

President revisits memories

BSS, India



President Abdul Hamid and his family members visited the Brookside Bungalow, where Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore had stayed in 1919.

Nostalgia gripped President Hamid, the then sub-sector commander of the Mukti Bahini during the 1971 Liberation War, when he visited the place after 47 years.

Entering the building, he recited a few poems from Gitanjali. The original handwritten verses hung on the wall.

Later, President Hamid visited a gallery where the paintings of art students were exhibited. At Brookside Bungalow, Abdul Hamid also met a group of Bangladeshi students.

Tagore visited Shillong and stayed at Brookside in Riblong in 1919 in an Assam-type building which was subsequently taken over by the Meghalaya art and culture department.

The building at Brookside christened Rabindranath Tagore Art Gallery is still preserved by the department.

The Brookside Bungalow, renamed the Rabindranath Art Gallery, is now a centre for promotion of art and literature by the Meghalaya Government.

The poet, during his stay at Shillong, penned the classic Shesher Kabita (farewell song). Shesher Kabita is a novel by Rabindranath Tagore, widely considered a landmark in Bengali literature.

The president's spouse Rashida Khanam, secretaries concerned and other family members accompanied him during the visit here.

Narendra Modi likely to visit Bangladesh this year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit

Bangladesh in the middle of this year ahead of the country's parliamentary election.

The dates of his visit are on the drawing board of both sides and no decision has yet been taken, said an official handling the matter.

Ahead of Modi's visit to Dhaka, the two countries are working to finalise some deliverables to ensure a concrete outcome, according to a senior Indian official.

The expectation in Dhaka is that there would be a big-ticket announcement on the long-pending Teesta river water-sharing issue.



Demanding immediate trial for all militant attacks in the country including the recent one on Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, civil society platform Alliance for Resistance of Terrorism and Communalism yesterday brings out a torch procession that paraded from the capital's Shahbagh intersection to Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University.

PHOTO: STAR

A voice against maladies

Discussion on Abul Mansur Ahmad told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

His was a voice against social prejudice and religious bigotry. He dedicated his entire life for the betterment of mankind.

Knowing the philosophy and ideals of the writer-politician can greatly help overcome the challenges of fanaticism and extremism the country is facing today.

This was how noted satirist and politician Abul Mansur Ahmad was remembered at a discussion in Sylhet yesterday.

Dedicated to his life and works, the event was organised by Sylhet Mobile Pathagar at the Pathagar Hall of Sylhet Metropolitan Law College, marking his 39th death anniversary.

At the event, participated by litterateurs, educationists and journalists, journalist Abdul Basit presented a keynote speech.

His ideals are still relevant today both politically and socially, said Basit. Abul Mansur Ahmad constantly wrote against religious orthodoxy, prejudices and communalism.

The discussion session was presided over by educationist advocate Abdul Malik.

Columnist Belal Ahmed Chowdhury, poet Muhammad Abdul Haque, Bashirul Amin and Mahfuj Joha and writer Taslima Khanam Bithee participated in the discussion.

One of the greatest satirists of Bangla literature, Abul Mansur Ahmad was a renowned politician, lawyer and a very powerful journalist. He worked for Krishak, Nabajug and was editor of the daily Ittehad published from Kolkata in 1946 in undivided Bengal. He was a pioneer in modern and progressive journalism.

A successful politician, Abul Mansur Ahmad was the provincial education minister in the United



Front Cabinet under Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq and the central commerce and industries minister of the Awami League government of Prime Minister Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy in 1957.

Abul Mansur Ahmad's publications include satires like Aina, Asmani Purdah, Gulliverer Safarnama and Food Conference. His works also include insightful writings on social and political history of Bengal. He has two autobiographical writings -- Atma Katha (about myself) and Amar Dekha Rajnitir Panchash Bachar (50 years of politics as I saw it).

He was the author of the famous Ekush Dafa (21 points programme) election manifesto of the Jukta Front in the 1954 election.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was born on September 3, 1898 at Dhanikhola village in Trishal Thana of Mymensingh.

He passed away on March 18, 1979.

Invest more in disaster management

Official urges public, private sectors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public and private sectors alike have to increase the investment in disaster management to sustain the economic and human development, said director general of the Department of Disaster Management yesterday.

Such investments will return the benefits in multiple ways, said the director general, Md Reaz Ahmed, at a discussion on the occasion of this year's National Disaster Preparedness Day.

The department with the support of Shifting the Power, and Dhaka Earthquake and Emergency Preparedness programme of Christian Aid Bangladesh, organised the discussion on "Let the world know, Bangladesh is prepared

for facing disasters" at the department's office in the capital.

The government is preparing a database of load-bearing capacity of soil in Dhaka and other nearby districts to help design buildings resilient to earthquake and other disasters, said Reaz.

The government has so far procured disaster rescue equipment worth Tk 250 crore and trained 6,000 doctors and paramedics, he added.

The department's Director Khaled Mahmud emphasised that the people across the country regularly make use of the weather forecast hotline service by dialling "1090" from any mobile operator.

Prof Mahbuba Nasreen, director of the Institute of Disaster

Management and Vulnerability Studies at Dhaka University, said all the documents and guidelines on disaster management should be widely available in an abridged version.

Noted disaster management expert Abdul Latif Khan said the disaster management issue must be incorporated in every development plan of the country.

