

NEWSLETTER

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Editor: Professor Dr. AKM Golam Rabbani



Nimtali Deuri

Editor's Note

To begin with we regret to announce that three eminent personalities—Mr. AKM Zakariah, Professor Shirin Akhtar and Professor Afia Dil are no more among us. They will be remembered for their enormous contributions to the Society in particular and the nation in general. We pay glowing tributes to their departed souls (News follows at page 10).

We also announce with pleasure that the newly elected Council took the

helm of the Society in January 2016. As per constitution, the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh gets a new Council after every two years when its Biennial General Meeting, the most important event in the calendar of the Society, is held. Accordingly, the new Council for the period 2016-2017 (News follows at page 3) led by Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury took office in January 2016.

Since our take-over we have started the ball rolling. We have been working

hard and thinking how to develop the Society in its manifold plans and works. We have already undertaken plans to expedite the research and publication works of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. We have taken a plan of posting the profiles of the Council Members on the Society's website. One of the important features of our plan is the reprinting of the Society's publications that are much in demand. About 19 books including those of Dhaka Project are in the pipeline.

Of them, ঢাকা কোষ and ঢাকায় গেরিলা যুদ্ধ ১৯৭১ have already been out. বাংলাদেশের ইতিহাস ১৭০৪-১৯৭১ (৩ খণ্ড) and *History of Bangladesh 1704-1971* (3 volumes) are now in press. Another milestone over the 4 month tenure of the Council is the implementation of the new pay scale as announced by the government.

The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, as you know, is an organization of high repute both nationally and internationally. It has been promoting dissemination of knowledge, learning and research since its very inception in 1952. It has been pre-eminent in the publication of scholarly books and journals. Our learned publications (So far we have published 217 books apart from three Journals) have won praise and laurels from the intellectual and academic arena at home and abroad. The mission of the Society's founding fathers was to make it a centre of oriental studies and a meeting place of scholars from home and abroad who would be engaged in researches and produce scholarly works. We still follow the same ideal and think in terms of producing works of scholarship. We leave no stone unturned to make the Society a centre of excellence. We still have miles and miles to go.

ASB celebrated its two important events together

The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh celebrated two most important events of its calendar- the 64th Founding Anniversary and 16th Biennial General meeting together with great enthusiasm on Sunday 3 January, 2016 in its campus. Dr. Abdul Momin Chowdhury, former Professor of History, University of Dhaka and former Vice-Chancellor, National University graced the occasion as Chief Guest and inaugurated the

Biennial General Meeting. Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury, President of the Society, delivered the Foundation Day Lecture on *Higher Education in Bangladesh: Impact of Globalization and Privatization*.

The last Biennial General Meeting was held on 3 January, 2016 in the Society. Constitutionally every two year a new elected Council takes office of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh and this Council was announced in the Biennial General Meeting. There was only one panel headed by Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury, former Vice-Chancellor, Jahangirnagar University. The panel was proposed by Professor Dr. Harun-or-Rashid, Vice-Chancellor, National University and seconded by Professor Dr. Feroza Yasmin, Department of Linguistics, Dhaka University. The panel earlier approved by the Council on 24 December, 2015 and ratified by the Monthly General Meeting on 27 December, 2015 was declared duly elected in the Biennial General Meeting held on 3 January, 2016. While presenting the biennial report of the Society the out-going General Secretary read out the names of the newly elected office bearers of the Council for the year 2016-2017. The formation of this Council is as follows:

President- Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury, Vice- Presidents- Professor Mahfuza Khanam, Professor Sharif uddin Ahmed, Mr. Ekram Ahmed, Treasurer- Professor Pradip Kumar Roy, General Secretary- Professor AKM Golam Rabbani, Secretary- Dr. Sabbir Ahmed, Members- Professor Hafiza Khatun, Professor Z.N. Tahmida Begum, Professor Akmal Hussain, Professor Khondoker Bazlul Hoque, Professor Nazmul Karim Chowdhury, Mr. Mofidul Hoque, Professor Sajahan Miah, Professor Abul Monsur Md. Abu Musa, Professor

Syed Rashidul Hasan, Professor Md. Harunor Rashid Khan.

Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury, the newly elected President of the Asiatic Society



Eminent educator and economist Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury was born in 1942 in Rangpur, Bangladesh. Professor Chowdhury did his undergraduate (1961) and graduation (1963) in Economics from Dhaka University. He obtained his Ph.D from the University of Wales in 1979 in Local Government Finance in Bangladesh. He did his post-graduate research from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India in 1987-88 and produced a Monograph on Comparative City Financing of Bangladesh and India. His area of interest is Local Government and Urban Economics.

Professor Chowdhury jointly edited two books and published several articles and book chapters in local government, urban finance and higher education. He successfully supervised two Ph.D research students. He was the editor of the Faculty journal of Social Science, Jahangirnagar University for several issues. He has been teaching and doing research in Economics since April 1964 and retired in 2004 from Jahangirnagar University and later joined North South University and taught as core faculty till September 2009 and now teaching in United International University. He did consultancy work for ADB, ESCAP, UNDP, WB, and other international groups.

**Asiatic Society of Bangladesh
Council: 2016-2017**



Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury
President



Professor Mahfuza Khanam
Vice-President



Professor Sharif uddin Ahmed
Vice-President



Mr. Ekram Ahmed
Vice-President



Professor Pradip Kumar Roy
Treasurer



Professor AKM Golam Rabbani
General Secretary



Dr. Sabbir Ahmed
Secretary



Professor Abdul Momin Chowdhury
Fellow



Professor ABM Husain
Fellow

Members



Professor Hafiza Khatun



Professor ZN Tahmida Begum



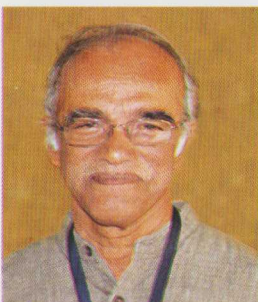
Professor Akmal Hussain



Professor Khondoker Bazlul Hoque



Professor Nazmul Karim Chowdhury



Mr. Mofidul Hoque



Professor Sajahan Miah



Professor Abul Monsur Md. Abu Musa



Professor Syed Rashidul Hasan



Professor Md. Harunor Rashid Khan

Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury teaches History of Economic Ideas, Urban Economics, Political Economy of Bangladesh, Microeconomics, Underground Economy and Globalization. He was the Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University from 1994-1998. He also served as the first Vice-Chancellor of Gano Bishabidayalya for a year.

**Professor AKM Golam Rabbani,
the newly elected General
Secretary of the Society**



Dr. AKM Golam Rabbani, Professor, Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Dhaka, former Secretary, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh and former Deputy Chief Co-ordinator and Managing Editor of the Celebration of the 400 Years of Capital Dhaka Project has been elected General Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

Professor AKM Golam Rabbani earned his Ph. D. from the University of Nottingham, England in 2006 on Urban Studies. Area of research was *Dhaka City in the Pakistan period from 1947-1971: Politics, Planning and Resource Mobilization within Dhaka Municipality and Dhaka Improvement*.

Professor Rabbani worked hard in arranging Trust Fund lectures and other Trust Fund related events as the Secretary of the Society and convener of the Trust Funds. During his tenure as the Trust Fund handler he had successfully conducted 36 Trust Fund lectures including the Bangabandhu Trust and the Tajuddin Ahmad Trust Fund during

the years 2012-2015. He demonstrated his academic and organizing skill in holding 60 lectures and publishing 40 lectures as booklet. He published nearly 40 articles, a number of books and contributed a lot as editor and member of the Editorial Boards to many research works and well-reputed published academic volumes. As the Deputy Chief Coordinator and Managing Editor of the 400 Years of the Capital Dhaka Project Professor Rabbani made immense contribution to the publication of 18 books on various aspects of Urban Dhaka in the years 2008-2012.

Professor Golam Rabbani served as the Editor of ITIHAS of the History, the Journal of Bangladesh Itihas Parishad, as the Senate Member in the years 2009-2012 and Syndicate Member in the years 1996-1998 of Dhaka University, as the Joint Secretary of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) in 2011 and the Teachers' Association of the Bangladesh Open University in the years 1995-1996 and as one of the youngest members of the Federation of Bangladesh Teachers' Association (FBUTA).

