

16th death anniversary of Mahbub Anam today



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 16th death anniversary of eminent journalist and author Mahbub Anam, former editor of The Bangladesh Times.

In a distinguished career as a journalist, he also served as a senior executive of the then Pakistan Observer and senior vice president of Bangladesh Editors Council.

Mahbub Anam was also actively involved with Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad, Bangladesh Press Council and Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha Porichalona Board.

For his contribution to journalism, Mahbub Anam received the Swadhinata Padak, Sher-e-Bangla Gold Medal, Moulana Akram Khan Gold Medal, Kaloddhani Padak and Tribhuj Gold Medal.

He also served as general manager of Jamuna Oil Company and director of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.

He was actively involved in politics from his student life. In addition to being the general secretary of Salimullah Muslim Hall of Dhaka University in 1954-55, he was appointed acting publication secretary of the Jukta Front on behalf of the Awami League in 1954.

Mahbub Anam actively took part in the Language Movement in 1952. He was jailed several times for this role in the movement as general secretary of Tamaddun Majlish, Mymensingh unit; joint

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Clockwise from left, Abinta Kabir's mother Ruba Ahmed cannot hold back tears as she speaks at the inaugural ceremony of Abinta Kabir Foundation's office on the capital's Pragati Sarani yesterday. A section of the guests at the programme. After the inauguration, visitors look at the memorabilia of Abinta on display in a corner of the office space. Abinta was killed during a terrorist strike in Gulshan's Holey Artisan Bakery on July 1 last year.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh increases capacity to train UN peacekeepers

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has further enhanced its capacity to effectively train peacekeepers and conduct United Nations and regional peace support operations.

A new multipurpose training facility at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) in Gazipur was inaugurated yesterday in support of the US State Department's Global Peace Operations Initiative or GPOI programme.

Visiting Commander of United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) Admiral Harry B Harris Jr, Chief of Army Staff General Abu Belal Muhammad Shafiul Huq and US Ambassador in Dhaka Marcia Bernicat attended the inaugural ceremony.

The new \$3.6 million multipurpose training facility provides the BIPSOT with a 750 seat auditorium and additional training rooms, and was part of nearly \$5 million in US government assistance allocated to enhance Bangladesh's capacity to effectively train and conduct United Nations and regional peace support operations, said the US embassy.

The BIPSOT will be the site for the Bangladesh Army and USPACOM co-sponsored Multinational

Peacekeeping Exercise Shanti-Doot 4, scheduled to begin late February into early March of next year.

The exercise is designed to increase participants' interoperability and peacekeeping skills prior to deployment of UN missions.

The year 2018 marks the 30th anniversary of Bangladesh's entry into UN Peacekeeping and Bangladesh is currently the fourth highest contributing nation with more than 6,900 troops and police serving in 13 UN peacekeeping operations.

Bernicat said the contributions of Bangladeshi peacekeepers have proven that, as in so many other spheres, Bangladesh's military continues to contribute immensely to global peace.

"Today, to pay homage to the brave men and women who have served Bangladesh and the world, and to honor the fruits of our bilateral partnership, I'm privileged to introduce Admiral Harry B Harris today," she said.

The US envoy said Admiral Harris has a long and distinguished career in service to the United States, starting with his graduation from the US Naval Academy in 1978.

The US Admiral who arrived in Dhaka on

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Abinta Kabir Foundation office inaugurated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abinta Kabir Foundation, a non-profit organisation, yesterday inaugurated its office on Pragati Sarani in the capital.

The foundation aims to fulfil Abinta Kabir's dream of helping the underprivileged through various welfare projects all over the country.

Abinta was a 19-year-old undergraduate student at Emory University's Oxford College campus in Georgia, USA. On the night of July 1 last year, she and her two friends -- Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain of Emory and Indian national Tarishi Jain, a student of the University of California, Berkeley -- were killed along with 19 other hostages in a militant attack at Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan.

During the inauguration ceremony, Manzur Morshed, Abinta's grandfather, said Abinta was involved in helping the needy and inspired children to enhance their creative endeavour.

She wanted to come home in Bangladesh early so she could open an NGO for the underprivileged, he said.

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DHAKA, CHITTAGONG 2.6 lakh to get prepaid gas meters next year

UNB, Dhaka

Some 2.6 lakh residential consumers in Dhaka and Chittagong cities are going to get prepaid gas meters from next year under a Japan-funded project.

