

### Abul Mansur's 24th death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 24th death anniversary of Abul Mansur Ahmad, a renowned litterateur, journalist and statesman of the sub-continent, will be observed today, (Tuesday, 18 March, 2003) says a press release.

The Abul Mansur Ahmad Memorial Committee has organised a do mahfil at Dhaka and Mymensingh on the occasion.

One of the greatest satirists of Bengali literature, Abul Mansur Ahmad was also a renowned politician, lawyer and a leading journalist. He was the editor of Daily Krishak, Nabajug and Ittehad in undivided Bengal and a pioneer in progressive journalism.

A successful politician, Abul Mansur Ahmad was the provincial education minister in the United Front cabinet under Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq and the central commerce and industries minister in the Awami League government of Prime Minister Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy. He was known for his strong stand on matters of interest of East Bengal.

Abul Mansur Ahmad's publications include great satires like Aina, Asmani Purdah, Gulliverer Safar Nama and Food Conference. His works also include great writings on social and political history of Bengal. He has two autobiographical writings--Atma Katha (About myself) and Amar Dekha Rajnitr Panchash Bachar (50 years of politics as I have seen it).

Abul Mansur Ahmad always propagated secularism in a manner unparalleled in the forties, fifties and sixties. His contribution towards opposition movement in the early days of Pakistan was extremely significant.

He wrote about the language issue from the early forties and contributed to the Language Movement as editor of the Ittehad. He was the author of the election manifesto of Jukta Front (a grand coalition of the three giants of our politics, Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq, Moulana Bhashani and Shaheed Suhrawardy) in the 1954 election in which the Muslim League was ousted from power. The 21-point programme (Ekush Dafa) was the first comprehensive articulation of the political, economic and cultural demands of the Bengalis of the then eastern part of Pakistan.

Bangla Academy has recently published three volumes of Abul Mansur's collected works. Three more volumes are under print.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was one of the greatest political personalities of Bangladesh who combined rare talents in three distinct fields--politics, journalism and literary writing.

### Rally in support of Enayet Pir in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Speakers at a public meeting held here yesterday warned of the government of serious consequences if the Barisal City Corporation polls are rigged.

The meeting was held in support of the 'Nagorik Parishad' candidate Enayet Pir Khan. Pir is backed by the Awami League, CPB, Workers Party, JSD and JP (Manzu).

The meeting was addressed by Awami League presidium member Amir Hossain Amu, former ministers Tofail Ahmed and Motia Chowdhury, KM Jahangir, MP Shahjahan Khan, and Rashid Khan Menon. Monjurul Ahsan Khan, president of the CPB, JSD president Hasanul Huq Inu, and mayoral candidate Enayet Pir Khan also spoke on the occasion.

Speakers told the meeting that the government had pushed the country below the poverty line, something that never happened before.

Lawlessness has reached such a level that even the police personnel are not safe they said while urging people to vote for Enayet Pir.

Later, a big procession was brought out in support of Pir.

Today two other mayor candidates will bring out processions to impress the voters.

### On fast track

FROM PAGE 12 Parbatipur via Ishwardi on the western side of the river is expected to end by July.

The Jamtoli-Parbatipur component includes renovation of 165 bridges and culverts, repair of station buildings and installation of ballast and slippers.

## Khaleda calls for enhanced use of herbal medicine

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called on scientists, research institutions and local pharmaceutical companies to encourage exploration, identification and massive cultivation of medicinal plants and promote awareness about their usefulness.

"If necessary, a social movement may be necessary for this," she said, adding that modern cultivation practices and creation of medicinal plant gardens must be increased to make such movement a success.

The PM inaugurated the international conference on "The Role of Taxonomy in Herbal Medicine and Conservation Policy of Floral Diversity" in the Bangladesh National Herbarium premises yesterday morning.

Organised by the Bangladesh Association of Plant Taxonomists

(BAPT), the three-day conference is being sponsored jointly by UNESCO and Hamdard, and attended by nearly 200 participants from home and abroad including representatives from China, India, Nepal and Thailand.

Presided over by BAPT president Dr AKM Nurul Islam, the function was also addressed by Minister for Environment and Forest Shahjahan Siraj, State Minister Jafrul Islam Chowdhury and secretary Sabihuddin Ahmed and general secretary of BAPT Dr M Matiuir Rahman.

The prime minister said Bangladesh rang the alarm bell that the country's "rich biodiversity is on the verge of extinction due to unplanned and weak management as well as the pressures of increased population".

"It's essential to ensure sustainable use and conservation of all bio-diversity in the interest of our existence," she said.

She mentioned the rising trend in the use of medicinal plants worldwide, including Bangladesh, and the World Health Organisation's recognition of Unani, Ayurvedi and Tibbia systems of treatment in primary healthcare.

