

## Abul Mansur

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Itehad in 1946, a daily published from Kolkata. He also worked in other newspapers, such as Krisak and Navayug. He was a leading figure of modern and progressive journalism.

An accomplished politician, Abul Mansur Ahmad served the Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque-led United Front government as the provincial education minister.

During 1956-57, he was the central commerce and industry minister of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy's cabinet. His dedication to the welfare of East Pakistan, particularly his contribution to the initiating of the industrialisation of this area, is well recognised.

In his literary oeuvre, he produced famous books like Aina, Asmani Purdah, Gulliver Safarama, Food Conference, and Bangladesher Culture. His autobiographical works include Atma Katha (about myself) and Amar Dekha Rajniti Panchash Bachar (50 years of politics as I saw it).

Abul Mansur Ahmad had an incomparable role in struggling for and promoting secularism during the 40s, 50s and 60s. He was a leading figure in organising the opposition movement in the early period of Pakistan. He was one of the frontline leaders of Awami League.

Since the early 40s, he had been writing on the language question, and played a crucial role in the Language Movement as the editor of Itehad. He drafted the 21-point programme of United Front in the 1954 election. It was the earliest political articulation of the political, economic and cultural demands of the Bangalees of East Pakistan. In that election, Muslim League was ousted from power.

He was imprisoned several times during the late 50s and early 60s due to his political activism.

Abul Mansur Ahmad died on March 18, 1979 in the capital.

On the occasion of his birth anniversary, "Bikkhon" organised a discussion yesterday in Mymensingh, where Prof Dr Serajul Islam Choudhury was the key discussant.

Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad will organise a discussion titled "Ideals and Aesthetics of Abul Mansur Ahmad" on Tuesday in the Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad Auditorium of Bangla Academy at 3:00pm. Prof Emeritus Anisuzzaman will chair the programme and Prof Emeritus Rafiqul Islam will be the chief guest. Among other discussants, Prof Mansur Musa, folklorist Shamsuzzaman Khan and novelist Selina Hossain will be present.

A book titled Jibon Shilpi Abul Mansur Ahmad, edited by Imran Mahfuz, will be published on that occasion.

All are requested to join the programme.

## Take action

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not resolved every year. For this reason, corruption and irregularities are being institutionalised in this sector as those who are involved in fraud and corruption do not face trial," he added.

Iftikharuzzaman also said the country's image is being tarnished following the international media reports on sufferings of Bangladeshi pilgrims in Saudi Arabia and hajj agencies' irregularities and cheatings.

As no effective action has been taken yet against the hajj agencies' wrongdoing, the government has to take the responsibility for the hajjis' plight, he said.

The anti-corruption watchdog has also urged the government to blacklist the hajj agencies involved in irregularities and cheatings and give the permission to send hajjis to Saudi Arabia only to those agencies which are qualified.

Contacted, Abdul Jalil, acting secretary of religious affairs ministry, said they were taking action against the hajj agencies and people who were found guilty of irregularities and cheatings.

"Last year, we punished 172 hajj agents. We will take action against any hajj agent if we get any written complaint against him," he said, adding that they have got allegations of mismanagement against two agents this year.

A total of 1,01,163 hajjis got hajj visas this year, he added.

## He wanted

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The day's programme also included reading out selected parts from Ahmad's writings and unveiling of "Swarachita", a monthly literary magazine of the sahitya sangsad.

Representatives of different socio-cultural organisations and educational institutions, cultural personalities, participated in the programme, where Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star; Shaheen Anam, executive director of poet Farid Ahmed Dulal, the sahitya sangsad's president; Yazdani Quraishy Kajal, its secretary; poet Amjad Dulong; reciter Golam Rahmani Quraishy Sajal; poet Swadhina Chowdhury; and poet Akanda Latif, among others, were present.

## Be cautious about Zika

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These countries receive a combination of high volumes of travellers from Zika-affected areas, have mosquitoes capable of transmitting Zika virus, climate conditions conducive to local spread and limited health resources, according to the study published online in The Lancet Infectious Diseases, a medical journal, on September 1.

Malaysia reported its first case of Zika on August 31. A woman tested positive for the mosquito-borne virus after she visited neighbouring Singapore.

The Zika virus, which has spread through the Americas and the Caribbean since late last year, is generally a mild disease but is a particular risk to pregnant women.

