

Dhaka Day by Day

Low profiles, high performance

By S.M. Ali

In the minds of most people, the Rockefeller brothers are identified with wealth, high finance and somewhat marginally, politics. At one stage, it was all very high profile, except perhaps in politics.

However, whatever the Rockefeller brothers have been involved in, there has been an undercurrent of philanthropy, not in the conventional sense of charity but as participation in well-defined social issues, like environment and agriculture, and all in the developing world.

It is this concern that gave birth to the Rockefeller Foundation as early as in 1913. So, over the past 78 years, it has identified worthwhile projects for the Foundation's support, first among impoverished communities in different countries and later in what has come to be known as the Third World. But always—and that's important—keeping a relatively low profile.

It is the same low profile that marked the visit here over the weekend of Peter Goldmark, the President of the Foundation, accompanied by a group of his associates from his New York-based office. A political scientist by academic discipline and the Chief Executive of the Foundation for three and a half years, Mr Goldmark came with a man with a boyish cheerful grin, was on his second visit to Bangladesh.

The short visit of the Foundation Chief was primarily concerned with seeing what was going on with two of his favourite development projects in the Third World—he described them to me as



A group of village children on their way to a non-formal school of BRAC. The project has won admiration from international organisations. Photo: Shehzad Noorani

jewels—the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, better known as BRAC, and the Grameen Bank. It was something of a familiarisation trip, rather than an evaluation mission, for talks with Fazle Hassan Abed and Mohammad Yunus, the chief executives of BRAC and the Grameen Bank respectively.

At a reception on Thursday evening, we sat in a corner, tactfully left to ourselves by the host and friends, to talk about the two organisations Mr. Goldmark regarded with almost boundless admiration, referring to them as "two development programmes most important for the world."

To the Foundation chief, the most important achievement shared by the two bodies is that "they work with the poor, on the basis of the low cost estimates, create in them a spirit of self-reliance and eventually help them—the poorest of the poor—to reach a level of skill." This is what grassroot development is all about.

While the Grameen Bank has created what Mr Goldmark called a "new balance of power between men and women" by treating the latter as its principal beneficiaries in the rural society, BRAC's education project is on the way

of producing "a new generation of children" who not only know how to read and write but are also bursting with new energy.

There was not much time for asking questions. But a couple had to be raised.

"Will the activities of the two organisations, impressive as they are, make a lasting overall impact on the socio-economic scene of Bangladesh which continues to face massive problems?" Mr Goldmark was asked.

The reply from the visitor was optimistic. In time, the activities of BRAC and the Grameen Bank would produce a snowball effect, inspire other non-governmental bodies follow the same road and even improve upon the performance of both BRAC and the Bank. "But it will be a long haul", we both said, almost at the same time.

Replying to another question, Mr Goldmark suggested that it was not all that important for BRAC and the Grameen Bank to influence the policies of the Bangladesh Government. The NGOs, like these two organisations, and the government work along different paths and operate within different frameworks.

The reply provided just a gentle hint that the two bodies should stay as far away from the government as possible, but without running into problems with the authorities.

The Foundation Chief had one regret which this writer had heard before from others.

"It seems to me that both BRAC and the Grameen Bank are better understood and appreciated outside Bangladesh than inside," he said. "There

are students in the United States universities, who are working on their post-graduate thesis, for their doctorates, on these organisations, especially on their role in grassroot development."

The Rockefeller Foundation operates on an annual budget of \$120 million, generated as an interest from its endowment fund of \$2 billion. At the moment, it provides assistance to projects, ranging from literacy programme to agriculture, in some 25 developing countries round the world.

Will the Foundation get into the newly-emerging democracies in eastern Europe? If so, where will the funds for new projects come from?

Here, the reply from Mr Goldmark was quite explicit.

"At the moment, we have no plans whatsoever to go to Eastern Europe," he said. The only project the Foundation has in that region is a small one in Russia in the field of environment.

