

Abul Mansur Ahmad's 122nd birth anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today marks the 122nd birth anniversary of renowned litterateur, journalist and politician Abul Mansur Ahmad. On this day in 1898, he was born in Dhanikhola village of Mymensingh.

One of the leading satirical writers of Bangla literature, he also had an illustrious career as a journalist and a politician.

In 1946, he was the founding editor of the daily Ittehad [in Kolkata]. He had earlier worked at daily newspapers Krishak and Navajug and many other periodicals.

An immensely successful politician, Ahmad was the provincial education minister of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haq's United Front government, and in 1957, served as the commerce and industries minister of the central government. His contribution to the development of East Bengal is undeniable.

Among his famous satirical novels, "Aina", "Asmani Parda", "Gulliverer Safarnama" and "Food Conference" are notable. Two of his autobiographies are

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At Karwan Bazar, parking rules are so blatantly violated that a green coconut seller did not hesitate to set up his makeshift stall right behind a "No Parking" sign, as more vehicles can be seen parked behind him along a line. This photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Final nail in the coffin'

Speakers tell Shujan-organised discussion about EC move to revise RPO

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has moved to kill itself through its latest initiative to revise the Representation of the People Order (RPO), 1972, said speakers including a former Appellate Division judge, eminent lawyer and civil society members, yesterday.

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan), a civil society platform, organised the virtual discussion.

They said cutting off its own hands, legs and pulling out eyes is tantamount to suicide.

Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder said through its move to revise the RPO, EC has hit the final nail in its coffin.

He said several important provisions that empower the EC to cancel the candidature of candidates and announce election schedule were absent in the proposed revised RPO.

"Through its move, the election commission has taken initiative to destroy the electoral system and to weaken the constitutional body," he added.

Former judge of the Appellate Division Justice MA Matin said it has to be ensured whether the EC has backtracked from its move to amend the RPO.

"We will have to remain vigilant in this regard," he said.

"They [EC] will not be able to do anything if the media remain alert," he further said.

Former Cabinet Secretary Ali Imam Majumder said it's very unfortunate that the EC itself wants to curtail its own power.

He said political parties failed to play its due role to force the EC to backtrack from its move.

Taking people with them, the former top bureaucrat said, political parties and civil society platforms will have to put pressure on EC so that it is bound to retract the move.

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Unprotected on the frontline

Sanitation workers at health, economic risks amid pandemic, says WaterAid report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sanitation workers across different South Asian countries are working with little protective equipment and poor access to handwashing and cleaning facilities during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a new report from WaterAid.

The report titled "Safety and wellbeing of sanitation workers during Covid-19 in South Asia", explored how the pandemic was impacting the lives and works of sanitation workers.

The research was carried out in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan over a period of approximately six weeks from the end of April until mid-June, where sanitation workers including sweepers and hospital cleaners were interviewed, according to press release received yesterday.

The report found that fear of infection and worrying for family members was a

common concern across all four of the study countries.

Eight in ten workers interviewed in Bangladesh thought their job would put them at high risk of infection.

The workers were aware about using personal protective equipment (PPE) but the supply of such equipment was inadequate.

While use of masks and gloves was relatively higher, supply and use of more specialised equipment such as aprons or goggles was much lower, even amongst high-risk groups such as hospital cleaners.

In Nepal, a third of workers had received no PPE from their employers at all. Workers across India, Pakistan and Bangladesh also complained of suffocation when using PPE in hot weather.

The Covid-19 pandemic has aggravated the considerable occupational and health hazards these workers usually face, leaving

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65-DAY FISHING BAN

33pc fishers in two coastal upazilas had no income: MJF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly one-third people involved in fishing in two coastal upazilas had no income during the government-imposed 65-day ban on the activity between May 20 and July 23, said a report prepared by Manusher Jonno Foundation.

The rest saw their average monthly family income drop to Tk 3,208 during the ban from Tk 11,125, said the report.

MJF shared findings of the report "Situation of Artisanal Fisher Folk Community during Covid and 65-day Ban" during an online press conference yesterday.