It has been linked to microcephaly -- a severe birth defect in which babies are born with abnormally small heads and underdeveloped brains.

There is no vaccine or treatment for Zika, which is a close cousin of dengue and chikungunya and causes mild fever, rash and red eyes.

"Bangladesh is fully prepared to tackle Zika," Health Minister Nasim said. He also urged people not to be panicked about Zika.

Professor Abul Kalam Azad, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, said the 10 Bangladeshis infected with Zika have been quarantined and they are out of danger.

As there is a general concern over Zika, he said, the health ministry has alerted the medical teams in all international air and seaports to make sure

the incoming travellers go through the thermal scanners so that any suspect of Zika infection can be tracked.

Prof Azad said the incoming travellers would be provided with a form, which they would have to fill up detailing information on the countries they come from and if they were infected by Zika virus.

If anybody is suspected to have been infected, they will be kept under observation at a special unit in Kurmitola Hospital, he said.

"We have a capacity of testing 1,500 people for Zika and will enhance it up to 20,000 if necessary," Azad told The Daily Star.

However, there is no general travel restrictions for tourists, he said.

There are some 6 lakh Bangladeshis working in Malaysia and 2 lakh in Singapore.

AFP reports at least 2.6 billion people, over a third of the global population, live in parts of Africa, Asia and the Pacific where Zika could gain a new foothold, researchers warned Friday, with 1.2 billion at risk in India alone.

These are people who reside in as yet unaffected parts of the world with the right climate and abundant mosquitoes for the virus to settle, spread and propagate an epidemic like the one besetting the Americas and Caribbean, they said.

The United States, Australia and other countries have added Singapore to the growing list of places that pregnant women or those trying to conceive have been warned to avoid.

## Neo JMB's military

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hideout at Paikpara in Narayanganj where "Neo JMB" coordinator Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury had been staying.

Tamim along with his associates Tausif Hossain and Fazle Rabbi were killed during a raid at the hideout on August 27.

Soon after the Narayanganj raid, police came to know about Murad's rented house -- a fifth-floor apartment of a six-storey building on Road 33 in Rupnagar of Mirpur.

On August 28, Murad along with his family left the house without taking any household items, Monirul Islam told The Daily Star.

"We asked the house owner to inform us whenever Murad comes for the household items. The house owner's family contacted the local police at night [last night] prompting the force to rush to the place to arrest him," said the CTTC chief, also an additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

When police reached in front of his home, Murad already had come down and was about to leave.

"As police challenged him, he jumped on them and indiscriminately stabbed three police officials," Monirul added.

Masud Ahmed, deputy commissioner of DMP's Mirpur zone, said Murad first opened fire at police from a pistol and then knifed them.

As police retaliated by firing shots, Murad died on the spot.

Additional Inspector General of Police Mokhlesur Rahman, who visited the scene, told reporters that the incident took place between 8:30 and 8:45pm.

Police recovered a pistol from the spot.

The injured, Officer-in-Charge Syed Shahid Alam, OC (Investigation) Md Shaheen Fakir and Sub-Inspector Mominur Rahman of Rupnagar Police Station, were immediately taken to

Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Shahid, who suffered stab wounds to his back, and Shaheen, shot in thigh, were shifted to Square Hospital.

Contacted around 1:00am today, a customer care officer of Square Hospital said the condition of the two were stable.

Mominur with minor injuries in one hand was still at DMCH.

The officers were in bullet-proof vests. They still were hurt as the militant targeted the body parts not covered by vests, Monirul said.

Aged between 40 and 45, Murad was a retired army man, the DMP official said, adding that it was yet to be confirmed which post he held. He could not say which district Murad was from.

Earlier, investigators said that Murad was known as an arrogant man and capable of carrying out attacks causing massive destruction. But there was hardly any chance that he would take the helm of "Neo JMB" after the killing of Tamim, they added.

Murad was not popular in the militant group, a JMB offshoot called by law enforcers "Neo JMB". He was ill-tempered and used to order his trainees to do push-ups 20 to 25 times for minor mistakes, said an investigator.

A police officer said Murad rented the Rupnagar apartment on July 1.

Witnesses said plainclothes officials reached the spot in a microbus.

"I heard around 15 to 20 gunshots and saw some injured people being taken away," said owner of a shop near the house.

