



Abul Mansur Ahmad's 108th anniversary of birth today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 108th birth anniversary of Abul Mansur Ahmad, a renowned litterateur, journalist and statesman of the sub-continent, will be observed today, says a press release.

Different socio-cultural organisations, including the Abul Mansur Ahmad Memorial Committee, have taken up programmes to mark the day. Doa mahfil will be held at Dhaka and Mymensingh on the occasion. And prayers will be offered at his grave in the morning.

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 the then East Bengal.

Abul Mansur Ahmad's publications include great satires like Aina, Asmani Purdah, Gulliver's 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 Rajnitir 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.

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.

SM Shafiul Azam



Today is the 83rd birth anniversary of SM Shafiul Azam, the doyen of Civil Service of Pakistan and Bangladesh, says a press release.

A former chief secretary of the then East Pakistan, he also served as cabinet secretary, deputy chairman of planning commission and minister for jute, commerce and industry, and mineral resources and energy after independence. He passed away on December 4, 1991.

SM Shafiul Azam Memorial Committee has drawn up elaborate programmes to mark his birth anniversary.

Special programmes will also be held at Dr SM Muhammadul Haque Government Primary School and Shazadi Latifa Khatun Forkania Madrasa at his village home in Chittagong. Prayers will also be offered for salvation of the departed soul and aims will be distributed among the destitute.

Two people were killed when a bus ploughed through an engine-run van in Kolaroa upazila on Satkhira-Jessore Road yesterday.

Local sources said the Satkhira-bound bus hit the van at Jhikra at about 10:00am, leaving two of its passengers critically injured. They both were taken to Sadar Hospital where they succumbed to their injuries.

The deceased were identified as Mintu, 25, son of Babar Ali of Muratikathi village and Ibrahim, son of Daud Ali of Gopinathpur village in Kolaroa upazila.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES

'WB, IMF aggravate situation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Behind the veil of poverty alleviation programmes, the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) - the two predatory organisations, are actually aggravating the situation in the country, said a spokesman of Alliance for Economic Justice, Bangladesh (AEJB) at a press conference yesterday.

The AEJB, a platform of 36 organisations including Campaign for Good Governance, organised the press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium prior to 50th summit of WB and IMF scheduled to be held in Singapore on September 14 to 20.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, secretary of the Campaign for Good Governance, tabled a number of proposals urging immediate reforms in those two organisations.

Holding up the UNDP's Human Development Report 2005, he said, "Most countries are off track to meet the MDGs. Human Development is faltering in some key areas, and deep inequalities are already widening."

In a keynote paper Rezaul demanded sovereignty of the country in choosing sustainable economic strategy as the record proved that conditions imposed by WB and IMF have increased the rate of poverty and make room for plunder instead of production.

"The poor countries have to be provided with unconditional debt," he said, adding that proper investigation into the disbursement policy of debt is also necessary.

Rezaul said, "Debt flow has been slimmed in these days comparing to those during military regime, the people will not bear the onus of the corrupt government."

He also insisted that the IMF has to be withdrawn from the process of debt disbursement.

The paper showed despite the review of the National Board of Revenue that withdrawing tax facility and incentives from the export-oriented agro-processing industry will create hazard for the economy, the government had to bow down to the condition of WB and IMF for releasing the sixth instalment of Poverty Reduction & Growth Facility (PRGF) debt.

The WB and IMF with larger share and capital are in a position to determine the fate of the least developed countries, Rezaul said, adding, "We demand equal participation, a balance between the developed and the least developed countries."

Pointing finger at the two organisations for making the domestic firms like BAPEX, and Petro Bangla inactive, he said they have made room for foreign exploration companies like Unicol/Oxidant, Niko and Asia Energy and thus restricted government's authority to monitor, research and extraction of natural resources.

"Even they fuelled the military juntas in Sudan, Burma and Congo to pile up bucks and heralded destruction to their reserves," he added.

