

# Historic March 7 observed

BSS, Dhaka

The nation observed the historic March 7 yesterday by paying rich tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On this day in 1971, Bangabandhu through his fiery and soulful address made a clarion call to the people to fight against the Pakistani occupation forces to achieve the long-cherished independence.

On the occasion of the historic March 7, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing wreaths at his portrait at Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi in the city.

The prime minister stood in solemn silence in front of the portrait some time and placed wreaths again as the president of Bangladesh Awami League along with the party leaders.

Earlier, Sheikh Hasina went to Bangabandhu Bhaban and sprayed petals on the staircase of the building where the body of the great leader was lying following the August 15, 1975 massacre at the house.

She recited from the holy Quran and offered munajat there.

Bangladesh Awami League and its associate organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina places a wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban in the city's Dhanmondi yesterday, marking the historic March 7. PHOTO: PID

# Don't make education a commodity

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman urged authorities of all universities in the country to make practical education compulsory in their curricula so that students could acquire knowledge about reality and contribute to national development.

He also asked them to ensure that education is not turned into a commodity, for the greater interest of the nation.

He said this while presiding over the 10th convocation of East West University (EWU) held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city on Sunday.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, EWU Trustee Board Chairman Dr Mohammad Farashuddin and EWU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mohammad Sharif also spoke on the occasion. Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique was the convocation speaker.

The president said apart from classroom-based education, the students would have to acquire practical knowledge about life and earth that will guide them to resolve various problems in national life.

A total of 1,073 students, both graduates and post-graduates, have been conferred degrees at the convocation.

In his address, Prof Arefin said a university could be truly evaluated by the quality and competence of their graduates.

Referring to a Chinese proverb, he said sow paddy on yearly plan; plant trees to make a success of 10-year plan and provide education and training to the new generation to make a success plan for life.

"It is our commitment that every student will advance and build their life in a planned way," he said.

# BCL men beat Chhatra Front leaders at Buet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chhatra League (BCL) men last night severely beat two leaders of Chhatra Front at Ahsanullah Hall of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

Buet unit Chhatra Front convenor Gautam Kumar Dey of Computer Science and Engineering department, and its activist Mamun Morshed Khan, of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering department, were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The hall sources said around 10 BCL activists swooped on the two of Dr MA Rashid Hall around 10:30pm.

The injured said they were beaten as they protested the attack on Nazmul by BCL men on March 5.

Chakbazar police said they visited the spot but none was arrested in this connection.

# Govt set to improve people's destiny

Says prime minister

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there are certain quarters who use the poor as guinea pig to make their own fortune overnight.

"But we work for improving the lot of the common people," she said at a discussion on the historic March 7 speech by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

It was organised by Bangladesh Awami League at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) with Deputy Leader in Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury in the chair.

The prime minister said her government would not allow anyone to exploit the poor people. "The present government will do whatever is needed to change the fate of the poor people."

She said the historic March 7 speech of Bangabandhu was an epic that contained all elements necessary for gaining the independence of the country.

Hasina mentioned that the main focus of the speech was democracy, the main vehicle of all sorts of development.

It also holds true for now as without democracy it is not possible for any nation to prosper, she said.

Recalling the "black days" of the autocratic governments, she said it is only during the Awami League rule that the country gets prosperity.

The prime minister criticised the previous BNP-Jamaat alliance government and the army-backed caretaker government for "not doing anything for the development of the country."

She said the BNP-Jamaat alliance government had plunged the country into corrup-

tion, looting, money laundering, militancy, and terrorism.

"The caretaker government, which was the combination of high degree holders, failed to do anything for the people except giving rise to fear and anxiety."

Hasina said this is the high time to move forward and ensure development for the whole country.

She said the present government has undertaken numerous steps to develop the country and attract foreign investment to

*The prime minister criticised the previous BNP-Jamaat alliance government and the army-backed caretaker government for "not doing anything for the development of the country"*

the country. "The government has taken steps to remove the bad image of the country that was created during the regime of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government."

The premier also criticised the recent remarks of the opposition leader who said if BNP is voted to power, she will declare illegal all steps of the present government.

"If you want to do so you have to declare illegal all the power generated during our tenure and you have to shut down all power stations," she said.

# Income generating aid changes her fate

PORIMOL PALMA

Ayesha Khatun proved how providing asset and skills to the extreme poor for generating income can help them beat poverty, a chronic problem of around four crore people in the country.

Ayesha, 45, is the bread earner of her six-member family at Kaunia upazila in Rangpur.

