



Mahfuz Anam elected ANN chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, has been elected chairman of Asia News Network (ANN) for the current year at a meeting of the board members of the organisation held in Seoul recently.

Established in 1999, the ANN is a network of national daily newspapers published in Asian cities, aiming to provide avenues for cooperation and to optimise coverage of major news events in the region.

Currently, 16 leading Asian newspapers -- The Daily Star (Bangladesh), The Nation (Thailand), The Island (Sri Lanka), China Daily (China), Viet Nam News (Vietnam), The Statesman (India), The Star and Sin Chew Daily (Malaysia), The Jakarta Post (Indonesia), The Straits Times (Singapore), The Korea Herald (South Korea), Daily Yomiuri and Yomiuri Shimbun (Japan), The Philippine Daily Inquirer (Philippines), Vientiane Times (Laos) and The Kathmandu Post (Nepal) -- are its members.

In its bid to serve as an alternative source of information for Asian countries from the Asian perspective, the ANN publishes a weekly magazine -- Asia News -- and runs a website -- asianewsnet.net.

Two top Ctg AL leaders sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two top leaders of Chittagong city unit of Awami League (AL) were sued for reported extortion and physical assault in the port city.

A trader filed the case against Chittagong city AL General Secretary Kazi Enamul Haq Danu and Joint Secretary Dr Afsarul Amin, accusing them of demanding extortion and assaulting him, said police.

The trader identified as Abdul Mannan, owner of a restaurant, filed the case with Kotwli Police Station at around 10:30pm on Sunday.

In the case the plaintiff claiming himself as a BNP activist alleged that Afsarul and Enamul allegedly being driven by political vengeance demanded Tk 50,000 from him as extortion.

The accused AL leaders along with their cadres went to his restaurant to realise the toll and being refused they attacked him leaving him seriously injured on January 9 this year, said police quoting the plaintiff.

However, hearing his cry the local people came forward to rescue him when the accused AL leaders managed to flee, claimed Mannan in the case.

Meanwhile, Arshadul Amin, the younger brother of Dr Afsarul, termed the case as baseless meant for harassing and tarnishing the image of his brother.

"Dr Afsarul is a well-established businessman and well known for his charitable and welfare activities. None could ever bring any such allegation against him so far," said Arshadul.

20 injured as locals clash with members of picnic party at Anwara beach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 20 people were injured in a series of clashes between the members of a picnic party and local people at a sea beach in Anwara upazila of the district yesterday.

According to sources, some 500 workers and employees of Regent Textile Mills at Kalurghat, who went for a picnic at Parky beach, were locked in a quarrel with the local people over the theft of a mobile phone set at around 11:00am.

Being reinforced in number, the local people again attacked mill workers and employees at 4:00pm leaving at least 20 people injured.

Of them, seven workers were wounded critically and rushed to nearby Upazila Health Complex, the sources added.

The identity of the injured could not be gathered immediately.

Bangladesh at high risk of HIV/AIDS

Says health adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More efforts and cooperation between the government and non-government agencies are required to combat HIV/AIDS, said Health Adviser ASM Matur Rahman at a workshop in the city yesterday.

Existing programmes should also be strengthened, the adviser added.

He was speaking as a chief guest at a workshop on HIV/AIDS with the civil surgeons of 64 districts with a view to sharing updated information on HIV/AIDS situation and its response in Bangladesh.

It also aimed at establishing coordinated mechanism at district

and upazila levels for supporting implementation with partners and to communicate government commitment on HIV/AIDS.

National AIDS/STD Programme (NASP) and Save the Children-USA organised the workshop at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

The health adviser said the figure with 874 HIV infected people is still in a manageable state, but there is nothing to feel content as Bangladesh is highly at risk for HIV/AIDS.

Dissemination of information, proper utilisation of fund, monitoring and evaluation is a must along with time bound initiatives, he added.

Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Jamil Osman said around 14,000 men and women across the world are being infected with HIV/AIDS everyday. Half of them are aged between 15 and 20 that means around 7,000 young people are being infected with HIV/AIDS daily.

Director General of Health Services Shahjahan Biswas presided over the inaugural session while among others Line Director of NASP SM Mustafa Anwar and Programme Manager Hanif Uddin also spoke.

Historic Mujibnagar Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The historic Mujibnagar Day will be observed today commemorating the formation of Bangladesh's first government-in-exile at Baidyanaththola mango grove in Meherpur on this day in 1971.

The place was later renamed Mujibnagar showing tribute to the country's independence hero Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was declared president and supreme commander of the armed forces.

Syed Nazrul Islam was made acting president in the absence of Bangabandhu, who had been arrested by the Pakistani occupation forces on March 25, 1971.

The Mujibnagar government with Tajuddin Ahmed as the prime minister led the country's nine-month liberation war that ended with the surrender of the occupation forces on December 16.

Amami League (AL) has taken up programmes to mark the day across the country.

In Dhaka, the national and party flags will be hoisted at Bangabandhu Bhavan at Dhamondi and also at the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue at 6:00am.

Party leaders will place a wreath at the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhavan at 7:00am, says a party press release.

In a message on the eve of the occasion, AL President Sheikh Hasina, who is now on a private visit in the USA, said the exiled government's contribution to emergence of Bangladesh would never be forgotten.

She paid rich tribute to Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Mansur Ali, AM Quamruzzaman and others who led the revolutionary government.

Hasina recalled the contribution of civil and military officials of the revolutionary government, and of the political leaders, freedom fighters and martyrs who struggled for independence.

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