

Delete distorted part from history

AL demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League yesterday demanded removal of the distorted part from the Swadhinata Juddher Dolipatra, the official history of the Liberation War.

A reprint of the 15-volume book has been released recently with an insertion that names former president Ziaur Rahman as the proclaimer of independence. Such insertion is a clear violation of the Constitution as it says Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the country's independence, said the AL leaders at a press conference.

Terming the Jamaat-e-Islami men war criminals, they said the Jamaat was the mastermind behind the plan to distort the history.

As a partner of the ruling alliance, the Jamaat was doing all this to take revenge for its defeat in 1971 Liberation War, said AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil.

He also alleged that the ruling alliance even wants to change the national anthem and flag.

Quoting an article by Ziaur

Rahman published in the daily Ittefaq, Jalil said Zia himself admitted that Bangabandhu is the proclaimer of independence.

He said Zia in his article wrote, "We have got the green signal for the announcement of independence from the March 7 speech of Bangabandhu in 1971."

The AL leader said Bangabandhu declared the country's independence and it is recognised the world over. "Major Zia only read out the announcement following Bangabandhu's order," he added.

Major General (retd.) M Shafiullah, who was the commander of Sector-2 during the Liberation War, said AL leader Abdul Hannan had made the proclamation of independence two or three times before Zia's announcement.

Captain (retd.) AB Tajul Islam, freedom fighters' affairs secretary of the party, read out a written statement at the press conference held at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity office.

The central working committee of the AL will meet today to discuss the issue and draw up the next course of action.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Mukti Juddha Projanma Command, an organisation of the children of freedom fighters, forms a human chain protesting distortion of history at Muktangan yesterday.

BTTB cellphone by December

Minister tells Parliament

UNB, Dhaka

Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haq yesterday said in parliament yesterday that the much-talked about mobile phone of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) would hit the market by December.

Replying to a question from Mashiur Rahman Ranga of Jatiya Party, he said that all the processes for T&T cellular phone had been completed. In the first phase, 250,000 mobile phones out of one million would be marketed and all upazilas would be covered with its network.

In reply to a question from Maj. (retd.) Manzur Kader, the minister said digital telephone would be introduced in all upazilas by 2005.

He told Kader Siddiqui (KSJL-Tangail) that during the previous government, Internet service was provided to only eight districts and 165 upazilas. At present, Internet services are available in all the 64

districts.

He also said that Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organised the conference, comprising six working sessions, being held at the BISS auditorium.

Moudud stressed that Bangladesh should embark on its own growth model, as he said an economic union of Saarc is far off. He said the size and nature of regional economies are too different and it would take a long time for harmonisation.

The minister suggested that bilateral issues should not be brought to the multilateral South Asian forum for discussion, as he said it might throw the future of Saarc's ideals in serious doubt.

He also said concern over important regional issues, including India's river interlink project, was not allayed because of Saarc countries' reluctance to discuss it at the sub-regional level.

Speaking as special guest, Saarc Secretary General QAMA Rahim said the commitment to forming a South Asian economic union at the Islamabad summit would have a multifaceted impact on the progress and efficacy of Saarc in future.

Rahim was optimistic about institutional reform of the forum that would make inroads into economic union, common currency and a visa-free South Asia.

Reaz Rahman, advisor to the foreign ministry, said the Social Charter, South Asian Free Trade Area and an agreement on suppression of terrorism at the 12th Saarc Summit in Islamabad indicated a new start for the region.

Moudud's friendly blame

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday blamed India for the failure of Saarc to reach its full potential by trying to dominate the forum and not being an appropriate role model for the region.

"In a friendly way, I will blame India for being dominant and not playing a leading role in developing a growth model for itself or its neighbours," Moudud said, adding India's failure prevented Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) from tapping its potential.

Moudud was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural session of the two-day regional conference on "The 12th Saarc Summit: Sustaining the Momentum for Regional Cooperation and Development in South Asia".

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Non-govt pry school teachers continue strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The non-government primary school teachers continued their strike for the fourth consecutive day yesterday demanding nationalisation of their jobs.

The strike will continue until the announcement of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia accepting their demand, says a press release of Bangladesh Non-government Primary Teachers Association (BNPTA).

They said that the government was trying to foil their logical movement.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressed her solidarity with the movement of the non-government primary teachers when she was in power and promised to meet their demand if voted to power.

The BNPTA will announce next course of action at the grand rally of non-government primary teachers at central Shaheed Minar on July 24.

Tk 206cr DAB project for healthcare network

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Diabetic Association of Bangladesh (DAB) has taken up a five-year-long Healthcare Development Project to establish a countrywide healthcare network at a cost of Tk 206 crore.

Under the project, a 250-bed hospital-cum-training centre will be set up at Mirpur in the capital. Besides, 10 healthcare centers including 10 urban health centers will be established in and around Dhaka.

