



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the International Mother Language Institute at Segunbagicha in the city yesterday. On her left is Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid. (Story on Page 1)

Children learn letters with fun

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The pen moves unevenly and draws a triangle as a three-year-old boy holds it attentively. The boy looks on as an elderly man jointly holds the pen with him and draws a circle near the top of the triangle. Then they join the triangle to the circle.

The elderly man is none but eminent artist Qayyum Chowdhury who taught the kid named Mostahidul Islam how to write "Ka" -- the first alphabet of Bangla consonant.

When Mustahid took his first writing lesson in the Bangla alphabet, hundreds of other children along with their parents queued up in front of a tent named as "First Lesson" (Hatey Khori) at Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex at Dhanmondi to take their lessons.

"The kids are playing with letters. They are learning the alphabet while playing. They will not be afraid of study and learning when they grow up," said Qayyum Chowdhury.

Leading Bangla daily Prothom Alo organised the event as a part of their daylong colourful programmes titled "Borno Mela" (Alphabet Fair) where people of all ages thronged to celebrate International Mother Language Day.

"The event is interesting. It establishes a link between study and the children through fanfare. May be the kids are yet to know the alphabet but it will create a feeling in their minds. They will cherish this memory when they grow up and feel an urge to write," said eminent poet Nirmalendu Goon.

"Traditionally a child takes his or her first lesson in a restricted and fearsome atmosphere. But this time they are taking it while playing and having fun," said artist Samarjit Roy Chowdhury.

Prof Syed Manjurul Islam, Prof Abul Barak Alvi, writer Anisul Haque, artist Rafiqul Nabi were among the eminent personalities who were giving first lessons to the kids along with their autographs.

The fair also included other well-decorated tents named as Alphabet Museum, Alphabet Maze, Alphabet Play, Alphabet in Bioscope and Alphabet in Dress.

As part of the fair, an exhibition of letters was put on display while painting and handwriting competition was also held and winners were awarded prizes.

The programmes also included a puppet show, mime show, kite flying, language and alphabet based songs and poetry recitation.

Record visitors at Ekushey book fair

PANKAJ KARMAKAR

It was a fairly shiny day for book lovers who thronged the Bangla Academy since early morning yesterday to visit the Amar Ekushey Boro Mela being imbued with the spirit of the Language Movement.

Thousands of people from all social strata were seen flocking to the Bangla Academy on the day that was dedicated to the language martyrs. They were in the festive mood as the book fair venue was given a facelift to attract them.

The visitors had plenty of time and scope for scanning through bookstalls on the day which is being observed across the world in remembrance of the supreme sacrifices of language martyrs.

People, mostly young, clad in black and white or grey clothes were seen waiting in long queues to enter the fair amid full-proof security.

The road outside the fair venue wore also a festive look with huge gathering of people and a display of vivid colours.

Law enforcers were kept on their toes all day long as visitors poured in through the two entry points to the fair that turned into a virtual sea of people in the evening.

It was difficult to get inside the fair venue in the afternoon as the compound become

Relatives protest refusal to receive food for jail inmates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred relatives of the inmates of Dhaka Central Jail staged a demonstration in front of the jail gate yesterday as the authorities refused to accept food, which they carried for their inmates.

Locals said the severe long agitation caused hour-long traffic congestion on different roads adjacent to the jail gate. Police brought the situation under control at 1:00pm.

Some agitating relatives said they brought food for their dear ones on the occasion of the Ekushey February what they did in the previous years but yesterday they were refused and misbehaved, causing resentment among them.

Being refused, the relatives brought out protest processions in front of the gate demanding permission to send food to their relatives, they added.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Golam Rahman of Chawkbazar Police Station said the agitating relatives in several groups tried to bring out processions but they (police) foiled the attempts.

Senior Jail Super Tauhidul Islam said as per jail code, there is no provision of accepting foods for inmates from outside the jail but the authorities accepted such food at times on humanitarian grounds.

They stopped accepting outside food as cannibis was found hidden in a curry box sent to the jail, he added.

The jail superintendent said that they already announced that they would not accept food for the jail inmates on February 21.

Chawkbazar police said the jail authorities handed over Alamgir Hossain to the police station with some cannibis and a case was filed in this connection.

BNP lawmaker, 25 others assaulted by Feni BCL men

UNB, Feni

BNP leaders and activists, including Md Mosharrar Hossain, lawmaker and adviser to the BNP chairperson, were going to place wreaths at the alter of the newly constructed Shaheed Minar at 12:01am some BCL and Jubo League activists attacked them with sticks.

They assaulted Mosharrar and drove him away from the place. The unruly BCL activists also threw shoes towards the BNP activists.

Sonagazi Upazila Poura Mayor and Upazila BNP Secretary Jamaluddin Sentu and Upazila BNP President Gias Uddin were among the injured.

A tense situation is prevailing in the area following the incident.

