

What's on today....

IUBAT certificate awarding ceremony: The certificate awarding ceremony of International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT)'s workshop on "Economic Management" will be held. Venue: Auditorium of Bangladesh Meteorology Department, Agargaon. Time: 5:00 pm.

Film show: Liberation War Museum will screen "Ithas Kanya," a film based on the Liberation War. Venue: Museum auditorium. Time: 6:30 pm.

Discussion: A discussion on "Development of IT Professionals in Bangladesh" will be held. Organiser: Bangladesh 2000 in association with ExecuTrain. Venue: House No 519, Rd No 1, Dhanmondi R/A.

Seminar: A seminar on Internet and e-commerce will be held. Organiser: New Horizons Computer Learning Centre. Venue: Academy for Planning and Development. Time: 6:30 pm.

Weather

Dry weather likely

Light rain or drizzle may occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and weather may remain mainly dry over the country with cloudy sky over Faridpur, Dhaka and Sylhet regions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, said met office.

The country's highest temperature recorded yesterday was 29.4 degree Celsius at Hatiya and the lowest 9.7 degree Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:56 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:28 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and town yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	26.2	13.2
Chittagong	27.2	15.2
Rajshahi	27.2	09.8
Khulna	28.0	13.5
Barisal	26.2	13.6
Sylhet	25.8	13.5
Cox's Bazar	28.5	16.5

HERE and THERE

BHBCOP

By DU Correspondent
Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad (BHBCOP) yesterday organised a discussion at the seminar room of Teachers and Students Centre (TSC) of the Dhaka University marking February 21, the International Mother Language Day.

Speakers at the discussion said that the non-communal spirit upholds the Bangla language before world.

They also said that the movement from 1948 to 1972 was led by non-communal democratic leadership.

DAB concerned

By Staff Correspondent
Central convening committee of Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) yesterday expressed deep concern over the incident of attack on Dr Maruf Ali, a doctor of Sylhet Medical College by miscreants, said a press release last night.

Demanding exemplary punishment of the culprits, DAB expressed its anguish saying that the law and order situation of the country has been deteriorating.

Directive

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It also strongly condemned filing of 'false' cases against opposition activists and alleged attacks on them by AL 'terrorists' and police. It demanded withdrawal of all cases.

UNB added that the meeting, held at the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition, decided to extend the 151-member Convening Committee of Dhaka city APAC by including another 50 members.

Ekushey

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Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will broadcast special programmes, while newspapers will bring out special supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

Different political, social, cultural and professional organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes, which include placing of wreaths, cultural functions and discussion sessions. Similar programmes will also be held in the districts and thana headquarters.

Bangla Academy is already holding a month-long Ekushey Book Fair at its premises. The Academy will also hold a discussion session on the theme "Language Movement and International Mother Language Day" at the Academy premises this afternoon.

Ministry of Cultural Affairs has taken up three-day programmes, beginning at the Ramna Batamul in the afternoon today.

A special exhibition of murals will be held at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy gallery at 3pm today.

Among others, Bangladesh Workers Party, Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) and Bangladesh Charu Shilpi Sangsad have also chalked out programmes in observance of the Amar Ekushey.

Meanwhile, at a meeting yesterday the Amar Ekushey Observance Committee urged the people to maintain sanctity of the day. The committee sought cooperation of all in maintaining discipline at the Shaheed Minar during the placing of wreaths.

Security will be beefed up during the BNP chairperson, Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to the Shaheed Minar.

None will be allowed to enter the Shaheed Minar premises through TSC, Doel Chattar and Chankharpur areas. The DU authorities have imposed ban on rallies and processions in the area from 7pm today.

The authorities have also imposed ban on hanging of portraits and pictures at the Shaheed Minar.

2 DNC men

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quiry committee formed to investigate the Fenil incident is expected to submit its report to its DG today, sources said.

Meanwhile, our correspondent from Fenil reported that five more persons who fell sick after taking the adulterated liquor died last night. They are Mahub, 32, Anwar Hossain, 35, Abul Kalam, Mahub, 32, Gazi Milan.

A total of about 236 people died and many others have lost eyesight in different incidents of methanol poisoning during the last two years, the DNC officials said.

Speakers suggest recognition of ethnic language, culture

Speakers at a discussion in the city yesterday suggested recognition of language and culture of ethnic nationalities in Bangladesh in the interest of national existence, reports BSS.

