

# Shahbagh spirit echoes in book fair

DU CORRESPONDENT

The spirit of Shahbagh movement, which is to demand death penalty for war criminals, rippled through the crowds of Amar Ekushey Boi Mela as people paid tributes to the 1952 Language Movement martyrs on the occasion of International Mother Language Day yesterday.

Unlike previous years when people streamed towards Bangla Academy premises and Central Shaheed Minar on Amar Ekushey, this year people's enthusiasm and vigour poured into the Shahbagh protest. Still, as the crowds converged, the entire boi mela area turned into a human sea.

Book lovers as well as protesters and mourners spent more time on the fair premises yesterday as it remained open from 8:00am to 10:00pm when regular visiting period is 3:00pm to 9:00pm. Sales rose, and the highest 225 new titles hit the stalls in the last three weeks of the one-month fair.

"Without any exception, we saw the maximum sale today," a salesman at Anya Prakash told The Daily Star.

On the historic occasion, loudspeakers were playing the touching song of "Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano Ekushey February", among others, here and there.

A poetry recital was held on the fair ground where 160 people from across the country recited poems dedicated to language heroes, while a discussion on "the spirit of February 21" was also held.

As the sun went down, the crowds at Bangla Academy as well as Shahbagh grew bigger and bigger.

At a musical event on the fair premises, songs were performed to fire the spirit of nationalism. The visitors responded this time differently--they were roaring to demand capital punishment for war criminals.

Shamim Ahmed, a freedom fighter, said, "Boi Mela is not only about bearing the spirit of the Language Movement. Rather it is a place that creates awareness and enlightens the youth about the role of the anti-liberation forces since 1952."

"I came to the fair shouting slogans and holding banners of the Shahbagh movement," said Ratul, a class VIII student, who had one cheek painted with the words "21 amar hok" and the other with "Razakar er fashi chai."

With friends, Ratul placed flowers at Central Shaheed Minar at 8:00am, then joined the movement and arrived at the fair ground around 5:00pm.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina goes round the museum of the International Mother Language Institute at the capital's Segunbagicha yesterday. PHOTO: PID

Language	No. of Speakers	Language	No. of Speakers
1. Bengali	6,870 (2000)	16. Sino-Tibetan	24902 (1991)
2. Hindi	24902 (1991)	17. Sino-Tibetan	22178 (1991)
3. Urdu	2112 (1991)	18. Austro-Asiatic	2361 (1991)
4. Punjabi	2227 (1991)	19. Dravidian	3033 (1991)
5. Pashto	17000 (1991)	20. Sino-Tibetan	85000 (1991)
6. Sinhalese	292744 (1991)	21. Indo-European	21,057 (1991)
7. Tamil	40000 (1991)	22. Sino-Tibetan	21,057 (1991)
8. Telugu	21,057 (1991)	23. Indo-European	21,057 (1991)
9. Malayalam	21,057 (1991)	24. Sino-Tibetan	21,057 (1991)
10. Kannada	21,057 (1991)	25. Indo-European	21,057 (1991)
11. Odia	21,057 (1991)	26. Sino-Tibetan	21,057 (1991)
12. Gujarati	21,057 (1991)	27. Indo-European	21,057 (1991)
13. Marathi	21,057 (1991)		
14. Assamese	21,057 (1991)		
15. Nepali	21,057 (1991)		



# Kids' day out at Borno Mela

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A different kind of fair with multidimensional cultural activities, all revolving around letters, was held in the capital on International Mother Language Day yesterday.

Thousands of children and adults flocked to the daylong "Borno Mela" (fair of letters) hosted by leading Bangla daily the Prothom Alo at Sultana Kamal Mohila Krira Complex.

The fair where celebrated artists taught kids to write Bangla letters correctly, among other things, was inaugurated by noted litterateur Abdullah Abu Sayeed.

"I was taught the very first letter of our Bangla alphabet incorrectly. Our primary school teacher in Chittagong pronounced it 'shoriyo' instead of 'shorayo'. I want my children to learn Bangla correctly and be inspired by the luminaries of Bangla language and literature," said Himel Ishaq, a drama artist who came with his two kids and wife.

The fair also featured handwriting, painting, and pattern making competitions, cultural programme, magic show, puppet show, quiz, game shows, and many more.

A gaggle of students of Preparatory Ideal Institute, who came with their teacher, said they won candies from the "Borno Pandit" stall by answering questions related to Bangla grammar, spelling and riddles.

Another stall named "Borno Prodorshoni" exhibited colourful designs and patterns of different letters. There was also an arrangement for children to make letters of different languages with clay blocks.

Children enjoying themselves at "Borno Mela" (fair of letters) hosted by Bangla daily the Prothom Alo at Sultana Kamal Mohila Krira Complex in the capital yesterday marking International Mother Language Day. PHOTO: STAR

## WEATHER TODAY

### Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country till 6:00pm today.