BYLC programme launched

METRO DESK

Bangladesh Youth Leadership Centre (BYLC) launched the BYLC Young Scholars Programme 2010 at the Koraila in the city's Gulshan area yesterday.

This scholarship programme was initiated as a tribute to the martyrs of the Language Movement of 1952 and was made possible by the generous support of BBLT graduates and BYLC leadership facilitators.

In its first year, BYLC Young Scholars Programme will be supporting 17 bright grade 6

Khulna college students, teachers boycott class

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Teachers and students of Khalishpur Mohsin Degree College have decided to boycott classes today in protest against vandalism by a group of Awami League leaders at the college Shaheed Minar on Saturday night.

This decision was taken in a meeting of teachers' council yesterday with Principal Tofazzel Hossain in the chair.

Tofazzel said a group of leaders of Khalishpur thana unit of Awami League swooped on him at the Shaheed Minar of the college at 11:30pm on Saturday for refusing to handover the responsibility to conduct the function of Amar Ekushey at the Shaheed Minar to AL leaders that night only.

The unruly AL leaders roughed up some other teachers as they came to save the principal.

Expats observe Ekushey in Japan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The expatriate Bangladeshis living in Nagoya city in Japan observed the International Mother Language Day through a daylong programme yesterday.

The programme was held in three sessions including a drawing competition for the children of expats, a discussion on the Amar Ekushey followed by a cultural show.

Most of the children painted the flag and green landscape of Bangladesh. The children got the focus of the programme, which was planned to introduce Bangladesh before them.

A discussion followed in which Toyob Ullah, Dr Monirul Islam, Dr Mohafikul Kader and Monjur-e-Khuda Torik, among others, talked about the glory of the Day.

In the cultural show the expat Bangladeshis presented patriotic songs and recitation to the amusement of the audience.

Several Japanese and Indian nationals attended the programme conducted by Dr Aminul Haq Shaheen.

Temperature may rise

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during late night till morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:58pm today and rises at 6:26am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 30.6 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 09.9 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	28.7	15.0	54	32
Chittagong	30.0	16.2	59	58
Rajshahi	29.0	11.1	82	47
Khulna	30.0	15.4	82	48
Burisal	30.0	16.0	80	51
Sylhet	29.5	14.0	58	46
Cox's Bazar	29.3	17.5	53	61

AMAR EKUSHEY OBSERVED ACROSS COUNTRY

Call for trial of war criminals

METRO DESK

Amar Ekushey, also the International Mother Language Day, was observed with solemnity and in the most befitting manner across the country yesterday, paying glowing tributes to the language movement martyrs.

People from all walks of life alongside different government, non-government, socio-political and cultural organisations and business as well as professional bodies thronged the Shaheed Minars [memorials to the language martyrs] since Sunday midnight to pay their respects.

Staff Correspondent from Chittagong said Amar Ekushey was observed in the port city with due respect to the martyrs, who sacrificed their lives for the noble cause of the mother tongue 58 years ago.

Different organisations, including a cross section of people and students from different academic institutions, took part in the mourning procession that led to the Shaheed Minar and placed wreaths and bouquets at its altar since early hours to far into the day.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Ameen first placed a wreath at the Shaheed Minar minutes after the zero hour. He was followed by Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Later, city units of the ruling Awami League and opposition BNP also placed wreaths.

Besides, discussion, cultural and blood donation programmes were also organised at different areas of the city on the occasion.

Staff Correspondent from Rajshahi adds: The demands for immediate trial of war criminals and reinstatement of the 1972 constitution were reiterated as people observed the Amar Ekushey in the divisional city.

Speakers at different Ekushey programmes said the supreme sacrifices of the martyrs of the Language Movement and the Liberation War would not rest in peace until the nation tries the killers.

In the afternoon, hundreds of people gathered at Prothom Alo's earth-shaking 30-minute programme at Bhuban Mahan Park.

Language movement veterans Sayeed Uddin Ahmed, Mosarrar Hossain Akhuni and Prothom Alo correspondent Abul Kalam Azad spoke at the programme where artistes of Hirdol and Rajshahi Abritti Parishad performed.

Local Awami League, its associate bodies, BNP, Jatiya Party, JSD, NAP, Bangabandhu Parishad, different socio-cultural and journalists' forums organised programmes like discussions, art competition, blood donation, cultural functions, documentary shows and special prayers.

Rajshahi City Corporation and the district administration jointly began a book fair and reception to the language movement veterans at Nagar Bhaban.

BSS from Narayanganj adds: People from all strata of society paid rich tributes to the martyrs while observing Amar Ekushey and International Mother Language Day in a befitting manner in the district.

To mark the occasion, leaders and activists of all political, socio-cultural and other organisations, including women and children, placed wreaths at the Shaheed Minar at Chashara in the town wearing black badges and carrying banners.

The day's programme began with placing of the wreaths at one minute past midnight last night.

Lawmaker Nasim Osman placed the wreath first followed by Deputy Commissioner Shamsur Rahman.

