



Abul Mansur's 26th death anniversary today

The 26th death anniversary of Abul Mansur Ahmad, a renowned litterateur, journalist and statesman of the sub-continent, will be observed today, says a press release.

The Abul Mansur Ahmad Memorial Committee has organised do a mahfils at Dhaka and Mymensingh to mark the day.

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

A very 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 of the Awami League government of Prime Minister Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy. He was known for his strong stand in matters of interest of the then East Bengal.

His publications include great satires such as 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 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 early forties and contributed to the Language Movement as the 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 Fazlul Huq, Moulana Bhashani and Shaheed Suhrawardy) in 1954 election through 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.

The 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 writings.

Obituary

Dr Saiyeda Qudsiya Akhtar, Professor of Microbiology Department of Dhaka University, died of cardiac arrest at her Dhanmondi residence on Wednesday night at the age of 57, says a press release.

Dr Saiyeda, daughter of late Professor Syed Abdul Hai and Professor Meer Mobassher Ali of Bangladesh University of Engineering (BUET), is survived by her one son and one daughter.

'Unplanned habitation responsible for illness'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unplanned habitation in the city is causing people, especially the children, physical and mental illness, said speakers at a round table organised by Save Environment Movement yesterday in the city.

"Environment of a city influences the behavioral pattern of its inhabitants," said architect Rafiq Azam while presenting his paper. Azam stressed that a living place should not be entirely detached from the nature.

He said the sun path, green house effect and sub-tropical climate of Bangladesh should be considered before planning for a house here.

"It is possible to provide a piece of green in every household no matter how much of space there is," he said referring to a five-storied apartment complex at Khazredwan in the old part of the city. The building has 14 small apartments of 500, 600 and 700 square feet, but miniature gardens exist in all of them.

"Children in the city are being

'Many social promises remain unfulfilled due to corruption'

4th English inter-school debate contest begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many social promises cannot be fulfilled in due course because of corruption, deprivation and lawlessness, said founder-President of East West University Dr Mohammed Farashuddin yesterday.

"Bangladesh as an emerging country needs enlightened citizens and efficient state managers," he said while inaugurating the 4th English Inter-School and Inter-Club and 1st Children's Debate Championship, organised by the Vigarunnisa Noon Debating Club and sponsored by The Daily Star.

Today's youngsters must build themselves as efficient managers and enlightened citizens for a better Bangladesh, said the former Bangladesh Bank governor.

"Being good at study in today's competitive world is not all," he said, "One has to attain the efficiency to express and market oneself with skills and reasoning."

He also called on the young debaters to extend their hands of cooperation to the underprivileged to build a more prosperous society.

Principal of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College Rowena Hossain said debating activities

would enable the youngsters to attain self-determination and confidence, making them good citizens.

Mere freedom of expression will not do much, it has to be based on reasoning and tested by rationality, said Vigarunnisa Debating Club moderator Shameem Jahan Ahsan.

Khademul Islam, literary editor, The Daily Star, and Afrin Hossain Borsha, president of the debating club, also spoke.

The institutions taking part in the English Inter-School Debate Championship are Government Laboratory School, St. Joseph, Sunbeams, Mastermind,

Vigarunnisa Noon, YWCA and the Aga Khan School.

Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka Medical College, Notre Dame College, Brac University, BAF Shahin College, Mastermind, North South University, Dhaka Commerce College and American International University Bangladesh are taking part in the inter-club event.

And the participants in the children's debate are Vigarunnisa School, Sunbeams, Government Laboratory School and St. Joseph School.



PHOTO: STAR

Participants of the 4th English Inter-school, Inter-club and 1st Children's Debate Championship 2005 pose with the guests at the inaugural ceremony of the event on the Vigarunnisa Noon School and College premises in the city yesterday.

'Develop country strategy for attaining MDG'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called for developing a country strategy for attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), including poverty alleviation and access to education and healthcare for all.