They also suggested adoption of a universal language and cultural policy to support flourishing the ethnic languages and cultures.

Organized by Bangla Academy on the occasion of Amar Ekushey the discussion on 'Mother tongue and culture of ethnic nationalities in Bangladesh' was presided over by Professor Rafiqul Islam.

Subrata Chakma presented the paper while Prof Ranajit Sinha, Sangib Drang, Prashanta Kumar Tripura and Mamunur Rashid were the discussants.

Prof Islam said after the

recognition of Bangla as the national language now it is our duty to recognize other mother tongues in the country and assist in flourishing those languages. He said this needs a specific language policy so that all languages and cultures get equal importance. To be alert about it to save the nation from such invasion.

Subrata Chakma depicted a comprehensive picture of language, culture, religion and social practices of the ethnic nationalities and said 34 such nationalities live in four geographical regions of the country.

Prof Ranajit Sinha said Manipuri Dance of the Manipuri received world recognition with the cooperation of poet Rabindranath Tagore. Similarly, the cultures of other ethnic nationalities also could get such

recognition if cooperation was extended to them.

Sangib Drang demanded constitutional provision for education of the ethnic nationalities in their mother tongues up to primary level. Prashanta Kumar Tripura demanded constitutional recognition for saving the language and culture of the ethnic nationalities from extinction.

Mamunur Rashid said along with state patronage the people of a language themselves should take initiative to develop and flourish their own language. He said we want to see literatures of all languages including Chakma, Marmas and Garo.

The discussion was followed by the drama of Arannayak Nattayagoshi "Joyjyanti" composed and directed by Mamunur Rashid.



Rotary Club of Sonargaon Dhaka organised an enchanting musical evening of old Bangla songs Friday. Popular singer Rtn. Fatema-tuz-Zohra, Rtn Jamil Ibrahim, Rtn Moududa Alam & Ann Ulka Hossain performed while Rtn Mohiuddin Ahmed Bahar presented some jokes. Artists seen rendering chorus in memory of the martyrs of the Language Movement.

Civil society members urged to help resolve political impasse

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a discussion urged the members of the civil society yesterday to play an important role to resolve the present political stalemate for the greater interest of the nation.

They also stressed the need for a transparent electoral system and called for a reconciliation among the deeply divided social forces.

The discussion on 'Present Political Impasse: Is there any role for the Civil Society?' was held at the IDB Bhaban yesterday.

Organised by the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA), the discussion was addressed by acting chairperson Abul Ahsan, former VC of Dhaka University Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, Prof Mozaffar Ahmed, Prof Mahbubullah, Prof Shakhawat Ali Khan, Prof

Ataur Rahman, former secretary Arshad-uz Zaman, Prof Aftab Ahmed, Maj Gen (ret'd) Mohammad Ibrahim and secretary general of FEMA Firoz M Hasan.

Abul Ahsan said hartals are being used as a political instrument by one party against the other. None but the people are the victims of the hartals, he added.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said that the present political impasse would not be resolved even if the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and opposition leader Khaleda Zia walk on the right track. Because the social forces working behind them are widening the gap between two major political parties instead of uniting them, he added.

Prof Emajuddin said the elements of the civil society are also divided.

Prof Mozaffar Ahmed said that there is no basic difference between Awami League and BNP. 'One is in power and the other is trying to go to power. The present political deadlock is merely a struggle for power between the two,' he observed.

Prof Ataur Rahman of Dhaka University said that the present political impasse has been created by the government itself.

It is the result of the three and half years rule of the government that has taken some major decisions for what the people did not give it the mandate, he said referring to some examples like Ganges water sharing treaty.

Rahman also said that the opposition should stop calling hartal as it would not bring about any change. He, however, observed that the electoral process should be transparent so that all concerned have confidence in the democratic institutions.

Prof Shakhawat said he is not frustrated about country's political future. 'But we have to remain vigilant so that the third party' couldn't emerge taking advantage of the conflict between the two political groups,' he added.

Int'l Mother Language Day programmes in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Feb 19: Preparations are almost final to observe International Mother Language Day and Ekushey February in the port city and elsewhere in the district on February 21 with much enthusiasm and eclat, reports BSS.

Political parties, educational institutions and cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate the occasion in a befitting manner. This year Ekushey February has got special significance as the day has been declared as International Mother Language Day by the United Nations.

