

# Uphold Bangabandhu's ideals

Prime minister urges children; renews call for keeping watch on them

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged children to uphold the Father of the Nation's ideals with a view to becoming future leaders of the country.

"Now the Father of the Nation is not amongst us, but we must complete the unfinished tasks of Bangabandhu. We have to turn Bangladesh into a prosperous and developed country," she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing a children's rally and cultural programme held at Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex marking 97th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu and National Children's Day. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and the district administration jointly organised the programme.

Urging children and students to move forward with the ideals of Bangabandhu, Hasina said, "The

Father of the Nation was son of this soil and he is in his eternal sleep here. So, the children of this soil will have to move forward upholding his ideals. I'll ask you to love the country and its people and groom yourselves in such a way so you could be future leaders of the country or even be a prime minister -- you'll have to have such self-belief."

The prime minister also advised children and students to be more compassionate to the autistic as well as the physically and mentally-challenged children.

Efforts need to be made for developing character and self-confidence among children, she also said.

Mentioning that her government has made religious education mandatory, Hasina asked them not to disrespect any religion. "Islam is a religion of peace and it never gives the right to kill anybody. The religion always preaches peace, brotherhood and

solidarity and we'll always have to abide by that."

"We want our country to be built in such a way which our Father of the Nation had dreamt of. He had always wanted our children to lead a better life," she said.

She also renewed her call to guardians, teachers, members of law enforcement agencies, religious leaders and scholars including imams, and muajjins to be watchful so the children do not remain absent from their academic institutions for too long without any valid reason or they do not go astray by getting themselves involved in crimes such as militancy or drug abuse.

Later, the Prime Minister distributed awards among the winners of various competitions including drawing and handwriting competition, cultural competition and historic March 7 speech competition.

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## Abul Mansur Ahmad's 38th anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 38th death anniversary of Abul Mansur Ahmad, a renowned litterateur, journalist, and politician of the sub-continent. He died in 1979. He was born in 1898 in Dhanikhola village of Trishal, Mymensingh.

One of the greatest satirists of Bangla literature, Abul Mansur Ahmad was also a renowned politician, lawyer and very powerful journalist. He was a pioneer of modern and progressive journalism. He worked for prominent newspapers such as Krishak, Nabajug, Sultan, and Mohammadi. He was editor of the Kolkata based Daily Ittehad from 1946 to 1948.

A very successful politician, Abul Mansur Ahmad played a key role in the formation of the Awami Muslim League. He served as vice-president of the organisation from 1953 to 1958. He was one of the main authors of the famous Ekush Dafa (21 point programme), which was the election manifesto of the United Front in the election of 1954.

He was elected a member of East Bengal Provincial Assembly in that election, and served as health minister in the United Front cabinet under Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq. In 1955, he was elected a member of Pakistan Constituent Assembly.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presents President Abdul Hamid with a copy of the second autobiography of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 'Karagarer Rojnamcha' at Bangabandhu's ancestral home in Tungipara yesterday, marking his 97th birth anniversary and National Children's Day. PHOTO: PID

## TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Bou-katha-kae in Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary. PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Jibananda's Birds

**B**o-ko-ta-ko! Bo-ko-ta-ko! This four-note song is the vocal signature of the Indian Cuckoo, known as bou-katha-kae in Bangla. Its song is unmistakable and the bird decidedly prefers to be heard rather than seen. Like other members of the cuckoo family, it hides among leaves usually high up on a tree, so if you see it at all, it is partly covered by leaves. I was able to photograph this bird, whole and uncovered, only once, in the Kalenga forest, and that too because it was a juvenile and less wary than an adult.

The furtiveness of the bird is not that well-known but, reading his poetry, I realized that the great Bengali poet Jibananda Das (1899-1954) knew about it. Many of his poems are replete with specific, precise details of nature in Bengal, in a way only a keen observer would notice. Not satisfied with simply the names and physical appearance of birds, his poems often allude to their behaviour and activities.

