

'Strengthen Indo-Bangla ties for mutual benefit'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally yesterday recalled the contribution of India to the liberation war saying that it was not possible to free the country from the occupation of Pakistan army within only nine months without the help of India.

They said friendship between Bangladesh and India must be strengthened for the greater interest of both the countries.

The rally was organised by Bangladesh-Bharat Sampriti Parishad at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city.

"Around 20,000 to 25,000 Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives during the liberation war. But a vested quarter is now trying to misguide the countrymen through propaganda against India which is very shameful for us," said Major General (Retd) KM Shafiqullah Birikram.

He said India helped Bangladesh in all possible ways in 1971 which should

not be forgotten.

"We should maintain good relations with India as both the countries believe in democracy and secularism," said Journalist Shahrier Kabir, acting president of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee.

He said the ideals of the liberation war should be disseminated among people to save the nation from present political stalemate.

Colonel (Retd) Shakhawat Ali, a former legislator, said there is no scope for denying the contributions of India and then Soviet Union to the liberation war.

"We should be in good terms with India as it is our closest neighbour," said Prof Nim Chandra Bhoomik, general secretary of Bangladesh-Bharat Sampriti Parishad.

Bangladesh Muktioddha Sangsad Chairman Prof Abdul Ahad Chowdhury, General Secretary M Salahuddin and Sampriti Parishad leader Abir Aahad and Nazrul Ahsan Pakhi also addressed the rally.



PHOTO: STAR

Anxious guardians wait outside the examination halls while their children sit for the admission test for class one under English medium section in Viqarunnisa Noon School yesterday.

Ctg JCD cadre Tinku Das held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested city JCD leader Tinku Das from a hotel at Katalganj in the port city.

Rab arrested Tinku, a listed criminal, while he was taking lunch at around 3.30pm along with one of his accomplices at a restaurant near a filling station. His unidentified accomplice, however, managed to flee.

Sources said Tinku, city JCD vice president, is accused in six cases, including three murders, one abduction and one arms.

Senora help to make six acid survivors self-reliant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six acid survivors yesterday received Tk 2,44,547 in financial assistance for their rehabilitation.

Senora, a feminine brand of Square Toiletries Ltd., donated the money at a function at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

Mohammed Tareq, deputy general manager (Sales), and Malik Mohammed Sayeed, head of Marketing, Square Toiletries Ltd., handed over a giant symbolic cheque for the amount to SAM Shawket Hossain, treasurer, and Niharika Momtaz, head of Finance & Fund Raising, Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF).

The acid survivors who received the financial assistance are Miraz, Arzina, Fulmala, Zobeda, Faizunnessa and Khadiza from across the country.

With a view to rehabilitating acid survivors, Senora has taken a joint initiative with the ASF to donate some money from its sale proceeds.

In the first phase, Senora

donated Tk 1,45,343 to four victims in May. One of them is Arfina of Mymensingh who received Tk 25,000. Her husband threw acid on her on December 23, 2003.

Speaking at the function yesterday, Arfina said the financial assistance has helped her become self-reliant. She has now a number of goats and a piece of land.

Malik Mohammed Sayeed called for raising mass awareness about acid violence through media campaign and rehabilitating the victims.

He also said that Senora would continue its assistance to the victims and expand the rehabilitation programmes such as education, tailoring project, poultry business, grocery shop and cow rearing.

Shawket Hossain said the acid survivors suffer not only physically but also mentally as they feel alienated from society.

He also urged all to extend a helping hand towards the acid survivors to make them self-reliant.



Reunion of Management Net, an organisation of ex-students of the management department, Dhaka University, was held at Teacher-Student Centre on the DU campus recently. Department Chairman Prof Abu Saleh formally inaugurated the event.

Durjoy Nari Sangha wins Red Ribbon Award

Durjoy Nari Sangha, a Bangladeshi local community, was awarded 'Red Ribbon Award' for their outstanding contributions to the frontline response to HIV and AIDS in Bangladesh, says a press release.

Durjoy Nari Sangha is working primarily with sex workers, clients and other persons involved in the sex trade. The organisation distributes condoms and provides information on HIV/AIDS to sex workers and at the same time it also advocates and supports the rights of sex workers to live with dignity and peace. The initiative also has a condom buying cooperative which has become self-sustaining.

Nearly 600 communities around the world were nominated for the Award. Through a rigorous review process, a committee of 50 international HIV and AIDS experts identified the top 25 candidates, who were invited to attend the AIDS 2006 conference in Toronto in August 2006. Out of those 25 candidates Durjoy Nari Sangha was selected for the award with four other groups from Ukraine, Thailand, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Each of the five winners receives US\$20,000 in prize money, while the other 20 finalist communities are each awarded US\$5,000.

An international jury that included the Norwegian Crown Princess, Oscar nominee Naomi Watts, former Irish president Mary Robinson and pioneering doctor Paul Farmer whittled the 25 finalists down to five, one in each award category.

'DDT found in dry fish, water, soil'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An environmental study found traces of harmful chemicals such as DDT and PCBs in some of its samples, including food items, water, sediment and soil, collected from different parts of the country.

The study sponsored by GEF-UNDP and conducted by the Department of Environment (DoE) was released at a research sharing seminar and workshop held at the LGED auditorium in the city yesterday.

According to the study, different levels of DDT were found in some samples of dry fish from Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Kishoreganj, especially in 'loitta' fish, but no DDT or PCBs were found in fresh fish.

Dry fish samples collected from

Saint Martin's Island, Kuakata and Syedpur and Dhaka city New Market areas were found free from DDT and PCBs. Vegetables and fruit samples were also found free from such chemicals, it added.

The results indicate that extra DDT was sprayed during fish drying processes and preservation in some localities and the amount varied from area to area, said the experts in the seminar.

PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) is a harmful chemical found in electrical transformer oil. Low levels of PCBs were found in deep-fried foods such as chanachur, singara, dalpuri, piyaju and jilapi, the study found.

The experts urged the government to take steps to check sale of transformer oil in the open market.

They also suggested using net

instead of DDT while preparing dry fish.

These harmful chemicals might be absorbed by human fat cell and they can change the DNA, they said.

Speaking as the chief guest, Environment Secretary SM Jahurul Islam said the government would adopt a regulatory mechanism immediately as a signatory to the Stockholm Convention that identified 12 hazardous persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

UNDP Assistant Country Director Shireen Kamal Sayeed said that UNDP would provide all necessary support in operationalising a regulatory mechanism in the country.

DoE Director General Khondakar Rashedul Haq, Director Mohammad Reazuddin and Project Director Afrin Sultana also spoke.