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ABUL MANSUR AHMAD

His journalism stood the test of time

Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Mansur Ahmad's journalism stood the test of time as he used it to fight for the rights of the people and the welfare of the society and state, academics and journalists said yesterday.

With his unique sense of responsibility toward society, Mansur, a versatile genius, was a sentinel of freedom of speech and change, they said while speaking at a programme marking the centenary of journalism of Abul Mansur, also an eminent litterateur and politician of his time.

The Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad organised the programme "Centenary of Abul Mansur Ahmad's Journalism and Essay Competition Awards" at Dhaka University.

Abul Mansur Ahmed started his journalism career in 1923. During his long career, he worked for seven organisations and edited two daily newspapers.

Speakers at the event said the process of the newspaper sector becoming a

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(From left) Emran Mahfuz, Kazal Rashid Shahin, Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury, Faruk Wasif, and Ali Ar Raji with the winners of "Centenary of Abul Mansur Ahmad's Journalism and Essay Competition Awards". The awarding ceremony was held at DU premises yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

We believe in people's mandate, not in conspiracy

Says home minister

BSS, Narayanganj

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said the government believes in people's mandate, not in muscle power or conspiracy.

"We do not believe in any conspiracy. I don't believe in any muscle power or gun power. We only believe in people's mandate. We believe in people's rights," he said.

The ministersaid these while addressing an exchange meeting with 11 national and 37 Narayanganj-based organisations on the occasion of the inauguration of the own building of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) at Chashara in Narayanganj as the chief guest.

With local lawmaker and BKMEA President A K M Salim Osman in the chair, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Textile and Jute Minister Golam Dastagir Gazi, Narayanganj-4 lawmaker Shamim Osman and Executive President of BKMEA Mohammad Hatem.

Asaduzzaman said there is no alternative to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

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JP will go to polls alone

Says GM Quader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Jatiya Party Chairman yesterday said his party is taking preparation to contest the next polls, independently.

"JP has decided to nominate candidates for 300 seats in the upcoming national election. Nominations will be given to corruption free leaders," he said while addressing the bi-annual conference of the Lalmonirhat District Jatiya Party at the Lalmonirhat Railway Officers Club.

Criticising the Digital Security Act, GM Quader said, "People have been deprived of their right to free thought because of this."

"The present government is heading towards one-party rule in the country and killing democracy," he added.

"Whoever has come to power since 1990 has conspired to destroy the Jatiya Party." This administration is also attempting to weaken us. But no one could ever erase

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LEAD POISONING

A threat to children's cognitive abilities: WB study

Causes 140,000 cardiovascular disease-related deaths among adults

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lead pollution is causing cognitive deficiency among children and fatal cardiovascular diseases among adults in Bangladesh, according to a World Bank report.

The report estimates that the level of harm due to lead exposure is far greater than previous estimations.

The Lancet Planetary Health journal on Tuesday published the World Bank's study titled "Global health burden and cost of lead exposure in children and adults: a health impact and economic modeling analysis".

According to the study, lead pollution in Bangladesh has serious implications for children below five years of age, causing a loss of over 20 million (20,596,306) IQ points, and a very high economic cost of \$10,897 million, which is 3.6 percent of the country's annual GDP.

About 140,000 (138,054) cardiovascular disease (CVD) related deaths among adults aged 25 years or older due to lead exposure exceeded the previous estimation with a four times higher mortality rate.

The combined cost of these health effects was US\$ 28,633 million which is a loss of six to nine percent of the country's GDP in 2019.

The study recommended a 10-point action plan to address the lead pollution crisis, which includes analysing the lead sources and designing source-specific interventions, building blood lead level surveillance, taking multi-sectoral efforts, increasing monitoring, reviewing the existing policy and enforcing laws and regulations, remediating toxic sites, building capacity of the stakeholders to mitigate the issue, and raising awareness at the national level.

