

Call to celebrate Nabanna Utsab at state level Festival on Nov 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday demanded that the Nabanna Utsab or Harvest Festival be observed at the state level in order to uphold the spirit of equal distribution of foodgrains among all citizens of the country.

They also called for declaration of a public holiday on the first day of the Bengali month of Agrahayan and issuance of a stamp in observance of the day as the traditional festival of new harvest takes place in this month.

The Jatiya Nabanna Utsab Udjapon Parishad (National Harvest Festival Observance Council) organised the press conference in the city on the occasion of 'Harvest Festival 1413'.

Reading out a written statement, Parishad convener Shahrier Salam said more than 40 countries across the world observe the harvest festival at state level, but Bangladesh, being an agricultural country, does not observe the festival the same way.

Bulbul Mahalanobish, co-chairperson of the Parishad, said the Parishad has been celebrating the festival for the last eight years highlighting the role of women in harvest that is neither a communal nor a religious festival.

This year, the festival will be observed on Agrahayan 10 (November 24) instead of Agrahayan 1 due to unavoidable reasons.

Language movement veteran and poet Mahbul-ul-Alam Chowdhury will inaugurate the daylong festival at Bakultala of Fine Arts Institute on the Dhaka University campus.

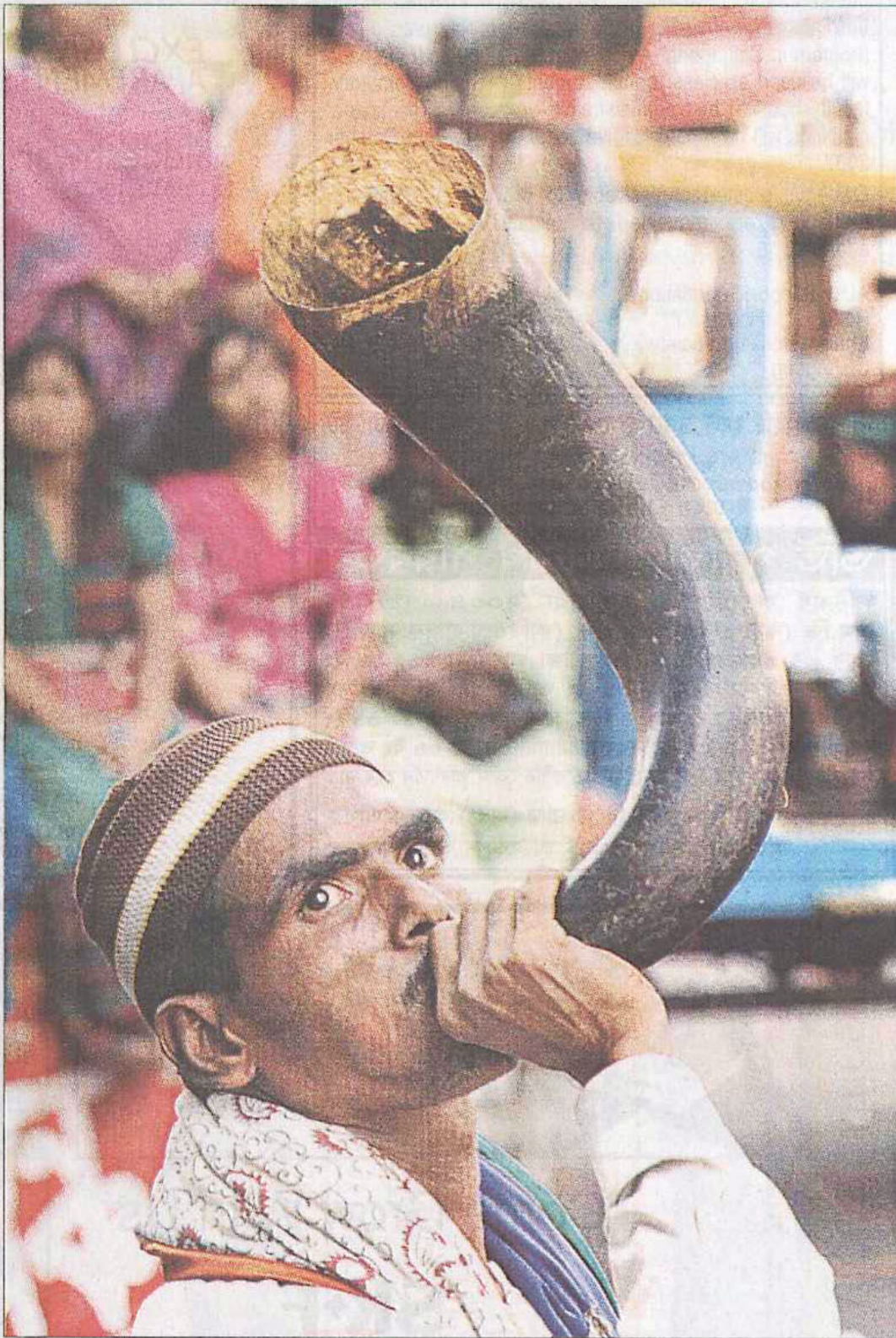
The festival will start with the playing of flute at 7:00am followed by song, dance, instrumental music, Baul song, rally and art competition.