Dr. Rabbani, a researcher and academic, has made his mark in the research and publication works of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. As the new General Secretary of the Society he has undertaken a plan of reprinting a number of most sought-after publications of the Society. Of them, *ঢাকা কোষ* and *গেরিলা যুদ্ধে ঢাকা ১৯৭১* have already been out. *বাংলাদেশের ইতিহাস, ১৭০৪-১৯৭১* and *History of Bangladesh 1704-1971* are now in press.

Professor AKM Golam Rabbani is a member of the freedom fighters' family. His father late Al-Haj Md. Abdul Majid was one of the persons whom Lieutenant Jagjit Singh Aurora, the Chief of the Allied Forces met on 7 December 1971 at Sherpur Darag Ali Park following its liberation from the occupation Pak Army. Mr. Md. Abdul Majid along with other organizers gave

Mr. Aurora a standing ovation at a mammoth meeting organized in honour of Lieutenant Jagjit Singh Aurora, the first Indian heavyweight to visit Sherpur after the liberation of Bangladesh. Mr. Abdul Majid's three sons were directly involved in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. The news of arrival of the Army Commander, Eastern Command during 1971 War was widely circulated at home and abroad and published and telecast with photographs of the Commander, local leaders and the huge crowd of Sherpur.

Professor Rabbani belongs to many learned bodies both at home and abroad and continues contributing to these organizations in various capacities. He has traveled many countries of Asia and Europe mainly India, Nepal, Bhutan, United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Australia, Italy, Switzerland, France and attended many conferences and seminars and presented papers over there.

**Asiatic Society of Bangladesh
observed its 64th Founding
Anniversary**

The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh observed its 64th Founding Anniversary on January 3, 2016 with great enthusiasm in the Society with a Foundation Day Lecture by Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury, President of the Asiatic Society and former Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University on *Higher Education in Bangladesh: Impact of Globalization and Privatization*. The paper focused on the current situation in Bangladesh Universities exploring the impact of Globalization both in the world at large and also in Bangladesh. It aimed at assessing the impact of privatization of higher education in Bangladesh. The lecture was broadly divided into six broad sections. The first section included popular misconception about higher education, literature review, quality assurance, actors in higher education and youth, university and democracies.



The new Council for the year 2016-2017 is in session exchanging views on future plans for the Society

The second section, dealt with Globalization and its pace, sources of funds, higher education as big business, should higher education be allowed to continue as big business, management of higher education, including the accreditation. The third section, discussed areas such as research, new techniques of teaching and its impact. The fourth section, tried to highlights some current problems of leading in higher education-- with regard to medium of instruction-- poor English and weak knowledge in mathematics and lastly the conclusions.

Professor Chowdhury observed that in 1990, the public sector in Bangladesh lost its monopoly right of higher education and private sector was allowed to participate in different areas of higher education (in humanities, science, medical, engineering, and also in other areas of training, etc.). In the initial stage, a limited number of Universities and colleges came up. However, later the permit/license to establish universities/colleges became a matter of political privilege and the number kept on increasing and probably

it is going to be 100 such institutions in this month. Now, tracking the number is becoming difficult. However, the practice of establishing universities in private sector is very old.

The most critical fact regarding higher education in the recent past is its phenomenal global post-World War II growth. It is reported in UNESCO Annual Report that Bangladesh had 18,36,659 achieves of Graduate and Undergraduate degrees and Bangladesh had one of the good rate of enrolment in this level.

It is very difficult to find quality research papers on higher education and particularly on university education. Professor Muzaffer Ahmed has produced some important writings on higher education. The UGC Chairman's annual report on higher education describes the present situation of higher education and identifies macro and micro problems of higher education and suggests ways and means to face them.

The University Grants Commission's (UGC) Annual Report is a good source of information and also includes

important comments on the state of affairs of higher education at the university level. The style and content of this report can be improved further to include more areas of discussion such as research publications and research status at the university level and information on student activities.

Bangladesh follows a complex system of education. Teaching is done at least in three different languages: Bangla, English and Arabic. Most of the teachers in higher education level complain about the poor English and Mathematics. English still continues as the 'Dominating Academic Language' and probably stays as an international language of communication; an impact of Globalization. If the students display this level of poor skill in both English (especially students coming from Bangla medium) and Mathematics, it will be difficult for our students to achieve international competitive.

