

Swadhinata Utsab begins

Trial of war criminals demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at the inaugural ceremony of the three-day Swadhinata Utsab yesterday demanded immediate trial of the war criminals.

They also demanded fanaticism and militancy be eliminated from the country.

Sammilita Sangskritik Jote is organising the event at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city.

Noted academic Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury stressed the need for developing a cultural movement that can inculcate the true sense of freedom in people.

"A combined social and cultural movement can bridge the gap among people from different backgrounds and form a social bond of unity, which was the true spirit of the liberation war," he added.

Jatiya Kabita Parishad General Secretary poet Aslam Sani said whenever the people of the country proceeded on the path of democracy, there were conspiracies to make the country a failed one.

"We have to identify the conspirators and take necessary steps against them for the sake of our sovereignty," he added.

Noted cultural personality and freedom fighter Nasiruddin Yusuf was present on the occasion as the chief guest while Singer Fakir Alamgir, poets Mahadev Saha, Rafiq Azad and Prof Muhammad Samad, Jote General Secretary Golam Quddus and cultural personality M Hamid spoke.

The festival was also inaugurated simultaneously at Rabintra Sarobar at Dhanmondi yesterday.



Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury inaugurates a three-day Swadhinata Utsab at Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday.

DU expels one for harassing female student

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University authorities yesterday expelled a student for six months from the university on charge of physically harassing a female student.

Campus sources said Shahiduzzaman, a 3rd year student of History department, harassed a 2nd year student of Islamic History and Culture department at arts building in the morning.

Proctor Dr Saiful Islam Khan told The Daily Star that the authorities took action in response to a written allegation by the victim against the culprit, adding that they have also taken a written deposition from a teacher in this regard.

He further said that the perpetrator was awarded punishment according to proctorial law of the university. Permanent expulsion has been recommended for the accused, he added.

The proctor said the reason behind the incident could not be disclosed, adding that an investigation is going on in this connection.

45pc population living below poverty line

Says minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of people living below poverty line has been increasing for the last two or three years, Food and Disaster Management Minister Md Abdur Razzaque said yesterday.

During the 90s, the number of such people had been declining by at least one percent. Currently, more than 45 percent of the population are living below poverty line, the minister said at the 'National policy workshop on agriculture, fisheries and livestock' at IDB Bhaban in the city.

Traidcraft Exchange and Development Wheel in collaboration with the European Commission organised the workshop under the project 'Sustainable Livelihoods for Poor Producers (SLIPP) in Mymensingh and Netrokona'.

The minister said the government has attached priority to food security and that it has provided fertiliser subsidy for farmers to this end.

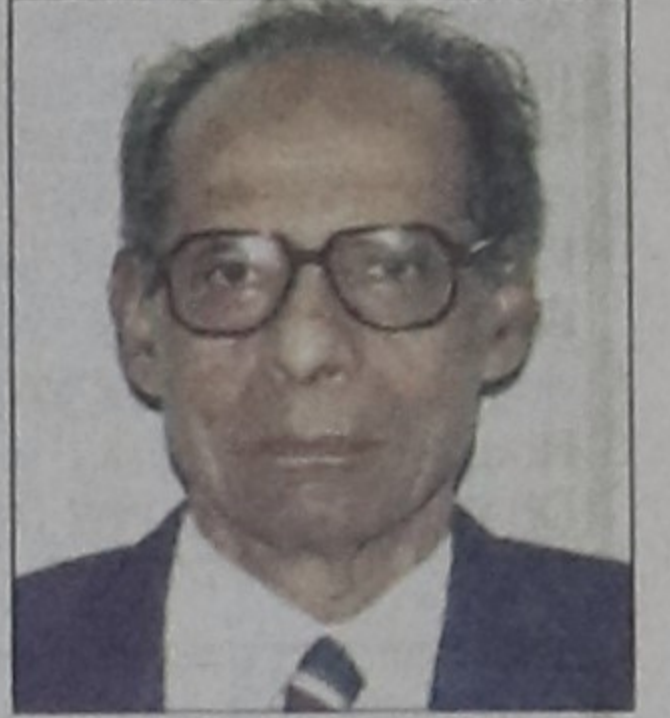
He also said that bio-fuel has now posed a threat to food security.

The minister emphasised the need for better coordination among government and non-government organisations in implementing development projects in order to ensure welfare of farmers.

