



AMAR EKUSHEY IN DISTRICTS

1) Students of Alor Pathshala, a school for indigenous children at Babudying in Godagari upazila of Rajshahi make an impressive Shaheed Minar with bamboo and colour paper, 2) people of the community walk to the Shaheed Minar to place wreaths, 3) students of Dakkhin Muradia Mohila Madrasa in Patuakhali place wreaths at the Shaheed Minar on the madrasa premises, 4) Indian nationals place wreaths at a makeshift Shaheed Minar at Hili border in Dinajpur, 5) students of Border Guard Government Primary School and Border Guard High School take part in a painting competition, and 6) Nepalese students studying at different Bangladeshi institutions join a programme at Rangpur Public Library ground yesterday as the nation observed the Language Martyrs' Day and International Mother Language Day yesterday.

PHOTOS: OUR CORRESPONDENTS FROM DISTRICTS

Language Martyrs' Day observed on border

Hundreds from India, Bangladesh gather on no-man's land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

For the Bangla speaking people of the two neighbouring countries, it was a different day yesterday at Benapole border line.

Marking the International Mother Language Day, thousands of emotion-choked people from Bangladesh and India, carrying banners, festoons and placards started gathering on the no man's land since the morning.

They also enjoyed a fair titled 'Milon Mela' on the occasion.

Organisers erected a temporary Shaheed Minar, martyred memorial, to pay homage to the language martyrs on the border line where members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) greeted each other with flowers.

BGB members also handed over the country's national flag to their

Indian counterparts as a souvenir. After placing of wreaths on the makeshift Shaheed Minar, a discussion was held at the venue which was presided by local Lawmaker Sheik Afil Uddin.

Separate delegates from both India and Bangladesh attended the programme and placed flowers to the temporary Shaheed Minar around 9:00am.

Marking the especial day, hundreds of people from both the countries donated bloods at a temporary blood bank set up on the no man's land.

Among others, West Bengal Food Minister Jyotipriyo Mallik, MLAs (Bidhaok) Sreemoti Mamata Thakur, Bishwajit Das and Surojeet Kumar Biswas and Bongaon Municipality Mayor Sree Shankar Addo, were present from the Indian side.

Meanwhile, State Minister Swapan

Bhattacharya, Customs Commissioner Belal Hossain Chowdhury and Sharsha Upazila Parishad Chairman Sirajul Haque Monju, attended the programme on behalf of Bangladesh.

While speaking at the discussion, Indian Minister Jyotipriyo said, "I have come here to respond to the call of our mother tongue. I am overwhelmed to see the friendly people of the two countries observing the day together with honour."

"Only people of this soil have set the rare example of sacrificing their lives for mother tongue," MP Gopal Sheik said, adding that he hopes such gathering will bring people of the two neighbouring countries closer.

State Minister Swapan Bhattacharya said, "The nation will never forget the Language Movement heroes, who sacrificed their lives to establish Bangla as our state language."

Signature campaign against corruption

TIB conducts the programme at Shaheed Minar premises

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

The Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in Jamalpur launched a mass signature campaign against corruption yesterday at the town's central Shaheed Minar with the slogan 'Corruption is opposite to the spirit of February 21.'

