

## Ekushey book fair opens

Translate Bangla books into other languages: PM

Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha Dhaka

THE prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, has laid importance on translation of the popular books of Bengali literature into other languages and vice versa to enrich Bangla language.

There is a wrong perception in a section of people that Bangla language will face debacle if we give importance to other languages. Rather, Bangla will be enriched if we take massive programme for translation of important books into Bangla and vice versa, she said.

I will be happy if our litterateur and people don't suffer from the confusion and give importance to the learning of other important languages, she said while inaugurating the Amar Ekushey Book Fair on the premises of Bangla Academy in the capital Friday.

The prime minister said her government was trying to make Bangla as one of the official languages of the United Nations. I hope that we would be able to earn the recognition, she said.

The prime minister said

all state members of the UN were observing Ekushey (February 21) as International Mother Language Day. And we have earned the recognition with the help of our expatriate Bangladeshis, she said, adding, With the united efforts of all we will be able to give UN status to our mother language.

The minister for cultural affairs, Abul Kalam Azad, attended the function as the special guest while the director general of Bangla Academy, Shamsuzzaman Khan, gave the welcome address.

With president of Bangla Academy and Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman in the chair, the function was also addressed, among others, by managing director of UPL, Mohiuddin Ahmed on behalf of the publishers.

The inaugural function began with playing of the national anthem, recitation of the verses from the main religious books of different religions and immortal Ekushey song Amar bhayer rokte rangano ekushey February. Besides, one-minute

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silence was observed in memory of the martyrs of the language movement.

Praising the role of Bangla Academy in promoting Bangla language, literature and culture the prime minister said the academy since its inception in 1955 was making relentless efforts for intellectual development of the Bengali people.

The enemies of Bangali nationalism have a wrath on the academy. So the occupied forces destroyed the academy during the War of Liberation. Despite enormous obstacles and destruction, the Academy is carrying out its activities for progress of the Bengali culture and heritage, she said.

The prime minister said

the government had taken initiative to prepare a legal framework to strengthen the activities of the Bangla Academy. She said a committee would also be formed to formulate a jatiya grantha niti (national book policy).

Ekushey, she said, is a source of inspiration of Bengali people. It's a tale of the valor and sacrifice of the nation to establish its right to speak in mother tongue. The spirit of the language movement had inspired Sheikh Mujib for movement of freedom, she said.

Hasina said after independence, Mujib had taken Bangla to international stage by delivering speech in the UN in Bangla. Mujib inspired Bangla Academy to arrange

first Jatiya Sahitya Sammelan (national literature conference) in 1974.

In this grand conference, Mujib vividly described about the Bangali nationalism, and policy and ideology of the Bengali people. We are striving for implementing that policy of father of the nation, she said.

The prime minister said traditionally Bengali people were progressive. The nation is constituted with the people of many religions, classes and castes which is our pride, she said.

Laying importance on cultivation of Bengali literature at all sphere of the society, she said, the spirit of Bengali national should be promoted to resist the evil forces, militancy and

terrorism.

The prime minister appreciated the efforts of the Bangla Academy for organising the Ekushey Book Fair and said, The fair has created an opportunity for us to be involved with the contemporary literature and knowledge.

For the new writers, she said, the fair is a centre of learning and fostering their creativity and talents. It is also more important for the visitors, readers and others participants for their cultural and mental development, she said.

The prime minister said the government would actively consider the proposal to shift the Ekushey Book Fair to the wide space near Shikha Chirantan at Suharwardi Udyan.