Country's leading artists and cultural organisations, including Udichi, Kochi Kachar Mela, Pratiiti, Khelaghar and Nriyalok, will perform at the programme.

Display of different types of pitha (home-made cakes) and traditional food items made from new paddy will add colour to the festival.

Young and senior artists will take part in a Nabanna Art Camp to be inaugurated at 9:45am.

The festival, which will continue till 8:30pm, will be dedicated to late poet Shamsur Rahman, said the organisers.



An Awami League activist blows a curved horn at a rally at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday demanding removal of the Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz.

PHOTO: STAR

4 cocktails exploded on DU campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

Four cocktails exploded at two different places on Dhaka University (DU) campus yesterday.

Three cocktails went off in front of Salimullah Hall at around 7:40pm with big bangs within seconds, sources said.

However, no injury was reported.

Police recovered an unexploded cocktail from the spot and sent to Shahbagh Police Station.

In a separate incident, a cocktail exploded at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Hall of the university at noon.

However, police could not identify the people responsible for the explosions.

Cocktail explosions have been taking place on DU campus almost everyday since September this year.

Ban on journo's entry to EC withdrawn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday withdrew the restriction on journalists it had imposed on Monday following protests from different journalists' associations.

EC Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarkar announced the withdrawal of the restriction at about 12:30pm after a discussion with leaders of BFUJ, DUJ and the Reporters' Forum for Election and Democracy (RFED).

Sarkar also announced that he will arrange a place for the reporters who regularly visit the EC to collect information on various aspects of the ongoing preparatory work for the next general elections. The EC will also hold press briefings over any action taken by it.

Besides, the EC will talk to the RFED leaders before taking any decision on the media, the EC secretary added.

The ban on journalists' access to the EC Secretariat suddenly came on Monday, but neither the EC nor its senior secretariat officials could clarify the reasons.

Security personnel at the EC Secretariat only told reporters that the authorities directed them not to allow any journalist to enter the secretariat.

Protesting the ban, the RFED staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the EC Secretariat at 11:00am yesterday.

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), and Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) expressed their solidarity with the RFED.

Earlier on November 15, Sarkar asked journalists to cooperate with the EC Secretariat in its measure to beef up security. He also proposed them to stay in a room in another building where all information will be provided.

The journalists, however, refused to accept his proposal.

Submission deadline for DU admission forms extended

Dhaka University authorities extended the deadline for submission of admission forms for first year honours classes under 2006-2007 sessions until November 25, a press release said.

"Admission seekers who bought admission forms under Ka, Kha, Ga and Gha units, but could not submit within the stipulated time, can submit forms at respective dean offices," the press release added.



Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) stage a sit-in in front of the Election Commission in the city yesterday demanding easy access to information.

'Ensure working women's right to franchise'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Karmojibi Nari (KN), a rights organisation, yesterday urged the caretaker government to ensure working women's right to franchise.

They formed a human chain in front of the High Court in the city where they also demanded for equal rights of women in all strata of life and creating a congenial atmosphere to hold a free and fair election.

KN leaders also demanded participation of women in all social, political and economical activities.

The programme was presided over by its Executive Director Rokeya Rafiq Baby while Mahmuda Imam, Arifa

Akter Anu, Rahela Rabbani, Shabnam Hafiz and Smrity Sarkar spoke.

IUB admission test date shifted

The admission test for Spring 2007 of Dhaka and Chittagong campuses of Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) will now be held on December 9 instead of November 25 due to unavoidable circumstances, says a press release.

The last date for submission of application forms for admission is December 5. The venue and time of examination will remain unchanged.

Jubo Dal leader shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jubo Dal leader shot by unknown criminals on Tuesday died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the early hours of yesterday.

Gaziul Ahmed Pradhan, 35, who also dealt in construction materials, was shot by a gang of extortionists near Kalyanpur Natun Bazar in Mirpur when he was returning home by a rickshaw at around 10:00 pm.

Pradhan, assistant organising secretary of Mirpur Thana Jubo Dal, succumbed to his bullet injuries at around 3:00am.