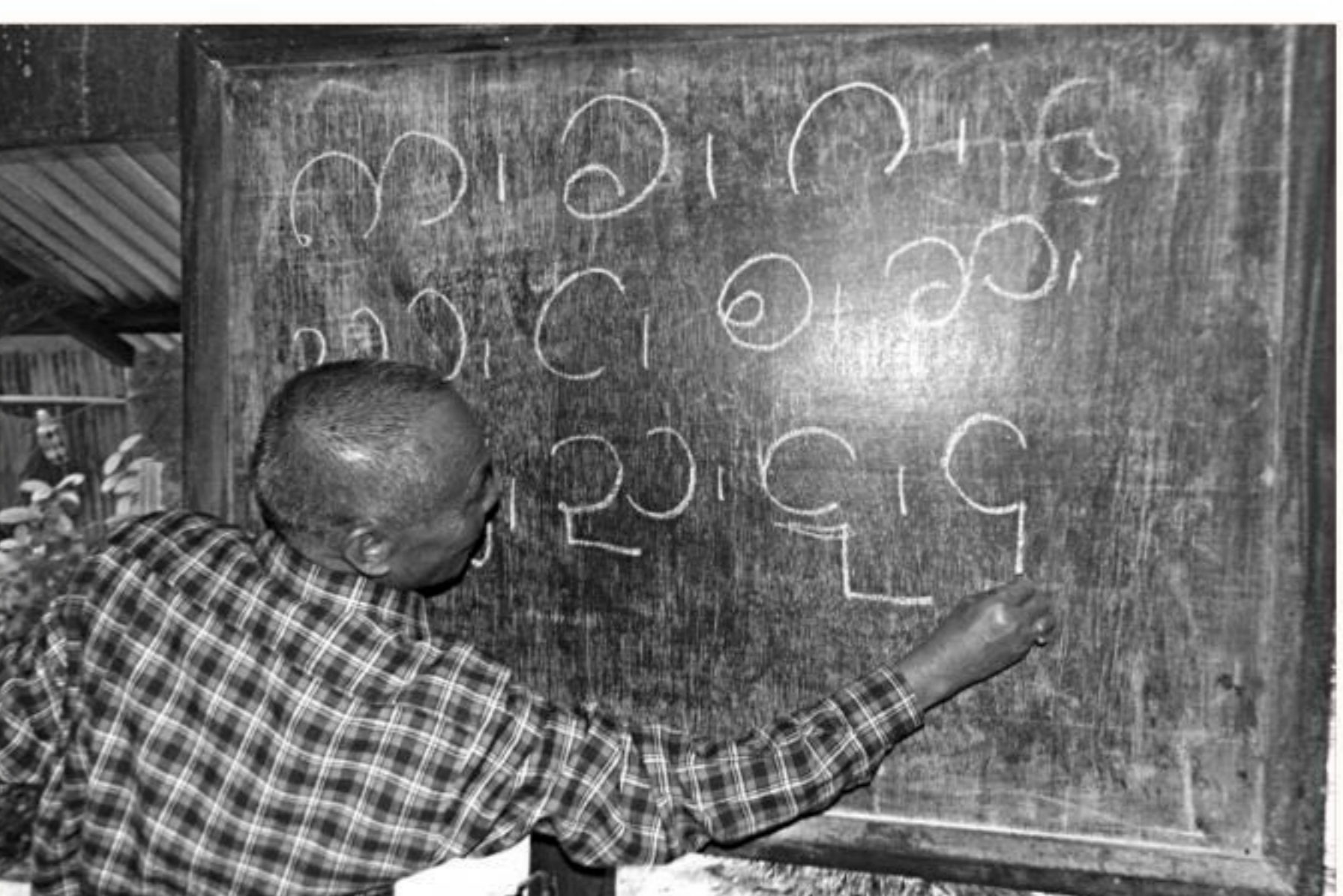
After paying homage to the language martyrs, people from all walks of life took part at a mass signature programme around 8:00am where they vowed to take stand against corruption and build a graft free nation.

District unit Vice-President of CCC Parvin Tarafdar said corruption has largely spread in our society which is hugely affected by the vicious cycle of graft.

Corruption can be eradicated from the society if more people start raising their voices against it, she added.

CCC also set up an information desk at the venue to help people to fill out the 'Right to Information' form for seeking information from the authorities concerned.

During the campaign, members of Youth Engagement Support Group, an associate body of CCC, helped a number of people fill the form as a good number of enthusiastic locals thronged the area to express their pledge to fight corruption.



Kra Thum Sein Master, a leader of the Rakhine community, taking class at his Taltalipara house in Barguna's Taltoli upazila. Inset, two Rakhine kids write in their mother language.



PHOTO: STAR

Bid to save Rakhine language

Kra Thum Sein runs school for Rakhine kids

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

In an attempt to save the Rakhine language from extinction, 60-year-old Kra Thum Sein Master, a leader of the community, has been running a school at his Taltalipara house in Barguna's Taltali upazila for years now.

The elderly teacher is trying to teach the Rakhine kids their own language so that they do not forget their mother tongue.

At present, only 15 Rakhine students of different nearby schools attend the two-hour class daily.

"I have been running the school for nearly 20 years so that Rakhine kids can learn their mother tongue easily," Kra Thum Sein said, adding that the school starts at 1:00am and continues till 3:00pm every day.

As he does not have any alternative to run the school he receives Tk 200 from each guardian, Kra Thum Sein said.

Usha said, adding that now she can read and write all the Rakhine letters.

During a recent visit to the school, this correspondent saw many Rakhine kids like Manda, Manwan and Mimisu were busy studying their mother tongue.

"We thanked Master Kra Thum Sein for his effort to save our mother tongue from extinction," said Monchala, an elderly Rakhine woman.

Day by day, many members of the community are forgetting their mother language, she said, adding that if the government doesn't take immediate steps to save the language, it will be extinct soon.

Although there are 600 Rakhine families at nine villages in the upazila, a very few of them get chance to learn their mother language at own cost, Monchala said.

Master Kra Thum Sein said several hundred Rakhine families migrated to Patuakhali and Barguna from the Rakhine State in 1872 and living as an ethnic minority group since then.



Representatives of Bangladesh and India gather at function on no man's land at Benapole border in Jashore yesterday. Inset, border guards of the two countries greet each other with flowers. PHOTO: STAR

