

Dhaka Day by Day



Memory Tinged with Determination

by Ekramul Kabir

"Jinnah had his own interpreted reasons to impose Urdu upon us, but there was no way we could accept it", said Dr Halima Khatun while she was asked by The Daily Star to stir her memories of the Language Movement.



Dr Halima Khatun

Dr. Halima Khatun, the present director of Institute of Educational Research, was a student of English Department at Dhaka University during the scorching days of 1952; and was a committed participant of the Language Movement. She was in her character when describing February 21, 1952. Her memory flashed back to her teenage days when she involved herself in anti-British demonstrations also.

When she was questioned why being a female, she associated herself in such activities, she answered that firstly it was a desperate patriotic necessity and secondly she wanted to prove herself in a way what was expected equally of a man. She revealed how the female students participated to adhere to Bangla and what was her contribution on 21st February, 1952. Her task was to amass the school girls from "Banglabazar" and from Anwara Khatun School which was then called "Muslim Girls' High School". The school authority locked the gate and prohibited the students to take part in the procession. But many enthusiastic girls joined the parade leaping over the wall. Dr Khatun had to go through a great ordeal to keep the girls together when it was still not decided whether to break Section 144. But soon the decision was taken.

One important fact that she unveiled which the historians denied, "It was the girls who first broke through the police obstacle". As for the police action on the girls, she said that they were also beaten and scattered by the teargas. The police forced a few of them into their official carriages and released them later after verification.

In her time, female participation in any socio-political activities was a taboo. She spoke of the family and social obstructions which kept females away from the movement. "But it was a lot easier for us who lived in residential dormitories," she said.

When she was asked if the students now-a-

days were politically conscious as they were in those days, it seemed to touch the core of her being as she said, "Yes, they are — but all of them are group-conscious. It is their own particular lot they are conscious about". So, in a sense the real political spirit is gradually becoming naive. In those days our real concern was to establish Bangla and later, Bangladesh." Dr Halima regretted that the sad plight of today's youth was due to lack of authentic guidance, but she was confident that the situation would change.

She was asked to compare between Pakistani oppressors and the rulers of independent Bangladesh. She thinks that extortion operates under various camouflages, so the nature of exploitation has changed through time. But still the process is on. The parasites who were ignored in their adolescence, have by this time grown in both size and dimension and have become almost invincible. She cautioned, "If these parasites are not dealt with in their infancy, gradually they will mature into monsters. Then it may become almost an impossible and uneven war between 'Beast' and 'Man'."

A prolific writer, Dr Halima talked about the growth of our language. She wrote about sixteen books for the children which are being taught at primary and secondary levels. From her point of view, language is a kind of water fall which never ceases to stop. To enrich a language one may have to borrow from other languages. In Bangla, there are sundry uses of Persian, Chinese and English words, but those did not main Bangla in any way — even English adopted few Bangla words for its expansion.

She emphasised that Ekushey February and the Language Movement which led to the ultimate emergence of independent Bangladesh, has become a ritualistic pilgrimage towards the Shaheed Meenar every year.

"If we do not perform the task of nurturing the sacred sentiments that are associated with our language and motherland with sufficient intensity, the sacrifice of our martyrs shall go in vain", concluded Dr Halima Khatun.

Goodwill team leaves for CIS today

A 20-member goodwill delegation of Bangladesh will leave Dhaka for Commonwealth of Independent States (Former Soviet Union) today (Monday) on a three-week official visit there, reports UNB.

The visit is expected to renew the political and economic relation with the newly emerged independent states of the former Soviet Union.

During the visit, the delegation led by State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan will explore the possibilities of exporting Bangladeshi products including ready-made garments, tea, jute goods and technology.

They will visit Moscow, Byelorussia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Mouldavia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

The members of the delegation include from both public and private sectors.

51 DU teachers demand trial of Golam Azam

By DU Correspondent

Fifty-one teachers of the Dhaka University Sunday in a statement condemned the government's role in rehabilitating Golam Azam.

The university teachers demanded immediate trial of Golam Azam and his associates.

The signatories to the statement were among others, Professor M. Shahiduzzaman, Dr Harun-ur-Rashid, Dr. Kazi Shahidullah, Dr. Anisur Rahman, Prof. Anis Ahmed, Dr. A. K. Azad Chowdhury, Dr. Tofael Ahmed Chowdhury, Dr. Abdul Khaleque, Dr. Md. Shahadat Ali, Dr. Rangulal Sen, Dr. Sayed Manzurul Islam, Prof. Md. Akhtaruzzaman, Prof. Mahabubur Rahman.

Autograph exhibition on Ekushey begins

An autograph exhibition titled "February 21 in the eyes of Banglali intellectuals" began Sunday in front of the Jatiya Press Club here.

The autographs of about 100 renowned intellectuals, litterateurs, poets, artists, educationists, scientists, journalists, film makers and freedom fighters were collected by Bakshi Habibur Rahman, a businessman from Bogra.

Talking to BSS Rahman said autograph collection was his hobby and since 1980 he collected 750 autographs of important personalities from home and abroad including Nobel Prize winner Mother Teresa.

