

A scene from a play 'Jago Janata Jago' performed by artists of Gononatyadal from Faridpur during an anti-corruption theatre festival at Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday, organised by Transparency International Bangladesh.



PHOTO: STAR

Graft clutches every sphere of society

Says rights activist Sultana Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former adviser to a caretaker government and rights activist Sultana Kamal yesterday said people are deprived of their rights and a sense of impunity has evolved in the culture due to massive corruption in every sphere of society.

While inaugurating an anti-corruption theatre festival at the central Shaheed Minar, she said resources of the country are being gripped by a small quarter of people who want to save these resources through corrup-

tion.

"Human rights, democratic rights of the people and their opportunities to resources remain absent when corruption prevails in any society," she said at the theatre festival organised by Transparency International Bangladesh.

To eliminate corruption, massive awareness among people against it should be created when every single citizen of the country would resist corruption in their surroundings, said Sultana Kamal.

There would not have been any shortage of hospitals or educational institutions for the people if there were no corruption in the country and Bangladesh would have been at a stage of development where it should have been after the 40 years of its independence, she said.

Seven dramas by different theatre groups will be played in the two-day festival.

Bangladesh Pathanaty Parishaad, President Mannan Hira, also spoke at the inauguration event.

BNP vows to protect independence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vowing to protect country's independence, sovereignty and democracy, the main opposition BNP yesterday brought out a colorful procession in the city marking country's 40th Independence Day, also the National Day.

Taking part in the programme, its leaders warned the government of an Arab world like situation, hinting at ongoing unrest in several countries there.

They said the same would happen in the country if the government fails to arrange a midterm election, as people have no faith in this government.

During the procession, starting at party's central office in Naya Paltan and ending at Moghbazar, severe traffic jam was created in adjoining areas.

Several thousand enthusiastic leaders, workers and supporters paraded several streets carrying banners, placards and festoons, joined by bands playing songs and horse carts.

Many carried portraits of late president

Ziaur Rahman, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and their son Tarique Rahman, also BNP senior vice chairman.

They chanted slogans demanding midterm election after resignation of the present Awami League led government.

Inaugurating the procession, BNP Standing Committee Member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said, "Government absolutely failed to run the country."

"They lost people's trust. A middle east like situation may be created if the demand of midterm election is not implemented soon."

Urging the party men to prepare for movement, he said BNP is now stronger under the leadership of Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman and the government will not be able to suppress it with torture.

He warned all to refrain from making derogatory comments on Zia, adding that if anyone does so in future, they would reply in a befitting manner.

Party leaders Moudud Ahmed, Nazrul Islam Khan, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Abdullah Al Noman and Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir were also present.

Warns the government of an Arab world like situation

BDR MUTINY TRIAL Defence lawyer warned of contempt of court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court, trying the suspected mutineers of 24 Rifle Battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), yesterday warned a defence lawyer of contempt of court.

Quoting a write-up published in a national daily on March 16 by the lawyer, Sultan Mahmud, the court remind him that it is a special court which is conducted under the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Act, 1972.

"The trial proceedings are going on. It's not a civil court. You cannot make such comments that tarnish the image of the court. The court could bring the charge for contempt of court. You are being warned," said BGB Director General Maj Gen Rafiqul Islam who presided over the special court-7.

In his write-up, Sultan Mahmud who was present at the court, made a doubt on the fairness of the court.

On the 31st days of the court proceeding, 20 defence witnesses gave depositions in the favour of 10 accused, out of 667 of 24 Rifle Battalion. The witnesses were cross-examined by the prosecutor. The court was set up at the Darbar Hall of BGB headquarters in Pikhana.

Out of 667 jawans, only 66 accused requested for defence witnesses through Friend of the Accused to the court.

Five witnesses, including wife and neighbours, gave depositions for Sepoy Kamrul Islam.

The witnesses said that they found him at his resident during the mutiny. The court was adjourned till 9:00am of March 30.