Law enforcers have been conducting raids on militant hideouts after the terrorist attacks on Gulshan's Holey Artisan Bakery on July 1 and near the Sholakkia Eidgah on July 7.

Since then, two successful drives were conducted -- one in Kalyanpur where nine militants were killed and then in Narayanganj.

## Blasts near Pakistan court

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wounded, three of whom were critical.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said yesterday's latest bombing would "not shatter our unflinching resolve in our war against terrorism".

"These receding elements are showing frustration by attacking our soft targets. They shall not get space to hide in Pakistan," Sharif said in a statement.

Jamaat-ur-Ahrar's spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan, vowed to stage more attacks in a statement sent to Reuters.

"We appeal to civilians to remain away from law enforcement installations and these un-Islamic courts. We will target them more," he said.

More than 20 people were killed in an attack in December on a government office in Mardan, which was also claimed by Jamaat-ur-Ahrar.

ATTACK ON CHRISTIAN AREA Earlier in the day, four gunmen wearing suicide-bomb vests attacked a Christian neighbourhood in the Khyber tribal region, killing at least one security guard and a civilian resident, military officials said.

Jamaat-ur-Ahrar, which has targeted Christians in the past, claimed responsibility within hours of the attack.

The Islamist group, which briefly declared allegiance to Middle East-based Islamic State in 2014 but recently said it was no longer affiliated with them, also staged the Easter Day attack on Christians in a park in Lahore that killed 72 people including

at least 29 children.

The attackers exchanged fire with security forces and were killed, the military said.

The area is near Warsak Dam, 20 km (12 miles) northwest of Peshawar.

The official said the attackers might have been attempting to enter an adjacent security installation by exploiting weaker security arrangements in the residential area.

Christians, who number around 2 million in a nation of 190 million people, have been the target of a series of attacks in recent years.

Just a day before the attacks, the chief army spokesman briefed the media on the progress of the military's two-year-old offensive against jihadists in the rugged areas bordering Afghanistan.

Lt General Asim Bajwa released figures showing that terrorist attacks had fallen from a total of 128 in 2013, with 46 of those suicide attacks, to 74 last year, including 17 suicide attacks.

He also said authorities had arrested more than 300 people attempting to set up an Islamic State operation in Pakistan. He added that the armed forces had killed 3,500 militants since 2014.

However, he acknowledged Pakistan still faced a tough fight.

Militants operating in Pakistan - including the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban groups, al-Qaeda and the Haqqani network - seek to establish strict Islamic rule.

## BSF FIRING

## Bangladeshi cattle trader shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A cattle trader from Bangladesh died and two others were injured as India's Border Security Force (BSF) opened fire in the early hours of yesterday near Burirhat border under Kaliganj upazila in the district.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) sources quoting the injured said the BSF fired on a group of six to seven cattle traders who were crossing into Bangladesh from India near Burirhat border pillar 915 with a herd of nearly 20 cattle.

The deceased was identified as Mahibur Rahman, 38, son of Nazu Islam from Malgara village under Lohakuchi union of Kaliganj upazila in Lalmonirhat.

The two injured -- Selim Hossain, 38, and Shariful Islam, 35, both from Malgara village of the same upazila -- were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, BGB said, adding that relatives of the deceased have received the dead body.

Lt Col Ahmed Bajlur Rahman Hayati, commanding officer of Lalmonirhat 15 BGB Battalion, said a patrol team of BSF from Satbandari camp under Cooch Behar 100 BSF Battalion in West Bengal had opened fire on the cattle traders.

The BGB has sent a formal protest to the BSF in this regard and a flag meeting between the two forces has been set for today, he added.

## Terror

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of mankind bent on suppressing and crushing the people's struggle for global peace and security.

"It is a symptom, not the disease, and the reasons of the disease are mainly poverty, religious fanaticism, illiteracy, social inequality and sense of deprivation or frustration."

He said, "Terrorism, in any form, has been one of the constant life threatening concerns affecting more or less every country of the world in the 21st century. Terrorism has no country and it is a threat to the whole mankind.

"As a peace-loving country, Bangladesh is fully committed and ready to fight against terrorism and support all meaningful steps to be taken by the international community to combat the menace," he noted.

The chief justice also said the people of Bangladesh face significant hurdles in accessing the judicial system.