They also underscored the need for cooperation between the government and the civil society in this regard.

The Campaign for Popular Education (Campe), an NGO, organised the workshop titled 'Achieving Millennium

Development Goals in Bangladesh: Actions and Strategies' at the Bangladesh Institute for Administrative Management (BIAM) in the city.

Researchers, professionals and representatives from different NGOs took part in the workshop.

Sayed-ul-Alam Kajal, programme manager of Campe, and Arifur Rahman of Social Watch and Manusher Jonno, presented two thematic papers.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, director of Campe, also spoke at the inaugural session, with Dr Ahmadullah Mia, director of Research, Planning, Monitoring and Policy Advocacy, in the chair.

In the afternoon session, the speakers unanimously recommended the continuation of the country's steering committee on MDG under the banner 'People's Forum on MDG'.

Prof Shafi Ahmed of Jahangirnagar University and Basudev Neupane, an expert from Nepal, discussed various aspects of the MDG.

Tasnem Athar, deputy director of Campe, delivered the vote of thanks.

Strains on foreign ties lamented

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two lawmakers from ruling BNP and the main opposition Awami League (AL) at a parliamentary committee meeting yesterday observed that Bangladesh is becoming a friendless country due to diplomatic failures of the government.

Referring to the recent strains in our diplomatic relations with a few countries, they said the trend indicates that the country is losing its friends because of the deterioration in relations with a number of 'trusted' countries, meeting sources said.

AL lawmaker Syed Ashrafur Islam and BNP lawmaker Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman at the meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on foreign ministry criticised the ministry for the failure in maintaining good relations with different countries and donors.

"Relations with China has deteriorated due to the improper handling of Taiwan issue. The European Union expressed its frustration at a meeting in Washington without participation of Bangladesh," Mahbub told the meeting held at the Jatuya Sangsad Bhavan.

He expressed concern over the

deteriorating relations with India.

Mahbub pointed out that Bangladesh has been excluded from the upcoming South Asia visit of the Japanese prime minister. "This proves that the foreign ministry is failing to handle the diplomacy efficiently," the ruling party lawmaker noted.

Meeting sources quoted Mahbub as saying that the foreign ministry should have initiated appropriate steps earlier to check the deterioration of relations with friendly countries.

AL lawmaker Ashrafur said Bangladesh is apparently becoming a friendless country. "It is the diplomatic failure of the government," he told reporters after the meeting.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan was present at the meeting but he declined to say anything about the discussion when reporters asked for his comment.

The meeting also discussed the recent remarks of the prime minister and finance minister on certain countries and donors and the allegations against a number of diplomats of interfering in the internal affairs of Bangladesh.

Supporting the remarks, BNP

lawmakers Manjur Quader and Naser Rahman criticised the role of a number of diplomats without mentioning their names. They alleged that the activities of those diplomats were beyond diplomatic norms.

AL lawmaker Ashrafur questioned the appointment of Hemayet Uddin as foreign secretary and alleged that Hemayet was appointed superseding six senior officers. In reply, the foreign minister said Hemayet was appointed foreign secretary fairly.

Ashrafur also questioned the appointment of immediate past foreign secretary Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury as ambassador to the US. He said Bangladesh's diplomatic relations with several countries deteriorated during his tenure as foreign secretary.

The parliamentary committee will discuss the relations between Bangladesh and neighbouring countries at the next meeting. It asked the new foreign secretary to prepare a report about the attitude of India towards Bangladesh, as he was the chief of Bangladesh mission in India before joining the present post.

'Raise awareness to save rivers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called on the media to play a vital role in raising awareness about protection of rivers as well as environment.

Although the media is covering river issues more than before, it is not enough, they said at a seminar on 'Dying rivers: Role of media'.

The Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) organised the seminar at the National Press Club to mark the 'Eighth International River Day'.

The government officials are always keen to build structures rather than taking steps to save the rivers, said Prof Mozafer Ahmed.