Rahman said the autographs now on display at the exhibition were collected since 1989 with the comments of the distinguished personalities on February 21 with a view to focus their opinions regarding the Language Movement to the new generation.

Maghi Purnima today

The Buddhist Community in Bangladesh will observe the Maghi Purnima today (Monday) with due religious fervour, reports BSS.

Maghi Purnima, one of the holy religious celebrations of the Buddhists, marks the holy anniversary by Lord Buddha of his Nirvana on Batshaki Purnima day.

Bangladesh Buddhist Federation has drawn-up an extensive programme in celebration of the day at the International Buddha Bihar at Merul Badda. The programme includes hoisting of religious flag, breakfast to Bikkhu Sangha, Buddha Puja and discussion meeting.

The Parbattya Buddha Sangha will also observe the day through a similar programme at Buddha Bihar at Mirpur.

Weather

No change in night temperature

By Staff Correspondent

Rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Chittagong division and the regions of Paridpur, Patuakhali, and Barisal. Night temperature is likely to remain unchanged over the country according to Met office.

Weather on Sunday remained almost dry over the country except Chittagong. It rained at a few places over Chittagong. Chief amount of rainfall was recorded from Kutubdia 45 mm and Teknal 12 mm the lowest temperature on Thursday was 9.6 degree Celsius at Rangpur.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Little change. Extended outlook for another five days: Rainfall activity unlikely. The temperature and humidity of some cities on Sunday were:

City	temperature		humidity	
	max	min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	24.5	16.7	60	51
Chittagong	27.4	19.7	98	70
Rajshahi	24.6	10.6	72	58
Khulna	26.1	14.6	64	74
Rangpur	23.6	9.6	80	64
Sylhet	25.2	13	x	x
Jessore	26	13.2	x	x



Rizwana Chowdhury Banna, a noted Tagore song artist, rendering songs at Bangla Academy premises Sunday in observance of 'Amor Ekushey'.

Call to write more books for higher studies in Bengali

A discussion meeting in memory of 'Amor Ekushey' was held at the Russian Cultural Centre auditorium in the city Sunday with a call for enrichment and wide use of Bengali language, reports BSS.

Minister for Social Welfare and Women's Affairs Tariqul Islam addressed as the chief guest while poet Al-Mujahidee presided over the occasion.

The minister said we all should use Bangla correctly in every sphere of our communication to pay honour and uphold the supreme sacrifice of the language martyrs of 1952.

The minister called upon all scholars and researchers of Bengali language to write more books and translate for higher studies in Bengali.

He said, scholars and authors will be provided all possible governmental assistance in this regard.

Later, artists of Performing Arts Centre presented a colourful cultural programme.

'Terrorists won't be allowed to escape law'

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury Sunday assured Parliament that terrorists and anti-social elements would be netted and be tried in accordance with the law of the country, reports UNB.

Entire police administration and I myself are engaged in tracking the miscreants and bringing them to book," Matin said.

Responding to an allegation made by Chief Whip Md Nasim the Home Minister said some terrorists have already been arrested from different parts of the country but efforts were underway to nab the rest, whoever they may be.

Terrorist will not be allowed to escape the law, he assured.

Power supply suspension

Power will be suspended tomorrow (Tuesday) from 9 am to 4 pm at Mohammadpur area, Dhanmondi R. A area, Hazaribagh partly, Lalmitia, Mirpur Road and eastern side area Thursday at same hrs, at areas from Gulshan road 112 to 133, Gulshan Central Avenue eastern side area, Beauty Hall Area Lane by lane, Kotbart, Gabtoht partly, areas under Shah Shaikh Lane, says a DESA press release.

Call to change negative attitude toward the retarded Physical disability seen no barrier to normal life

Physical disability is not a barrier to normal life, rather formulation of appropriate policy can enhance potentiality of a disabled man, reports UNB.

Prof Ajit Dalal of the Department of Psychology, University of Alahabad, India, said this while addressing a national seminar on Disability and Community-based Rehabilitation at a local hotel Sunday.

We are to learn the potentialities of the disabled people first and then gear up our efforts with community resource mobilisation," Ajit said.

He said negative attitude towards the disabled should be changed immediately to help their proper rehabilitation in society.

The speakers at the seminar stressed concerted efforts and community awareness to help promote the cause of the disabled so that they could be back in weal and woe of normal life.

The morning session of the seminar was chaired by Prof Barrie Pickles of the International Centre for Advancement of Community-based Rehabilitation (ICACBR), Canada.

Dr Al Begum, a World Bank Adviser, also took part in the discussion while Dr Shabnam Shahnaz of Pathfinder International presented paper on "Women and Disability".

Dr Shabnam, quoting a survey titled "Bangladesh Census of Non-farm Economic Activities and Disabled persons, 1986" by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, said about 0.41 per cent of the female population, nearly 2.5 lakh, were suffering from disability.

A review of improvement of relevant laws, an improved in-

formation base, awareness creation at different levels and clear policy guidelines can help ensure the wellbeing of the disabled, Dr Shabnam recommended.

Francine Arsenault, herself a disabled woman and activist from Canada, focused on the means of welfare of the disabled by citing her own experience. While Malcolm Peat presented a paper on relation between disability and poverty and illiteracy.