"Vulnerable groups, including the poor, women, children, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities face particular exclusion. Throughout the formal justice system, there is a significant lack of capacity within the judiciary, relevant ministries and statutory bodies."

The chief justice said there are some specific constraints on access to justice. Those include prohibitive costs, corruption and undue influence and lack of awareness of legal rights.

"Nowadays it is unfortunate to note that lawyers are politically motivated." They don't raise voice against the political parties they support, said SK Sinha.

"Some lawyers developed their mentality in commercialisation of the profession." They are not interested in giving due attention to "substantive matters" such as first appeals and writs, he said.

"We always discover serious flaws in complaints, written statements, writ petitions and even in the bail petitions and injunction petitions. The quality of drafting legal instruments is degrading day by day."

Lawyers are interested in injunction and bail matters, and it's hard to find adequate number of lawyers to deal with "substantive matters", he said.

"If this continues, I do apprehend that judiciary will be in peril within 20 to 25 years and as a result, the rule of law which is the foundation of democracy will be a far cry."

SK Sinha noted that one of the main reasons behind case backlog is "awful shortage" of judges in both tiers of the judiciary and lack of infrastructure.

He said the country now has 1,600 judges. The number is too meagre and inadequate for a country with a population of 16 crore. If the number of judges is not doubled, no dramatic change can be expected.

The chief justice hoped Bangladesh Legal Times would discuss serious legal matters and help students, lawyers, judges and other stakeholders enhance their knowledge.

Law Minister Anisul Huq and Legal Times Editor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh also spoke at the ceremony organised by the magazine's publisher, Banglar Bani.

## Cops hunt for militant

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outfit and whether he had supplied all the grenades used in the July 1 attack that killed 20 hostages, mostly foreigners.

Sohel is a close relative of Nurul Islam Marzan, a key leader of "Neo JMB". Investigators said Marzan went on a recce to the Gulshan café area and after receiving information from him, "Neo JMB" coordinator Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury finalised the attack plan.

Seeking anonymity, a top investigator said Marzan from Pabna had a connection with Sohel, as one of his brothers married a maternal aunt of Marzan. The official said Marzan was under surveillance.

Also known as "Hathkata Mahfuz", Sohel joined the banned organisation during its initial years under the command of first JMB chief Shaykh Abdur Rahman.

Rahman along with five others, including his deputy Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai and brother Ataur Rahman Sunny, was executed on March 29 in 2007.

After the executions of some top JMB leaders, Sohel became a member of the JMB's Majlis-e-Shura, the highest policy-making body of the outfit, with Maulana Saidur Rahman as its chief.

Law enforcers have been on the hunt for Sohel for many years. They on several occasions had claimed Sohel fled to India where he helped their Indian associates establish a militant network in West Bengal.

The name of Sohel, who used fake name Nasrullah, was common on

the lists of militants and criminals exchanged between Dhaka and New Delhi in February last year. The names of three other top JMB men also appeared in both the lists, according to DMP sources.

These militants have been staying in West Bengal for the last few years. They came to Bangladesh whenever they thought it to be safe, the sources added.

IGP IN CHAPAINAWABGANJ Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque yesterday urged people to remain vigilant and inform law enforcers about those involved in militancy.

"Now militancy is our big challenge and we need to create social awareness to counter it," the police chief told newsmen after attending a programme in Chapainawabganj, reports our correspondent.

The programme was organised to destroy narcotics seized in the district.

RAB ARRESTED 26 'MILITANTS' The Rapid Action Battalion has so far arrested 26 suspected militants from across the country after the Gulshan attack, Rab Director General Benazir Ahmed said yesterday.

The arrestees include members of banned militant outfits JMB, Ansarullah Bangla Team, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, and "Neo-JMB", he told reporters during his visit to Kamalapur Railway Station in the city.

The Rab chief said law enforcers were working to ensure security in the country during Eid-ul-Azha keeping the Gulshan attack in mind.

## Mir Quasem

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presidential mercy, Prashanta Kumar Banik, senior jail superintendent of the prison, told The Daily Star.

Quasem, who led ruthless militia Al-Badr in Chittagong to commit crimes against humanity in 1971, is now kept at a condemned cell in the jail.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said there is no legal bar now to execute Quasem as he has decided not to seek presidential clemency.

"Now the government can make preparations for his execution," he told this correspondent.

