplex and major cinema halls in Dhaka, Narayanganj and

Chittagong.

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam, Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies leader Azad Rahman and festival director Golam Rabbani Biplob also spoke at the inaugural function with festival committee chairman Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, chairman of the Privatisation Board, in the chair.

"Ontor Jatra" directed by internationally reputed Bangladeshi filmmaker Tareq Masud and Catherin Masud was screened at the inaugural function.

Addressing the function Khaleda said country's cinema, which has already passed 50 years, started journey with immense potential.

A good number of remarkable artistic quality films and fair commercial cinemas were made in the country during the long period that has gone by, she said. But that tradition was not sustained for various reasons.

In this regard, she called upon educated, elegant and talented filmmakers to come forward to stop the slide.

She called for making lifelike, artistic, aesthetic and appealing films that will successfully reflect and authentically screen a beautiful Bangladesh, life and struggle of nice people of the country and their hopes and aspiration, smile and cry, present, past and the future.

She hoped that the days are not far off when Bangladesh's films would earn dignity and honor in the world forum.

"I am looking forward to that day," Khaleda said hoping that filmmakers will fulfill the desire of the countrymen.

The PM said this film festival, during which artistic cinemas of different countries will be screened, will be helpful for the viewers and filmmakers of the country in identifying their respective positions as well as keep role in deciding the means of future work.

"This international film festival is another positive aspect of globalisation," she said.

SC Bar election schedule

UNB, Dhaka

Schedule for annual election to the 14-member executive committee of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) was announced yesterday.

According to SCBA election commission, the filing of nomination papers started yesterday and would continue until March 12.

The nomination papers will be scrutinised on March 12 evening. The final candidature list will be announced on March 15 evening.

Voting will take place Mar 29-30.

17 killed by law enforcers in Feb

Says Odhikar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 17 people were killed by the law enforcers only in February of this year, says a report on human rights situation of the country prepared by 'Odhikar', a human rights organisation.

The report, based on newspaper analysis, said 12 people were killed

in 'cross fire' by Rab and five others by police.

The report further said 19 were killed in political conflict and around 1,171 injured while 72 others were arrested. Besides, police arrested more than 10,000 activists of 14-party alliance including common people on the occasion of the

opposition's long march on February 5.

Odhikar reported that around 44 women including 10 children were violated across the country in February while 24 others were murdered for not paying dowry. In addition, acid was hurled on 10 people including seven women and two children.



PHOTO: STAR

Karmojibi Nari, a women's rights organisation, stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding electricity, diesel and fertiliser for the peasants at a subsidised price.

Pro-AL panel sweeps Dhaka Bar election

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The pro-Awami League lawyers' White Panel' under the banner of Sammilita Ainjibi Samanaya Parishad (SASP) swept the Dhaka Bar Association (DBA) election.

Out of 25 posts 'White Panel' won 23 posts, including president and general secretary, while BNP backed lawyers' Blue Panel' under the banner of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Oikya Panel (JAOP) got two posts of executive committee (EC) members.

Mohammad Nuruzzaman Nani was elected president securing 1250 votes while his rival Ghulam Mainuddin got 612 votes. Abdul Batan was elected general secretary (GS) securing 1339 votes while his rival Golam Mostafa Khan bagged 1020 votes.

Other bearers are Vice-Presidents: Shah Alam Talukder and SM Anwar Hossain, Treasurer: Ibne Aziz MD Nurul Huda, Assistant General Secretary: Azizul Haque Chowdhury Rumi and Mohammad Jahangir Hossain Dulal, Library Secretary: Mizanur Rahman Mamun, Cultural Secretary: Umme Kulsum Smrity and Office Secretary: Ferozur Rahman Montu.

Executive Committee members from the White Panel are Abu Saleh Fazle Rabbi Khan, Gazi Shakhaout Hosen Swapon, Halima Akhter, Abdul Kader Patwary, Abu Taib, Hafizur Rahman Tota, Iqbal Hossain, Nazrul Islam Sarder, Mohammad Muktar Hossain Sujon, Mohammad Shah Alam, Noor Jahan Khatun Uzzal, Shahab Uddin Ahammad Tipu and Zobaida Sultana Dolly. Morsheda Khatun Shilpi and Nahid Farzana Ahmed were elected from the Blue Panel.

'Harmonious co-existence of people of different faiths is our tradition'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A five-member delegation of United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) led by its Chair Michael Cromartie called on Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan at his office yesterday.

They inquired about religious tolerance, recent bombing incidents, Ahmadiyya issue and election reforms in Bangladesh.

The Foreign Minister informed the delegation that Bangladesh is a multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. He said harmonious co-existence of the people of different faiths is the tradition of our country for centuries.

In this regard, Morshed Khan mentioned that the last Ramadan and Durga Puja, the main festivals of Muslims and Hindus, were celebrated at the same time without any untoward incident.

Regarding terrorist incidents in the name of Islam, the Foreign Minister said, Islam is a religion of peace. He said a few ignorant and half-educated people were responsible behind the series of bombings in the country but the law enforcement agencies and motivational campaign with Islamic leaders along with people of all walks of life have proven effective in combating such incidents.

On the Ahmadiyya issue, he said that the government is committed to protecting their rights, life and property of the people of all faiths, including the

Ahmadiyya community.

The Foreign Minister apprised the delegation of the electoral procedure of Bangladesh, which was designed by all major parties of the country. He said that last three elections were held in a free and fair manner under neutral caretaker government.

The members of the delegation thanked the Foreign Minister for his insight. Vice Chair of the Commission Felice D. Gaer and Commissioner Preetta D. Bansal also took part in the discussion.

US Charge d' Affaires Judith Chammas was present on the occasion.

POWER CRISIS

Campaign against measles faces some problems

ABDUL KADER

The countrywide massive measles vaccination campaign is facing some problems in keeping the vaccines at low temperature due to frequent power outages.

Acknowledging the problem, Health Directorate officials said they have taken additional measures to store the vaccines at the required temperature (2 to 8 degree Celsius).

In many upazilas, the measles vaccines are being carried in cold boxes from the refrigerators of upazila storeroom as a cold box can preserve a vaccine for four days, they said.

Dr Lutfar Rahman, programme manager of the Extended Immunisation Programme (EPI), said the power crisis in upazilas could not

affect the vaccines as alternative measures have already been taken.

Generators are being used in some upazila health complexes to operate the refrigerators, he added.

Besides, the high-ups of the government have issued an order to the power supply authorities to ensure uninterrupted power supply to upazila storerooms, said Dr Iqbal Ansary Khan, medical officer of EPI and Surveillance.

The health ministry through the EPI has been carrying out the campaign across the country with a target to cover a total of 3.35 crore children aged between nine months and 10 years. The campaign that started on February 25 will continue until March 16.

The first week of the campaign ends today. During this period, vaccines

were given to students at primary level educational institutions across the country.

The officials said they have been carrying out the campaign almost successfully.

During the second and third weeks, all the vaccination centres of the government will conduct the programme from 8:00am to 3:00pm daily. The government hospitals are also involved in the campaign.

The American Red Cross, World Health Organisation (WHO), Unicef and the government have funded the campaign involving Tk 80.7 crore.

About 50,000 trained workers and 7.5 lakh volunteers are carrying out the campaign.