

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA H 28.8 L 25.3	MYMENSINGH H 27.2 L 25.2	CHITTAGONG H 30.8 L 25.0	SYLHET H 29.9 L 25.2	RAJSHAHI H 31.4 L 25.5	RANGPUR H 29.2 L 25.4	KHULNA H 30.6 L 25.0	BARISAL H 30.8 L 25.2	COX'S BAZAR H 31.8 L 25.0
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Light to moderate rain is likely to occur at most places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and Rangpur's divisions with moderately heavy to very heavy falls at places over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. The sun sets in the capital today at 5:47pm and rises tomorrow at 5:50am, Met office said.

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Barred owl painted by Audobon (left) and photographed by the author (right.)

Audobon

What a life! Born illegitimate to French parents in Haiti and raised in France, John James Audobon (1785-1851) escaped to America with a false passport to avoid being drafted in the army for the Napoleonic Wars. In his new home he became an outdoorsman, ornithologist, and painter. His seminal work was *The Birds of America*, a collection of 435 life-size paintings - portraits of every bird then known in America - that was printed and sold to subscribers in installments. It is considered one of the finest ornithological works ever. Along the way he spotted and identified 25 new species of birds.

Married to Lucy Bakewell, Audobon was a dedicated family man who raised two sons. An entrepreneur who started a string of stores in Kentucky, he lost everything during economic hard times. Unbeaten, he took up portrait drawing at five dollars a head. Eventually he raised the equivalent of several million dollars to publish his paintings.

His paintings of birds are admired for their beauty as well as their accuracy of detail. He often shows them active in their natural environment. Some of the birds in his work, including the passenger pigeon and the Carolina parakeet, have since gone extinct.

Audobon's life reads like a novel, but for me his writings about birds are equally fascinating. In a poignant essay he describes the arrival of a great flock of passenger pigeons in a farm where many are slaughtered. He writes at length about the peregrine falcon (which he calls great-footed hawk), describing in detail its pursuit and disposition of prey, and observing that the falcon would arrive at the sound of shooting and snatch birds that hunters had shot.

About the Carolina parakeet, the

only parrot native to North America, he wrote, "our parakeets are very rapidly diminishing in number." Sure enough, today it is extinct. His detailed description of the bird's flight and behaviour is a rare documentation of an extinct species.

He describes the flight of the barred owl as "smooth, light, noiseless and capable of being greatly protracted." Almost two centuries later, this author watched barred owls flying in Florida and can attest to the veracity of these words.

While passerine birds were easier to observe on land, water birds were another matter. To study them up close, Audobon travelled far north to Labrador to their nesting ground, travelling on a chartered ship. His notes from this trip, published as *Labrador Journal*, are an exciting blend of exploration, ornithology, science and anthropology.

Sometimes, though, his writing approached tall tales. For example he refers to a popular belief that the peregrine falcon's only fluid intake is the blood of its prey. How would anyone believe that?

Since this was before photography, how did he create such accurate drawings? He shot his birds, using fine pellets, and strung them up into lifelike pose using elaborate armatures and wiring. Then he drew them.

We take leave of Audobon with a parting note for birders. Audobon studied the migration patterns of small birds, called eastern phoebes, by tying silver strings to their feet to see if they returned the next year. This is the first recorded case of bird ringing, a common technique today for studying migration.

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ROHINGYA CRISIS

Govt failed to bring nations, UN together

Says BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government failed to bring neighbouring countries and the United Nations together to resolve Rohingya crisis, said BNP yesterday.

The reason behind it is diplomatic failure, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi told a press briefing at party's Nayapaltan office.

The Rohingya crisis will reach an acute level due to such failure, observed the BNP leader.

"The incumbent government seems to maintain subservient foreign policy while the entire world is

Open all regional borders to save refugees: UNHCR

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN Refugee Agency yesterday reiterated that Rohingya refugees have been fleeing violence in Myanmar at a staggering rate calling for stronger international protection and humanitarian assistance.

"They walk for days through jungles and mountains, or brave dangerous sea voyages across the Bay of Bengal. They arrive exhausted, hungry and sick -- in need of international protection and humanitarian assistance," the UNHCR said.

As new arrivals top half a million in Bangladesh, the agency, in massive efforts, has started distributing plastic sheeting and essential relief items to the refugees in Cox's Bazar.

The latest estimate of the number of Rohingyas who have arrived in Bangladesh since violence erupted in Myanmar has crossed the half million mark, at 501,000 as of September 29.

UNHCR spokesperson Andrej Mahecic,

at a press briefing in Geneva, yesterday said teams of UNHCR's partner are also scouting crossing points on the border with Myanmar to see where plastic sheets, pots and pans, jerry cans, plastic mats and solar lamps can be handed to the refugees as soon as they enter Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, as Bangladesh shoulders the full extent of the refugee crisis, UNHCR calls on all countries in the region to show solidarity and do their part in keeping their borders open and protecting refugees who are fleeing discrimination, persecution and violence in Myanmar.

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

It said UNHCR urgently requires an estimated US\$30 million to respond to the ongoing emergency in Bangladesh, which was already coping with devastating floods before the refugee influx.

Obaidul Quader criticises China, Russia

Fakhrul slams India, the two countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday slammed China and Russia over their roles on the Rohingya crisis.