She said medicinal plants not only provide the raw materials for herbal medicine but also form the basis of several chemical products, and stressed the need for increasing production of medicinal plants.

Khaleda Zia however warned against fraudulent medical practices in the name of herbal medicine. She also acknowledged the contribution of Professor Salar Khan, an eminent plant taxonomist, to the establishment of the National Herbarium.

Earlier, the prime minister planted the sapling of a herbal plant.

### Country is above Party, PM tells JCD leaders

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said she wants to see her party's student front as an ideal, well-organised and patriotic organisation dedicated to people's welfare.

"Party is above individuals, and country is above the party," she reminded the leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), BNP's student front, when she made a courtesy call on her at the International Conference Center yesterday.

JCD, whose central body and Dhaka University (DU) unit had been dissolved earlier, carried out intensive re-organisational activities during the last six months and held a conference at the DU Teacher-Student Center (TSC) on Sunday with representatives of its newly elected executive committees of different units.

Khaleda Zia asserted that national interests should come first and told the student leaders to support pro-people programmes of the government. She also asked them to participate in voluntary activities during their free time.

She said party's unity is the foremost thing in order for politics to be beneficial to people.

The BNP chairperson also asked the student leaders to ensure congenial educational atmosphere in all educational institutions.

BNP's senior joint secretary general Tarek Rahman, joint secretary general and PM's political secretary Haris Chowdhury, student affairs secretary and State Minister for Health Amanullah Aman and PM's political secretary Mosaddek Ali were present.

At the outset of the meeting, JCD president Shahabuddin Laltu presented a brief of JCD's future plans and programmes. JCD general secretary Azizul Bari Helal was also present.

### Khosru rejects demand for administrator at BGMEA

STAR REPORT

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday rejected the demand by a faction of garment exporters for appointment of an administrator at the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

The Oikya Jote, a group of garment exporters formed before the January election of the BGMEA, met the commerce minister and said the new BGMEA committee was elected illegally, sources said.

The minister rejected the demand of the Jote and asked them to accept the polls result for the sake of the readymade garment sector.

The BGMEA election was held on January 28 this year. Although the Jote declared its participation in the election, it withdrew a few hours before the voting started.

A Jote delegation led by Abdul Manna, a ruling BNP lawmaker and former minister, met the commerce minister with the demand.

The commerce minister told the Jote that the newly elected committee bagged 78 per cent vote in the election, which proves its popularity.

### Public prosecution

FROM PAGE 12 by the court," he said.

The minister said government is identifying such detainees, especially women, and would give legal support to them.

He said in every district funds for legal aid under committees headed by district judges have not been used in the last three years. "These funds can be used for the cases of rural women and children who are in jail," he said. He called upon the women lawyers to come forward in this regard.

Professor Kathryn B Ward of the Department of Sociology, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, presented the keynote paper at the session, which was presided over by the Minister for Science and Information and Communication Technology, Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan.

Earlier in the first session of the two-day congress, organised by Khan Foundation, home minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury appealed to people to help improve law and order.

He said the number of police personnel was not adequate. "The government will increase their number in the upcoming budget and the process will continue."

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, Shahin Amin, team leader of Manusher Janno, and Advocate Rokhsana Khondokar, executive director, Khan Foundation spoke on the occasion among others.

### Muhuri Murder

FROM PAGE 12 Sources said the three were being interrogated by the DB men.

Azam told them he had joined Shibir at the request of notorious Shibir cadre Habib Khan and that he (Habib) still possesses four AK-47 rifles.

Habib is also an absconding convict in the Muhuri murder case and he was awarded life imprisonment. He also is the prime accused in the ward commissioner Liaquat Ali Khan murder case.