Referring to the circular waterway around Dhaka, he said the officials have built several structures in the name of the project but there is not enough water in the river for navigation.

"The media should play a vital role in making the people aware about rivers as the rivers are the life line of Bangladesh," said Prof Nazrul Islam.

Presenting a keynote paper,

journalist Chapal Bashir said five national dailies have carried 254 environmental-related reports and features in two months. Although 170 reports and features dealt with river and wetland issues, only 46 articles were written in depth, he said.

He urged the editors to adopt a pro-environment policy and train the journalists on environmental reporting.

Farid Hossain, bureau chief of the Associated Press (AP) and Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi, editor of the Desh Bangla, also spoke.

Call to stop discrimination against female UP members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday demanded an end to all sorts of discrimination against the female UP members.

Female UP members can not discharge their duties properly due to non-cooperation from the administration and their male counterparts, they said.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (Blast), a human rights watchdog, organised the seminar on 'Empowerment of

women: Role of female UP members' at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Speaking at the seminar, former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru said the constitution has guaranteed that the female public representatives at all levels would enjoy the same power as their male counterparts.

Taking part in the discussion, advocate Sara Hossain said in some cases women have to be given special

privileges so that they could attain equal rights like male counterparts.

The participating female UP members demanded specification of their duties to better serve the people.

Presided over by Blast Vice Chairman Justice Naimuddin Ahmed, the seminar was also addressed by its Executive Director Samsul Bari, Deputy Director Farida Yeasmin and Assistant Director Soma Islam.



PHOTO: STAR

Children place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in the city yesterday to mark his 86th birthday.

12,000 die a year from pregnancy-related complications

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An estimated 12,000 women die each year in the country from pregnancy and delivery-related complications which is said to be one of the highest in the world.

This was disclosed at a workshop on 'Reproductive health' organised by Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) in collaboration with the health and family welfare ministry and the Unicef yesterday.

A recent study in several villages found that hemorrhage, eclampsia, unsafe abortion, sepsis and obstructed labour are the major reasons for maternal deaths.

Speaking as chief guest at the inaugural session, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said, "We will allocate maximum resources for reducing maternal mortality rate (MMR)."

He suggested developing policies to address the scarcity of human resources in addressing maternal health problems.

Hemayetuddin takes over as FS

UNB, Dhaka

Hemayetuddin yesterday formally took over as Foreign Secretary.

Earlier, he was the Bangladesh High Commissioner to India.

Hemayetuddin replaced Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury who was appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Washington, USA.

Exhibition of traditional boats begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A unique exhibition of traditional boats begins at the National Museum tomorrow for the city dwellers to have a glimpse of the water transports plying in different regions of the country.

The exhibition will feature an array of country boats such as Patam, Fishing, Shandi, Shampan and Horonga.

A total of 90 boats will be displayed in the exhibition, which will continue till April 6. The boats were made using exactly the same technique and materials as the originals.

The boats, collected from different parts of the country, are now on the verge of extinction, said the organisers at a press conference yesterday.

The exhibition titled 'Traditional Boats of Bengal' was jointly organised by the Friendship Association and the German embassy in association with the National Museum and the Design of Technology Centre (DTC). GrameenPhone, Mutual Trust Bank and Bengal Foundation are the sponsors of the exhibition.

Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, chairman of World Literature Centre, will inaugurate the show at 6.00pm.

The exhibition will offer the visitors an opportunity to watch carpenters working on the boat and to look at the original boat materials and commodities carried by the boats, said Runa Khan Marre, executive director of the Friendship Association.

"Bangladesh is a good place for traditional boats and it seems an urgent matter to raise awareness about cultural and social heritage," said Guido Genrich of the German embassy.

Chandra Sekhar Saha, senior designer of the DTC, said they had collected designs of different types of boats from different parts of the country -- Barisal, Sundarbans, Teknaf, Sandwip, Khulna and Rajshahi over the last 10 years and made the boats for the exhibition.