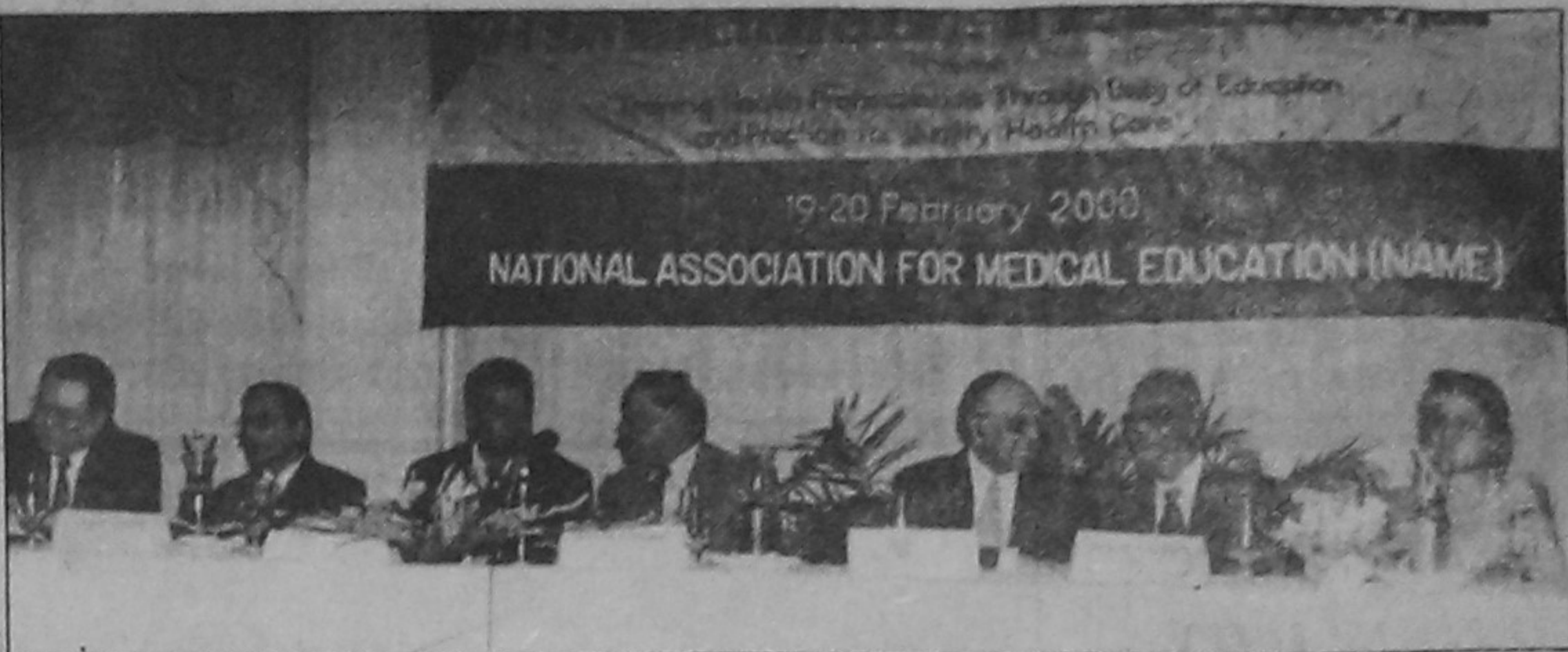
The programmes chalked out on this occasion include placing of wreath at K C Dey Road central Shaheed Minar, Probhat Ferry rally, seminar, cultural functions, drawing competition for children, recitation of poems etc.

Earlier he was scheduled to come on March 25. The American head of state who had originally planned to visit the Subcontinent in 1998, had to postpone it following nuclear explosions carried out by India and Pakistan in the middle of that year.

In the original schedule of President Clinton's visit three countries — Bangladesh, India and Pakistan — were included. But now things seem to have changed in the meantime, at least till now.

White House though confirmed President Clinton's visit to Bangladesh and India. It did not say anything — either confirm or reject the possible visit of Clinton to Pakistan. The issue of Clinton's visit to Pakistan has been kept in suspense.

The New York Times in the lead titled 'Bill Clinton's Asian itinerary' said that 'Pakistan is warning that a snub by Clinton could worsen the tension' between Islamabad and New Delhi which has aggravated after the military coup in Pakistan last October even further.



The third national conference on medical education was held at a city hotel yesterday. Picture shows Dr W Hardjonojo, Prof Ahsanullah, Prof Muzaherul-Huq, Prof M Amanullah, Syed A Farouk Chowdhury and Prof MA Qaderi.