The telephone survey was conducted under MJF's "Sustainable Ocean" project, supported by the Danish Institute for Human Rights in Patharghata and Cox's Bazar's Moheshkhali upazila.

A total of 1,018 respondents including 306 women participated in the survey. Of them, 519 were from Patharghata and 499 from Moheshkhali.

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh partnered with

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Animal rights activists and organisations yesterday demonstrated in front of Nagar Bhaban, protesting DSCC's decision to relocate stray dogs outside the capital.

'Relocating dogs illegal, shameful'

Animal rights groups protest DSCC move

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A large group of animal lovers yesterday held a human chain in front of the Nagar Bhaban at Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), protesting authorities' decision to move stray dogs to the Matuail landfill.

After reports that DSCC relocated 15 dogs in the last week, six organisations -- Care for Paws, Obhoyaranno, Stella, PAW Foundation, We Are Nature, and Ekbelar Khabar Boba Pranider Jonno -- organised the rally in front of the DSCC headquarters. They demanded vaccination and sterilisation instead of relocating dogs.

Obhoyaranno founder Rubaiya Ahmad said, "DNCC [Dhaka North City Corporation] has more dogs than DSCC. But while DNCC opts to co-operate with us in vaccinating them, DSCC does not."

Terming DSCC's relocating dogs to Matuail shameful, she said, "If they moved the dogs, they should stop doing it, and opt for vaccination and sterilisation. We are asking DSCC to abide by the law."

PAW Foundation chairman Rakibul Haq Emil said, "The dogs were removed from their habitats to Matuail landfill. This is an act of forced migration. This goes against the existing Animal Welfare Act-2019, which prohibits killing stray dogs or removing them from their habitats."

"The government has vaccination programme for the dogs, and already 70

percent of the dogs in Dhaka have been vaccinated. So there is no need for culling or removal of the dogs," he reasoned.

People from different walks of life joined the protest, with placards saying: "Eliminate rabies not dogs", "Shame on DSCC" and "Dhaka dogs belong to Dhaka". Sayeda Gaffar, a retired professor of Dhaka University, said, "Killing dogs will not bring any solution; rather it will beget problems such as ecological imbalance."

DU student Fahmida Akhi said, "When there is option to vaccine and sterilise, killing or removing them is not pragmatic."

DSCC 'UNAWARE' OF LAW

Contacted, SM Shafiqul Islam, veterinary officer of DSCC, admitted that they had moved 15 dogs to the landfill. "Locals were telling the city corporation to relocate dogs. Therefore, we temporarily sent few dogs off to the Matuail landfill, but it didn't work. They all came back," he said.

"There has been no official decision to relocate dogs to Matuail permanently. It is just under discussion. We are not going to cull any dog," he added.

Asked about Animal Welfare Act that forbids dog culling and relocation, he said, "I'm only aware that dog culling is not allowed; we are not culling any dog."

Asked if they have any plans for stray dogs in future, he said, "Right now we

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HC halts work of AL MP's economic zone near Turag

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed authorities to maintain status quo on works for constructing Arisha Economic Zone owned by ruling AL lawmaker (Dhaka-14) Aslamul Huq and on eviction of its structures near Turag River in Savar.

It also asked Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) to dispose of in 10 days the application submitted by Arisha Economic Zone for conducting a joint survey to determine whether the company has grabbed river land.

Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice AKM Zahirul Huq came up with the order following a petition filed by Aslamul Huq, managing director of the economic zone, challenging legality of a notice issued by the BIWTA asking the company to remove its structures from the land of the river.

Sagor Hossain Leon, a lawyer for the writ petitioner, told reporters that his client has invested Tk 1,500 crore for establishing Arisha Economic Zone on 51.81 acres of land at Syamla Mouja in Savar and has deposited US \$10,000 to the government for its final approval.

No place for illegal billboards in city

Says Atiqul as DNCC starts drive to pull those down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday said they will not allow any illegal billboard in DNCC areas and remove all of those gradually.