DHAKA TODAY

Film show

Dhaka Chalachchitra Sava will screen two films titled 'Central Station' by Walter Salas and 'Chokher Bali' by Rituparna Ghosh. Venue: 62, Science Laboratory Road. Time: 4.30pm and 7.00pm.

Theatre festival

As part of the National Children's Theatre Festival organised by the People's Theatre Association, eight plays will be staged. Venue: Shawkat Osman Memorial Hall, Central Public Library, Shahbagh. Time: 10.30am.

Painting exhibition

An exhibition of paintings by artist Aminul Islam will be inaugurated. Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, House-25, Road-5, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.30pm. The exhibition will remain open till April 1 from 10.00am to 1.00pm and from 5.00pm to 8.00pm daily.

Children's exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a children's exhibition titled 'C for Courage', focussing on the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, will be held with Norwegian Ambassador Aud Lise Norheim as chief guest. Venue: Central Kachi-Kanchar Bhavan, Segun Bagicha. Time: 10.00am.

Children's workshop

The South Asian Children's Federation of Bangladesh organises a motivational workshop for the children. Venue: 293 Ulan Road, Khilgaon. Time: 3.30pm.

Chander Hat

The fourth national conference of Chander Hat (a children's organisation) will be inaugurated with Unicef Country Representative Morten Gierling as chief guest. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10.00am.

Seminar

A seminar on 'Adivasi life, language and culture', organised by the Society for Environment and Human Development, will be held. Venue: Cirdap Auditorium, Tophkhana Road. Time: 9.30am.

Roundtable

Workers Party of Bangladesh organises a roundtable titled 'Militant activities in the name of Islam and the role of the government'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 9.30am.

PSFB conference

The annual conference of Pali Shishu Foundation of Bangladesh will be held. Venue: House-6A, Barabagh, Mirpur-2.

Time: 9.00am.

Award giving ceremony

Bangladesh Centre for Development Journalism and Communications will present award of honour to women journalists working in print and electronic media with Education Minister Dr M Osman Faruk as chief guest. Venue: VIP Lounge of the National Press Club. Time: 3.30pm.

Reception

A reception will be accorded to Advocate Sigma Huda for being elected as Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons at the United Nations. Venue: Biam Auditorium, New Eskaton. Time: 3.00pm.

Condolence meeting

Habiganj Association, Dhaka will hold a condolence meeting in memory of Shah AMS Kibria, former finance minister and Language Movement Veteran. Venue: Victoria University Auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 3.30pm.

Installation ceremony

The installation ceremony of newly elected office-bearers of Narail Zila Samity, Dhaka will be held with Environment and Forest Minister Tarique Islam as chief guest. Venue: Rajuk Auditorium. Time: 4.00pm.

Biennial meeting

The biennial general meeting of Rajbari Zila Samity, Dhaka will be held. Venue: Novera Hall, National Museum, Shahbagh. Time: 3.30pm.

Rotary meeting

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will be held. Venue: Rotary School and College, Mirpur-14. Time: 10.30am.

Blood donation

Quantum Foundation organises a voluntary blood donation camp. Venue: North South University. Time: 9.30am.

Human chain

Bangladesh Christian Association will form a human chain demanding government holiday on Easter Sunday. Venue: Mukhtangan. Time: 10.30am.

Alumni meeting

The annual general meeting of the Alumni Association of German Universities in Bangladesh will be held. Venue: Goethe-Institut Auditorium, House-15, Road-9, Dhanmondi.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Comilla and Noakhali till 6.00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said predicting slight rise in day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 34.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 17.3 degree Celsius at Srimangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:09pm today and rises at 6:04am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.0	22.7	78	49
Chittagong	32.0	22.0	77	76
Rajshahi	33.0	21.4	80	79
Khulna	33.2	22.0	90	73
Barisal	32.5	21.3	91	75
Sylhet	32.1	19.9	71	58
Cox's Bazar	33.0	20.0	73	74