In December 2009, she received a cow from Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), a UK-based charity organisation. The cow recently gave birth to a calf and now gives three litres of milka day.

Ayesha also receives monthly sustenance allowance of Tk 500 from the Food Security for Ultra Poor (FSUP) project funded by the European Union (EU).

Before availing the aid, she earned Tk 400 a week working at a local rice mill, while her 13-year-old son Alim earned a minimal sum by catching fish.

"We had very hard times, sometimes managing only one meal a day," she told The Daily Star on a visit to her house at Thakurda village.

Saving her monthly allowances, she bought a second cow and six pairs of pigeons.

The family now consumes one litre of milk and sells around two litres daily. Every month, the pigeons give birth to six pairs of squabs, with each pair selling at Tk 100 or more.

"Alongside my rice mill work, we get good income from these assets. We have much better meals now," said Ayesha, adding that she plans to lease out a pond to cultivate fish.

Ayesha's family is among the 1.35 lakh ultra poor households who were provided with assets for income generation.

The area coverage under the 43.50 million euro (around Tk 450 crore) FSUP project include Rangpur, Gaibandha,



Ayesha Khatun with her fortune-making cow. PHOTO: STAR

Bogra, Sirajganj, Pabna Netrakona, Sunamganj, and Kishoreganj.

IRW, Care, UN World Food Programme (WFP), and Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation are implementing the three-year programme through their partner NGOs.

The assets are provided to the ultra poor, mainly the woman-headed families, which are mostly landless.

The assets provided include cattle and capital for vegetable cultivation, fish culture, nursery, small trades, grocery, processing dry food, making bamboo products, tailoring, and rickshaw vans.

"While providing assets, the recipients' choices are preferred," said Sharif Ahmed, IRW regional coordinator in Rangpur.

The programme's main concept is to enable the ultra poor to come out of poverty using their assets, he said, adding that the NGOs provide the poor with skills to take care of the animals they were given and to operate the businesses for which they were given capital.

The monthly allowance is given for 18 months to make sure that the beneficiaries do not sell the assets for survival, said Sharif.

The family members are also given medical services and training, he noted. On an average, a household is provided with Tk 21,000 in total.

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation Chairman Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmady said this approach meant for asset building of the extreme poor is quite effective, but imparting them with necessary skills and monitoring their activities is important.



A scene from a street drama being performed on Central Shaheed Minar premises in the city yesterday, the last day of the weeklong Street Theatre Festival 2011 organised by The Daily Star and Bangladesh Pathanatak Parishad. PHOTO: STAR

# Brick kiln fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment yesterday stopped the operation of a brick kiln at Baliarpur of Savar and fined its owner Tk 2 lakh for polluting air and changing the character of agricultural land and flood plain.

An enforcement team of DoE led by its Director Mohammad Munir Chowdhury also arrested the manager of M/s Anan Bricks, running without any environmental clearance, and knocked down its chimney, said a DoE release.

# 50 foreign nationals

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists, British Broadcasting Corporation and Indian Radio Akashbani are among the organisations.

Former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, former West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu, former Indian chief of army staff field marshal Manekshaw and eastern commander of Indian army Gen Aurora, are among the Indians.

The Indian soldiers killed in the military operation against the Pakistan occupation forces will collectively be honoured.

Senator Edward Kennedy, known as friend of Bangladesh, is one of the eight Americans to be honoured by the government.

The four Russians are Yakov Alexandrovich Malik, former Soviet ambassador to the UN, Rear Admiral Sergey Pavlovich Zuenko, Alexei Nikolayevich Kosygin, chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers and Nikolai Viktorovich

Podgorny, chairman of Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

The US nationals are Edward Kennedy, Senator William Frank Church, Senator William Saxbe, Archer Kent Blood, singer Joan Baez, poet Allen Ginsberg, Laver Levin, Father Richard W Timm CSC and Father Evans CSC.

The British nationals included in the list are singer George Harrison, Edward Heath, Bruce Douglas Mann, Harold Wilson, Julian Francis, Peter Shore and Simon Dring. Three Japanese are Takashi Hayakawa, Takamasa Suzuki and Nawaki Usui.

Besides, BP Koirala of Nepal Andre Malraux of France, former Bhutanese foreign minister Ugyen Tshering Shaun Maxbride of Ireland, William AS Quaderland, Bir Protik of Australia Kinten Watt Bagey of the Netherlands, Lars Leijonborg MP of Sweden and Sunil Das Gupta of Germany are in the list.

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