In Bangladesh, the major sources of lead exposure include used-lead acid battery recycling in informal settings, lead in paints, aluminium cookware, ceramic food ware, spices, toys, cosmetics, food, electronic waste, fertilisers, and cultured fish feed.

"We may not see it, taste it or smell it, and early symptoms may be hard to identify, but we know that exposure to lead can have devastating consequences on a child's health,

learning and development," said Sheldon Yett, Unicef representative to Bangladesh.

"When children are not able to reach their full potential, this is a tragedy not only for these specific children but their entire communities," she added.

She called for national-level surveillance and assessments of possible contaminants in households to identify lead exposure.

"Decorative and industrial paints still contain high lead levels, while several national and multinational companies still do not meet the accepted standards," said Dr Shahriar Hossain, Secretary General of Eco-Social Development Organization.

He said there is a lot to do to protect the future generation from the effects of lead poisoning.

He said the implementation of existing laws, and maintaining industrial paint standards are crucial in this regard. He also said implementing polluter-pay principles will help to curb industrial-level pollution.

Continuous advocacy and multi-sectoral actions involving various stakeholders are also needed," he added.

Dr Md Mahbubur Rahman, project coordinator of WASH, Health System and

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Three members of new militant outfit arrested

They planned terror attack in 2024, say cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested three members, including the chief, of a new militant outfit Tawhidul Uluhiyah (Al-Jihadi) from Dhaka and other parts of the country.

The arrestees -- chief Jewel Molla, 29, members Rahul Hossain, 21, and Gaziul Islam, 40 -- had a plan to carry out terror attacks in the country in 2024, according to the Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) of police.

They were arrested from Bagerhat, Joypurhat and Dhaka in separate drives conducted by ATU personnel in the last four days.

"The outfit started its activities two to three months ago. Their plan was to launch a major terror attack in the country in 2024," Abdul Alim, deputy inspector general (operations) of ATU, said during a press briefing at the ATU headquarters in the capital's Baridhara yesterday.

The ATU came to know that the outfit has so far collected around 80-90 members, he said.

"We have been getting information that some radical people including former members of militant outfits, who do not believe in the democratic system of the country, are regrouping over the past few months with a new goal."

They were collecting new members through social media. The founder and chief leader of this outfit is Jewel, a former bakery worker who later

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Social movement needed to ensure equal rights

Say speakers on minority issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A social movement is needed to combat communalism and fundamentalism in the country, said Hindu community leaders yesterday.

They also questioned as to how the country had become so communal, despite the fact that a pro-Liberation War government was in power.

They were addressing Jubo Karmashala, a workshop for Hindu youths, organised by Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad, at the capital's Dhakeshwari National Temple.

"Our struggle is not to survive as a minority community. Rather, we are striving to ensure equal rights and dignity," said lawyer Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad.

He also questioned, "How many perpetrators, who were involved in attacking minorities, have so far been tried?"

Rana Dasgupta urged all the political parties not to conduct any political programmes during the five-day-long Durga Puja, the largest religious festival of Hindu community to be celebrated next month.

"If any party does so, we will assume that it is not our friend," he viewed.

Rana Dasgupta also called upon all the political parties not to use minorities as "chess pieces".

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It is a pleasant sight to see dinghies with colourful sails in the Buriganga, a river where engine-run boats have become a common phenomenon. The photo was taken at Gudara Ghat in the capital's Mill Barrack area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DU launches research fund

DU CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of Dhaka University yesterday launched "The Dhaka University Fund" to mobilise resources for its research and academic development.

On the first day, around Tk 1.11 crore was received by the DU authorities from four donors: DU Alumni Association, PHP Family, Universal Medical College and Popular Medical College Hospitals, said DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman after inaugurating the initiative at a press conference.

Donations will be received from DU alumni, rich and well established individuals, renowned institutions, philanthropists, and education and research enthusiasts, said DU authorities.

Thanking the donors, the DU VC expressed optimism that it would be possible to increase this fund to at least Tk 1,000 crores if everyone comes forward.