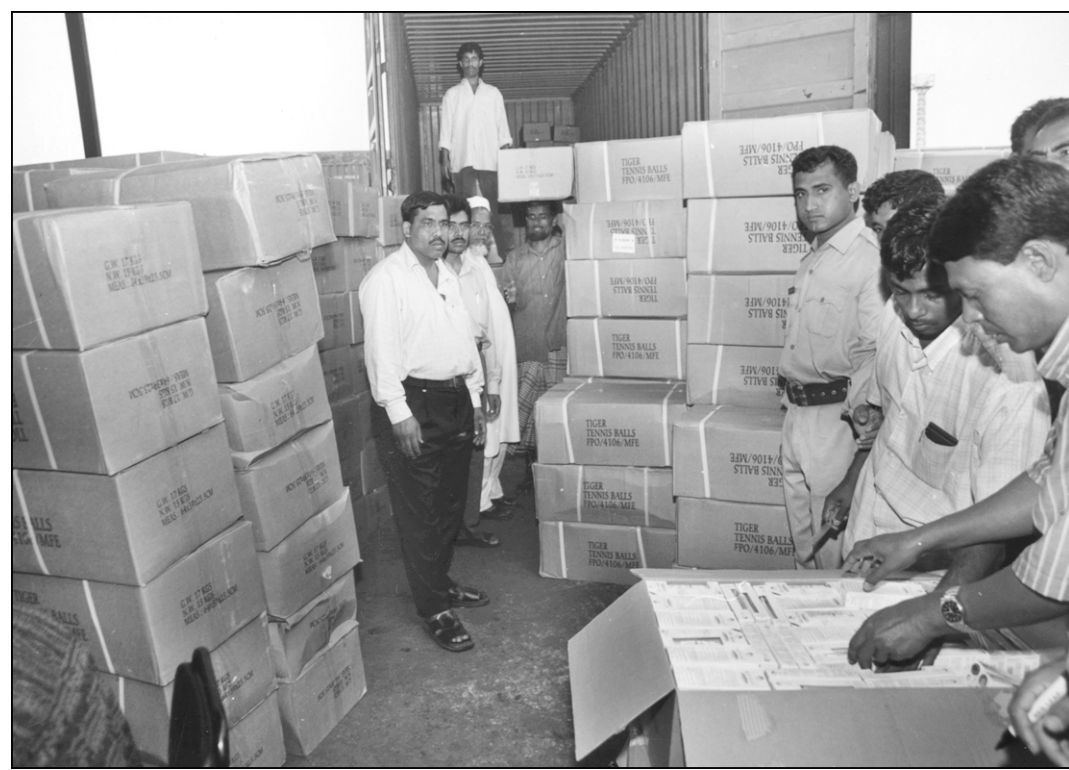


PHOTO: STAR

Customs officials unpack a carton of cosmetic products after a seizure of illegally imported cigarettes and cosmetics worth about Tk 1 crore at the Kamalapur Container Terminal yesterday.

## Guns, bombers ready to roar

FROM PAGE 1

He said that China's attitude toward military action in Iraq would remain identical on his watch as foreign minister. "We support using the framework of the United Nations to obtain a political resolution to the Iraq problem," he said, urging people to "keep your fingers crossed for peace".

Yesterday, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said his country would not agree to a UN resolution legitimising war, and called on the UN to give weapons inspectors the time they needed to disarm Iraq peacefully.

Meanwhile, UN chief weapons inspector Hans Blix was preparing to give the Security Council 30-page report later yesterday. It would list around a dozen key remaining disarmament tasks that Iraq should complete in the coming months.

France called for an emergency UN ministerial meeting today to set a timetable for Iraq's peaceful disarmament, ignoring the 24-hour deadline set by the US and UK at Sunday's summit.

Russia backed the French proposal, the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

"[Blix's] report will touch on the further programme of the work of the international inspectors, and

will indicate their key disarmament tasks," the agency quoted Fedotov as saying.

"We hope it will be possible to settle the situation on the basis of the UN security council resolutions and by means of further inspections."

Late Sunday evening, the security council scheduled closed consultations on Iraq at 10:00am (1500 GMT) yesterday to discuss the resolution sponsored by the US, Britain and Spain, setting an ultimatum for Iraq to disarm within days or face war.

Washington could call for a vote but, as the resolution does not have the support of a majority of the 15 council members, and could face up to three vetoes, it may choose to abandon the resolution rather than face a vote it seems unlikely to win.

**Inspectors told to quit Iraq**

As the push for war continued, the US advised UN weapons inspectors to begin pulling out of Baghdad.

Head of the International Atomic Energy Agency Mohamed El Baradei said the advice had been given, late Sunday night, to both teams of inspectors, those looking for signs of nuclear weapons, and those searching for biological and

chemical weapons.

"Late last night... I was advised by the US government to pull out our inspectors from Baghdad," Mr Baradei told the IAEA's board of governors today. He said that the UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, and the security council, had been informed. The council was to take up the issue later yesterday.

UN officials have said that the inspectors and support staff in Iraq, numbering around 60, could be evacuated in as little as 48 hours.

No-one has yet given the order for inspectors and staff to begin pulling out. Mr Blix said that he planned to present a proposal to the Security Council today that would extend the inspections regime by several months.

When asked by reporters at the UN whether inspectors would continue their work today, Blix said: "Yes, unless we call them back."

Germany yesterday closed its embassy in Baghdad and its charge d'affaires left Iraq for Jordan, the German foreign ministry said. Sunday, Germany advised its citizens to leave Iraq immediately.

The US State Department Sunday night ordered non-essential personnel and all family members to leave Israel, Kuwait and Syria.

## SL seek a twist in tale

FROM PAGE 1

Muttiah Muralitharan took 3-26 as the Aussies were bowled out for just 162 in last September's ICC Champions Trophy semifinal and they eased home by seven wickets with 10 overs to spare.

Sanath Jayasuriya (122) and Marvan Atapattu (101) were the match-winners two months ago in Sydney as an opening stand of 237 paved the way to a total of 343-5, with Australia falling 79 runs short of their target.

