

# Take steps to make Bangla official language of UN

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called on the government to take proper steps to make vernacular Bangla the sixth official language of the United Nations with a view to introducing the language across the world.

They also underscored the need to use Bangla language extensively in all government and private sectors in order to increase its practice at all levels.

Bishwa Bangalee

Sammelan and Bangabandhu Swadhinata Parishad jointly organised the discussion on 'Establishing Bangla as an official language of UN' at the National Press Club in the city.

Urging not to speak mixed version of Bangla and English languages as the trend destroying alarmingly the standards of our language, they also called on the government to enact a law for using Bangla in all sectors to protect the language properly.

Speaking as the chief guest, Social Welfare Minister

Enamul Haq Mustafa Shaheed said writers and litterateurs should follow Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, most popular poet of modern Bangla literature Jibanananda Das and other writers and poets of the country to enrich Bangla language. The government would take proper steps to use Bangla in all sectors even to make it one of the official languages of the United Nations, he added.

Expressing deep shock over

the killings of army officials and civilians at the BDR headquarters, the speakers demanded proper investigation into the massive killings and exemplary punishment to the jawans responsible for the bloody mutiny.

With Poet Muhammad Abdul Khaleq was in the chair, the programme was also addressed by freedom fighter and language hero Bahauddin Chowdhury, language hero Dr BB Chowdhury and Editor of the Ajker Surjodi Khandaker Mozammel Haque.



PHOTO: BANGLARCHOKH.COM



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA  
Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid speaks at a press conference at his Mintoo Road residence in the city yesterday.

## Import, export thru' Benapole resume

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Import and export between Bangladesh and India through Benapole land port, resumed yesterday after the trade remained suspended from morning to evening yesterday at the call of Indian truck workers.

Indian truck workers abruptly stopped the import and export between the two countries without any prior announcement.

A source in the C&F Staff Welfare Association said the workers stopped import and

export following a recent announcement that the driver concerned would not get bail if anybody is killed in a road accident in the area.

Several hundred goods-laden trucks got stranded in the port areas of both the countries. Highly perishable goods like fruits, onions sand fish started rotting.

Panic gripped the drivers and helpers of the trucks at Benapole in Bangladesh side and Petrapole in India as Black Cat commandos and additional BSF troops carrying heavy weapons were deployed

in Petrapole port area.

Indian exporters and C&F agents held several rounds of meetings with the transport workers.

On-duty Customs Cargo Officer Motaleb said the import and export trade between the two countries resumed at around 6:00pm.

On February 26 noon, BSF men suddenly stopped export import trade. They also stopped movement of travellers holding passports of both the countries across the border.

## China tensions high after Tibet monk sets himself alight

AFP, Beijing

Tensions were high in a flashpoint town of southwest China yesterday after a Tibetan monk set himself on fire in protest against Chinese rule, activist groups and residents said.

Chinese authorities confirmed a man had set himself alight, but did not acknowledge claims by activist groups that police shot the monk and that he embarked on his protest after officials banned prayers at his monastery.

The incident on Friday came amid reported protests across the Tibetan plateau ahead of the ultra-sensitive 50th anniversary on March 10 of a failed uprising against Chinese rule that led to the Dalai Lama fleeing to India.

The monk, in his late 20s, was shot after dousing himself with petrol and setting himself alight in the Tibetan-populated town of Aba in southwest China's Sichuan province, the London-based group Free Tibet reported.

The monk, from Kirti monastery in Aba, held a flag with an image of the Dalai Lama, the Himalayan region's spiritual leader, as he embarked on his protest. Free Tibet and other activist groups said.

They cited unnamed witnesses and Aba residents.

In a brief report on China's official Xinhua news agency, Aba Communist Party chief Shi Jun confirmed a man wearing monk's robes had walked out of the monastery and set himself alight.

Shi reportedly said police put out the fire, and that the man was taken to hospital with burn injuries to his neck and head.

The Xinhua report made no mention of any shooting by police, while local authorities refused to comment to AFP.

Locals telephoned by AFP on Saturday were extremely fearful of discussing the issue.

Some said police had fired shots but they would not comment on who these were aimed at.

One resident, who could not be named for fear of reprisal, said police had told her not to say anything but she confirmed police had fired shots.

"It's true, but I can't say anymore. My phone is monitored," she told AFP before hanging up.

Other residents also confirmed police shooting, but quickly put the phone down.

Some spoke of a strong force presence in the town after the incident.

"There are many policemen on patrol in the street and all of them have guns," an

### BDR MUTINY Forces behind want to turn country a vassal state Says Jamaat UNB, Dhaka

Expressing deep concern at the killing of more than 100 bright, efficient army officers at Pilkhana on Wednesday Jamaat-e-Islami has viewed that those want to make Bangladesh a vassal state were behind the mayhem.

Jamaat Ameer Maulana Matiur Rahman Nizami was speaking at a party meeting arranged to pay homage to the martyred army officers at Al Falah auditorium yesterday.

He underscored the need for total unity of the nation at this critical juncture saying "everyone has to play the responsible role to protect the independence and sovereignty. The government and all must work to frustrate the conspiracy of making Bangladesh a failed and subservient state."

Nizami said the footages with statements of BDR mutineers shown by TV channels after the mayhem were full of inconsistency, manifesting the height of irresponsibility and spreading malice against the Army.

"The brutal execution of more than 100 army officers cannot be without pre-planning. Those who are trying to prove Bangladesh a failed state and desiring to hand over the sovereignty to alien powers were behind the conspiracy."

"They have weakened the nation by spreading malicious propaganda against the patriotic armed forces and butchering the officers. The incident is intrinsically linked with the country's independence and sovereignty," added the Jamaat chief.