Formulation of medical edn policy urged

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a conference in the city urged the government, yesterday to incorporate a medical education policy in the National Health Policy.

'The national health policy needs to have a structured and well-defined medical education policy. Without it, we cannot expect quality graduates,' said one of the speakers.

The medical colleges should follow a policy guideline with a view to producing competent physicians, the speakers said at the inaugural session of the three-day National Conference on Medical Education.

Prof M Amanullah, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare, was the chief guest.

Prof Muzaherul Huq, chairperson of the organising committee, called upon the policymakers to develop innovative strategies and programmes oriented to the healthcare needs of the common people.

Among others, who spoke on the occasion were Dr Witjasko Hardjonojo, WHO's chief of mission in Bangladesh, Syed Alamgir Farouk Chowdhury, Health Secretary and Prof A B M Ahsan Ullah, Director General of Health Services.

The conference on 'Training Health Professionals Through University of Education and Practice for Quality Healthcare' was organised by the National Association for Medical Education (NAME).

BNP programmes on Ekushey

By DU Correspondent

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the main opposition yesterday chalked out an elaborate programme marking February 21, the national mourning day.

The programme includes hoisting black flag, wearing black badge, dawn procession, placing wreath and offering *fateha* at the grave of the martyrs and pay homage to the martyrs at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The BNP will hoist black flag and keep the party and national flag at half mast at its central office in the morning.

They will start dawn procession towards Ajimpur graveyard from in front of Balaka Cinema Hall after wearing black badge at 7:00 am.

After offering *fateha* at the graveyard, BNP procession will proceed towards the Central Shaheed Minar.



Obituary

Fahmida Jahan, a teacher of Oxford International School at Dhanmondi died yesterday at Monwar Hospital, says a press release.

She has been with the School as a member of the teaching staff since 1993.

The teachers and the staff of Oxford International School in a statement condoled her death and prayed for the salvation of her soul.

Fahmida Jahan, 32, is the daughter of Md Shahjahan Finance Director, Steel & Engineering Corporation.

By Staff Correspondent

Lutfur Rahman Chowdhury, Managing Director of the Securities Promotion and Management (SPM) Ltd, a member of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, died of a massive heart attack at his Century Tower residence yesterday morning.

Chowdhury, 48, left behind wife, two sons, a daughter and a host of friends and relatives to mourn his untimely death.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) premises at 2:30 pm, while he was buried at the city's Mirpur graveyard.

Nilufar Banu, a renowned poetess of the sixties, died at her residence in the city on February 14, says a press release. She wrote several books of rhymes and limerick, the most famous being 'Antal Pantal Khorosh'. She was also the Executive Editor of a children's monthly 'Shristee Shukhei Ullash'.

Prior to her retirement, Nilufar had been serving as a Senior Research Executive in the Bureau of Economic Research, Dhaka University. She was buried in her family graveyard in Narsingdi district on Tuesday.

I am still confident

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'There is no scope for a Tribunal to sit on cases'.

Asked how would it be proved that an allegation is false and what the victim has to do to make sure that the person/s making the allegation is punished, the minister said, 'In my view, acquittal of an accused should be considered a proof that the allegation against him is false, while the Tribunal could draw suo moto proceedings against the person/s who lodged the false case. Or may be, the victim has to submit a petition in this regard to the Tribunal concerned.'

He, however, admitted that there should have been clear cut provisions in this regard. 'Well, scope is still there to frame rules under the law.'

The minister answered in the negative, when asked whether the political motive of fanning opposition processions prompted the government to treat forcible diversion of traffic a bigger crime than damaging vehicles, as in the PSA. 'It's not diverting the path of a few cars only. Just think of artificially created traffic jams, say, on the Dhaka-Aricha road, by non-political elements. Don't you think that making hundreds of vehicles with thousands passengers stranded for hours is a bigger crime than damaging a few cars?'

When told that the provision still leaves scope for using it to foil processions that usually cause diversion of traffic, the minister claimed that the government did not have any intention to use it with political motives.

'I strongly believe that bringing out processions is a democratic right of citizens. There is no question of using the PSA to snatch such rights,' Khasru asserted. 'Even if there is any scope to use the law against political opponents, room for improvement is always there. Law-making is a continued process.'

However, he was still 'confident of the neutral application' of the law.

