

AKHTERUZZAMAN ELIAS

16 FEBRUARY 1943 – 4 JANUARY 1997

Born in Gaibandha District, Akhteruzzaman Elias was a Bangladeshi novelist and short story writer. He did not write many novels yet he is arguably the most radical novelist of Bangladesh is recognised as one of the most critically acclaimed Bengali novelists.

After starting his career as a lecturer at Jagannath College, Elias worked in the same post till 1983. Subsequently, he worked as Deputy Director, Directorate of Primary Education, Vice-Principal of Music College,

and Professor and Head of the Department of Bengali at Dhaka College.

With only two novels -- Chilekothar Sepai (The Soldier in an Attic, 1986) and Khwabnama (Tale of Dreams, 1996) --

Akhteruzzaman Elias left an indelible impression on the Bangladeshi readers. With an active political viewpoint, he wrote several short stories and essays, which are also noteworthy addition to our literature.

MAD GENIUS

NOVELS

- Chilekothar Sepai (The Soldier in the Attic) (1987)
- Khoabnama (Tale of Dreams) (1996)

SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS

- Dojokher Om (The Warmth of Hell)
- Dudhbhate Utpat (No Peace in Milk and Rice)
- Onno Ghore Onno Shor (Another Tune in Another Room)
- Khoari (Hangover)
- Jal Shopno, Shopner Jal

ESSAY COLLECTIONS

Shongskritir Bhanga Shetu (Broken Bridge of Culture)

AWARDS

1977 : Humayun Kabir Smriti Puraskar
1983 : Bangla Academy Award in Literature
1987 : Alaol Sahitya Puraskar - Chilekothar Sepai
1996 : Ananda Puraskar - Khwabnama
1996 : Saadat Ali Akhand Puraskar - Khwabnama
1996 : Kazi Mahbubullah Gold Medal - Khwabnama
1999 : Ekushey Padak (posthumous)

SKETCH: YAFIZ SIDDIQUI

STARDIARY

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HEAVY SCHOOL BAGS ON DELICATE SHOULDERS

As the winter vacation comes to an end and it's time for children to head back to school, my 7-year-old son dreads going back to school. As the year begins and their syllabus is not fixed yet, he has to carry almost all the books to school. Whenever I think of him going back with the heavy schoolbags on his delicate shoulders, I get scared too. My elder son who is in high school finds it stylish to just have one strap on one shoulder. Later after talking to a doctor, he was asked to take their bag on both shoulders so that the load is distributed evenly. He too was having back and posture problems for a long time. Paying attention to how a bag is packed could also help reduce the risk of a child developing back or neck pain. I think it's important to look at the load that they're carrying, especially if they're complaining of back or neck pain. It's really important to think about the size of the bag that they're carrying, and that it fits your child properly.

Moumita Dey
Motijheel, Dhaka



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A STRONG BOND

While people complain of not having good neighbours, I have been very lucky in this business. My next door neighbour to the left is a family of four. The couple have a son and a daughter. The daughter is of my age. Being a doctor and a mother of a two year old it becomes very difficult for me to manage everything. Every time they go out to the store for their grocery, they don't forget to ask if I would like them to pick something up for me. They are very friendly and we often pass most of our afternoons together over a cup of tea. On different festivals, we try to have a meal together. It's like having an extended family! We share a very strong bond even if we are not related by blood. How lucky we are to have them as our neighbours!

Afrina Tabassum
Mohakhali, Dhaka