Meanwhile, four witnesses gave depositions against 22 accused of Signal Sector who later cross-examined them at the special court-8, set up at the entertainment centre of 13 Rifle Battalion in the headquarters.

The court was adjourned till 9:00am of April 10.

A total of 73 people, including 57 army officers, were killed during the mutiny at the BGB headquarters in February 25-26 of 2009.

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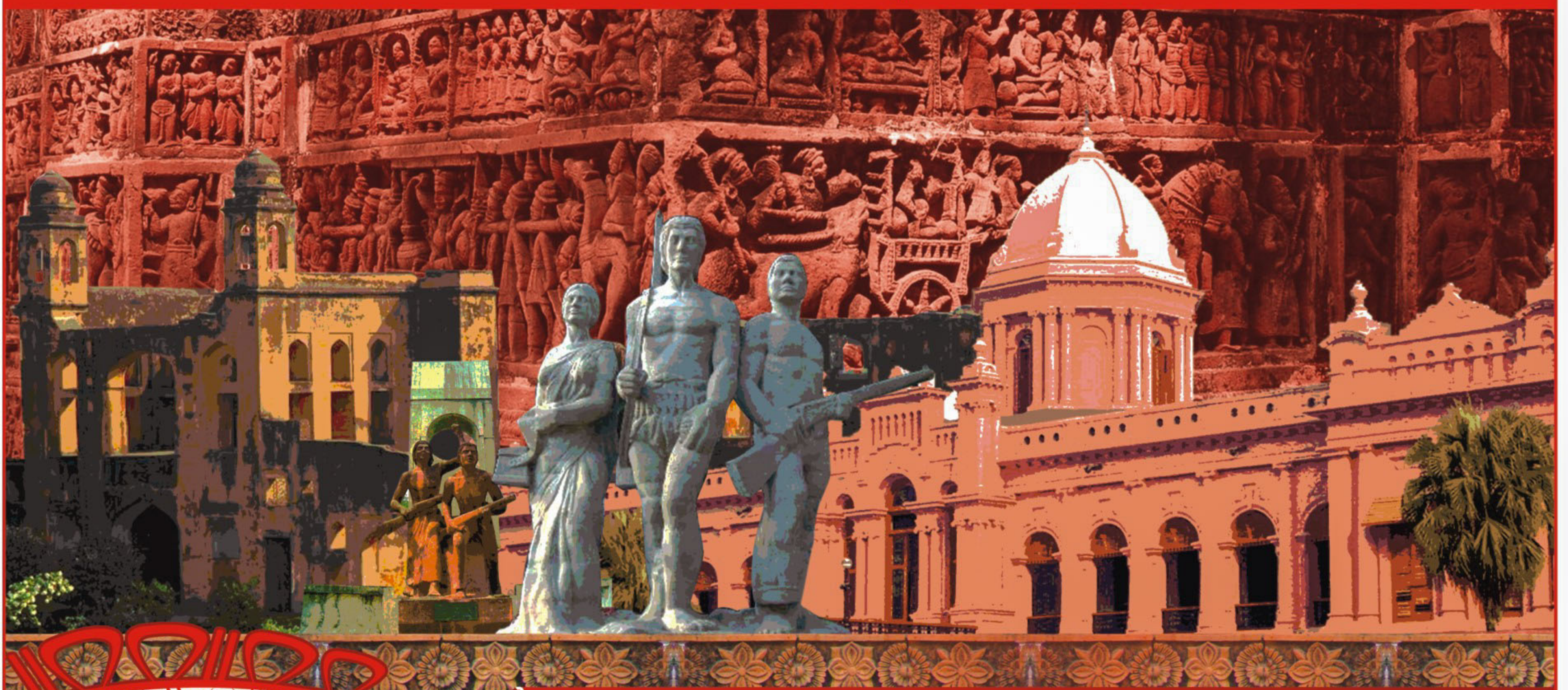
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