Professor Chowdhury suggests that the course on History of Bangladesh should be mandatory for all students. He said that he himself has been teaching this



Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury is seen delivering the 64th Foundation Day Lecture

course for the last five years which is divided into two courses: one Bangladesh Studies and the other one is Socio- Economic History of Bangladesh. He hopes that the universities may take this seriously.

Co-option of two Fellows onto the Council

As per the article 28 of the constitution of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, the General Secretary proposed the co-option of two Fellows from amongst the elected ASB Fellows onto the Council. After discussion it was unanimously resolved that Professor Abdul Momin Chowdhury, Former Professor of History, University of Dhaka and Former Vice-Chancellor, National University and Professor A.B.M. Husain, Professor Emeritus, Rajshahi University, be co-opted onto the Council for the year 2016-2017.

Monthly Meetings and Lectures

The 1st Monthly General Meeting for the year 2016-2017 was held on 23 February, 2016. National Professor Dr. Sufia Ahmed, a veteran of Language Movement, delivered a lecture on “বায়ানের স্মৃতিকথা”।

National Professor Sufia Ahmed presented a panorama of her involvement in the Language Movement of 1952. While reminiscing about the language movement, Professor Sufia Ahmed said that her participation in the movement was purely a manifestation of spontaneous emotions against the dictatorial rule of the Pakistani leaders who tried to replace Bengali with Urdu. She focused on the role of the women folk in the movement. A winner of Ekushey Padak, Professor Sufia Ahmed urged the scholars and academics to translate the important English reference books into Bengali in order to enrich our language and help our students pursue higher studies in mother language. She also requested

the government to play a vital role in promoting the use of Bengali language at all levels of our national life.

The 2nd Monthly General Meeting

was held on 22 March 2016. Dr. Syed Anwar Husain, eminent historian and supernumerary Professor of History, University of

Dhaka, focused on fixing responsibility of genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani occupation forces in 1971 Bangladesh. He observed that apparently, the Pakistani occupation forces were primarily responsible for genocide; but there were other political and military elements of the Pakistani establishment involved in this genocide. Moreover, there were Bengali collaborators, generally called razakars, who aided and abetted genocide.

The paper entwined both theoretical and empirical perspectives in getting across the core point. The opening section picked up genocide etymologically and phenomenologically. The second section, the core one, dealt with the responsibility for the genocide factor from a number of perspectives. The two sections that followed looked at the track-record of some sporadic and scattered attempts, mostly by civil society elements at home, and lately by government at bringing the war-criminals under trial. The last section closed the discussion with some concluding observations.

Dr. Abul Kalam, former Professor and Chair, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka delivered a special lecture on *Maritime Prospects and Challenges: Bangladesh Perspective* on 9 February 2016. The speaker observed that Bangladesh, a relatively new maritime nation, did not inherit any demarcated maritime boundary.



Speakers of the Monthly General Meetings from the Left: National Professor Dr. Sufia Ahmed and Professor Syed Anwar Husain

Hence as a sovereign maritime entity it does not carry, with some due exceptions, an enduring maritime legacy in its conscious awareness, strategic formulations or in policymaking. The more recent international legal verdicts vis-a-vis its maritime boundary beyond its shores does make a difference; but a fuller appraisal of the territorial gains made by Bangladesh and the challenges facing the nation in maritime affairs is yet to be made and a national maritime security structure or policy frame is yet to evolve or shape itself.

The paper appraised the prospects offered by the maritime gains made by Bangladesh in recent years and assembled the challenging threads in a framework so that the analysts, researchers and policymakers may find them useful for reflections toward charting a secure maritime destiny for Bangladesh. It is viewed that as the country comes out of its aid-dependence and progressively moves toward trade orientation the subject of maritime study notably features as of decisive importance for Bangladesh towards selection of the best strategic option available and ensure its sustained prosperity through business enlargement as a maritime nation. The paper ended with pleas for extensive research and policy coordination so as to ensure that the nation progresses with time towards greater awareness, a better and more secure maritime destiny.