Thus it is - in the poem *Ekhane Ghughur Dakey* - he says, essentially, that if you happen to catch sight of that bou-katha-kae hiding in the jaam tree, and if you happen to hear strains of the song of the ghughu (spotted dove), then you will be captivated forever in this forest.

There are numerous other examples sprinkled throughout his poems. For example, in *Hai Cheel*, he mentions the weeping of the golden-winged Brahminy kite, whose call is indeed melancholy. Owls - both *lokkhi pecha* (barn owl) and *neem pecha* (scops owl) - show up repeatedly in his poems. And the poet knows which bird eats what. In *Tomader Booker Thekey* he pictures the *neem pecha* picking up a field mouse at sunset while wishing for

a similar ending to his own life.

The *shalik* also makes frequent appearances in his poems. There are several species of birds in Bangladesh called *shalik*. Jibananda is usually talking about *bhat shaliks* (common mynas), which he must have observed with great attention. For he mentions their brown wings and yellow feet, their frolic with each other among the leaves and branches, their feet sinking into the velvet soft grass while picking up seeds until they fly off as if answering the call of a *hijol* (*barringtonia*) tree nearby.

Insects such as crickets, grasshoppers, fireflies, bees, beetles, butterflies and hornets feature in his poems, as do mammals such as mongoose, jackals and mice. His rich evocation of Bengal fauna - trees, shrubs, weeds, even different species of grass - also adds much to his poetry.

He seamlessly blends in both real and mythical historical figures, as well as mythical creatures such as the *shuk* bird, weaving a tapestry of a beautiful, dreamlike Bengal, or *ruposhi bangla*. And he declares over and over, in many ways: he does not want to see any other land as the beauty of Bengal is enough for him, and that he wants to return to Bengal after death, not necessarily as a person, but nevertheless immersed in her elements.

There was sadness in Jibananda's short adult life, much of it spent moving from one teaching job to another. But out of that sadness came poetry that captivates us, perhaps in the same way the birds, trees, rivers and grass of Bengal captivated the poet.

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## Where did the rice go?

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

This was the question that came to her mind after Rawshan Ara Begum of Charaicha village in Barisal bought a 30 kilogram sack of rice under a government scheme for providing cheap rice to the ultra poor.

When the 55-year-old widow went to the Loharpul dealer centre in Sadar upazila on Tuesday to buy rice for her family, to her utmost surprise, the sack was missing half

a kilogram of rice.

"We are being deprived even though the scheme was meant for helping us," said Rawshan Ara.

She was not the only one, almost all the buyers alleged that they got shortweighed by the dealers.

As per the scheme, the government is selling rice at Tk 10 per kilogram to the disadvantaged.

Every year, during the periods of

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## Woman, child burnt to death in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A mother along with her four-year-old daughter was burnt to death while her husband was injured in a fire at their tinshed house at Fulbari village in Ballavdi of Shalta upazila early yesterday.

The dead were Farida Begum, 28, and Rabeya. Unus Ali Mollah, Ballavdi union parishad chairman, said only Sentu Mollah, a rickshaw-van puller, managed to get out of the house.

Police suspected that the fire originated from a short circuit around 3:00am. Locals doused the blaze within half an hour.

The bodies were sent to Faridpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsies. A case was filed.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Shalta Mobasar Hassan gave Tk 10,000 for the treatment of Sentu who is now undergoing treatment at the hospital with 20 percent burns.

## Two jailed for stalking in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A mobile court sentenced two youths to six months' imprisonment in separate cases on Thursday night for stalking females in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

One of the convicts, Md Babul, 25, son of Abdus Samad of Salondor Collegepara village, was held red-handed by police on patrol while he was stalking a female at Telipara village.

Meanwhile at Chongakhata village, locals held Alamgir Hossain, 20, son of Belal Hossain, while he was stalking a madrasa student and also tried to harass her sexually. Later, they handed him over to police.

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