'It is bad, it is not desirable,' the minister admitted, when told of a photo-feature in The Daily Star that showed police using the PSA to prevent a BNP rally on a city street on February 15, while allowing an Awami League public meeting blocking a city street the same day.

The government would take steps to motivate police personnel and judges concerned to ensure neutral application of the PSA, he said. 'But a government - no matter how sincere it is - cannot succeed in checking terrorist activities even with the harshest legislation unless the opposition parties and the society at large extend all out cooperation.'

Reception to veterans

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and crest as he set to tune the great song on Language Movement - 'Amar Bhaier Rokte Rangano Ekushey February'.

The veterans and SSJ activists also placed wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar and observed one-minute's silence commemorating the language martyrs.

Later, SSJ held a discussion which was chaired by its president Ramendu Majumder. National Professor Kabir Chowdhury was present as the chief guest.

In his address of welcome Golam Quddus, general secretary of SSJ said, 'The Language Movement will be successful only when Bangla language will be used in all spheres of life.'

'Our Liberation war and independence was the ultimate result of the Language Movement and we have to continue movement for a peaceful and safe life', Kabir Chowdhury said.

He also urged all concerned to be united to build a motherland free from poverty and terrorism.

Pak forces

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val Pakistan and agree to nuclear non-proliferation, in a bid to diffuse dangerous levels of tension in South Asia.

But analysts say that the efforts of the two permanent member of the UN Security Council are unlikely to bear fruit in the short-term.

From a domestic political perspective, New Delhi cannot appear to be succumbing to foreign influence, particularly ahead of US President Bill Clinton's visit at the end of March.

Clinton Wednesday warned of the dangers of an uncontained conflict between the two nuclear powers and proposed acting as mediator on the issue of the divided state of Kashmir, which lies at the heart of the rivalry.

I hope my trip will serve to help to highlight to Americans the importance of that region to us and the very real danger of a conflict between India and Pakistan not contained is one of the most significant security threats to the United States in this century,' he said.

Visiting French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine also called for the two sides to begin talks, saying 'what we do know is that the current situation is dangerous.'

Even if India rejects all offers of mediation, he said that France would be 'very happy' if the US could 'shift things in the right direction'.

Vedrine also demanded positive signals from India on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and to show its sense of responsibility by signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

A year after the 'Lahore declaration' of February 21, 1999 under which India and Pakistan agreed to a dialogue aimed at settling their differences, relations between the two neighbours are at their lowest.

India, saying that it has been 'betrayed' by Pakistan during last summer's conflict in Kashmir, firmly resists entering into talks over the divided region.

While Pakistan is keen to internationalise the Kashmir dispute, India is adamantly opposed to any third-party interference, insisting that it is a purely bilateral issue that touches on issues of national sovereignty.

Golam Azam

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Pakistan, but also said Bangla is the language of *Kafir*.

Language veteran and writer M R Akhtar Mukul said despite the claim of Jamaat that their Ameer was a veteran of the Language Movement, Golam Azam did not have the scope to take part in the movement in 1952 as he had joined a college by then.

Another language veteran and eminent scholar Dr Ahmed Rafiq said Golam Azam never involved himself in the Language Movement, as he never joined any of the rallies and demonstrations related to the movement in 1943 despite his position in DUCSU.

'I cannot agree with the claim projecting him even an ordinary Language Movement activist,' he added.

Mostafa Sarwar, a young activist of 1952 Language Movement, said, 'At that time we did not hear of anyone named Golam Azam.'

Judgement

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the early afternoon, said the Special Court source.

BDR will be deployed if necessary to assist police to maintain security in and around the judge's court. Hundreds of people are expected to assemble to know the verdict.

Zainal Khan's is the first among 23 recorded murder cases.

Hasan Imam, Additional District and Sessions Judge, in charge of the special court, will deliver the judgement. He will also try all murder cases against Ershad Shikdar and his accomplices.

Zainal Khan, a handling worker of Skid Ghat, was murdered by Ershad and his armed cadres at about 8 pm on April 22 in 1995.

A case was lodged with Khulna thana in this connection on April 24 by Shaheh Ali, a brother-in-law of Zainal Khan. Later, the then OC Kazi Shahabuddin filed an amended case himself as complainant as some innocent people were implicated in the first case to save Ershad Shikdar. The second case was filed on June 8 in 1996. Ershad and nine of his armed cadres were accused of murdering Zainal Khan.

Trial of this case began on February 1.