

Amir Ali passes away

CITY DESK

Amir Ali, a Language Movement veteran, journalist, teacher, and researcher, passed away in London on November 28, said a press release.

Born on May 26, 1936, in Mymensingh, Amir Ali's ancestral home was in Kathuria village under Sharsha upazila in Jashore.

He received his BA and MA in English Language and Literature from Dhaka University, and later earned an LLB degree. He was imprisoned for participating in the Language Movement. He was among the founders of the then East Pakistan Chhatra Union.

He began his career as a columnist for the then Pakistan Observer newspaper. He later served as the head of the Department of English Language and Literature and as an associate professor at Jagannath College.

On March 27, 1964, he travelled to Britain for higher education. He went on to obtain a postgraduate degree from the University of Surrey, London, and an MSc in Sociology from Birkbeck College, University of London.

As a leading figure during the Liberation War, Amir Ali worked closely with Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury.



After collecting olives from nearby trees, a man sorts them into baskets in Naogaon's Kalikapur village, which saw a good yield this year. The produce is being sold to traders at Tk 20 per kg. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

The abuse that leaves no bruise

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HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

Controlling behaviour cuts across education, income, and geography. From villages to Dhaka's middle-class areas, husbands dictate when women can leave home, how long they may be out, whom they may meet, and even when they must return.

The VAW Survey found nearly 40 percent of women need permission to access healthcare; 29 percent face mistreatment linked to in-laws; a quarter report insults to their parents; and 15 percent are restricted from recreational activities.

Women reported partners trying to stop them from seeing friends or family, demanding to know their whereabouts, showing jealousy when they spoke to other men, [monitored their behaviour], or enforcing permission to access healthcare. Other forms included forcing women to wear a veil, restricting education or work, limiting outings, insulting parents, and monitoring social media.

Regional variations are stark: Khulna and Barishal report prevalence above 73 percent, while Dhaka has 63 percent. Rates are higher in disaster-prone regions (73.2 percent vs 65.3 percent), and urban areas outside city corporations exceed the national average at 70.4 percent.

Younger women are most at risk: 59.1 percent of girls aged 15-19 report current controlling behaviour, dropping sharply after age 60. Education and

wealth reduce vulnerability; 71.5 percent of women with no or pre-primary education report lifetime exposure, compared with 54.8 percent of graduates.

Raisul Islam, programme officer at the National Helpline Centre for Violence Against Women and Children-109, said they received 19,584 calls related to psychological abuse in the first eight months of this year. "Most calls involve husband's domination, restrictions on movement, control over clothing, interference in personal freedom, and denial of financial support."

NORMALISATION OF PATRIARCHAL CONTROL
Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said women's subordination stems from the belief that they are meant to be controlled. "Many men feel entitled to decide if their wives can work, reflecting a patriarchal power imbalance. Controlling behaviour is a core feature of patriarchal masculinity that harms both women and men."

She said the behaviour has worsened over time. "Household competition and stress have increased, reducing empathy and placing greater pressure on young women. This mindset has been so normalised that many women do not even recognise it as violence. They assume it is simply how things are supposed to be."

Dr Sunjida Shahriah, physician and psychotherapy practitioner, said controlling behaviour often hides behind concern or family honour. "Small restrictions

accumulate over time, making women accept them as routine. With no visible injuries and low awareness, such abuse remains unseen, leaving survivors unsure if they are being harmed at all."

Although the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 recognises controlling behaviour as psychological abuse, no other law does, explained Advocate Sifat-E-Noor Khanam of BLAST. "This makes it almost impossible to prosecute," she said. "Implementation is negligible. Many women, social workers, and even lawyers are unaware of the law's provisions, leaving complaints filed under the wrong laws and courts unresponsive to psychological harm."

"Most women say the abuse began with small disagreements, then escalated over five or ten years. By the time they seek help, it has become unbearable and sometimes violent." Highlighting the lack of state support, she said, "Victim Support Centres allow only five-day stays. Women don't just need shelter. They need a survival plan, income, and long-term protection. The state has left the biggest gap here."

Farhana Yeasmin, deputy commissioner of the Women Support and Investigation Division at Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "Women come to us only when violence becomes physical. By then, the psychological abuse has been ongoing for years."

"I've been in charge for a year and have not seen a single case filed for this type of abuse, not one."

THE INVISIBLE WOUNDS

Dr Shahriah said controlling behaviour leaves deep emotional scars, often more lasting than physical abuse. "Long-term coercive control triggers trauma, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Gaslighting distorts memory and reality, while constant surveillance, insults, or financial penalties trap women in a mental prison."

Gaslighting is when someone makes you doubt your own memory, feelings, or reality so they can control the situation or shift blame.

She said survivors need trauma-informed, empowerment-focused care, including counselling to restore autonomy, psychoeducation to reduce self-blame, and life skills to counter economic dependence. "Support groups can help break isolation." Advocate Sifat said solutions require systemic change.

She outlined three steps: educating children early about gender equality, establishing state-funded shelters so women can report abuse securely, and reforming the law to explicitly recognise psychological abuse with clear proof standards.