Rezaul said the WB and IMF are now exerting all their efforts to

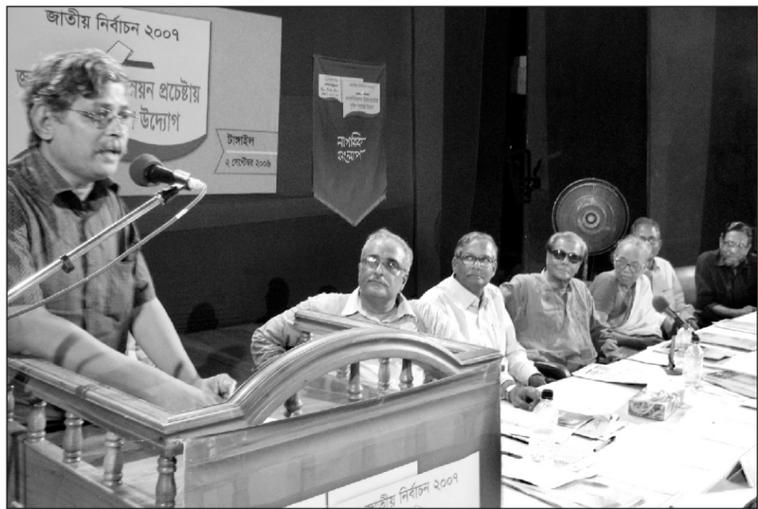
reduce government control over social programmes in education, health, water, power, telephone and infrastructure sectors and imposed privatisation and tightening of government expenditure.

"The WB allured a project worth Tk 100 million and demanded increase of fee in government institutions. In last 50 years they contributed nothing but now have decided to assist on condition of leaving the power sector to private ownership," he added.

Transparency and accountability have to be ensured from home rather than from the WB-IMF-prescribed 'governance special-ists', Rezaul said, demanding 'Full disclosure of Policy' from the local WB and IMF offices.

It has to be ensured that the upcoming summit will focus on 'Governance and Anti Corruption', he said adding that instead of playing the role of 'Global Policeman' the WB and IMF will have to assist all countries to sign a UN convention against corruption.

To intervene the WB and IMF move, the AEJB has adopted some draft proposals which would be publicised through a number of programmes including seminars on September 4, 6 and 11, submitting memorandum to deputy commissioners of 46 districts, lawmakers and finance minister, holding rally and forming human chain on September 16 in 46 districts, participating at Singapore summit and creating awareness through holding meeting there.



Muhammad Zafar Iqbal speaks at a dialogue titled 'Election 2007: Campaign for honest and competent candidates' at Bhashani Hall in Tangail town yesterday. Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised the discussion with joint collaboration of The Daily Star, Prothom Alo and Channel i.

Rickshaw owner found dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rickshaw owner, who has been missing from Dakkhin Shahjahanpur since Friday, was found dead at Uttar Shahjahanpur under Motijheel Police Station in the city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Moahammad Ratan Mia, 22. Police recovered his body at 7:00am yesterday.

Ratan had been missing since Friday night after one boy called him out of his residence at around 11:00pm saying that one Sharif is

looking for him, victim's family sources said.

The morgue source at Dhaka Medical College said Ratan's neck was tied with a red tape and his body bore marks of several sharp injuries.

Victim's brother told The Daily Star that one Sharif threatened Ratan of taking revenge for slapping his daughter around two weeks ago.

The victim's family filed a murder case accusing Sharif along with three others in this connection.

Joy arrives today

UNB, Dhaka

Sajib Wazed Joy, son of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, arrives in Dhaka from the USA today, AL sources said.

Joy, 35, visited Bangladesh last month.



Discussion

Steps Towards Development will hold a discussion on 'The importance of CEDAW charter and the stand of Bangladesh' to mark the CEDAW Day. Venue: Steps office, Lalmitia. Time: 3:00pm.

Inaugural ceremony

The inaugural ceremony of 'Sultan Gallery' and 'Bhasha Prakash Writers' Corner' will be held. Venue: Concord Emporium Shopping Centre. Time: 4:00pm.

MoU signing

Bangladesh Olympic Association will sign an MoU with Tata Steel limited India for higher training for the players of national team in different events. Venue: Kurmitola Golf Club. Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion

Bangladesh Chhatra League organises a discussion in memory of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Mujib. Venue: Engineers' Institute auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar

Assembly for Protection of Hijab Bangladesh will organise a seminar entitled 'Hijab in the light of human rights'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.



BNP has erected decorative arches in the city's Nayabazar area on the occasion of its 28th founding anniversary, causing traffic congestion. The picture was taken yesterday.

GENDER EQUALITY

Call to change attitude towards women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called for a change in the attitude towards women to stop all forms of violence against them.

Men must come forward to promote gender equality and ensure human rights, they said.

Khan Foundation organised the seminar titled 'Judicial Gender Equality and Human Rights -- Broadening the Spectrum' at its auditorium in the city. Some 50 judges from across the country attended the seminar.