Addressing a drive against such billboards near the airport, the mayor said, "Many challenged that I'll not be able to remove illegal billboards and I have accepted their challenges. I'll see who comes forward to intercept our drives."

He said he wants to send a message that business of illegal billboards has to stop.

The billboards contain pictures of powerful people to show their political identities, which is not expected, the mayor said. They can campaign but not by destroying the beauty of the city, he added.

Yesterday, DNCC mobile court knocked and pulled down illegal structures and a giant billboard near the police box by airport crossing.

The drive was led by executive magistrate Motakabbir Ahmed that started at 11am and continued till 4pm.

Among others, ward-49 councillor Md Anisur Rahman Nayeem and councillor from reserved seat Zakia Sultana were present during the drive.

Dr Yunus appointed chancellor of Malaysian university

UNB, Dhaka

Nobel Laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus, also founder of Grameen Bank, has been appointed the inaugural chancellor of Albukhary International University (AIU) in Malaysia, reports the New Straits Times.



Yunus, also Chancellor of Glasgow Caledonian University, UK and the Chairman of Yunus Centre, was appointed based on his contributions, knowledge, expertise and experience in developing the world-recognised social business agenda.

"His appointment as Chancellor of AIU is in line with the Philosophy, Vision and Mission of the establishment of AIU to develop graduates or future leaders who are adaptable, balanced, well-rounded individuals, willing and able to serve humanity, acting as change agents in respective communities through Social Business agenda," the report quotes Vice Chancellor and President of AIU Prof Dr Abd Aziz Tajuddin as saying in a statement.

BOOKS ON BANGABANDHU

HC forms body to probe copyright infringement claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday formed a three-member committee headed by the secretary to Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to inquire into the allegation of attempting to misappropriate money by changing the copyright and intellectual property rights of two books published on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The other two members of the committee are Bangla Academy Director General Habibullah Sirajee and Liberation War Museum Trustee Mofidul Hoque.

In response to a writ petition, the HC also asked the committee to submit the probe report to it in a month.

Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice AKM Zahirul Huq delivered the order and rule.

Syed Sayedul Haque Suman submitted the writ petition on August 31, claiming Nazmul Hasan, owner of Journey Multi Media and Swadhika Publishers, reportedly tried to misappropriate money by changing copyrights and intellectual property rights of the two books.

The books published for the Bangabandhu Book Corners at all the primary schools across the country, according to the petition.



Scores of cars, trucks and rickshaws seized in road accidents are just haphazardly dumped near Ashulia Police Station, blocking the adjacent road. Since there is no designated spot to keep these vehicles, they remain there to rust away. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Sexual and reproductive health services need special attention: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To ensure emergency reproductive healthcare and family planning services for women and adolescents, government and NGOs must work together, urged speakers at an online dialogue titled "Reproductive Health Services for Women and Adolescents in COVID-19: Perspective Bangladesh", organised by Marie Stopes Bangladesh and Team Associates on Tuesday night.

Mashrurul Islam, country director of Marie Stopes Bangladesh said, due to the global pandemic, child and maternal mortality rate in low and middle-income countries is expected to increase in the coming days since coverage and access to family planning services might have been reduced by around 10 percent. "The contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) has decreased already, and the number of unsafe abortions has also shot up. In addition to that, postpartum family planning services have also been disrupted greatly," he said at the programme.

Citing the news reports and surveys conducted by various organisations, Mashrurul also mentioned that the rate of child marriage and the incidents of violence against women have increased as well during the pandemic.

However, Member of Parliament Syeda Rubina Akhter highlighted the various steps taken by the governments to ensure women's reproductive health services. She said steps have been taken to ensure that not a single incident of abortion happens under risk. "Community clinics have been activated across the country and field workers have been making door to door visits to provide services. Besides, maternity allowance is also being provided," she added.

Member of Parliament Gloria Jharna Sarkar said along with taking all necessary steps to ensure reproductive health services, the government has taken steps to protect women's rights. "As a result of effective measures taken by the government, maternal mortality and infant mortality rates

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