Light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during late night till morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged and day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

**The sun sets in the capital today at 5:58pm and rises tomorrow at 6:26am.**

Country's highest temperature 31.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 11.5 degree Celsius at Sreemangal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	28.6	17.7	61	47
Chittagong	29.7	18.4	60	51
Rajshahi	27.8	13.2	80	64
Rangpur	28.5	14.0	78	54
Khulna	28.5	14.5	75	65
Barisal	28.3	12.5	71	64
Sylhet	31.0	15.0	67	48
Cox's Bazar	29.8	18.0	58	55

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# Boy dies from electrocution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

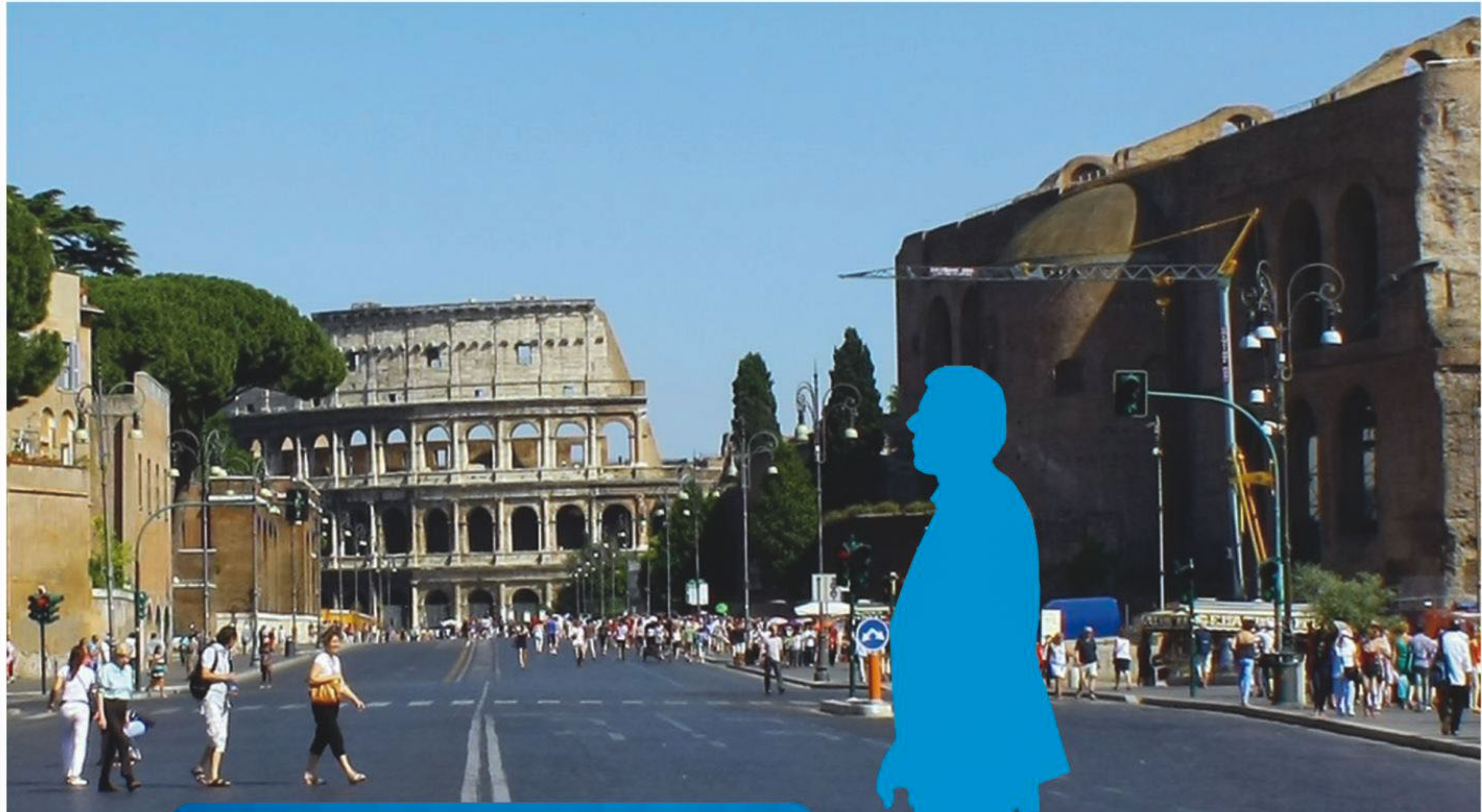
A schoolboy died from electrocution at Rasulbagh in Lalbagh area of the capital yesterday.

The victim was Mohammad Emon, 9, a student of class III at Rasulbagh Primary School, and son of Rafique Miah.

Quoting Emon's family members, Lalbagh Police Station Sub-Inspector (SI) Fazlul Haque said the boy climbed, while playing, on a roof of their tin-roofed house, and got an electric shock.

He got the shock as the tin roof was electrified by a live electric wire running under the roof, he said adding that the victim fell down on the ground from the roof.

The boy was rushed by his father to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead, he added.



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