Three New Trust Funds Established

Three new Trust Funds— Dr. A. R. Mallick and R.N. Mallick Memorial Trust Fund, Dr. Mainul Islam and Mr. Waliul Islam Memorial Trust Fund and S.N.H. Rizvi Memorial Trust Fund were set up at the Society. Cheques hand-over ceremony was held on 22 March, 2016 at the Society. President of the Society Professor Amirul Islam Chowdhury, the General Secretary Professor AKM Golam Rabbani, some Council members, founders and their nominees were present in the Deed Signing Ceremony.

The objective of the Dr. A.R. Mallick and R.N. Mallick Trust Fund is to organize/ conduct annual lectures by learned scholars on (i) War of Liberation of Bangladesh (ii) Higher Education and Research in Bangladesh (iii) History of South Asia, particularly related to Bangladesh. On behalf of the family of late Dr. A.R. Mallick, Mrs. Rahmatun Nessa Mallick, wife of Professor A.R. Mallick and Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, son-in-law of late Professor A. R. Mallick opened the Trust Fund with an endowment of TK. 10,00000/- (ten lac).

Dr. Mainul Islam set up Trust Fund with an amount of TK. 10,00000/- (ten lac), the objective of which is to organize lectures on any one of the following subjects: (i) Society



Professor Mainul Islam, founder of the Dr. Mainul Islam and Mr. Waliul Islam Memorial Trust Fund handing over the cheque for TK. 10,00000/- to the Society

(ii) Politics (iii) Economics (iv) Education of Bangladesh, and (v) Literature or Music of poet Rabindranath Tagore.

Professor Dr. Gowher Rizvi, Adviser to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on International Affairs and his family opened the Trust Fund in the name of their late father titled S.N.H. Rizvi Trust Fund with an endowment of TK. 10,00000/- (ten lac). The objective of the Trust Fund is to organize annual lectures by learned scholars and practisionerson the following broad themes: (i) Inclusive Plural Society, Secularism and Religious Tolereance; (ii) Social Justice; and (iii) the Influence of the Sufis and Syncretic Islam in Bangladesh. With the addition of these three new Trust Funds at the Society, the total number now stands at 36.

Trust Fund Lectures

The Tajuddin Ahmad Memorial Lecture 2015 was held on 10 October, 2015. Dr. Anisuzzaman, Professor Emeritus, University of Dhaka delivered the lecture on 'Tajuddin Ahmad: A Man of Destiny'. He dwelt at length on the different phases of the late prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad's political life. The speaker said that from the very beginning Tajuddin had declared three principles which the Bangladesh government would stand by. Those were: democracy, secularism and socialism. All these came from the 1970 Election Manifesto of his party and the party's overall thrust since its, inception. Fortunately those were accepted by his colleagues, even by the Foreign Minister, without a grudge. The question of forming an All Party Advisory Council was not so easy. There were opposition both from the party and the cabinet, but the Prime Minister succeeded in convincing them of its need to give the liberation a wider basis formally.

In his contact with civil and military bureaucracy in India, Tajuddin maintained a dignity that earned him a lot of praise from them.

From the very beginning Tajuddin Ahmad did aim to achieve the liberation of the country by the winter of 1971. He reckoned that had the war lingered, Pakistan, with the backing of



Endowers of the Dr. A.R. Mallick and R.N. Mallick Memorial Trust Fund handing over the cheque for TK.10,00000/- to the ASB President and General Secretary of the Society



Endowers of S.N.H. Rizvi Memorial Trust Fund are seen handing over the cheque for TK. 10,00000/- to the Society.

the USA, would render it into another Vietnam War. In order to achieve liberation by that time, active Indian participation would be necessary, and India could participate fully only when the Himalayan passes were covered with snow, making it impossible for the Chinese forces to interfere. All his energies were directed towards that strategy. His government had clearly told India that the Indian forces would get into Bangladesh as a 'supporting force' and that they would leave the Bangladesh soil when Bangladesh would feel that their presence was needed no longer.

The speaker maintained that Tajuddin dreamt of a Bangladesh where all citizens will have access to food, clothes, shelter, education, health, welfare and security. It will be a state where religions will be a matter of personal belief and will not play any role in the affairs of the state. There will be no minority community. Fundamental rights will be enjoyed by all and rule of law will prevail over everything else. One will not occupy an office in the party and another in the government at the same time. Corruption must come to an end. Talking of socialism, Tajuddin Ahmad said that socialism of Bangladesh will neither be of the Soviet model nor of the Chinese one, they will find their own way of socialism. He was wary of foreign aid. He knew that we needed support from others, but we

must not be treated as beggars and tied with conditions which were not honourable for any free nation. Tajuddin's dream has not yet been realized. He did not have the time to translate most of his ideals.