At the risk of being rather selfish, I thought it was rather reassuring. But I did not say so to Mr Goldmark.

BCL demands implementation of 10-pt demand

By DU Correspondent

The Chhatra League (S-A), student wing of Awami League at a rally Sunday held the government responsible for being indifferent to the 10-point charter of demand of the student community.

The rally held at the Aparajeeo Bangla of the Dhaka University was addressed by the BCL (S-A) President Shahe Alam and General Secretary Ashim Kumar Ukil.

The BCL leaders demanded the implementation of the students' demands immediately.

BCL (S-A) leaders Golam Mustafa Sultan, President of its Dhaka University unit and Kamruzzaman Ansari, General Secretary of the same unit were also present in the rally.

The 10-point demand of the student community was chalked out by the now defunct All Party Student Unity (APSU).

No price-list of essentials

There is no fixed price-list of the essentials in the country, reports BSS.

It was stated by Commerce Minister M K Anwar in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday replying to a question from Abdul Khaleque Talukdar (AL-Bagerhat).

What's on today

Bangla Academy

An essay on 'use of Bangla in administrative field' by Kazi Muhammad Manzure Maula will be delivered today (Monday) at the Bangla Academy in the afternoon.

The discussants will be Mofazzal Karim, Dr Badruzzaman and Bashir Al Helal.

Research Bureau

The certificate awarding ceremony of the training course on 'Islami Bima' organised by Islamic Economics Research Bureau will be held today (Monday) at Hotel Sheraton at 6.30 pm.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman will be the chief guest.

Sahitya Parishad

The regular monthly meeting of Bangla Sahitya Parishad will be held today (Monday) at 171, Bara Maghbaraz in the evening.

The meeting will be presided over by Jahangir Habibullah while Mahbub Bari and Aminur Rahman Dipu will be speakers.

Aangik

Aangik, an alternative film making group, will hold a press conference today (Monday) at 3.30 pm at 14/2, Topkhana Road (Udichi office) to discuss the problems arising out of giving censorship to a short film "Dhusar Jatra".

Sonali Bank employees

The officers and employees of Sonali Bank will hold a press conference today (Monday) at 4.35 pm at the Sonali Bank Building in Dhaka.

They will talk on their demands.

Rotaract Club

A press conference at the advent of 'eighth Rotaract district conference '92' will be held today (Monday) at 5 pm at 23, Green Road.

Seminar on diarrhoeal diseases

A two-day seminar on 'prevention and treatment of diarrhoeal diseases' will begin today (Monday) under the auspices of the Gono Bikash Sangstha.

The trainers are Dr ASG Faruq, Dr Abu Yusuf, Dr Rezia Laila Akbar, Dr Mizanur Rahman, Dr Bilkis A Haque and Dr KMA Aziz. As many as 61 women will be participating in the two-day training seminar.

Rotary Club of Dhaka Central

The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held today (Monday) at 1.30 pm at the family lounge of Dhaka Club. Rtn Dr Mohammad Moniruzzaman will be the guest speaker.

. . . . and tomorrow

Seminar

A seminar on "social mobilisation for sanitation" organised jointly by LORD Ministry and UNICEF will be held tomorrow (Tuesday) at 10 am at Sher-e-Bangla MP hostel premises.

Nasiruddin Trust

Nasiruddin Gold Medal Trust will distribute its awards for 1990 and 1991 among the award winners tomorrow (Tuesday) at 3.30 pm at the children auditorium of National Museum.

The award winners are, Syed Shamsul Haq, Al Mahmud, Obaidul Haq and Nilima Ibrahim.

Weather

Rain likely over Khulna, Ctg

By Staff Correspondent

Met office Sunday forecast, rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind likely to occur at few places over Khulna and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places elsewhere over the country till 6 pm today (Monday).

Night temperature likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country, the Met office said.