On the one hand China sent relief to Bangladesh for the Rohingya refugees, but on the other hand it supported Myanmar at UN Security Council, he said.

The minister was talking to reporters while visiting Dhakeshwari temple, marking Durga Puja.

Referring to the local and international media, he said Russia also favoured Myanmar



Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman speaks at a discussion on the life and works of renowned litterateur, journalist and politician Abul Mansur Ahmad. On his left are Professor Emeritus Rafiqul Islam, Prof Mansur Musa and Prof Habib Ar Rahman. Titled "Language Movement and Thoughts of Abul Mansur Ahmad", the programme was organised by Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad at Bangla Academy in the capital yesterday.

A man ahead of his time

Eminent scholars praise Abul Mansur Ahmad for speaking about Bangla as state language much before the partition in 1947

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Mansur Ahmad is one of those few thinkers who spoke about Bangla as the state language of the future East Bengal in as early as 1943 when creation of Pakistan was still very uncertain, years before the birth of the country and much before the Language Movement began, said eminent scholars at a discussion yesterday.

They said the litterateur-turned-politician paved the way for the Language Movement through his writings and fought for the recognition of Bangla as the state language of the future East Pakistan.

What made him unique was he not only demanded the recognition but also wrote about the form of Bangla that should be adopted in the future Eastern wing of Pakistan, they added.

Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad organised the discussion titled, "Language Movement and Thoughts of Abul Mansur Ahmad," at Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad Auditorium of Bangla Academy in the capital.

Also an eminent journalist, Abul Mansur Ahmad was born on September 3, 1898 and died on March 18, 1979. He is strikingly popular as a political satirist in Bangla literature and possibly

outshines all his other identities in undivided India and Bangladesh.

During 1929-1938, he practised law in Mymensingh, and later worked in Kolkata as a journalist and a political activist until the partition in 1947.

At the discussion, Prof Emeritus Anisuzzaman said to learn about Abul Mansur Ahmad comprehensively one must read about his thoughts on the state language, nationalism and the nature of Bangla language.

"He spoke for and demanded Bangla as the state language in 1943 which was astonishing," said Prof Anisuzzaman.

The veteran scholar added that education during his early life and his family surroundings might have contributed significantly to sharpening his thoughts in the later years.

Chairing the discussion, Prof Emeritus Rafiqul Islam said Abul Mansur Ahmad's clear thoughts on the state language and mother language helped him surpass his contemporaries.

His mastery lies in the fact that he used regional language to write novels which was not thought by his contemporaries, said Prof Islam. "He taught us to think about language."

Presenting a keynote paper on the topic, Prof

Habib R Rahman said Abul Mansur Ahmad was a man ahead of his time who thought about Bangla as state language before his contemporaries in the early 1940s, much before the partition, and wrote several articles in support of his thinking.

While remaining a secular individual all his life, he was a great Bangalee writer who was very conscious of the backwardness and challenges faced by the Muslims of Bengal and devoted his writings in demanding equality and justice for them, said Prof Habib.

Prof Mansur Musa said Abul Mansur Ahmad will be placed at the top among those who thought deeply about language and colonialism in this region.

Abul Mansur Ahmad highlighted the identity crisis of Bangalee Muslims through his writings, Dr Ahmed Mawla said.

Dr Md Chenggis Khan said, "While Language Movement is political and thinking of language is the subject matter of literature, he [Abul Mansur Ahmad] enriched both areas through his contributions."

For his immense contribution Abul Mansur Ahmad could be recognised as a key person behind the Language Movement, said Dr Mohammad Azam.

PHOTO: STAR



Mirzaganj Upazila Kallyan Samity, Dhaka forms a human chain in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday, demanding that 25 coastal villages from the upazila's Rampur to Kudbar Char be protected from erosion by the river Payra.

Project in trouble for poor loan recovery rate

UNB, Dhaka

The rate of loan recovery from the revolving fund of "One House, One Farm" project looks to be low as it notched 44.78 percent on average delaying the process in providing loan to others.

This was revealed in a monitoring report on the project conducted by the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Planning.

Some 40,333 village-development Samities (cooperatives) have already been formed under the project and the families brought under the Samities take loan from the revolving fund and utilise that in various income generating activities.

The report shows that the project beneficiaries are not repaying the loan taken from this revolving fund in time.

The officials familiar with the process of preparing the report said it was formulated after taking information from 32 village development samities from 32 unions under 16 districts in eight divisions.

The districts covered by the report are Barisal, Bhola, Feni, Cox's Bazar, Faridpur, Rajbari, Khulna, Bagerhat, Sherpur, Netrakona, Bogra, Naogaon, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Sylhet and Moulvibazar.

Analysing the report findings, it was found that the lowest loan recovery rate was seen in Bogra with 6.98 percent followed by 32 percent in Bhola, 33 percent in Bagerhat,

'ONE HOUSE, ONE FARM'



A BEAUTIFUL MIND

Aminul Islam walks with his innovative push cart he built to raise civic awareness. With contrasting images of two playgrounds in Bangladesh and Japan, he requests all to stop littering for a clean environment. A college teacher by profession, he says he has been running this campaign on holidays for six years on public roads and at educational institutions. The photo was taken yesterday across New Market in the capital.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN