

Tajuddin's anniversary of birth today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 86th birth anniversary of Tajuddin Ahmed, the first prime minister of Bangladesh.

He was born on this day in 1925 at Dardaria village of Kapasia upazila in Gazipur.

He played a key role in all anti-communal movements after 1947, including language movement. He was one of the main initiators during the formation of Awami League in 1949.

Tajuddin Ahmed was one of the great leaders in formulating 6-point movement in 1966. He played important role in forming the temporary government of Bangladesh during the War of Liberation in absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

After Bangabandhu was killed along with his family members, Tajuddin was kept under house arrest and later shifted to the central jail. On November 3, he was brutally killed inside the jail with three other national leaders of the country.

This shabby road littered with garbage and blocked by cars parked illegally greets traffic with all inconvenience while entering Azampur road from Airport road in the city. The photo was taken from Azampur road on Thursday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



Tk 1cr fund for journalists

UNB, Dhaka

The government will set up a fund of Tk 1 crore to help journalists' families in distress situation.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad yesterday said the proposed fund will be operated by his ministry.

Azad divulged the government plan while addressed a meeting at Jatiya Press Club in the city to commemorate Somoy TV's joint news editor Belal Hossain who was killed in a road accident in the capital on July 16.

The minister said steps have been taken to form the fund at the instruction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The prime minister during a recent meeting with BFUJ leaders asked the information minister to set up a welfare fund for journalists in line with the cultural ministry's fund for artists.

Azad said families of journalists who will be killed in road accidents or other incidents will be given donations from the fund.

Loose rein on acid sale, use

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Taking the advantage of slack monitoring and poor implementation of laws, some traders in Old Dhaka are selling and using acid in violation of the laws.

This correspondent visited the acid-selling hub and found a good number of wholesale and retail acid shops in Armanitola, Goalnagar Lane, Golokpal Lane, and Tantibazar.

"We don't sell acid without licences. But if you go to Golokpal Lane of Malitola, you will get it as they don't bother much for licences", said a wholesaler of Goalnagar Lane.

Almost all big industries need acid for different purposes, he said. It is used to prepare jewellerys, produce electricity, aluminium, and fertiliser, purify water, dye textiles, and make batteries, he added.

Due to its easy availability, acid violence still goes unabated and led at least 153 people to fall its victim last year while Bangladesh is committed to curb acid violence through strong regulation of acid's sale and

use. The government also formulated acts in this regard in 2002.

A record of Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) shows the number of acid victims stood at 349 in 2001, which reduced to 179 in 2008 and 150 in 2009. But the fact is acid violence still takes place and many small traders having no licence use acid, violating the law.

Talking to this correspondent, a jewellery shop owner of Goalnagar Lane said he has been operating the shop for last 48 years without having licence for using acid.

"I have a trade licence, and so I need not any further licence to use acid", he said, unwilling to be named. The trader added that he needs only a pound of acid for a month, and he can buy nitric acid from any of the acid shops in that area with Tk 200-250.

The Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office in Dhaka said currently only 643 businesses possess licence for commercial use, general use, sale, and transport of acid. Of these 81

were licensed in the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

The Acid Control Act 2002 says whoever produces, imports, transports, stores, sells, and uses acids without licence could be sentenced to 3-10 years' rigorous imprisonment with penalties. People who possess equipment for producing acids and have no licence could be sentenced to 3-15 years' rigorous imprisonment with penalties, it adds.

The law is a very good one, said members of the National Acid Control Council. Still it should make easier the licensing process to persuade small traders to have licence, because a trader who runs a business with a mere capital of Tk 20,000 finds it often impossible to pay Tk 5,000 as licence fee, they added. The council members also emphasised that strong monitoring at grassroots level is ensured.

Monira Rahman, executive director of Acid Survivors Foundation, said, "The district acid control com-

mittee which is delegated to monitor acid use is not active in most of the districts. The DC office is overburdened with different types of works and lacks manpower to control illegal use and sale of acid.

"Above all the National Acid Control Council, the policy making and regulating body, lacks sincerity in this regard".

She said the National Acid Control Council, chaired by the home minister, has not sat since April 2010 though it is supposed to hold meeting every three months.

For proper implementation of the law, Monira suggested that the DC offices involve the union parishad members and local non-government organisations to monitor and control sale and use of acid.

"It is true there are many traders using and selling acid without any licence, and we cannot try them though we often lead mobile court drives due to human resources crisis", said Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Mohibul Haque.

Drugged student dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student of Chittagong died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the city yesterday after he was allegedly drugged by unknown people.

The deceased is Ashraful Islam, 21, a student of Bariarhaat Degree College of Mirsarai in Chittagong.

Ashraful's cousin Helal said Ashraful came to Dhaka to buy medicines for his pharmacy on Thursday.

A staff of Shaheed Suhrawardi Medical College Hospital informed Helal that Ashraful was admitted to the hospital in an unconscious state and shifted to DMCH.

DMCH doctors said he died from poisoning. His family claimed they did not get Tk 1 lakh which was with him.

Nine policemen hurt in gunfight

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Nine policemen including two officers-in-charge of Sadar Model Police Station suffered wounds in a gunfight with a gang in the district town's Pahartoli area Thursday night.

Police arrested the ringleader Salah Uddin, 32. The injured are OC Mohammad Shahjahan, OC (investigation) Harun-or-Rashid, sub-inspectors Jahirul Anwar, Solaiman, Monoj, Fazlul Karim, Ruhul Amin, Mofizur Rahman, and Emran, and Ansar member Monir Ahmed.

Police said OC Shahjahan led a police team to Pahartoli area in search of "Salah Uddin Bahini", whose members started firing shotguns at them as the team reached there.

The policemen were injured with shotgun pellets in the hour-long gunfight. They were given primary treatment at Cox's Bazar sadar hospital.

OC Shahjahan said at least 10 criminals took part in the gunfight, but they could not arrest anybody else but Salah Uddin as the others managed to flee.

Salah Uddin will be interrogated on police remand on charge of attacking police and possessing illegal weapon, he added.



Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad speaks at a memorial programme at Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday marking the death of Belal Hossain, joint news editor of private television channel Somoy TV.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

JP to contest next JS polls independently

Says Ershad

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party, a major ally of the Awami League-led grand alliance government, will contest the next parliamentary elections independently, said the party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday.

The next general elections will surely be held on time whether BNP participates or not, he said while briefing newsmen at a press conference at his Baridhara residence in the capital.

On BNP's threat to boycott the next polls if it is held under a political government, Ershad said it is not their concern who will participate in the elections or not. "We know, we will participate," he added.

The Jatiya Party chief was a bit critical of Awami League for holding talks with smaller parties.

"BNP as opposition party, can hold talks with smaller parties to increase their strength. But, Awami League does not need to do the same," Ershad said.

"By holding talks with smaller parties, Awami League is undermining itself," he added.

JU photo exhibition begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A photography exhibition by Envisio, the photography club of Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of Jahangirnagar University (JU), began at the city's Drik Gallery yesterday.

JU IBA Director Dr Mohammad Baktiar Rana inaugurated the exhibition where Kudrat-E-Khuda, vice president of "Photography Bangladesh", was present.

A total of 50 photographs of 28 photographers of different departments were on display at the exhibition, to be open from 3:00pm to 8:00pm everyday till July 28, says a press release.

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