Dr Md Atiqullah, additional secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, said all the documents and research findings so far prepared on disaster management must be compiled immediately in the interests of people and professionals.

Md Shah Kamal, secretary to disaster management and relief

ministry, was present at the programme as the chief guest.

He said the government has approved a national resilience project under which Tk 400 crore would be earmarked for the disaster management department.

The government observes National Disaster Preparedness Day every year to promote disaster risk reduction with dissemination of knowledge on safety of all but particularly of those at greater risk of death, injury, ill-health, loss of livelihood and displacement. And the vulnerable groups include women, children, elderly persons and people with disabilities.

Shakeb Nabi, country manager of Christian Aid Bangladesh, conducted the discussion.

Honouring the torch bearers

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"A Simple Solution: Teaching Millions to Treat Diarrhoea at Home"; SA Karim's "Sheikh Mujib: Triumph and Tragedy"; "Rotting from the Head: Donors and LDC Corruption" (edited by Salim Rashid) and "Pakistaner Drishtite Ekattor" (edited by Prof Muntasir Mamoon and Mohiuddin Ahmed).

Author Niaz Zaman and politician Barrister Moudud Ahmed were given the "Prolific Author Award".

UPL Director Mahrulk Mohiuddin said books sold over 5,000 copies were selected for the best-seller category while for the prolific author, writers with 10 or more books published by UPL were considered.

Starting from 1975, UPL has so far published around 1,500 books, she said.

Six institutions received the "Support Institution Award". They are Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), Brac, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) and Yunus Centre.

UPL also honoured six eminent personalities with the "Patron Award". They are Khalid Shams, retired secretary and former director of Grameen Shakti Foundation; Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; Waqar A Khan, founder of Bangladesh Forum for Heritage Studies; Prof GM Shahidul Alam, former head of the department of media and communication, Independent University, Bangladesh; Rubana Huq, managing director of Mohammadi Group; and Fakrul Alam, pro-vice

chancellor of East West University.

The publishing house also recognised six individuals with the "Associate Award" for their contributions during its four-decade journey.

They are UPL's former chief accountant Purnendu Kumar Deb; its former publishing editor Badiuddin Nazir; proprietor of Elora Art Publicity Tofazzal Hossain Bhuiyan; founder of book binding house RA Khan and Co Rustom Ali Khan; Provincial Paper Stores owner Monir Ahmed and Zeenat Book Supply owner SAS Md Faisal.

Speaking as the chief guest, Finance Minister AMA Muhiht said UPL will be credited for creating its own style in publishing industry.

Prof Emeritus Anisuzzaman said UPL has been giving priority to quality books since its

inception. "Hopefully, it will maintain such quality in future," he said.

UPL Managing Director Mohiuddin Ahmed urged all to work together for making the society a better place.

The organisers also screened an interview of former Pakistani army general Rao Farman Ali at the ceremony. The interview was conducted for the book "Pakistaner Drishtite Ekattor".

UPL will release 28 such interviews from March 26.

Prof Muinul Islam of Chittagong University, Bangla Academy Director General Prof Shamsuzzaman Khan and Bangla daily Prothom Alo's Sazzad Sharif were also present.

A panel discussion on the topic: "Higher education, research and intellectual pursuits in mother-tongue" was also held.



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8/3/18
(Md. Meftaur Rahman)
Secretary (a.i)

Host of reasons

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While presenting the key note paper, Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), stressed the need for girls' safe travel to and from schools.

"There have been incidents when girls travelling to schools by boats have been abducted and then raped," said Rasheda.

She further said that in haor areas girls travel by boat to go to school. Many parents fear their daughter's safety on boat.

She also said early marriage is a big hurdle for a girl to continue her higher studies.

Education is a right for the girl, not an opportunity, said Rasheda.

Rasheda stressed that Bangladesh needs to invest more in education, and ensure quality education for both girls and boys.

Echoing Rasheda, Majeda Shawkat Ali, vice-president of UNAB, also said girls in haor and char areas struggle to attend school in fear of stalking.

Syed Mohammad Shahed, secretary general of UNAB, moderated the seminar.

Per capita income

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though the country saw huge developments in recent years and reduction in poverty, discrimination has been increasing.

"We are heading for an imbalanced development. Besides development, the government should look into it [discrimination]...", he said.

Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), said besides getting remedy, seeking it is also very important. Researches show that only two percent people, whose rights are violated, sought remedy.

She said apart from courts, there are forums where one can seek remedy.

SM Masum Billah, assistant professor of the law department of Jagannath University, also spoke.

Advocate Fawzia Karim Firoze, president of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), chaired the session, moderated by Zakir Hossain, chief executive of Nagarik Uddyog.

39 get Shishu Sahitya

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was halted for last 6 years since 2012," said Managing Director of Agrani Bank Limited Md Sams-Ul Islam at the award giving ceremony.

The winners received a citation, crest and Tk 15,000 each.

Speaking as the chief guest, Finance Minister Abdul Maal Abdul Muhith said that composing literature for children requires very creative mind and love for children.

He congratulated the awardees and urged them to keep writing good literary items for children.

Presiding over the programme, Chairman of BSA Selina Hossain said, "Writers are illuminating the children's mind through their write-ups and this award is to recognise their contribution."

Director of Bangladesh Shishu Academy Anjir Liton and State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroze Chumki were also present at the programme.

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