Judges being sensitised with the fact and real condition of women in society can play a vital role in promoting women's rights and improving the situation, said Chief Justice Syed JR Muddassir Husain.

He spoke of 5 R's -- raid on criminals, rescuing the victims, recovery of

the victims from physical and mental trauma, rehabilitation and reorientation of the victims -- which are needed to stop violence against women and make them productive citizens.

He also called for improved law enforcement mechanism and review of some laws to end the scourge of violence.

Presenting the keynote paper, Justice Douglas R Campbell of Canada highlighted the importance of close relationship between the judiciary and the community and of training of judges to enhance their understanding on women's issues and human rights.

While delivering verdict in cases relating to violence against women, judges should feel the pains of women who were oppressed, he said.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said, "We are trying to empower women as it is one of our priorities."

Mentioning the government efforts to ensure gender equality and human rights, he said investment in women's development always brings better returns for the nation.

"We plan to make arrangements for free education of women up to degree level if we are voted to power in the next general election", he added.

The minister also stressed the need for raising awareness to end violence against women.

Executive Director of Khan Foundation Advocate Rokhsana Khondker also spoke at the seminar chaired by Minister for Science and Information and Communication Technology Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan.

Implement electoral reforms

Demands Jatiya Oikya Front

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Jatiya Oikya Front (JOF) yesterday called on the government to implement the proposals for reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission.

At a meeting of the JOF liaison committee held at the Jatiya Oikya Manch office in the city, the leaders strongly criticised the government for appointing a partisan person as an election commissioner.

They also urged the people to wage a mass movement against corrupt people, black money holders and those who harbour militants and bombers.

Secretary General of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) Major (Retd.) Abdul Mannan presided over the meeting.

Former whip Abdur Rouf, engineer Abul Kashem, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation Secretary General Maolana Zakir Hossain, BDB Joint Secretary General Firoz M Hasan, Organising Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury MP, Jatiya Oikya Manch steering committee member Advocate Zahurul Islam, convenor committee member Moshtak Ahmed and assistant office secretary Rafiqul Islam Pathik attended the meeting.

Terry Fox Run to raise fund for cancer research

Terry Fox Run was held in the city yesterday to raise money for cancer research in the country, says a press release.

Every year more than 50 countries organise their own Terry Fox Run on September 2 to raise funds to fight cancer.

The High Commission of Canada in Dhaka organised the run which was participated by some 350 runners, families and children.

An amount of Tk 4,20,000 was raised from the run which will be donated to Gene Cure Health Care.

The sponsors of the event included American International School in Dhaka, Banglalink, Garib and Garib Co Ltd, Homebound, IDLC, Niko Standard Chartered Bank and Canadian companies doing business in Bangladesh.

Terry Fox of British Columbia, Canada was 18 years old when he was diagnosed with bone cancer. His right leg was amputated 15 cm above the knee in an effort to stop the disease. In hospital, Terry was so moved that he decided to run across Canada, more than 8500 km, to raise money for cancer patients.

80 houses gutted in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 80 slum houses were gutted and properties worth around Tk 10 lakh damaged in a devastating fire in the port city yesterday.

According to sources, the fire broke out at a house of one Asad Sawdagar at Asadganj Post Office Lane under Kotwali Police Station at around 9:45am.

The fire that reportedly originated from an electric short circuit soon engulfed other houses of adjoining 10 slums.

Seven fire fighting units from different fire stations of the city rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze with the help of the locals after two hours.

Around 400 people have been rendered homeless.

Housewife kills herself under train in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A housewife committed suicide by jumping under the wheels of a running train at Gazipur yesterday morning.

Lovely Akhter, 22, died on the spot while her two and a half year old son Leon, who was in her lap, was severely injured.

The victim's family members claimed her marital unhappiness to be the cause of her suicide and that she was having conjugal feuds with her husband for the last few weeks.

She left the house with her son at around 8:00am yesterday, family sources added.

Witnesses informed that Lovely suddenly jumped before a Dhaka-bound train with her son in her lap near Hydrabad area at Gazipur and died on the spot.

The locals rushed Leon to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in serious condition.

Relatives of the deceased took the body to her village home for burial without autopsy.

OBSTRUCTION TO BUYING TENDER Court frames charges against 11 JCD men tomorrow

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will frame charges against 11 Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders and activists tomorrow.

They were arrested for preventing participants from bidding in a tender at the Construction Maintenance Management Unit (CMMU) of the health ministry on July 30.