Opportunity through self-employment projects for the disabled people was necessary for community-based rehabilitation (CBR), he said.

The seminar observed that proper coordination between health professionals and disabled people could help promote CBR programmes to improve their condition.

People in the community should be made conscious for the welfare of the disabled—visually, hearing and speech impaired, physically and mentally retarded.

Dr. Nasir of the Voluntary Health Services Society (VHSS), speaking on the position of disabled women in society, said "even mothers are

Workshop on agri mechanisation begins Feb 25

A three-day national workshop on "Agricultural mechanisation its present status and future strategy in Bangladesh" will begin on February 25 at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, reports BSS.

About two hundred participants from different government and non-government organizations will attend this workshop.

Major General M Majid-Ul Haq (Retd), Minister for Agriculture will inaugurate this workshop.

এবারের উপহার
নিয়াজ মোহাম্মদ চৌধুরীর
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Beautification of Ahsan Manzil nearing end

The renovation and beautification works of the Ahsan Manzil Project at a cost of Taka 13 crore 60 lakh is nearing completion and expected to be opened to public soon, reports BSS.

This was revealed at the second Parliamentary Standing Committee meeting on Cultural Ministry held Sunday at the parliament building with State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum in the chair.

The meeting was informed that for the self-income generation of the Ahsan Manzil, the government was actively considering to fix Taka two as entrance fee. The National Museum Authority has decided

to fix Taka one as gate money. The meeting decided to formulate proposals to accord the Borendra Museum of Rajshahi the status of central or National Museum.

Stressing the need for proper preservation of archaeological relics the meeting was informed that after the year 1980, no legal permission was given to send archaeological relics abroad. In this context the State Minister urged all concerned including parliament members to give information about excavated relics so that the concerned authorities can collect them for proper preservation.

The meeting expressed deep satisfaction at the smooth

holding of the book fair and cultural programmes in the Bangla Academy in observance of the "Immortal Ekushey".

Prof Jahanara Begum advised the concerned authorities to take necessary precaution so that no body could tarnish the glorious tradition of "jatra".

The Members of Parliament Amanulla Chowdhury, Poritosh Chowdhury, Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury, Sahin Ara Haque, Rebecka Mohamud, Fatema Chowdhury Paru, Shamsun Nahar Ahmed, Abu Lais, Md. Mubin Chowdhury and Cultural Secretary I V Malik were present.

Bhawal, Madhupur Garhs drastically reduced

The areas of the Bhawal and Madhupur Garhs of the country have been reduced drastically during last 20 year, reports BSS.

Abdullah Al Noman, Minister for Environment, Forest, Fisheries and Livestock, told the Jatiya Sangsad Sunday that while the Bhawal Garh had an area of 41,000 acres and Madhupur Garh 62,621.11 before March 25, 1971, the present areas of the two forests were 28,721 and 51,359 acres respectively.

The minister was replying to a question of Musharraf Hussain (Al-Netrokuna) during the question hour. According to the figures, the Bhawal Garh has been reduced by 13,398 acres and Madhupur Garh to 11,261.31 acres respectively during the last 20 years, he said.

The minister also gave the year-wise data of income and expenditures from the two forests, showing the amount of expenditures as higher than that of the income.

According to Noman, while the total income from 1974 to 1990 from these two forests was Taka 1,41,10,858 the expenditure was Taka 3,0067,515 for the same period.

Replying to a question from Sardar Sakawat Hussain Bakul

(BNP-Narsingdih), Noman said the government has taken up programmes for afforestation during the current year under the Forest Department in different phases. He said a total of 10,245 acres would be brought under coastal afforestation and 9,220 acres in the hilly areas this year. A total of 34,194 acres would be brought under afforestation involving Taka 1323.64 lakh in various phases, he said.

Answering a question from Shamsudouha (CPB-Nilphamari), the Forest Minister said the country has received Taka 1684.49 lakh from 1985-86 to 1991-92 for afforestation in the coastal areas.

Chehlum

Chehlum of Nurhar Khatun wife of late Abdul Majid of town Khalishpur, Khulna will be held today (Monday) in Dhaka and Khulna, reports BSS.

Nurhar died of old age complications on January 8 at a clinic here.

She was 87. She was buried at town Khalishpur, Khulna.

Confce of British diplomats, civil servants opens

A group of British diplomats and civil servants working in South and Southeast Asia embarked on a three-day regional conference in Dhaka to discuss "all aspects of immigration works."

A spokeswoman of the British High Commission, which is hosting the conference, told UNB that some 24 diplomats and civil servants, including some senior officials from London, are attending the meeting.

British High Commissioner Colin H Inray inaugurated the conference at a local hotel Sunday morning.

The conference is designed to exchange views on immigration works in South and Southeast Asia. "It's the latest one in a regular series of meetings we hold every two years," she said.

Dhaka was the venue of such a meeting earlier in 1986 while the last conference of British officials was held in New Delhi in 1990.

The spokeswoman said all aspects of the British immigration works, including both operational and some policy issues, will come up for discussion at the meeting.