"Awareness alone is not enough," Fauzia Moslem warned. "Women must reclaim their skills and decision-making to break free from controlling environments, especially where control is subtle, relentless, and shatters their lives in silence."

EC meets today

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would be used for the referendum.

He said the EC had reviewed pre-schedule preparations at a meeting yesterday.

According to EC officials, there will be nine agenda items at today's meeting. These include overall preparations for the 13th parliamentary election and referendum, pre- and post-schedule activities, coordination with field-level administration, registration of political parties, and reviewing the NID correction application system and finalisation of the relevant SOP.

As the national election and the referendum on the July charter will be held simultaneously on a single day, the EC is considering setting up two marking corners in each polling booth where space allows, as well as increasing the number of booths in other polling stations.

The commission is also considering extending the eight-hour balloting

period by one hour, from 7:30am to 4:30pm, as each voter will need to cast two votes – one for an MP candidate and another for the referendum. On October 27, the EC released the list of 42,761 polling stations across the country for the 13th parliamentary election, increasing the number by around 611 compared to the 2024 national election.

4 civilians

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attacked with "light and heavy artillery" and that mortar fire had struck civilian homes.

Residents on the Afghan side of the border told AFP the exchange of fire broke out around 10:30 pm (1800 GMT) and lasted about two hours.

"Light and weak firing started then the tanks started firing and the mortars hit our houses," said Mahmood Khan, adding that a niece and two cousins were wounded.

Don't use religion card in election

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said poet and thinker Farhad Mazhar.

These historical facts must be clear.

"Politics and law are not the same thing. No mass uprising in this country ever followed the constitution. After the 5th August revolution, when the oath was taken on 8th August, I said at that very moment – this is a constitutional counter-revolution. Lawyers did this together."

They have no knowledge of politics, no knowledge of history and no understanding of Bangladesh's evolution and development.

SM Ali still unmatched

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aspirations for equality. Through these experiences, Ali emerged as a progressive thinker.

He said Ali was a liberal democrat, respectful of others' opinions, and believed in the growth of different ideas in society. He dreamt of a pluralistic society for Bangladesh and for the world.

Former ambassador Farooq Sobhan said Ali often spoke about the challenges of realising his dream: mobilising resources, maintaining independence and integrity, and building a paper comparable to the best in the region.

Sobhan recalled that when Ali returned to Dhaka to launch The Daily Star, he did so despite health concerns and leaving a secure job. "He was taking a risk, a gamble, because he believed so strongly in this dream," he said.

He said The Daily Star has flourished despite numerous challenges, surviving in the way Ali believed an independent newspaper should, by safeguarding its integrity and serving as a voice for the nation and its people.

"You are fondly remembered and your legacy thrives and will live on," he said of Ali.

Editor of Chaarcha, Sohrab Hassan, said Ali envisioned a progressive, democratic and humane Bangladesh. "If we can build that Bangladesh, only then will our tribute to him be genuine," he said.

He said he had not known Ali personally, but

his book "After the Dark Night: Problems of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" left a deep impression. "This book did not feel like the work of a journalist alone. It felt like the work of a close observer of society," he said.

Hassan said Ali analysed politics, the economy, foreign relations and social instability "not just as a journalist, but as a sociologist".

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said he was proud to have stood beside his mentor in the last and greatest initiative of his life: building an international-standard newspaper in Bangladesh.

He said their conversations about journalistic values, ethics and responsibilities shaped his understanding of how journalism could influence society.

Although Ali passed away only two and a half years after the paper's launch, the lessons and dream he left behind became the groundwork for today's The Daily Star.

Aasha Mehreen Amin, joint editor of The Daily Star, said SM Ali believed journalism was a public service, in which public interest and truth must always come first.

"He valued independent journalism free from influence and insisted that the paper must never take a partisan stance. We must always remain objective, as he was," she said.

The event was moderated by The Daily Star journalist Emran Mahfuz.

Seven of a family burnt

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months, but despite informing the landlord, no action was taken.

In a similar incident, four members of a family were injured in an explosion at a rented house in Patatta village of Sonargaon upazila in Narayanganj.

The injured are Alauddin, 35; his daughters, Shifa Akhter, 14, and Simla Akhter, 4; and

his mother, Jarina Begum, 65. They were taken to the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Shaon Bin Rahman, resident surgeon at the institute, said Alauddin suffered 40 percent burns, Shifa 12 percent, Simla 30 percent, and Jarina 20 percent. Alauddin's sister Salma Akhter suspected the blast was caused by a gas stove-related problem.

89% journos fear

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not concerned about investing in journalists' safety. He urged journalists to begin a "self-revolution", warning that without action, "we will remain trapped".

Channel One Head of Input Parvez Nadir Reza said journalists face obstacles both in the field and in newsrooms. "We can witness realities, but often cannot broadcast them. Media owners must take this responsibility," he said.