Speaking as the special guest, Charles Whiteley, charge d'affaires a.i., delegation of the European Commission (EC), said the aim of the SLIPP project, which is now two years into implementation, is to improve the position of primary producers in local markets, thereby reducing poverty among poor and marginalised communities.

EC is the one of the largest donors in Bangladesh in Trade Related Technical Assistance (TRTA), he said, adding that under Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013, Bangladesh would receive 80 million Euros.

KM Khalid Babu and Ashraf Ali Khan, two lawmakers from Mymensingh and Netrokona, Shah Abdus Salam, executive director of Development Wheel, and Shahed Ferdous, country director of Traidcraft Exchange, also spoke.



Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syed Badruddin Hossain, a Language Movement veteran and former registrar of Dhaka University (DU) and adviser to Bangladesh Gonoatantrik Party, passed away due to old age complications at Square Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 86, says a press release.

Syed Badruddin, also former principal of Ananda Mohon College in Mymensingh and president of Padatik Natya Sangsad, was laid to rest at his family graveyard at Mia Bari in Ghorashal under Narsingdi after namaz-e-janaza at DU central mosque.

His quikhwani will be held at the residence of his son Syed Tasnin Hossain Tanu at 7/15, Block-B at Lalmatia after Maghrib prayers on March 27.

Deprived cops demand appointment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The sub-inspectors and sergeants, who were deprived of appointment in 2005, along with their guardians formed a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding their immediate appointment, says a press release.

They urged the government to start scrutinising the recruitment process immediately.

They will bring out a silent procession from the Central Shaheed Minar at 11:00am today to press home their demand.



Lawyers cast their votes on the first day of the two-day Supreme Court Bar Association elections at the Supreme Court Bar Council Bhaban in the city yesterday.

TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS 'Ensure transparency in trial process'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should review the International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973 before holding the trial of war criminals in order to ensure transparency in the trial process, international law expert

Dr Ahmed Ziauddin said yesterday.

"After a long time, we are about to try the war criminals of 1971 as the people have given a huge mandate in favour of the trial. That's why the trial should be transparent. The government should

review the International Crimes Tribunal Act to see whether the war criminals can be tried under this law," he said.

Dr Ziauddin said this while delivering a speech on 'International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973 and the trial process' at the Liberation War Museum on the third day of its weeklong programmes marking the 13th anniversary of the museum and the Independence Day.

At least eight types of war crimes were committed, 30 lakh people were killed and hundreds of thousands of women were violated during the Liberation War, he said, adding that it is not easy to try such huge crimes.

"The entire world will pay its attention to Bangladesh during the trial of war criminals. So we must not fail in our efforts to try them," Dr Ziauddin said.

Members of Razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams who collaborated with the Pakistani army during the Liberation War can be tried under the International Crimes Tribunal Act, he said, adding that "Our priority should be bringing the top criminals to book."

Later, the Liberation War Museum launched a website -- www.liberationwarmuseum.info -- containing statements of the witnesses of the Liberation War.

A cultural programme was also held where students of Fatullah Pilot School, Notre Dame College and Mukul Niketan of Mymensingh performed.

Bullet-hit body of youth recovered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the bullet-hit body of a youth from the field near the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre at Sher-e-Banglanagar in the city yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Alamgir Hossain, 25, a resident of West Tejtura Bazar in the city.

Tejtura police said the body bore several marks of injury in his body and he was shot in his head.

Police said the body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

Family members of the deceased said local criminals beat Alamgir up in front of Hotel Super Star at West Karwan Bazar on March 20 and handed him over to Rab members in presence of Tejtura police at 9:30pm on the day.

But Sub-inspector Fariduzzaman of Tejtura Police Station told The Daily Star that they had no information about the arrest of Alamgir by the Rab members. He, however, said Alamgir is wanted in several cases.

SCBA polls begin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day polling of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) for its 14 executive posts, including president and secretary, began yesterday.

The polling started at 10:00am and continued till 5:00pm. It will resume at 10:00am today and continue till 5:00pm.

Some 675 lawyers out of 1,845 cast their votes on the first day.

Advocate Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque has been leading the seven-member election sub-committee to conduct the SCBA polls.

The contest will take place mainly between the ruling Awami League-backed Bangladesh Sammilita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad (BSASP) and the opposition BNP-backed Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Oikya Parishad (BJAOP), sources said.

AFM Mesbahuddin (BSASP), Khondokar Mahub Hossain (BJAOP) and Mohammad Zakir Hossain (independent) are contesting for the post of president.

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