

Spirit of Ekushey Lives On



Dhaka Day by Day

Read Bangla

By Rahat Fahmida

On every Ekushey almost all the newspapers, magazines and journals of different types in the country publish special issues. This is to acquaint the people to the history and efficacy of the language movement. Each year in this particular month such movement seems to gain new momentum — but all this is just for the month of February. All the schools and educational institutions are lecturing about what should be done. Different programmes in the electronic medias are centred around the same subject and of course, not to miss out on the national newspapers. But whatever happens with regard to cultivation of this great language throughout the year goes quite unnoticed!

To get to the very basic Bengali language to most means books. It means books that they read to themselves silently. Often, of course, people see and hear a play; sometimes they listen to the radio. Yet most of their experience of literature is one in which they 'hear' what they read only in their 'inner ear'. They read to themselves, silently, alone. Their silent, rapid reading of a page is the result of their long exposure to fixed, uniform print. Their very notions of what Bengali literature is and how it works upon us have been fixed by all their experience of the printed words, the unchanging, uniform arrangement of words upon the page. Talking about Bengali literature and its popularity amongst the people is very limited. The main reason is, majority of the population are in the villages. And one certainly has to take their system of education into account.

At a seminar recently, a professor of Dhaka University, Zaheda Ahmed said, this country has been unable to utilise its human resources due to lack of right education planning, poverty and the absence of right social infras-

structure for education. Though primary education is now compulsory, but sadly enough even those who have completed their primary education know very little about the Bengali language. Most of the villages have very poor attendance in their schools, more so because of the economic status of the families. Another factor crucial for the child's education is the system in which they are taught. Most families prefer to send their children to Madrasahs and Makhtabs, as Ahmed said, which in the long run ignores teaching Bengali as such. As was discussed by this and other educationists that one of the drawbacks of the country's education system is, there are 45,930 primary schools, whereas there are over 70,000 of Madrasahs and Makhtabs (which in most cases are out of tune with the teaching of Bengali language or literature).

Termining the growth of Madrasahs 'prolific' she observed, that the late 70s and the whole of 80s witnessed the emergence of 'ill-educated, but clever, dishonest agents with petro-dollar connections who gradually replaced the local itinerant alms collectors as source of funds for these up-coming Makhtabs and Madrasahs. Without being disrespectful to the teachings of these Makhtabs and Madrasahs, it should not cast or rather shadow the learning of the mother tongue. To make the school education economically and socially relevant, this professor of Dhaka University suggested, the curriculum ought to be flexible enough to incorporate courses suitable for the various needs of the pupils coming from different strata of life. There should be a core component of basic compulsory subjects including English as the second language and mathematics, but giving top priority to Bengali at all classes.



Udichi artistes performing dance at the Central Shaheed Minar as part of Amar Ekushey programme. — Star photo

'People should be empowered to alleviate poverty'

By Staff Correspondent

People should be empowered to alleviate poverty, remove all discriminations and to establish rule of law and democracy in the country to achieve economic self-reliance.

This was stated by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad in a summary report of its recently concluded week-long seminar on 'The past two decades and the coming one', released in a press conference yesterday.

The Parishad said this could be achieved by educating the people, taking up employment oriented programmes for them and by increasing the awareness of the urban and rural poor.

The report was read out by Chairman of Unnayan Parishad, Kazi Khaliquzzaman at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium. The press conference was also attended by Fakhruddin Ahmed, former Foreign Secretary, Prof Nurul Islam of BUET, Prof Aitish Nishat of BUET and Alaas Samad, the local BBC

correspondent. The Parishad viewed that the nation could not stand on a firm footing in the last decades and as a result the future has become uncertain. The seminar, therefore, observed that alleviation of poverty should be the main thrust for development.

The report said a small segment of the society holds all the power whereas the mass people are in a marginal position. Development could not be achieved without the participation of this vast majority, it added.

Referring to the environment, the report said 'the people would be interested to preserve environment only if their economic condition was improved. It also underscored the need for expansion of educational programmes for this purpose.

The report observed that people, especially the poor, are not aware of their rights in the Constitution.

Govt firm to adopt policy of rewarding talented people : Majid

Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister M Majid-ul-Haque said here yesterday that the government was determined to adopt a proper policy so that talented people were duly rewarded, reports BSS.

He was inaugurating the 26th annual convention of

Bangladesh Water and Power Engineers Association at the Institution of Engineers here last morning.

Mohammad Nurul Huda, State Minister for Establishment, attended the function as special guest. Among others, Abdur Razzaque, Chairman, Water Development Board, S T S Mahmood, Chair-

man, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, G M Khaled and Mizanur Rahman, President and Acting General Secretary of the association spoke on the occasion.

Haque expressed the hope that the engineers would contribute their mite in the nation-building activities with dedication and sincerity.

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Poor countries cautioned against adverse impact of free trade

A Canadian professor yesterday cautioned the poor countries against the adverse impact of free trade agreement (FTA), reports UNB.

Prof John Richards of Simon Fraser University, Canada told a research seminar here yesterday that growing industries in poor countries will fall under threat if they go on FTA.

In free trade agreement, developed countries with their technological advancement will dominate the poor and developing countries, he added.

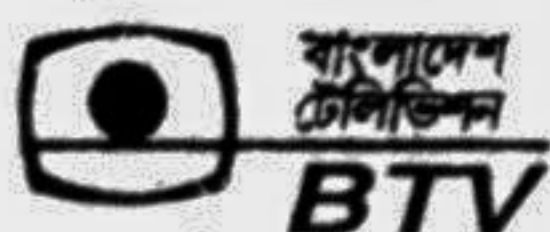
The seminar on 'Problems and Potential of Regional Trade Agreement: Lessons from the European Community and North American Free Trade Association' was organised by International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT), Dhaka at the auditorium of Academy for Planning and Development.

Prof Richards said if any country wants to go on FTA, it should consider some major sectors including auto industries, agriculture, textiles and apparel, energy services, financial services, investment, standards, environment, government procurement and dispute settlement.

Presided over by IUBAT

President Prof M Alimullah Miyan, the seminar was addressed, among others, by Food Minister M Shamsul Islam and Prof Nurul Momin of International Relations Department of Dhaka University.

Referring to South Asian experience, Food Minister M Shamsul Islam said regional trade accords are removing trade barriers within the regional countries and contributing to the growth of regional economy.



Saturday

- 5.00 Opening announcement Al-Quran
- Programme summary
- 5.10 News in Bangla
- 5.25 Cartoon film : Care Bears Family
- 6.00 Amra Natun
- 6.30 Open University
- 7.05 Banshari
- 8.00 News in Bangla
- 8.30 Abhimat
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.30 Dallas
- 11.30 Khabar/The News
- 11.45 Closing

Weather

Weather may remain dry

By Staff Correspondent

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country with partly cloudy sky over Rajshahi division and the regions of Mymensingh, Tangail, Dhaka and Sylhet during the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Saturday).

The Met office forecasts, night temperature is likely to remain unchanged over the country.

The maximum temperature of the country of 30.6 degree Celsius was reported from Rajshahi yesterday and the minimum of 13.9 degree was from Srimangal.

The sun sets today (Saturday) at 5.52 pm and rises tomorrow.

The maximum and the minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	max	min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	29.4	15.3	73	54
Chittagong	27.0	15.6	80	78
Rajshahi	30.6	16.2	82	82
Khulna	30.0	16.5	89	65
Bairai	29.5	15.5	97	73
Cox's Bazar	27.6	16.4	78	72
Sylhet	27.1	16.0	85	74
Dinajpur	28.8	16.2	83	63



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