Family members suspect that members of Shahadat group, a top listed criminal, are responsible for the killing as they were threatening him for tolls for the last few days.

Japanese delegation meets UGC chairman

BSS, Dhaka

A four-member Japanese delegation led by Takashi Nishizawa, professor of Faculty of Agriculture, Yamagata University, called on Prof M Asaduzzaman, chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh, at his office here yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed the 'exchange programme of higher education' between Japan and Bangladesh and stressed on increasing the number of Japanese scholarships in Bangladesh through Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS).

They also discussed other scholarships like Momboshu, Human Resource Development Scholarship and JICA activities in Bangladesh, a UGC press release said.

Other members of the Japanese delegation were Prof Mohammad Hazrat Ali of Department of Agronomy, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Tuhin Shuvo Ray, assistant professor, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University and Takashi's spouse Yukiko Tada, the release added.



British Minister of State for Trade and Investment Ian McCartney calls on President/Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

'CA fails to prove his neutrality'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) held rallies and took out processions in different areas of the city yesterday in support of countrywide blockade programme enforced by the Awami League-led 14-party alliance.

Speaking at a rally, JSD President Hasanul Huq Inu said the president/chief adviser has failed to prove himself to be neutral after taking over as the chief of the caretaker government.

He also said that no quarters can resist the 14-party alliance's movement to realise its 11-point demand.

Gono Mukti Andolon, a platform for eight left organisations, also organised a rally at Topkhana demanding reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC) and arrest of the corrupt ministers, lawmakers and bureaucrats.

Removal of Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz is a must for a free and fair general election, speakers at the rally said.

They also demanded appointment of a neutral person as CEC. In another rally at Bangabandhu

Avenue, leaders of Muktijoddha Samannay Parishad said that the president is acting like a puppet of BNP-Jamaat alliance, putting democracy at stake.

They urged the president to remain neutral and reconstitute the EC.

Parishad Chairman Abir Ahmed presided over the rally addressed by its Secretary General Golem Mahmud Mamun and Mesbahuddin Faruk Khan.

US Embassy closed today

UNB, Dhaka

The American Embassy offices, including the American Centre, Archer K Blood American Centre Library and the student counseling service will remain closed today on the occasion of Thanksgiving Day, a national holiday in the United States, said a press release.

Teachers demand cancellation of conditional circular

Nat'l Convention on Nov 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of teachers of non-government educational institutions staged a token hunger strike in front of the High Court Mazar Gate in the city yesterday demanding cancellation of a government circular regarding tuition fees of the students.

According to the circular issued by the education ministry on October 31, teachers will have to deposit the tuition fees collected from students to the government funds as they will receive 100 percent basic salary from the government exchequer.

At the programme organised by the National Front of Teachers and Employees, the teachers strongly criticised immediate past education minister Osman Farruk for politicising the education sector.

They called on the caretaker government to immediately withdraw the circular for the greater interest of teachers.

They also urged the caretaker government to provide 100 percent

basic salary from 2006-07 fiscal instead of 2007-08.

The teachers also claimed that over 5,000 of their colleagues across the country have lost their jobs in the last five years due to political reasons.

Quazi Faruque, chief coordinator and convener of the organisation, said they will hold a national convention in the city on November 27.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the convention at the auditorium of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.

Fresh agitation programme would be announced at the convention to press their various demands, said the leaders of the organisation.

"Thousands of teachers from across the country will take part in the event. At the technical session, they will highlight all kinds of irregularities that took place in the education sector in the last five years," said Quazi Faruque.

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) General Secretary Dr Akhtaruzzaman,

former president Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique and AL Education Secretary Nurul Islam Nahid expressed solidarity with their demands.

Boy burnt alive in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A boy was burnt alive in a fire that ripped through scrap metal shops at Badda in the city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Sameer Mia, 12, an employee of a shop. Sameer was sleeping inside his shop when the blaze spread in the area at around 4:45am.

On receiving information, six units of fire brigade rushed to the spot and managed to extinguish the fire at around 7:10am. Later, the fire fighters recovered the burnt body of Sameer.

Three shops were destroyed in the fire, said the shop owners.



City Corporation turns a blind eye to a huge pile of garbage in front of a school on the Mirpur-1 Technical road, much to the disgust of students, dwellers and commuters.

PHOTO: STAR

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‘ঘোড়ায় চড়িয়া মর্দ হাঁটিয়া চলিল, কিছুদূর যাইয়া মর্দ রওনা হইলো’

সাহায্যকার

ড. আনিসুজ্জামান

সুলতানা কামাল

উন্মুক্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, উন্মুক্ত দুর্নীতি ও জামায়াতীকরণ

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