The speaker said that as he left Dhaka for India in 1971, Tajuddin had sent a note to his wife, asking her and the children to get free with the people at large and expressing the hope to be reunited with them when the country becomes free. During the liberation war he lived separately from his family, in a room adjoining the Prime Minister's office. He washed his own clothes and even nursed his peon when the latter had become sick.

Professor Anisuzzaman concluded that it is a pity in a free Bangladesh that self-seekers succeeded in creating difference between him and the Bangabandhu. Tajuddin had decided to

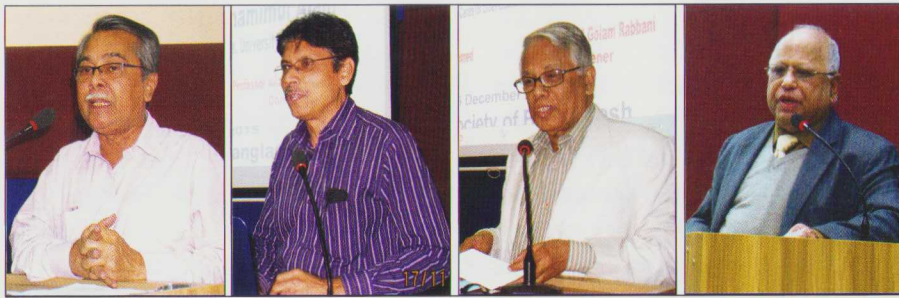
leave the cabinet, anyway, but before he could do so, he was asked by the Prime Minister in writing to resign. Even the draft of the resignation letter was attached to the Prime Minister's instruction. The killers, however, had no confusion. He had proved with his life that his loyalty to the Bangabandhu was unquestionable. The tragedy was that the Bangabandhu had no way of knowing that. Yet the fact remains that Tajuddin had realized the greatest task that history had assigned him: the liberation of Bangladesh.

The Professor Mofassiluddin Ahmed Trust Fund Lecture 2014

was held on 14 October, 2015. Dr. Shaheen Islam, Professor and Chairman, Department of Education and Counselling Psychology, University of Dhaka, delivered the lecture on *Understanding Psychotherapy as a Way to Healthier Life: Bangladesh Context*. The paper focused on uncovering the myths around mental health and role of psychotherapy as psychological means to promote, protect and restore mental health. The speaker said that common understanding of 'Health' is confined to physical condition denoting mere absence of any disease. WHO's holistic definition of health in addition focussed on overall level of functioning. In addition to physical wellness, importance has been given to balanced mental and social well being. In reality, health without mental health is unachievable.



Trust Fund speakers are from left: Professor Anisuzzaman, Professor Shaheen Islam and Mr. Muhammed Shohrab Uddin.



From left: Professor Syed Mohammad Shahed, Professor Sheikh Shamimul Alam, Professor Nazrul Islam and Dr. Ahmad Ismail Mustafa are seen delivering the Trust Fund lectures

Bangladesh: Issues in Disparities, Deprivations and Rights. Professor Nazrul Islam focused on the nature of urbanization in Bangladesh and highlighted the disparity issue on a broad national scale and also on urban poverty and the deprivations of the urban poor. He said that an issue in the urban poverty discussion obviously is the 'rights' of the urban poor, such as their right to stay in the city, right to work for their livelihood, right to the basic needs and right to participate in democratic urban governance.

Professor Nazrul Islam said that when Bangladesh achieved its independence in December, 1971, the war ravaged country began with such a poor and fragile economy and a totally shattered physical infrastructure, low level of social development and weak and inexperienced administrative and managerial structure, that some of its unfriendly western critics labeled the country as a "bottomless basket" or a little later, as a "Test case for development". But only some four decades since then, one finds that Bangladesh was not at all a bottomless basket, in fact far from it, and that Bangladesh has passed the 'test of development' very well. It now puzzles its friendly critics as a case of 'surprise' or 'paradox' in development, particularly because of the fact that its economic and social development has not been matched or supported by the indicators of 'good governance'. Although compared to some of its regional neighbours, Bangladesh has been a little tardy in its journey to economic progress, the country is now definitely in a growth track. The credit for such progress, must be gratefully acknowledged to the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who not only made Bangladesh a free land of the Bangalees, a reality but also laid the foundation to its development with the four fundamental principles of state policy.

