

# REVISITING LIBERATION WAR THROUGH VICTORY FAIR

ARUN BIKASH DEY

"I am a regular visitor of the 'Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela' since my childhood. I used to visit the fair with my parents during my childhood, with my friends during my college and university life and now come with my husband".

Afsana Khan, a resident of city's Shulak Bahar area, said this at the fair while talking to this correspondent at the outer stadium in the port city. Her husband Niloy accompanied her.

The 15-day long victory fair began at the outer stadium of MA Aziz Stadium in the port city on Saturday. State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Capt (Retd) AB Tajul Islam inaugurated the fair as the chief guest, lighting the "Bijoy Shikha" (victory flame).

With a call to unite the patriotic people against the war criminals, "Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela Parishad" organised the fair with a slogan "Victory in the War of Liberation is the pride of the heroic Bangalee nation". The fair was first organised in December in 1989 at the outer stadium.

Afsana said, "I feel proud of the fair and I would also bring my next generation in future to the fair as it is arranged marking the victory of the War of Liberation".

Over 200 various types of stalls including bookstalls, cosmetics, jewelry, handicrafts, showpieces, food corners etc. Big industrial houses from home and abroad also take part in the fair with their products and services.

Circus show and doll dance are the two special attraction of the fair.

Tajul, in his speech, urged the people to visit the fair to get a firsthand experience in organising such a well organised fair elsewhere in the country.

National leaders, freedom fighters, litterateurs and educationists reminisce their memories about the liberation war on Bijoy Mancha, said the sources at the fair.

Drama, cultural functions and recitations are also held on the Bijoy Mancha every day in the evening.

Sources said, in the past, the fair lasted for only six days with cultural programmes of the local clubs and cultural organisations being held on the victory stage. Discussion was held on December 14 on the occasion of the Martyred Intellectuals Day and mainly the bookstalls and the stalls of handicrafts were



State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Captain (Retd) ABM Tajul Islam inaugurates the 'Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela' at MA Aziz Stadium on December 10.

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allowed to display their items at the fair.

Later, the duration of the fair was extended to 15 days and more events were included.

ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, chairman of Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela Parishad and the city Awami League president, at a press conference on December 3, urged everybody to resist those who arrange gambling and other obscene

events in the fair.

He said the parishad officials will remain alert in stopping these activities at the fair.

Faruk-e-Azam Beer Pratik, convener of the first Bijoy Mela in 1989, expressed his frustration over the deviation of this victory fair from its initial spirit.

"We initiated the fair with a view to spreading

the spirit of the War of Liberation to our next generation," he said, adding that the fair was initiated involving the people from all walks of life irrespective of race, religion and political identity.

But now, the appeal of the fair has been spoiled as it is politicised and highly commercialised, said Azam, add-

ing that the fair has now become merely a trade fair.

He said Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam, addressing a huge gathering on the platform of victory in "Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela-1989", inspired us to organise the movement against the war criminals, including Ghulam Azam.

## the week that was



Natyadhar, an organisation working on theatre, stages a street drama titled 'Smriti '71' on the DC Hill premises on Saturday.

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### Call to eliminate corruption

Speakers at a discussion on Saturday urged all patriotic people to stand united to eliminate corruption from the society.

They said flourishing democracy in the society as well as in the country were being obstructed due to corruption.

Sachetan Nagarik Samaj (Sanak) and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the discussion with a slogan "Glorious 40 years of independence: Good governance -- resist corruption" at Char Chaktai City Corporation High School of Dakshin Bakalia in the port city.

Poet and journalist Abul Momen spoke at the programme as the chief guest with advocate Akhtar Kabir Chowdhury in the chair.

Abul Momen in his speech said creating awareness among the people was only the path for establishing a society free from corruption.

Shahriar Khaled and engineer Subhash Chandra Barua spoke at the programme.

### 'Explore Germany in Chittagong' held

With a view to introducing German literature and cultures, a programme titled "Explore Germany in Chittagong" was held in the port city on Thursday.

On the occasion, "Literary encounter" a programme to introduce contemporary German literature in English translation was organised at Bishad Bangla on Thursday.

Goethe Institute Bangladesh organised the programme in cooperation with Bishad Bangla and Die Sprache.

A photography exhibition titled "One day in Germany" was also arranged at 'Die Sprache', a German language learning centre in the port city.

A total of 25 selected photographs were displayed at the exhibition.

Prof Dr Shyamal Kanti Biswas, Vice-Chancellor of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) inaugurated the programme as the chief guest.