Those three players, along with leading wicket-taker Chaminda Vaas, are likely to be the key figures again if Sri Lanka are to reach the final for the first time since their 1996 triumph.

They also have an advantage in that David Whatmore understands the Australian way of doing things perhaps better than any other coach - hardly surprising as he played seven Tests for them in the 1970s.

"We play a similar brand of cricket to theirs - aggressive, in your face cricket. That's why we've been able to beat Australia in the past," Whatmore commented.

Sri Lanka will also take heart from Australia's problems in their two previous games at Port Elizabeth against England and New Zealand, both of which they would have lost but for the batting of Michael Bevan and Andy Bichel.

Bevan returns to the Australian team, having been rested for the

Super Six match against Kenya, but the loss of Damien Martyn with a broken finger is a potentially significant setback.

Groundstaff at St George's Park believe this pitch will have more pace and bounce and if their predictions come true, Australia plan to make the most of it.

Jayasuriya was roughed up by paceman Brett Lee in their last match at Centurion, suffering a cracked thumb and bruised arm.

Both he and opening partner Atapattu can expect more of the same.

"Intent and intimidate -- those are words that were used at the start of the tournament. It will be just a progression of what we started," skipper Ricky Ponting commented.

"We just need to keep performing at a higher level and if we keep doing it, I can't see any reason why we can't take it (the trophy) home."

Sri Lanka's main dilemma concerns whether to keep faith with batsman Avishka Gunawardene, who made 41 against Zimbabwe, or recall the hugely talented, but wretchedly out of form Mahela Jayawardene.

Whoever plays, they are aware of the need to avoid early lapses.

"They want to run down the opposition all the time, right from the start. If we can dominate the first hour of the game, it will be very important," said captain Jayasuriya.

## War to fan out

FROM PAGE 1

without any veto power will vote against the move.

"An attack on Iraq could be interpreted by people as an attack on Muslims," says the German envoy.

"Organisations like al-Qaeda will definitely be happy in the event of an attack on Iraq. They (al-Qaeda) will cash in on the situation and many Muslims may join them, he added.

However, he said Saddam Hussein is a dictator who killed his own people and the world would be happy if he steps down today.

"Peaceful disarmament of Iraq is possible, otherwise we would not have taken resolution 1441. And there is no need of a second resolution," he said. Destruction of al-Samoud missiles by Iraq is an impressive development for a peaceful solution, the German envoy thinks.

Lummaux said the UN resolution 1441 only gives assent to disar-

mament of Iraq and not any regime change, which the USA is pressing for.

Nations should try to find a decision on a multilateral basis under the aegis of the UN, otherwise the UN would become a rubber-stamp organisation, says the French ambassador.

Both envoys said a war without UN approval would put the world body in a danger of being irrelevant.

They explained their position in case all diplomatic efforts fail and war breaks out, saying their countries would not side with anybody with hopes that the war would be short-lived.

They also said they would come forward with financial assistance in reconstruction of Iraq after war, if any.

The Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh organised a programme at the Jatiya Press Club, where the two European envoys briefed the press.

### Shazneen case

FROM PAGE 1

for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka.

Judge Kazi Rahamat Ullah then adjourned the hearing till today.

During the three-hour cross-examination, Masum told the court that on September 27, 1998, the investigation officer (IO) of the case took Shahid to the place of occurrence and he (Shahid) voluntarily narrated the incident in detail.

The IO recorded his (Masum) statement on the Shazneen murder case in the second week of June, 1998 and his statement on the rape case in the third week of October that year.

The witness further said he contacted Hasan twice on the night of the incident over mobile telephone from the Gulshan residence of Latifur Rahman (Shazneen's father). "The following day, I found Hasan at Latifur Rahman's residence and asked him why he did not come there although he was contacted two times. But Hasan replied he could not come as his motorbike was out of order."

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, the youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

Special public prosecutors (PPs) Arfan Uddin Khan, Saima Khanam and Assistant PP Anisur Rahman appeared for the state. Advocates MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam, Mosharraf Hossain Kazol and Abdus Salam Bhuiyan represented the accused.

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### Rejoinder

FROM PAGE 1

submitted to the government last Saturday, said Justice Sultan.

A copy of a rejoinder signed by him was carried to The Daily Star office by a police officer Sunday evening and another copy was faxed from the office of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Although the word was not used in the report, some other news media also quoted him as saying fundamentalists and extremists might be involved in the blasts.

### Tapan murder

FROM PAGE 12

Baig Moazzem Hossain Sabu, outgoing president of Sadar thana Jubodal, and the other to Noor Mohammad, the chairman candidate of the four-party alliance.

Niranjan and his family supported Noor Mohammad, which infuriated Sabu and caused him to seek revenge, said AL Leaders.