The project also envisages construction of nine healthcare centers including a 100-bed hospital in Sirajganj, and a 30 to 75-bed hospital each in Pabna, Bogra, Dinajpur and Thakurgaon under the supervision of respective district diabetic associations.

DAB officials said the project has been taken up to develop an integrated health care delivery system that covers a sector approach including primary, secondary and tertiary health care system using the existing structure and experience of the DAB and its affiliated associations all over the country.

Of the total cost, Tk 103 crore will be available as grant from Dutch government and the rest Tk 103 crore will come from a consortium comprising 12 financing institutions.

The financing institutions are Pubali Bank, Dutch-Bangla Bank, Sonali Bank, Rupali Bank, City Bank, Agrani Bank, UCBL, Prime Bank, IPDC, Bank Asia, IFIC Bank and Standard Bank.

The loan will be the largest consortium loan in the health sector under

the private initiative.

This was stated at a signing ceremony between the DAB and the consortium for Tk 103 crore loan at a city hotel yesterday.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed was the chief guest at the ceremony attended by the managing directors of concerned financing institutions.

Dr Fakhruddin said this is a new concept which has provided an opportunity for the banking sector to show that they are capable of funding such a big project.

He said it has become imperative for the banks to invest in new areas as

huge amount of idle money is lying with them.

"We need productive and profitable investment so that both the people and the banks can be benefited," he added.

Pubali Bank Managing Director Khandaker Ibrahim Khaled said the consortium finance would be a revolutionary step as 12 institutions have not provided such a big loan earlier.

Dutch-Bangla Bank Managing Director Md Yeasin Ali, DAB President Prof Wahiduddin Ahmed and Secretary General Prof A K Azad Khan also spoke.

Conference on English teaching begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day national conference on 'English language teaching in Bangladesh: Emerging issues' begins at the British Council auditorium in the city tomorrow.

Teachers, trainers, administrators, textbook writers and others related to English language teaching will attend the conference organised by the Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association (BELTA).

Education Minister Dr M Osman Farruk will inaugurate the confer-

ence as chief guest. Charles Nuttall, acting director of the British Council, and Karl Fritz, director of American Cultural Centre, will be present at the opening ceremony as special guests.

The conference is open to all English teachers and those interested in English language teaching.

Interested persons can register for the conference at the library of Institute of Modern Languages, Dhaka University. The registration fee for the members of BELTA is Tk 100 while for others is Tk 200.

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Bar Assoc slates history distortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday condemned the distortion of the country's liberation history by re-naming former President Ziaur Rahman as the first declarer of independence in the reprint edition of "Swadhinata Juddher Dolipatra".

In a joint statement SCBA President Rokonuddin Mahmud and General Secretary Bashir Ahmed said people of Bangladesh started fighting the Pakistani occupiers after the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 25, 1971.

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DHAKA TODAY

Drama
Mohakal Natya Sampraday will stage a drama titled 'Shikhandi Katha'. Venue: Mohila Samity Auditorium, Bailey Road. Time: 6.30pm.

Ceramics exhibition
The opening ceremony of a ceramics exhibition will be held. Venue: Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts. Time: 5.00pm. The exhibition will remain open till July 20 from 11.00am to 8.00pm daily.

SOFEN festival
The inaugural ceremony of a two-day cultural festival, organised by SOFEN, a socio-cultural organisation to mark its 6th founding anniversary, will be held with Deputy Minister for Land Advocate Ruhul Quddus Talukdar as chief guest. Venue: Teachers Students Centre, Dhaka University. Time: 10.00am.

Seminar
Centre for Strategic and Peace Studies (CSPS) will hold a seminar on 'Solution to the culture of political intolerance'. Venue: CIRDP Auditorium, Tophkhana Road. Time: 9.45am.

BRAC seminar
BRAC University organises a seminar on 'Developing applications for the mobile industry in Bangladesh: Prospects and benefits'. Venue: University Building, Mohakhali. Time: 4.00pm.

DCC meeting
Dhaka City Corporation will hold a meeting to ensure sanitation facilities for all by 2010 with LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan as chief guest. Venue: Nagar Bhaban Auditorium. Time: 12.00 noon.

Condolence meeting
Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote organises a condolence meeting in memory of language movement veteran and liberation war inspirer M R Akhter Mukul. Venue: Bishwasahitya Kendra Auditorium, Bangla Motor. Time: 4.00pm.

Memorial meeting
Bangladesh ICT Journalist Forum organises a meeting in memory of Professor Md Abdul Kader, founder of monthly Computer Jagoth. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 2.30pm.

ALCWC meet today

An emergency meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) will be held at the party's Dhanmondi office in the city at 10-30am today.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting, says a press release.

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