

Ekushey book fair opens

PM urges parents to give more books to children

Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha Dhaka

THE prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, on Wednesday urged parents and guardians to acquaint the new generation with treasures of books to instill into them the reading habit to build an enlightened society and keep up the spirit of Amar Ekushey.

'I call upon you to give your children more and more books and contribute to building a brilliant society,' she said while inaugurating the month-long Ekushey Book Fair 2012 on Bangla Academy premises in Dhaka in the afternoon.

The premier also noted that poets and litterateurs through their creative writings could implant spirit of Ekushey in new generation and bring back the persons gone astray to the right track.

Sheikh Hasina paid her rich tributes to the 1952 Language Movement martyrs and urged all to remain vigilant in upholding their spirit saying 'Ekushey (February, 1952) is a source of Bengali nationalism and glory, and Amar Ekushey Book Fair is the manifestation of that spirit.'

'Ekushey Book Fair is an illuminating landmark of our cultural rekindling and

The prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, flips through a book at a stall on the Bangla Academy premises in Dhaka on Wednesday after inaugurating the Ekushey Book Fair 2012.

— New Age photo

largest cultural festival of the nation, where the Bengali people regain their self-confidence, rediscover them afresh and come up with self-revelation,' she said.

'The renaissance generated through the language movement has epoch making pervasiveness in our literature, culture and polity, she added.

British poet, researcher of Bengali language and literature and former professor of London School of Oriental Language and African Studies, William Radichi joined as the guest of honour the ceremony presided over by Bangla Academy chairman Professor Anisuzzaman.

Information minister Abul Kalam Azad and state minister for cultural affairs Pramod Mankin, among others, also addressed the ceremony while Bangla Academy director general Shamzumman Khan gave the welcome address and cultural personality Ramendu Majumdar conducted the function.

The prime minister said the international community with profound respect now recalls 'our sacrifice for mother language and our devotion' which is inspiring others to protect their mother languages and helping many endangered dialects to survive.'

She expressed her government's firm resolve to uphold the dignity of mother language, saying Bangladesh

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established the International Mother Language Institute also to carry out research works on mother languages of other nations and ethnic minority groups and for their preservation and development.

Laying importance on publishing quality books, the premier said, 'Every year a huge number of books are published coinciding with the Ekushey Book Fair but we have to attach utmost importance to quality than the quantity.'

She also gave importance to protecting the rights of the writers to encourage their creativity and called upon all concerned to take more initiative to protect the copyrights of the writers and publishers.

Revisiting the contemporary history of the nation, Sheikh Hasina recalled the leadership of the Father of the Nation during the Language Movement in 1952 for which he was imprisoned time and again.

She also recalled the contribution of language veteran

Dhirendranath Dutta, who first placed the demand in the then Pakistan National Assembly in 1948 for making Bangla one of the state languages.

The prime minister mentioned that Bangla Academy at the inspiration and patronage of Bangabandhu had arranged the first Jatiya Sahitya Sammilan in 1974, which was the first august gathering of country's eminent poets, litterateurs, novelists and drama troupes.

In that auspicious gathering, she said, Bangabandhu highlighted the essence of Bengali nationalism, culture, principle and ideology. The present government is following the path of Bangabandhu, she said.

Sheikh Hasina said her government has taken steps for strengthening the research activities of the Bangla Academy. A museum on the language movement and another on eminent writers were established at the academy which is expanding the cultural activities up to rural level, she said.