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Tribute paid to Waheedul Haque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist and exponent of Tagore song Waheedul Haque will live forever in the hearts of the people through his works, speakers at a memorial meeting said yesterday.

Paying tribute to him, they said Waheedul Haque tried to be a better man and told others how to become a better person.

The daylong programme began with a Tagore song 'Agnor Parashmoni Chhao Prane' on the Ati Bhawal High School premises at his home village at Keraniganj with Matiur Rahman Bhuiyan, a former teacher of the school and brother of Waheedul Haque, in the chair. Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui was present as the chief guest.

After the song is over, participants and the audience observed one minute's silence in memory of Waheedul Haque, also one of the founders of Chhayanaut.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Sultana Kamal, artist Qayyum Chowdhury, economist Dr. Atiur Rahman, cultural personalities Ali Zaker and Ataur Rahman, language movement veteran Imdad Hossain, journalists Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan and freedom fighter Mostofa Mohsin Montu spoke at the memorial meeting.

Artists of Chhayanaut and Rabindra Sangeet Sammelan Parishad also rendered songs at the programme.



Participants observe one minute's silence in memory of renowned journalist and Tagore song specialist Waheedul Haque at a memorial meeting on the Ati Bhawal High School premises in Keraniganj yesterday.

Nato troops shoot dead Afghan child

AFP, Kabul

Nato troops shot and killed a 12-year-old Afghan boy who was in a car with his family in Kabul, the government said yesterday, in the latest in a series of civilian deaths involving foreign forces.

Nato's International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) confirmed there had been an incident late Thursday but said it could not comment until a military police investigation was completed.

"Nato forces opened fire at a Townace civilian vehicle which apparently tried to overtake the troops or maybe the car was too close to the troops," interior ministry spokesman Zemaral Bashary told AFP.

"A bullet hit a 12-year-old child in the car. The child was apparently driving with his family," he said.

Soldiers with Isaf and the separate US-led coalition, nervous of suicide car bombings and other attacks, have been travelling too close to their convoys.

Drug resistance threatens India's battle against TB

APP, New Delhi

Drug resistance is emerging as one of the biggest challenges in India's battle against tuberculosis, the major killer of adults in the South Asian nation, experts warn.

Three percent of all new TB cases in India and roughly 14 percent of patients undergoing treatment for the disease have developed resistance to drugs, studies estimate.

Experts have called for upgraded facilities to better diagnose drug-resistant strains of TB, a disease which spreads through coughing and sneezing and usually infects the lungs.

"We have limited facilities for detecting drug-resistant TB in India, which poses challenges in fighting the disease," said Nani Nair, regional advisor on tuberculosis with the World Health Organisation.

"We will have another 24 laboratories to detect the drug-resistant strain in the next five years," said Nair, ahead of World TB Day on Saturday.

In the meantime, just three laboratories, apart from medical colleges and private hospitals, are equipped to diagnose such strains, she said.

India reports some 1.8 million new cases every year -- the highest in the world -- and 1,000 deaths

daily despite having one of the world's most successful anti-TB programmes.

Doctors say mycobacterium tuberculosis, which causes the disease, develops resistance to all or some of the drugs when patients give up their treatment mid-way after visible signs of recovery.

"This form of TB is a very big concern for us because it is more difficult and more expensive to detect and treat," Nair said.

Even though TB drugs are free in India, many poorer patients abandon medication because of the difficulty of reporting to the doctor for supervised treatment at the same time as continuing to work.

Poor nutrition also makes recovery longer and more difficult.

Public health experts said they would use World TB Day to push for the development of improved drugs and diagnostic techniques. The day marks 125 years since the cause of TB was first discovered.

"The technique we are using today for primary diagnosis is 125 years old now. It's a shame we have not made enough investments because it's a poor man's disease," said Bobby John, who heads advocacy body Global Health Advocates.

"Multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB is emerging as one of the biggest challenges in India, but we have not even started reporting it fully," John said.

Antarctic melting may be speeding up

REUTERS, Hobart

Rising sea levels and melting polar ice-sheets are at upper limits of projections, leaving some human population centers already unable to cope, top world scientists say as they analyze latest satellite data.

A United Nations report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in February projected sea level gains of 18-59 centimeters (7-23 inches) this century from temperature rises of 1.8-4.0 Celsius (3.2-7.2 Fahrenheit).

"Observations are in the very upper edge of the projections," leading Australian marine scientist John Church told Reuters.

"I feel that we're getting uncomfortably close to threshold," said Church, of Australia's CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research said.

Past this level, parts of the Antarctic and Greenland would approach a virtually irreversible melting that would produce sea level rises of meters, he said.

There has been no repeat in the Antarctic of the 2002 break-up of part of the Larsen ice shelf that created a 500 billion ton iceberg as big as Luxembourg.

But the Antarctic Peninsula is

warming faster than anywhere else on Earth, and glaciers are in massive retreat.

"There have been doomsday scenarios that west Antarctica could collapse quite quickly. And there's six meters of sea level in west Antarctica," says Tas van Ommen, a glaciologist at the Hobart-based Australian Antarctic Division.