### Mayor for strengthening local govt

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor M Manjur Alam stressed the need for strengthening the local government to ensure better services to the city dwellers.

Without a strong local government it is difficult to do something for the people, he said. Mayor said this while he was addressing as chief guest the conference of Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB) at CCC conference room in the port city on Tuesday.

MAB Vice President and Bhera Municipality Mayor Mohammad Abdul Baten and General Secretary Shamim Al Razi were present as special guests with MAB Chittagong president and Rangamati Municipality Mayor Saiful Islam Chowdhury in the chair.

Manjur said organisations like MAB has been playing a significant role in strengthening the structure of the local government.

He said he increased the number of CCC standing committee to solve different problems of the city dwellers.

### German envoy meets mayor

Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany Holger Michael made a courtesy call on Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor M Manjur Alam on Sunday at the city corporation, says a press release.

The German ambassador said Chittagong has a great scope to attract the foreign investors to invest in tourism sector. If it is possible to give a special

attention to this sector, it will become a successful sector.

The mayor at the meeting urged the Germans to invest in the port city and assured them of providing all kinds of facilities.

During the meeting Honorary Consul General of Germany Mirja Sakir Ispahani, general manger of Ispanhani Group NU Humayun, CCC Councillor Chowdhury Hasan Mahamud, Mohammad Giyas Uddin and Chief Executive Officer Anwara Begum were present among others.

### Chittagong Gaming Championship held

Two-day long Chittagong Gaming Championship-2011 was held on the Independent University Bangladesh (IUB), Chittagong campus with the participation of the students of different university and college in the port city.

Prof Dr M Nuruzzaman of IUB, Chittagong inaugurated the event of 'computer game' organised by IUB Science and Engineering Club on Monday.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony Dr Nuruzzaman said computers, nowadays, have become an integral part of our day to day life. Computer games have become popular among the youngsters as they do not find playgrounds in the city to play, he said.

Emphasising the outdoor games, he said computer games can not be the alternative of outdoor games. Every child and youngster should play outdoor games side by side with the indoor games, he added.

Teachers of IUB, Chittagong Swomitra Palit, Amran Haroon and Atiqur Rahman distributed prizes among the winners at the concluding session on Tuesday.

## Kapasgola road dev work gets going



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Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) continues expansion and development works of a road from Chittagong College to Kapasgola. The photo was taken recently.

PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY

Development works of Chittagong College to Kapasgola road is going on in full swing with a hope to complete it within June, 2012.

Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), the implementing agency of the work, said one third work of a Tk 91 crore project, including Kapasgola area, has already been finished without any progress in the Chittagong College area due to shortage of land. Having the land from Kajem Ali High School and Haji Mohammad Mohsin College, CDA officials said they started the construction work in the Chittagong college portion.

Of the total budget, Tk 75 crore is fixed for land acquisition and compensation. Rest of the money will be used for road construction, they said, adding that after widening, the 2.19 kilometer long road will be 60 feet in width.

CDA will build two sidewalks which are five feet in width on both sides of the road, they said.

The officials said it is very difficult to acquire lands of the roadside educational institutions, but the CDA achieved the task. They could convince the institutions to hand over the lands for the road.

While visiting the project area on December 7, this correspondent found that work to widen the road was going on as Kajem Ali High School and Haji Mohammad Mohsin College handed over a huge amount of land for the road. CDA

officials expressed hope that they would also be successful in acquiring lands of other owners shortly including that from Chittagong College.

Habibur Rahman, project director (PD) and executive engineer of CDA, said it is one of the busiest roads in the port city. When the classes of the schools and colleges end, it becomes tough to cross the College Road Area for the pedestrians as well as the students. The CDA is implementing the project on priority basis keeping all this in mind, Habibur said.

He said the CDA got the one kilometer Kapasgola road from Roads and Highway Department (RHD) which is being widened. He said without cooperation of the educational institutions, it would be very difficult to run the project.

The PD hoped that after completion of the work, traffic jam would reduce in Jamal Khan, Chawkbazar, Muradpur, West Bakalia, Kapasgola Sholokbahar and Bahadderhat areas.

CDA Chairman Abdus Salam said people of that area were very cooperative in the development process. He said the CDA would also widen the other city roads in phases.

Engineer Ali Ashraf, former president of Institute of Engineers of Bangladesh, Chittagong and a city planner, said, "The port city needs extensive roads but it only has one wide road which is from Bahadderhat to Patenga beach. Traffic jam always prevails on Bahadderhat-Patenga road as there is no wide road in the city".