Narayanganj district units of Bangladesh Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party, Workers Party, JSD, CPB, Narayanganj Press Club, Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry, BKM, Bangladesh Jute Association, Bangladesh Hosiery Association, Bangladesh Yarn Merchants Association, Joy Bangla Sangskritik Jote, Narayanganj Institute of Fine Arts, Narayanganj Tolaram Government College, Narayanganj Government Mohila College, Bangladesh Marine Technology, Narayanganj Zila Parishad, Narayanganj Poursabha and Zia Shishu Kishore Sangathak also placed wreaths.

Special prayers were offered at mosques, temples and churches seeking eternal peace of the language movement heroes.

BSS from JU reports: The International Mother Language Day was observed on the Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus in a befitting manner.

Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir along with other officials placed wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar on the campus at 12:01am.

Jahangirnagar University Teachers Association, JU Officers and Employees Association and Union, Jahangirnagar University Journalists Association, Mohila Club, JU BCL, Chhatra Front, Chhatra Union, Badhan JU unit, Rotaract Club JU unit, Amar Desh Pathokmela, Physically Challenged Development Foundation and different socio-cultural organisations paid their homage to the language martyrs.

The day's programme included a discussion on language movement, cultural programmes of different organisations and painting competition for children.

The Language Movement indeed infused spirit in the Bangalee nationalistic movement which led the nation to fight the war of liberation in 1971, said the VC at the Ekushey function on the campus.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi University (RU) authorities yesterday observed the Amar Ekushey in a befitting manner on the campus, reports BSS.

National flag was hoisted at half-mast atop all buildings of the university, including the administration building, VC's residence, library and dormitories.

VC Prof Abdus Sobhan along with the university staff placed wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar on the campus at 6:45am.

Rajshahi University Teachers Association, Progressive Teachers Society, RU Officers and Employees Association, Rajshahi University Journalists Association, RU Mohila Parishad, RU unit BCL, Chhatra Front, Chhatra Federation, Chhatra Union, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Udichi, Anushilan Drama Group, Gono Shilpi Sangstha, Bangabandhu Parishad and residential halls also placed wreaths.

In the morning, Shaheed Smriti Sangrashala organised a painting and handwriting competition for children.

A milad mahfil was also organised in the afternoon.

Rajshahi University Mohila Parishad organised a photo exhibition and a discussion at the Shaheed Minar to observe the Amar Ekushey.

Bangladesh missions observe Ekushey

BSS, Dhaka

The Amar Ekushey and International Mother Language Day was observed in Bangladesh missions abroad yesterday in a befitting manner.

The Bangladesh High Commission in India observed the Amar Ekushey with due respect.

The Day's programme in New Delhi began in the morning when High Commissioner Tariq A Karim hoisted the national flag at half-mast on the chancery premises.

The messages of President M Zillur Rahman Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni were read out on the occasion.

Prayers were offered seeking divine blessings for eternal peace of the language martyrs of 1952 and the martyrs of the liberation war.

Prayers were also offered for the departed soul of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was assassinated on the fateful night of August 15, 1975 along with most of his family members.

Deputy High Commissioner Masfhee Bintu Shams, officers and employees and staff of the Bangladesh Mission were present.

The Embassy of Bangladesh in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) also observed the day.

Ambassador Nizamul Quannein hoisted the national flag at half-mast in the morning and paid tribute to the martyrs of the Language Movement.

A large number of Bangladeshis from all walks of life living in the UAE were present on the occasion.

Discussion and recitation of poems followed the function.

Besides, a brief cultural programme was organised where students of SKBZ Bangladesh Islamia School in Abu Dhabi rendered songs.

At the beginning of the discussion, messages of President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina were read out.

At the discussion, Nizamul Quannein paid glowing tributes to the martyrs of the language movement who laid their lives on this day in 1952 to establish Bangla as the state language.

The day was also observed at the Embassy of Bangladesh in Bangkok with solemnity and respect. This was for the first time the Embassy arranged such a public programme on the Embassy premises after the chancery building had been shifted to a new location early this month.

In the morning, the flag was hoisted at half-mast by Charge d'affaires Pabna Chowdhury at the Chancery.

A cultural programme was held at the end of the discussion where a delegation of Dhaka University comprising four members of the university's Cultural Foundation presented various songs.

Prof Dr AHM Mostafizur Rahman of the Department of Soil, Water and Environment of the university led the delegation.

A discussion was held at the Bangladesh Embassy in Beijing to mark the day.

DHAKA

TODAY

Workshop

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Dhaka Transport Coordination Board of the Ministry of Communications will jointly organise a workshop on Dhaka mass transit system making the use of Tokyo and Delhi experiences. Venue: Hotel Sonargaon. Time: 9:00am.

Centenary programme

Teachers' Training College organises a two-day programme to mark 100 years of the college beginning today. Venue: College premises. Time: 11:30am.