Roksana Anzuman Nicole, assignment editor of Jamuna Television, said risks are even more pronounced for women reporters, who face sexually targeted abuse and online harassment intended to silence or discredit them.

Samakal Executive Editor Zakir Hasan and RTV Chief News Editor Elias Hossain spoke about ensuring that journalists can work independently during the next polls.

Ekattor Television Special Correspondent Shahnaz Sharmeen said political parties often make promises before the media,

but "these will never be implemented at the field level".

She urged media owners and policymakers to sit together to address the issue.

The discussion was also attended by MRDI Chairman Hasibur Rahman; AFP Dhaka Bureau Chief Sheikh Sabiha Alam; M Abul Kalam Azad, editor, special affairs at Times of Bangladesh; Massranga Television Special Correspondent Kawsar Soheli; Mustafizur Rahman, chief reporter of New Age; Jahidul Kabir, chief reporter of BDNews24; The Business Standard Senior Correspondent Abbas Uddin Noyon; and Maria Petersson, project coordinator (Asia) of Fojo Media Institute, who joined online.

| PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 7 | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|---------|------|--|
| Fajr | Zohr | Asr | Maghrib | Esha | |
| AZAN 5-15 | 12-45 | 3-45 | 5-19 | 7-00 | |
| JAMAAT 5-50 | 1-15 | 4-00 | 5-22 | 7-30 | |
| SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION | | | | | |

Anisul, Manju to announce

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new alliance, adding, "Everything will be made clear in the briefing."

In mid-July, leaders of four JP factions appeared on the same stage at a memorial event marking the sixth death anniversary of party founder HM Ershad and called for uniting the Jatiya Party under one umbrella.

It was organised by

Pallibandhu Ershad Smriti Sangsad. Manju, who is also a former minister, joined as the chief guest, while leaders of Jatiya Party (Raushan Ershad), Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar), and Jatiya Party (Matin) were also present.

The organisers said they came together on the same stage as part of a broader unity process on Ershad's death anniversary.

At the event, several JP leaders sought forgiveness for their past mistakes, saying they unconditionally apologised to the people.

On August 9, the JP formally split into another faction, led by Anisul Islam Mahmud, following a council session.

Founded in 1986 by HM Ershad, the Jatiya Party has a long history

of factionalism, having already split at least six times.

The five other factions are: GM Quader-led Jatiya Party (JaPa), Anwar Hossain-led Jatiya Party (JP), Andaleev Rahman Partho-led Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), MA Mukit-led Bangladesh Jatiya Party, and Mostafa Jamal Haider-led Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar).

Ex-Jubo Dal

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over to the police last night. He was taken to Keshabpur Upazila Health Complex following the handover. Subsequently, Ujjal was taken to Jashore Central Jail.

Jailer Abid Ahmed said, the Jashore jail received Ujjal with a medical certificate stating "public assault" issued by the upazila health complex at around 9:30pm.

Ujjal was then moved to the jail's medical centre around 10:30pm.

Suspecting internal bleeding, jail authorities shifted Ujjal to Jashore General Hospital when he fell ill again, where doctors pronounced him dead, said the facility's resident doctor, Bazlur Rashid.

The deceased's elder brother Afzal Hossain alleged that Ujjal was tortured.

Jashore district Jubo Dal Member Secretary Ansarul Haque said, "There is no approved Jubo Dal committee in Keshabpur. Ujjal's name was in the convening committee, but it was never approved. He worked as a party activist but was expelled due to controversial activities."

Maj Md Mahfuj, commander of Keshabpur army camp, could not be reached for his comment immediately.

said noted photographer Shahidul Alam.

"This is unfortunate. If those in power fail to tolerate criticism, they will create their path to fall."

Progress is possible only through questions and criticism.

"Otherwise, the society will walk backwards," he added.

It is an alarming trend that the mystic baul singers and cartoonists, satirists are facing cases, said Din M Sumon Rahman, head of media studies and journalism at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh.

"It is unthinkable these important elements of society will face attacks so soon after the July uprising."

Satires, cartoons and memes are established practices in democracy through which people's anger against the powerful can be ventilated. Otherwise, people can take to the streets to oust the regimes.

"Now, we can see that the new elites are very fragile and get embarrassed by the criticism – those wishing to establish moral supremacy cannot tolerate the free expressions," he added.

The religious majority people often speak of defamation of religion but they do not care about similar events when it comes to the minority communities, said rights activist Prapti Taposhi. "How can these people restore democracy when they cannot establish the right to publish memes and satires?"

The DUCSU VP's case spoke of defaming its female leaders – they don't have a similar position when that happens to the marginalised women. The case is very much politically motivated and not to prevent harassment of all women, Prapti added. Newspapers almost stopped publishing satire magazines and political cartoons over the last decade because of repressive actions by the Awami League regime, said Simu Naser, editor of Earki. "Such an attitude finally led to the regime's fall," he added. Cartoonist Ahsan Habib, meme researcher Fayaz Ahmed, writer Firoze Ahmed and Supreme Court lawyer Priya Ahsan Chowdhury spoke among others.