



The Bangabhasha Lekhok Jadughar in Uttar Baravita, Kurigram, displays biographies and memorabilia of over 200 late poets and writers, alongside rare books and publications. Established by teacher and lyricist Touhid-ul Islam, the museum celebrates Bangla literature and culture, inspiring young generations to connect with their heritage. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

'BANGABHASHA LEKHOK JADUGHAR'

A teacher's mission to protect literary heritage

SDILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

In the quiet village of Uttar Baravita in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila, a unique tribute to Bangla literature stands as a testament to one man's dedication.

Built on 10 decimals of land, the "Bangabhasha Lekhok Jadughar," a museum preserving Bangla language and literature, showcases a treasure trove of rare books, biographies, and letters from celebrated writers and poets.

Opened in December 2023, this museum is only the second "Writer's Museum" in Bangladesh, following the Bangla Academy's Bardhaman House established in 2011.

Touhid-ul Islam, a 57-year-old teacher at Lalmonirhat Government Girls' High School and an accomplished lyricist, built this museum from a deep sense of responsibility to his culture.

Known for his Bhawaiya and modern song compositions aired on Bangladesh Betar and BTV, Touhid's devotion to Bangla heritage shines in his life's work.

With five galleries, the museum displays photographs and biographies of over 200

late poets and writers, alongside defunct Bangla newspapers and magazines that highlight the region's rich literary history.

Touhid said he began the project with Tk 2 lakh from the "IPDC-Prothom Alo Best Teacher Award" he received in 2022, supplementing the funds with his own earnings.



He also established a library on two decimals of land, boasting 6,000 books, and the Syed Shamsul Haque Cultural Club in 2021.

"I had to sell some of my land to support my vision, leaving me with just two bighas of farmland," he said.

His wife Begum Amina Sultana said, "Initially, we found his efforts unusual, but seeing the response and admiration he got from people, we now admire his commitment."

Their son Anupam Saikat Apu, a Dhaka University student, and college-goer daughter Nilanjana Saikat Nila echoed her.

giving chocolates to children who came to borrow books.

Students, teachers, and curious visitors from across the region come to explore the museum's collections and learn about the lives of poets and writers who helped shape Bangla literature.

"This museum has immense historical value," said local journalist Mahfuzar Rahman, noting that it offers people in the village a unique opportunity to connect with their heritage.

Touhid said, "I hope to preserve these collections in a more secure, concrete structure, as the current tin-shed building leaves the artefacts vulnerable."

"I do hope the government will support me to safeguard this cultural repository, but, if needed, I'm prepared to continue investing my own savings, including my retirement funds, to maintain the museum."

"My collection is inspiring this generation to thirst for knowledge," Touhid says, "and I believe it will guide future generations in understanding our historical heritage. The museum, library, and cultural club are my contributions to nation-building, and in that, I find my ultimate peace."

They said their father's work will remain as a contribution that will live on beyond their lifetime.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw that locals of various age groups visit the library. He also saw Touhid encouraging young readers by

WAR IN LEBANON

82 Bangladeshi expatriates return home

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 82 Bangladeshi expatriates have returned home from war-ravaged Lebanon in an Emirates Airlines flight.

The flight, EK-584, landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 11:00pm on Thursday, said a media release sent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The repatriation was made with the help of the ministries of foreign affairs, expatriate welfare and overseas employment, Bangladesh embassy in Lebanon's Beirut, and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

Among the returnees, 76 expatriates were repatriated at government expenses, while six others were funded by the IOM.

As of yesterday, a total of 697 Bangladeshi returned from Lebanon through 11 flights since the conflict started there.

The returnees were welcomed at the airport upon their arrival. Mostafa Jamil Khan, director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, exchanged greetings with the returnees and inquired about their well-being.

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MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Days after deciding to scrap a key festival over financial hardships, the indigenous Khasi community in the greater Sylhet region yesterday said they will be celebrating their New Year celebration as usual, thanks to the government's promise of full support.

Philah Pothimi, general secretary of the Khasi Social Council, said "Seng Kut Snem", a festival to welcome the New Year as per their calendar, will be held on November 23 with day-long festivities like the previous years.

Now the event will be organised in collaboration with the Chief Adviser's Office, he said, adding the news reports, including that of The Daily Star, on the

decision to cancel the event drew the attention of the government high-ups.

"After the news was published in The Daily Star and different other media outlets, the matter came to the attention of the government. The Chief Adviser's Office contacted us and assured full cooperation in celebrating the festival," he added.

On November 19, The Daily Star ran a report titled "Financial hardship forces Khasis to scrap key festival".

The report, quoting a Khasi community leader, said the people of the community couldn't raise enough funds to organise the programme due to economic challenges.

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TAZREEN FIRE

12 yrs on, justice still elusive
Say speakers

DU CORRESPONDENT

Justice for those killed in the Tazreen Fashions tragedy remains elusive even after 12 years, said speakers at an event yesterday.

They were speaking at a cover unveiling event for the book, "12 Years of Impunity: Tazreen Worker Murders — Stories of Fire and Life," marking nearly 12 years since the devastating fire at Tazreen Fashions, which killed at least 117 workers and injured over 150 others.

The book, published by Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati, a platform for RMG workers, was launched at Bishwo Shahitto Kendro at Banglamotor in the capital.

November 24 will mark over a decade since the tragic blaze at Tazreen Fashions, located in Nishchintipur, Ashulia.

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RAILWAY PROJECTS

AL govt misused public money

Says Adviser Fouzul Kabir

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The AL government misused public money in the name of developing the railway sector in the country during its 15-year rule, said Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the Ministry of Railways of the interim government.

The adviser made these comments while he was visiting the Central Locomotive Workshop (Keloka) in Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur yesterday.

After arriving at Saidpur Airport, the adviser went to Keloka at around 11:00am by road.

Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan criticised the previous AL government for the billions of taka that was squandered without focusing on improving passenger services or facilities.

"The previous government expanded the network everywhere without any proper studies, but the quality of services and passenger benefits were largely ignored," he said.

He accused the past AL government of building extravagant railway stations in places like Gopalganj, allegedly to appease the then ministers and MPs, even where such infrastructure was not needed.

Additionally, he cited the Karnaphuli Tunnel, constructed at a cost of Tk 10,000 crore, as an example of ineffective planning, claiming that it currently sees little to no vehicular use.

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