Doomsday has not yet arrived.

But even in east Antarctica, which is insulated from global warming by extreme cold temperatures and high altitudes, new information shows the height of the Totten Glacier near Australia's Casey Base has fallen by 10 meters over 15-16 years.

Scientists say massive glacier retreat at Heard Island, 1,000 km (620 miles) north of Antarctica, is an example of how fringe areas of the polar region are melting.

The break-up of ice in Antarctica to create icebergs is also opening pathways for accelerated flows to the sea by glaciers.

Church pointed out that sea levels were 4-6 meters higher more than 100,000 years ago when temperatures were at levels expected to be reached at the end of this century.

US missile plan 'real threat' to Russia

AFP, Moscow

A US plan to deploy an anti-missile defence system in eastern Europe against potential attacks from Iran threatens Russia and undermines cooperation in the United Nations, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said yesterday.

"If our Western partners are deploying elements of the US national anti-missile defence system on the pretext of an Iranian threat... then what's the point of the UN Security Council?" Lavrov wrote in the Moskovskiy Novosti newspaper.

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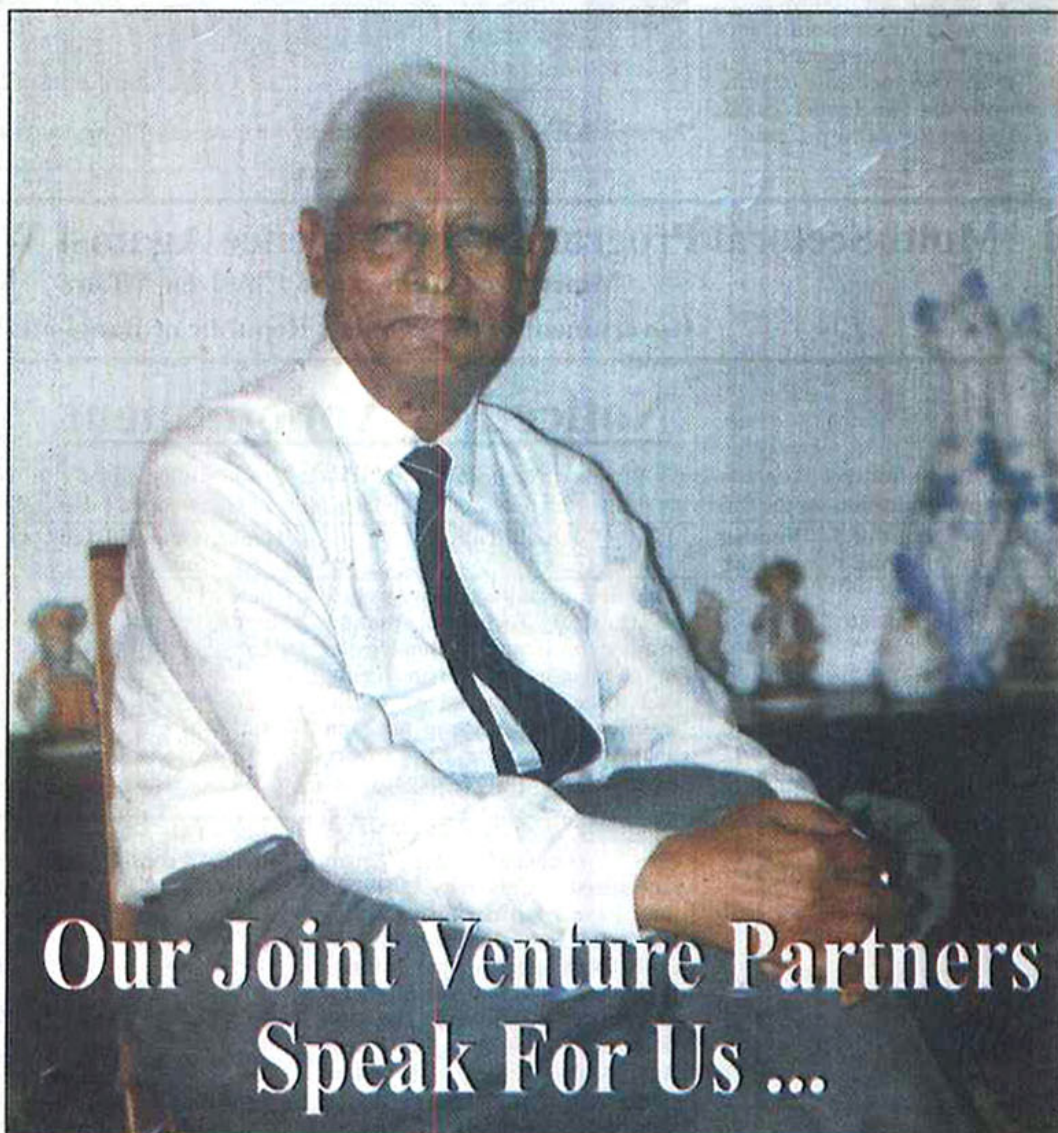
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