He referred to the reports dashed out by CNN/IBN TV channel and Ananda Bazar Patrika and said the anti-Muslim forces in the neighbouring country were out to change the course of the tragic incident.

Referring to the reported offer of "peace mission" to Bangladesh from the neighbouring country, Nizami demanded clarification from the government about its stand.

Nizami extended his party's fullest support to the government endeavours for forging total unity of the nation to face up the situation.

### Death anniversary METRO DESK

Today is the 6th death anniversary of Matiur Rahman, a freedom fighter, former minister and also former president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries, says a press release.

On the occasion, milad mahfil will be held and food will be distributed among the destitutes at Pirganj in Rangpur.

### Asaduzzaman Babu METRO DESK

Today is the 5th death anniversary of Asaduzzaman Babu, a social worker and businessman, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwan will be held at his residence at Courtpara and milad mahfil at College More Jame Mosque after Asr prayers in Kushtia. Asaduzzaman Smriti Sangsad also organised a discussion.

Col BM Zahid Hossain Chapal, who was killed inside the BDR headquarters in Dhaka during the BDR mutiny, was buried with state and military honour at his family graveyard at Chandtrishira village under Agoijhara in Barisal yesterday.

## Anger as rights activists barred from Asean talks

AFP, Hua Hin

Southeast Asian leaders were embroiled in a fresh row over human rights yesterday after Myanmar's junta and Cambodia blocked activists from attending rare face-to-face talks.

Myanmar premier Thein Sein and his Cambodian counterpart Hun Sen had refused to join the meeting with civil society representatives if activists from their countries were present, delegates and rights groups said.

The angry spat at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit in the Thai beach resort of Hua Hin threatened to overshadow the 10-member group's efforts to deal with the global financial crisis.

"I was disappointed but it was expected." The refusal by the Burmese regime "clearly shows they are not committed to change," one of the two barred activists, Khin Omar from Myanmar, told AFP after the meeting.

Myanmar's military regime changed the country's name from Burma in 1989.

He said the move showed that a landmark Asean charter

that came into force in December and calls for the establishment of a new regional human rights body "is just a cosmetics show".

The meeting went ahead without Khin Omar and the other activist, Pen Somony of Cambodia, who instead both held a brief meeting with Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.

Singapore-based civil rights activist Sinapan Samydorai, who was at the meeting, said that when one delegate raised the issue of the barred campaigners "I saw the face of the Cambodian and Burmese leaders change".

There was also no representative from communist-ruled Laos because they feared possible repercussions at home, Samydorai said.

The meeting eventually covered topics including the rights body, migrant workers, Myanma and gender, delegates said. There was no immediate comment by any of the Asean leaders who attended.

Human rights have been a perennial challenge for Asean in the 42 years since it was founded as a bulwark against the spread of communism. Its members now include a monarchy, a dictatorship and two

communist states.

The bloc has repeatedly been pressed to use its influence to improve the rights situation in Myanmar but to little avail. Its soft approach contrasts with the sanctions imposed by Western nations.

A key problem has been the group's core policy of non-interference in domestic affairs, which has previously been used by nations like Myanmar to fend off criticism.

The policy has most recently been enshrined in a draft document seen by AFP on the proposed rights body, which in its current form has no powers to investigate or prosecute rights abusers.

The draft is also packed with provisions rejecting external interference and stressing cultural diversity.

Thailand's Abhisit defended the rights body, however, saying in a speech at the formal opening of the summit that it was a "big step" towards protecting the fundamental freedoms of the region's 570 million people.

He also sought to focus on economic issues, saying Southeast Asia must pull together to survive the "adverse impact of the global financial crisis".

### BDR MUTINY Col Zahid buried with state honour

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Col BM Zahid Hossain Chapal, who was killed inside the BDR headquarters in Dhaka during the mutiny by BDR jawans, was buried with state and military honour at his family graveyard at Chandtrishira village under Agoijhara, Barisal, yesterday.

Earlier, his body was flown to Barisal by a helicopter in the morning.

His mother Zahra Begum became speechless after losing her youngest son, Col Zahid. Her eldest son Abdul Halim Bakhtiar died only 29 days ago.

Abdur Rob Bakhtiar Shahed, a businessman and elder brother of Col Zahid, told The Daily Star that Col Zahid called at about 10:00am on Wednesday and said perhaps this is his last contact with them and also asked them to pray for him.

Col Zahid, commander of Sector 13 in Mymensingh, was born in 1961. He joined the Bangladesh Army in 1981.

His wife Nusrat Chhanda and two sons -- Niloy, 12, a student of class six, and Nirjhor, 6, -- were staying in the house of a relative in Dhaka on the day of massacre in the BDR headquarters.

### Schoolboy killed in Benapole

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A schoolboy was beaten to death with a hammer at Agrabhulot village in Benapole yesterday afternoon.

The seven-year-old boy, Shaon, died after Sagar, 14, hit him in his head with the hammer, said the police.

The police arrested Sagar on charges of killing the schoolboy.

They said the incident occurred during a quarrel over irrigating a paddy field.



PHOTO: STAR

### WEATHER TODAY Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind may occur at one or two places over Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and the region of Dhaka, Met Office said.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged and day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:01pm today and rises at 6:20am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.4 degrees Celsius was recorded today at Jessore and lowest 14.1 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.3	22.7	53	23
Chittagong	29.5	23.0	74	81
Rajshahi	32.7	14.1	38	30
Khulna	32.3	23.5	91	48
Barisal	32.4	23.0	94	46
Sylhet	30.8	19.9	86	33
Cox's Bazar	31.5	23.0	73	80