The struggle continues ... Independence Day at JU

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IT was a moment of pride and jubilation when the teachers and students of the department of English, Jahangirnagar University, led by Professor Shafi Ahmed, offered formal salute to two Freedom fighters, Professor Kaiser Haq and Shirin Banu Mitil. That was the last session of the day-long programme on March 25, 2010 organised by the department of English to observe the Independence Day. There was a day-long photo exhibition entitled "1971" (organised by JPS) featuring the atrocities and sufferings incurred by the Pakistani occupation forces during the Liberation War. The short chorus song and recitation entitled "*Sangram Cholbei*" were performed by the students included a medley of 'Shwadhin Bangla Betar Kendra' songs.

The most interesting part of the programme was the session "Meet the Freedom Fighters." Shirin Banu Mitil, Director, Gender and Governance, PRIP Trust enthralled the audience with her amazing story: how she wore male clothes, joined the war, and continued fighting until being discovered as a female. In her emotion-charged speech, she insisted on writing on



women's role in the war and questioned why the word "rape" always goes with women captured and battered by the Pakistani forces. Professor Kaiser Haq of the department of English, University of Dhaka narrated the tragic events on the night of March 25, 1971 and how gradually, through numerous interrelated events, he got involved with the Liberation War. The young audience was left with a sense of pride and patriotism listening to the song "*Maago, Bhabna Keno*" sung by everyone in the hall with which the programme came to an exhilarating end.

It was at the beginning of the programme that the Chair of the department, Mashrur Shahid Hossain, presented the Freedom fighters with beautifully made crests on which were inscribed the following words: "We Salute Our Freedom Fighters." Yes, we do! And let the spirit of the fight continues through us to ensure a better future, a better Bangladesh!

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