The speaker observed that there is an intimate connectedness with mental health and other health conditions. About 14% of global burden of disease has been attributed to mental condition. However, mental health is most neglected, stigmatized hospital based notion, mostly hidden and confined.

Halima Begum and Shaikh Sharafuddin Trust Fund Award 2014 was held on 29 October, 2015. Mr. Muhammed Shohrab Uddin, Head of the Department (acting), Department of Archaeology, Comilla University delibered the lecture on *সোমপুর মহাবিহারের পোড়ামাটির ফলকে জীববৈচিত্র্য*। The paper dealt with the biodiversity on the terra cotta of the Sompur Mahabihar.

Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Trust Fund Lecture 2015 was held on 6 November, 2015. Dr. Syed Mohammad Shahed, Professor, Department of Bengali, University of Dhaka made a presentation on *বাংলা সাহিত্যের ইতিহাস পুনর্বিবেচনা: নতুন উপকরণের আলোকে*। The speaker dwelt at length on the reconsideration of the history of Bengali literature in search of new materials.

Halima Begum and Shaikh Sharafuddin Trust Fund Lecture 2015 was held on 17 November, 2015. Professor Dr. Sheikh Shamimul Alam, Director, Chromosome Research Centre, University of Dhaka delivered the lecture on *Application of Chromosome Research*. The speaker said that Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid (DNA) is the hereditary materials in

higher plants and animals. DNA cannot exist as nucleic acid in cell. It needs some substratum. Histone protein is the substratum on which DNA coils. One part of DNA and one part of histone protein makes chromatin. The chromatins coil in different manner to form chromosome. Chromosome is the holder of hereditary materials. It is also the carrier of hereditary materials, it carries genetic information from generation to generation via gametes.

Professor Alam observed that the knowledge of chromosome research has been applying in different fields like authentic identification at species or even at varietal level, improving breeding programme, screening of putative hybrid, agriculture, detection of hereditary diseases etc. In human, a number of hereditary diseases are caused by chromosomal aberration. Recently chromosome research at the molecular level helps in identifying cancer cells. In the University of Dhaka, a Chromosome Research Centre has been established in 2014 with an aim to apply the knowledge in different sectors of agriculture and identifying human genetic disorder caused by chromosomal abnormality.

Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Memorial Lectrue 2015 was held on 17 December, 2015. Professor Nazrul Islam, Honorary Chairman, Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) and former President of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh delivered the lecture on *Urbanization and Urban Poverty in*

The FINAS Foundation Lecture 2014 was held on 26 January, 2016. Dr. Ahmad Ismail Mustafa, Dean, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Daffodil International University and former Professor, Department of Applied Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, University of Dhaka, delivered the lecture on *Industrial Pollution in Bangladesh: Present Status and Mitigation Measures*. The speaker said that Bangladesh has recently been graduated from lower income country to lower middle income country where contribution of both agricultural and industrial sector is extensive. Indeed, although Bangladesh is categorically considered as Agriculture or Agro based country, but now-a-days, the industries are substantially backing our GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Since achieving the independence in 1971, Bangladesh has remarkably amplified the rate of the production in different industrial sectors. Rapid development of industrial sectors appreciably contributing in: (i) employment generation; (ii) increasing local income; and (iii) earning foreign exchange. Particularly, the ready made garment and pharmaceutical sectors are in the leading position in accelerating the economic vibrancy of the country. At present, about 77% of the country's foreign exchange earnings come from the garment sector. Moreover, this leading industrial sector now accounts for 45% of all industrial work forces in the country and contributes 5% of the total national revenue.