After scrutinising the case docket (CD) and other relevant documents, Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza of the Speedy Trial Court-6 will pass the order on the issue.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 13 JCD leaders and activists at the CMMU while they were making obstructions for the tender bidders from buying schedules and dropping those on July 30.

Rab pressed charges against 11 JCD leaders and activists on August 10. Later, the investigation officer (IO) dropped names of five others,

including a fugitive from the charge sheet, as their names and addresses, given by four accused in their confessional statements, were not correct.

They told a metropolitan magistrate on August 20 that Shaikot and Asad, two JCD leaders of Fazlul Haq Muslim Hall of Dhaka University, engaged them to obstruct buying and dropping of tender schedules for jobs worth around Tk 400 crore.

Two of the chargesheeted accused -- Asaduzzaman Asad and AKM Azad Swadhin are still at large and the court had earlier directed the authorities concerned to publish an advertisement in a national daily asking them to appear before it to face trial.

The last date for buying the schedules for the three projects under the development budget was August 1, while the next day was the deadline for dropping the tender schedules, which were being sold at 36 places across the country, sources said.

MURDER CASE AGAINST MIRZA ABBAS, 4 OTHERS Further hearing on petition for withdrawal of case Sept 28

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed September 28 for further hearing on the government petition for withdrawal of the Constable Abu Naser murder case filed against Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, his brother DCC Ward Commissioner Mirza Khokon and three others in February 2001.

After hearing from the prosecution and the defence on the issue on August 29, Judge Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court did not withdraw the case and set the date for the next hearing.

Earlier on July 17, Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdullah Mahmud Hassan submitted the petition along with a home ministry letter that recommended withdrawal of the case, saying it was a "politically motivated" one.

The petition also sought withdrawal of the charges against three other accused Shahab Uddin Laitu, former president of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal, student wing of the ruling BNP, Yusuf Bin Jallid and Abulqbal.

However, the trial of the case against another accused Sumon will continue.

According to the prosecution, over 150 people led by the then Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Mirza Abbas brought out a procession during a hartal called by BNP, the then opposition party, on February 13, 2001.

They attacked a procession of the then ruling Awami League near Rajbargh Police Lines.

As the BNP processionists fired at the police barracks, Constable Abu Naser, 27, was shot on the third floor of Rajbargh Police Lines. He died on the spot. Constable Partha Roy was also seriously injured during the firing.

Subedar Jamal Uddin filed a murder case with Motijheel Police Station the same day. The investigation officer pressed charges against Mirza Abbas and five others on July 11, 2001.

The home ministry in a letter on June 19 this year informed the district magistrate of Dhaka that it had decided to withdraw charges against Mirza Abbas and four others as the charges were "politically motivated".

The ministry asked the district magistrate to hand over the matter to the metropolitan public prosecutor (PP), who will arrange withdrawal of the case with permission from an appropriate court.

AL lawmaker's first public rally at Raozan in five years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Fazle Karim Chowdhury, an Awami League lawmaker from Raozan, yesterday appeared in a public rally at his constituency for the first time in nearly five years since the BNP-led four-party alliance government took over.

"I'm delighted to be here today after a long time," he said while addressing thousands of party leaders, activists, supporters and people of the upazila at Jaliil Nagar Bus Station.

"You all know that I was eagerly waiting to meet you but couldn't do because of the ruling party's continued repression and harassment and the cases filed against me in the last five years," said Fazle Karim, who is also a cousin of Prime Minister's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

The lawmaker vowed to stay in Raozan from now on and stand by the people, whatever the consequences might be.

He also expressed his desire to contest the next general elections and urged the people to support him.

Chaired by Upazila AL President Shafiqul Islam Chowdhury, the rally was also addressed by General Secretary Moslemuddin Khan and former chairman of Raozan Municipality Debashish Palit.

Prof Mosharraf new BAU VC



Prof Dr Mosharraf Hossain has been appointed Vice-chancellor (VC) of Bangladesh Agriculture University (BAU).

Mymensingh for the next four years, says a BAU press release.

He is an internationally recognised soil scientist and a freedom fighter.

Prof Mosharraf stood first class first in BSc Ag (honours) and MSc examinations in 1971 and 1972 in Soil Science from BAU. He obtained PhD degree from Dandy University as a Commonwealth scholar in 1981 and received postdoctoral fellowship in 1988.

He joined the BAU as a lecturer of Soil Science Department in 1975.