

## HSBC-PROTHOM ALO BHASHA PROTIJOG 'Use Bangla in all spheres of life'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The final round of the 6th National HSBC-Prothom Alo Bhasha Protijog (language competition) was held at Viqarunnisa Noon School and College in the city yesterday with a call for using Bangla in all spheres of life.

A total of 450 people, winners of eight regional competitions, took part at the final round of the three-month festival.

"We are immensely proud of our language. We feel proud of those who laid down their lives so that we can speak in Bangla. Our proudest moment was when we became part of the process of upholding the dignity of our language," said Editor

of the daily Prothom Alo Matur Rahman at the award giving ceremony.

He also urged all to use Bangla in all spheres of life and learn to love the language more.

A total of 52 students were selected as winners from the participants. They received crests, certificates and books.

Prof Anisuzzaman, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Prof Monzurul Huq, Prof Biswajit Ghosh, Prof Bhismadev Guho, Prof Gaurav Sikdar, Head of Marketing of HSBC Mushfiqur Rahman Khan and Head of CSR Sami Hafiz were also present at the programme.

Noted singers Fatema-tuz-Zohra and Andrew Kishore also rendered songs.



Winners of 6th National HSBC-Prothom Alo Bhasha Protijog (language competition) pose at Viqarunnisa Noon School and College in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## HASINA-MANMOHAN MEETING BNP worries about outcome

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition BNP is fearful of the outcome of the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the just concluded 16th Saarc summit in Thimphu.

Talking to reporters at his residence yesterday, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said people of Bangladesh have become afraid following the reaching of consensus by the two prime ministers on implementing the agreements signed between Dhaka and New Delhi during Hasina's visit to India last January.

He said people do not know what is there in the agreements while India is eager to implement the agreements, as it will be in their favour.

Delwar, however, appreciated the two agreements signed in the 16th Saarc summit in Bhutan.

## 1 killed in Habiganj clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

One person was killed and over a hundred sustained injuries in a clash between the two rival groups of villagers over paying tempo fare at Olipur in Habiganj Sadar on Thursday night.

Soon after the incident, the male inhabitants of at least 10 villages had left their houses apprehending police raids.

Police had to lob tear gas shells and fired over a hundred rounds of rubber bullets to take control of the situation.

They arrested four people from Brahmandora village the same night.

Following the clash, over 300 vehicles remained stranded on both the sides of Dhaka-Sylhet highway as traffic remained suspended for about three hours and a half till 12:30pm.

# Power crisis hits hard plastic industries

### Adequate power supply can boost int'l market share of plastic items

UNB, Dhaka

Adequate power supply can boost to a great extent the country's domestic and international market share of plastic products, which can play an important role in the growth of economy.

But the country's plastic industries are now facing serious setbacks due to severe power crisis, said Ferdous Wahed, president of Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BPGMEA).

Talking to UNB, he said that power is a big factor for the plastic industry-- a high energy-consuming industry.

"Loadshedding has really been disastrous for the plastic industry and still there is no sign of improvement," Ferdous said, adding that they often had to incur loss of production due to power outages.

After the major export-earning readymade garment (RMG) sector, the plastic sector has similar potential, as its value addition is very high, he said.

"There is no labour unrest and complaints about salary, as the workers are getting good salary. It's a growing industrial sector having growth rate of 20-30 percent a year."

He, however, said that the expected growth in the current fiscal could not be achieved due to power crisis.

Ferdous said that the BPGMEA in its recent budget proposal to the NBR suggested inclusion of the plastic industry in the highest priority export sector, as there has been an international market of around Tk 1600 crore, including Tk 400 crore in direct form and Tk 1200 crore in deemed form (indirect export). Besides, the domestic market size of plastic goods is around Tk 4,000 crore.

He also demanded withdrawal of the NBR circular on 'Import Under Bond, Not For Sale', as he thinks this is an obstacle to the growth of the plastic sector.

He said that as the multinational petrochemical companies like BASF,

SCG, Chevron, Basell and Remex refused to supply raw materials as per the NBR circular, "we had to give 100 percent bank guaranty for which a bulk of our working capital remains blocked with the customs."

The BPGMEA president also emphasised promoting recycling of plastic wastes, so that it could reach 100 percent compared to existing recycling rate of 60 percent in the country.

"Even with 60 percent recycling, we could make a savings of US\$ 400 million in 2005 by avoiding import of virgin resins," he said.

Ferdous said entrepreneurs from India, China, Taiwan and Thailand are keen to invest in Bangladesh's plastic sector, but these investments would come only if uninterrupted power supply is ensured.

The export of plastic items began in the 1980s in the form of indirect export (deemed export) mainly as backward linkage for RMG sector, he said.

According to statistics provided by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the export earnings of plastic items totalled US\$ 56.78 million in 2008-09 fiscal and US\$ 54.14 million in 2007-08 fiscal.

The major export destinations for the Bangladeshi plastic items are China, Poland, UK, Belgium, France, Germany, USA, Canada, Spain, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Australia, Sri Lanka, Japan, Malaysia, UAE, Hong Kong, Bahrain, Italy, New Zealand and the Netherlands.

Some one million workforces are now directly and indirectly employed in some 3,000 small, medium and large plastic goods manufacturing units.

Although plastic goods are exported in direct and deemed way, some directly exported plastic items are PVC Pipes, PVC bags, insulator (rubber), polythene sheet, plastic hanger, hand gloves (rubber), synthetic ropes, plastic waste, V belt, polyester thread, computer accessories, and video and audio cassettes.

## RU VIOLENCE 25 Shibir men released on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

At least 25 Islami Chhatra Shibir activists, out of 55 who got bail from the High Court last week, were released from Rajshahi Central Jail yesterday.

The Shibir activists were arrested from Uttara and Shahbag areas in Dhaka in connection with the case filed by the police following the February 9 Shibir atrocities at Rajshahi University.

The jail authorities received their bail documents from the Rajshahi chief metropolitan magistrate court on Thursday evening, said Faruk Ahmed, the jailor.

A High Court bench on April 21 granted bail to some 55 Shibir activists, he said, adding that the remaining 30 Shibir men will be sent to Dhaka in connection with a case filed against them with Shahbag Police Station.

On February 9, leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student organisation Shibir launched attacks on different RU dormitories, killing Chhatra League worker Faruk Hossain and injuring around 100 people.

Police recorded some 14 cases after the incident.

## 3 held with cocaine, Yaba tablets in Ctg

BSS, Chittagong

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in separate drives arrested three drug traders with huge quantities of cocaine and Yaba tablets in the port city on Thursday night.

The drugs included 930 grams of cocaine worth about Tk one crore and 70 pieces of Yaba tablets.

The arrested drug traders were identified as Mohammad Salauddin, 47, Sohel, 20, and Mohammad Alif, 30.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-7 raided a passenger bus at Pahartali area in the city at about 6.30pm and recovered 930 grams of contraband cocaine.

Police arrested drug traders Salauddin and Sohel in this connection.

In another raid on Baddarhat area of the city, the Rab arrested Mohammad Alif with 70 pieces of Yaba tablets.

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