Professor Mustafa observed that environmental pollution situation of Bangladesh is extremely at risk, which otherwise reflects that Bangladesh is almost in the grip of all formats of pollution (i.e. water pollution, air pollution, noise pollution, land or soil of pollution). According to the statistics of the Global Environmental Performance Index for 2014, Bangladesh is the

ninth-most polluted country in the world. Nevertheless, such vulnerable situation is no doubt a threat for human health, ecosystems and economic growth of our country and immediate mitigation measures are crucial to protect the environment for our own existence as well as for our future generations. Because, to compete in this era of globalization as well as industrialization, there is no other alternative but developing industries based on sustainable and eco-friendly technologies.

Finally Professor Mustafa concluded that discharge of industrial waste is a major problem in Bangladesh and at present it has reached to an alarming proportion which urges immediate treatment or mitigation. However, it is speculated that mitigation through 3R would no doubt be a noteworthy pathway in handling industrial wastes.

Tributes to three eminent personalities

The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh records its deep sense of sorrow and loss at the demise of its three eminent personalities— Mr. AKM Zakariah, Professor Shirin Akhtar and Professor Afia Dil who have died very recently. These three renowned persons have made outstanding contributions to their respective fields in the country.



Late AKM Zakariah was born in 1922 and he obtained his Master's in English from the University of Dhaka. He was an eminent scholar, archaeologist and also a former secretary of the Cultural affairs ministry, government of Bangladesh.

He was one of the few scholars in Bangladesh who mastered Persian language and translated many Persian books into Bangla. Among his publications the most important one titled *The Archaeological Heritage of Bangladesh* has been published by the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh in 2011.

In recognition of his contributions to the understanding of the history and culture of Bangladesh, the Council and the members of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh elected Mr. AKM Zakariah to the distinction of Fellowship of the Society on 24 December, 1999.



Professor Shirin Akhtar was a Professor of History, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka. She received her PhD in 1973 from SOAS, London University and then joined the Jahangirnagar University (1970-2006). Her fields of research include the history of medieval and modern Southeast Asia and the South Pacific Region and Gender Studies. Her published works include one book titled 'The Role of the Zamindars (Landed Aristocracies) in Bengal 1707-1772' (1982) and papers in eight edited books and in several journals in Bangladesh. She was the Council Member of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh during the period 1987-88.



Dr. Afia Dil was born and raised in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She was educated

at the University of Dhaka; University of New Zealand; University of Michigan; and Stamford University. She was Professor of English, at Eden Girl's College, Dhaka (1954-61) and Professor and Language Specialist at the East Pakistan Education Extension Center, Dhaka. (1961-62) and at the West Pakistan Education Extension Center, Lahore (1962-65). She taught at the University of Missouri, Columbia, and the San Diego State University. She was Professor of Linguistics and Communication at United States International University since 1973 and was Professor Emeritus at Alliant International University since 2003. Her books in Bengali include, among others, her acclaimed travel-Ogue *Je desh mone pare* and Bengali version of *Helen Keller's my Teacher*. Her books *Two Traditions of the Bengali Language* (Cambridge, 1991) and *Bengali Nursery Rhymes* (2010) have been hailed as valuable contribution to socio-linguistics and Bangladesh Studies. Dr. Anwar Dil and Dr. Afia Dil Trust Fund was founded in the Asiatic Society on 5 February, 2011. The objective of the Trust is promotion of research and publication in the areas of Asian History, Culture and Civilization.

In their death the country has lost some great souls who have made outstanding contributions to Bangladesh and Asia in different fields.

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Associate Professor
Department of Islamic History & Culture
Rajshahi University, Rajshahi
1862. Dr. Faheem Hasan Shahed
Associate Professor
Department of English
American International University
Dhaka

1996. Mr. Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury
House- SEL Oasis, Flat-GF, C
116/A, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue,
Eskaton Garden Road, Ramna,
Dhaka-1000
2195. Dr. Nahid Ferdousi
Associate Professor
and Coordinator of Law Program
Bangladesh Open University
Gazipur
2404. Dr. Keka Dutta Roy
Associate Professor
Department of History
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Kolkata, India

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Assistant Engineer
Power Grid Company of
Bangladesh Ltd.
West Rampura, Dhaka-1219
2403. Dr. S. M. Mostafizur Rahman
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2409. Mr. Milton Kumar Dev
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2411. Mr. Md. Mahbubur Rahman
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2412. Ms. Chandana Rani Biswas
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