The authorities, however, are yet to disclose the time and the place of Quasem's execution.

Talking to Our Gazipur Correspondent at 9:35pm, Prashanta said, "Mir Quasem will not be executed tonight." He, however, declined to say when and where the convict would be executed.

Tahmina Akhtar, daughter-in-law of Quasem, told this correspondent at 9:30pm that they were yet to get any call from the jail authorities to meet Quasem.

The jail authorities usually ask family members of a death row convict to meet him for the last time before execution.

When Our Gazipur Correspondent visited Kashimpur jail area around 7:00pm, he found that additional policemen were deployed there and journalists were waiting outside the jail.

All the shops on the jail road pulled their shutters down around 7:00pm. Harun-ur-Rashid, superintendent of police in Gazipur, told this newspaper that he didn't get any call from the jail authorities. They, however, beefed up security around the jail area.

On Wednesday, a day after the Supreme Court upheld Quasem's death penalty for 1971 war crimes, the Jamaat leader, widely considered as top financier of the Islamist party, sought time to decide his next course of action. He sought more time when the authorities asked him the same question the following day.

After meeting her husband on Wednesday, Quasem's wife Khandakar Ayesha Khatun said her husband wouldn't decide on his next course of action until their son, allegedly picked up by unidentified men 22 days ago, returns home.

His son Ahmed Bin Quasem was allegedly picked up by plainclothes men from his Mirpur DOHS home in the capital on August 9 night. He has remained traceless since then.

On Wednesday, Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Syed Iftekhar Uddin

said the convict would get "reasonable time" to make his decision but the time wouldn't be more than seven days.

About the place of execution, Iftekhar said, "He [Quasem] is now in Kashimpur Central Jail and we'll consult all stakeholders and decide on the place of execution."

Earlier, five war criminals were executed at Dhaka Central Jail, which has been relocated recently to Keraniganj.

Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch urged the Bangladesh government to halt the execution of condemned war criminal Quasem.

"The death sentence against Mir Quasem Ali, a central executive committee member of Bangladesh's Jamaat-e-Islami, should be suspended with immediate effect," the HRW said in a statement yesterday.

"It is critical that the Bangladesh government ensures justice for the awful crimes against civilians in 1971, but that requires it to uphold international fair trial standards," said Brad Adams, Asia director of the HRW.

BACKGROUND

On Tuesday, the SC dismissed Quasem's petition seeking a review of the judgment that upheld his death penalty for crimes against humanity in 1971.

The apex court released the full verdict and sent it to the International Crimes Tribunal.

The ICT then sent copies of the verdict to Dhaka Central Jail, the office of Dhaka district magistrate, and law and home ministries. The Dhaka jail sent a copy to the Kashimpur jail.

In November 2014, the ICT-2 sentenced Quasem to death on two charges and awarded him different jail terms on eight other charges.

According to the case documents, he had set up a torture camp at Dalim Hotel in the port city during the Liberation War. On his instructions, many freedom-loving people were tortured and killed at the camp.

Quasem challenged the verdict at the apex court.

On March 8 this year, the SC upheld his death sentence on one charge -- the killing of young freedom fighter Jasim Uddin at Dalim Hotel -- and jail terms for his involvement in abduction, confinement and torture of freedom fighters and innocent people.

It, however, acquitted him of three other charges, including a murder charge on which he was sentenced to death by the ICT-2.

Quasem filed the review petition on June 19.

## Fake currency makers

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commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), during a press briefing at the DMP Media Centre yesterday said the arrestees admitted that they were trying to sell the counterfeit currencies.

The equipment confiscated from the criminals included a notebook computer, a printer, ink cartridges, wooden frames, plastic jars and 450 pieces of blank paper sheets.

The price of the equipment alone would be around Tk 50 lakh, Monirul also said.

The arrestees are professional counterfeiters and they admitted to have been involved in the crime for around

seven to eight years, he said, adding that the gang usually fabricated and delivered counterfeit currencies from a flat they rented in the capital for a short period of time.

The gang operated within a syndicate that had different tiers of members, including females, with each tier having specific function and these criminals became especially active ahead of Eid, Monirul explained.

On Wednesday, detectives arrested two counterfeiters -- Alam Miah and Alamgir -- from Lalbagh area in the capital and recovered counterfeit notes of Tk 63.77 lakh from their possession.