The lowest temperature of 10.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Rangpur while the highest of 27.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Rangamati.

The sun sets today (Monday) at 5:50 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 6:35 am.

The temperature and percentage of humidity recorded in some major cities/towns Sunday were:

Cities / Towns	Temperature		Humidity	
	Max	Min	9am	6pm
Dhaka	24.3	16.2	80	58
Chittagong	27.0	19.7	86	78
Rajshahi	24.3	11.2	93	70
Khulna	25.3	15.4	78	—
Rangpur	23.7	10.2	89	67
Dinajpur	23.6	10.4	97	57
Faridpur	24.6	14.0	98	59
Sylhet	23.6	11.5	100	73
Cox's Bazar	25.0	19.5	91	86
Rangamati	27.2	18.2	88	59

EC appoints 100 UP polls tribunals

The Election Commission, in a gazette notification Saturday appointed 100 election tribunals throughout the country for disposal of election petitions relating to the recently concluded Union Parishad elections, reports BSS.

These tribunals have been constituted under Section 27 of the Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance, 1983.

Ninety-seven Assistant Judges of 61 districts, excepting Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban hill districts, have been appointed as the election tribunals. The Additional District Magistrates of Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban hill districts have been appointed as election tribunals for all the unions under their respective districts.

The commission, however, said no election, relating to any Union Parishad, can be called into question except by

Goyeswar for removal of class system

State Minister for Environment, Forest, Fisheries and Livestock Goyeswar, visited a number of Saraswati Puja mandaps in the city Saturday, reports BSS.

Addressing a gathering at Rokeya Hall premises of Dhaka University on the occasion of the puja, he urged the students to build themselves as able and responsible citizens of the nation.

He stressed the need for removal of class system in the Hindu community and to check the dowry system with concerted efforts.

an election petition presented to the election tribunal under Section 26 of the Local Government (Union Parishads) Ordinance, 1983.

According to the Election Commission any candidate may file an election petition challenging the election at which he was a candidate.

Following are the provisions of rule 44 of the Union Parishads (election) rules, 1983. An election petition may be presented to the election tribunal within thirty days after the publication of the names of the returned candidates in official gazette.

Majid-ul-Haq leaves for India

Agriculture and Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister M Majid-ul-Haq Sunday left for India to attend the Twenty-First Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) regional conference for Asia and Pacific which will be held in New Delhi from 10 to 14 February next, reports BSS.

All the member nations in the FAO, Asia, and southwest Pacific regions, representatives of the United Nations bodies and specialised agencies will participate in the conference.

The conference will discuss food and agriculture situation in Asia and Pacific region and selected issues of agriculture and rural development in the region. It will recommend regional strategies for arresting land degradation. The conference will discuss enhancing rural employment and income through the development of agro-processing industries in the region.

The election petition may be presented to the tribunal either by the candidate in person or by a person duly authorised in writing by him in his behalf.

Every petition shall have to be accompanied by a receipt showing a deposit of Taka five hundred under the prescribed head of account in any branch of the Sonali Bank or a government treasury or sub-treasury in favour of Returning Officer as security for the cost of the petition.

The petitioner may claim as relief any of the following declaration under rule 45 of the Union Parishad (election) rules, 1983:

That the election of any returned candidate is void and that the petitioner or some other person has been duly elected, or that the election as a whole is void.

Monday

- 5-00 Opening announcement, Al Quran, Programme summary
- 9-10 News in Bangla
- 9-20 Recitation from the Geeta
- 5-25 Cartoon film: The Great Space Coaster
- 6-00 Sports programme
- 7-05 Debate
- 8-00 News in Bangla
- 8-30 Janamat
- 9-00 Bhara Nadir Bankey
- 10-00 News in English
- 10-25 Parliament roundup
- 10-35 Film: The Rescue
- 11-30 Khabar/The news
- 11-40 Tuesday's programme summary
- 11-45 Closing