According to sources at Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company, responsible for installation of 200,000 gas meters in Dhaka North City Corporation area, a Japanese contractor is now making pre-shipment inspections of the imported prepaid meters, which will reach the country this month.

Manager of Titas prepaid meter installation project Sazzad Hossain informed that they have been conducting a consumer survey in the selected areas before starting the installation work.

"Once the meters reach the country, both the survey and installation works will simultaneously go on and the job will be concluded within the next two years," he told the news agency.

The government took the project a few years back as part of a move to check the pilferage in gas supply.

Earlier, under a pilot project, Titas installed 8,600 prepaid meters in Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur and Lalmatia areas in the capital. Now 200,000 prepaid meters will be

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Putting their cameras in front of them symbolising a work stoppage, photojournalists stage a sit-in on the road in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding release of their colleague from the Daily Observer, Ashik Mahmud, who has been "falsely implicated" in a drug case. The Dhaka Union of Journalists also joined their protest programme.

PHOTO: STAR

Photojournalists stand up for co-worker

Demand his release in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists yesterday demonstrated in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club demanding immediate release of Daily Observer photojournalist Ashik Mahmud, who was "falsely" implicated in a drug case.

They threatened to besiege Paltan Police Station if the demand is not met within 24 hours.

Ashik, 25, has been languishing in jail since June 27 after police indicted him in a, what the family alleged, a false drug case.

Leaders and members of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) and Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) formed a human chain and blocked the road between 11:00am and 1:00pm, demanding withdrawal of the case.

They urged the newspersons not to publish

any report of police until the demand is met. Ashik was arrested on June 27 night in the capital's Shantinagar while he was returning home by his motorbike.

His mother Achhia Begum said the next morning, Ashik told her [over cellphone] that police had arrested him in a Yaba case and they would only release him if she could give them Tk 1 lakh or else Ashik would be shown arrested in a drug case.

Some photojournalists, who met Ashik at Dhaka Central Jail, said police also seized Ashik's two mobile phones and his motorcycle.

"Police had badly beaten him up and implicated him in the false drug case," the journalists alleged.

Shiblee Noman, additional deputy commissioner of police (Motijheel division), claimed police seized 10 Yaba pills from Ashik.

"The case has been handed over to the detective branch of police yesterday," he added.



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Netrakona flood victims in tight spot without OMS

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Flood-hit people in Khaliajuri upazila of Netrakona are in a tight corner with the suspension of open market sale (OMS) programme since July 1.

An official at local administration requesting anonymity said the suspension of OMS has added to the sufferings of the flood victims.

OMS centres in Khaliajuri used to have a daily allocation of one metric tonne of rice for around 1,400 families and the families could buy the rice for Tk 15 a kg.

After losing almost everything in the flood, these flood-affected people, especially the ultra-poor, now do not have the means to buy rice at regular price, the official added.

Akhtar Ali, a marginal farmer in Puranhati area under Khaliajuri Sadar union, said he has to provide for his eight-member family.

He used to buy OMS rice at Tk 15 per kg, but he will be in a difficult position now if he has to buy coarse rice at Tk 40 to Tk 45 per kg from local market, Akhtar added.

House wife Ranu Akhter of the same area said the suspension of the OMS programme will put her five-member family in serious hardship as her sharecropper husband can

hardly support the family.

The OMS programme was a great assistance for people with low income and, therefore, it should be resumed soon, Ranu said.

According to sources at agriculture department, Khaliajuri is the worst affected area as all its 89 haors overflow in the latest flashflood and washed away around 20,070 hectares of boro land. A total of 30,000 people have fallen victims to the devastation in Khaliajuri, said the sources.

Khaliajuri Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mohammad Tofail Ahmed told this correspondent that the OMS programme was suspended from July 1 without giving any reason for it.

He said he had requested the authorities concerned to withdraw the suspension order considering the hardship of the flood victims. He however said he would not be able to confirm whether his request would be entertained.

Mehdi Mahmud Akanda, UNO of Mohanganj upazila, confirmed the suspension of OMS in eight centres of his upazila as well.

Sanwaruzzaman Talukder Josef, chairman of Khaliajuri Sadar union, said

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