

## WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA

H 29.4 | L 18.6

CHITTAGONG

H 28.4 | L 17.6

SYLHET

H 29.5 | L 17.0

RAJSHAH

H 29.5 | L 17.1

KHULNA

H 31.6 | L 20.0

BARISAL

H 30.8 | L 18.5

RANGPUR

H 26.8 | L 14.6

COX'S BAZAR

H 30.8 | L 18.3

Night and day temperature may change slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:58pm and rises tomorrow at 6:27am. Country's highest temperature 32.6 degree Celsius was recorded in Mongla and lowest 13.3 in Sreemangal.

## INT'L MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY IN SOLEMN REMEMBRANCE, PROUD FESTIVITY



Clockwise from second row, Central Shaheed Minar bedecked with flowers yesterday as tributes keep pouring in in honour of the 1952 language martyrs from the people of all walks of life, including Sector Commanders Forum, Bangladesh Awami League, BNP, Leader of the Opposition Raushan Ershad, chiefs of the three military services, wounded freedom fighters, the chief justice, and Bangladesh Police. A procession of Biam Laboratory School and Biam Model School and College heads to the memorial while a humongous crowd throngs it.



Photo: STAR



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wearing black badges and holding bouquets tight to their bosoms, thousands of people from all walks of life thronged shaheed minars around the country barefoot yesterday amid a political blockade, paying glowing tributes to the Language Movement martyrs.

The environment reverberated with the Ekushey anthem, "Amar bhaiyer rokte rangano Ekushey February", as the hallowed monuments were softly covered with flowers.

It was Amar Ekushey, the Language Movement Day, globally recognised as International Mother Language Day, an occasion to reminiscence the significance of the ultimate sacrifice made for the mother tongue 63 years ago.

On the day in 1952, the Pakistani police fired on peaceful protesters taking to Dhaka's streets demanding that Bangla be made one of the state languages of the then Pakistan. The martyrs include Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and Shafiqur.

The day has since been of special significance, also as Language Martyrs' Day. In November 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization declared it International Mother Language Day.

As the clock struck one minute past zero hour, President Abdul Hamid led the nation in paying

respects as he placed a wreath in front of Central Shaheed Minar in the capital, followed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. They then stood there in solemn silence for a while.

Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom Baroness D' Souza and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee followed suit.

Hasina, president of Awami League, along with her cabinet members, advisers, lawmakers and party leaders placed another wreath on behalf of the party. Opposition Leader Rowshan Ershad also paid tribute. Afterwards, a sea of people then started paying tributes to the language heroes imbued with the spirit of patriotism. With daybreak, the crowd grew bigger.

Many children were also seen with their parents, carrying flowers in their hands.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia did not place any wreath there. A BNP delegation led by Khaleda's adviser, Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, placed a wreath early morning.

Meanwhile, tightened security measures were taken surrounding the monument and adjoining areas amid the ongoing blockade enforced by the BNP-led 20-party alliance since January 6.

Prothom Alo organised a "Barnamala" festival at Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi to popularise Bangla alphabets

and the language among the new generation.

The day was a public holiday. State-run Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar and private TV channels aired special programmes while newspapers published special supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

Outside Dhaka, the day was observed at almost all districts, reports our correspondents.

BARISAL

In Barisal city's Central Shaheed Minar, the Barisal city corporation mayor, lawmakers, government officials, teachers and students of Barisal University and over 200 organisations, including Barisal Reporters Unity and Bangladesh Girl Guides Association, paid tributes from the early hours, reports our correspondent in the district.

Regional dailies Satya Sangbad and Barisaler Katha, Sandhani's Sher-e-Bangla Medical College unit and Barkat General Stores jointly organised a daylong voluntary blood donation programme in front of Ashwini Kumar Hall.

Barisal Sangskritik Sangathan Samannaya Parishad concluded a five-day discussion and cultural programme at the shaheed minar.

Charukala Barisal painted the roads and walls surrounding the monument and Shishu Academy organised a children's painting competition.

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