

DOWN TO EARTH

A Research Institute with Unrealised Promise

By A S M Nurunnabi

A research institute is hardly a popular subject for a feature article. The lack-lustre nature of the theme may be improved to some degree with a less pedantic approach to it. With this belief which is not without a tinge of diffidence, a research institute which has not been much in public view lately, is here introduced on account of its potentialities for extending the frontiers of knowledge in the fields of law and international affairs.

The research institute in question is the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs. It is a non-government body devoted mainly to functions as a sort of think tank for promotion, among other things, of studies and research in law and international spheres.

Housed in a building which belonged to Mr. H S Suhrawardy, amidst a beautiful grove on Road No. 7, Dhanmondi Residential Area, it was established in June, 1972 under the initiative of Dr. F K M A Munim, former Chief Justice of Bangladesh Supreme Court who remained its Chairman for a long time. Among its objectives, it seeks to operate as a forum for providing scholars and experts to relate to one another and to facilitate the formulation of common policies in important areas of law and international studies in a growing interdependent world order. It was among its members and patrons, eminent personages, jurists and academics.

Till recently the mainstay of its finance rested on grants made by the Ministry of Law and Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following a shake-up in its controlling authority recently, the grant from the Ministry of Law and Justice is no longer available. The curtailment of the grant has thrown the institute into a tight financial position. Not that the institute had previously enough funds to conduct its activities with. The suspension of a major source of funds is understood to be detrimental to its normal functioning.

The present heads of the Institute, it was learnt, are making efforts to have the grant restored as well as to explore new avenues for augmenting its fund position by inviting project grants from interested external agencies. From talks with the Director of the Institute, I had the impression that prospects in this respect are bright.

The Institute now headed by Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed as Chairman, Mr. S A M S Kibria as alternate Chairman and Mr. Fakrudin Ahmed as Director are all noted personalities. There is no reason why with their dynamic leadership the Institute will not be able to come out of the present doldrums and expand its activities further. Previously agencies such as the Asia Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the USAID played a helpful role by offering specific project grants. If these agencies could evince as much interest as before, it will help the Institute to resume its due functions as well as enlarge the scope of its activities.

The story will be incomplete without recounting its contributions and achievements. The Institute has a rich library. Though, because of fund constraints, new accession of books and journals is much limited, organisations such as the American Centre, the British Council, and other foreign missions donate books, journals, periodicals, etc. which go a long way in enlarging its collection.

The Institute has a list of research publications which is undeniably impressive. These publications cover a broad spectrum of current burning issues. The Institute's other publications include (a) a biennial journal featuring articles on international law and international affairs, (b) Bangladesh Supreme Court Report which is a quarterly publication bringing out the decisions of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and (c) a monthly magazine focussing on areas of current international interest. It is deplorable that

because of fund constraints, these publications have become irregular.

The Institute also undertook certain important projects on areas noted below: (a) Project on delay in Court and Court administration funded by the Asia Foundation, (b) Project on documentation on SAARC also funded by the Asia Foundation. But regrettably this project could not make much headway, (c) Project on Bench Guide Book for use by trial judges on Civil Procedure, (d) Project on Gender differentials for Industrial Women Workers in Bangladesh, (e) Project on international relations subjects.

A very important part of the Institutes project activities related to Judicial Officers' Training Programme initiated in 1985, with the co-operation of the Ministry of Law and Justice. Under this programme a good number of judicial officers of the ranks of Subordinate Judges and Assistant Judges have received training so far. The existing state of fund shortage has also had its adverse impact on this training programme which has resulted in its being irregular.

It is a sad thing that a research centre with such a legacy of achievements has fallen on bad days. It will not be far from truth to say that it is in a moribund state. The redeeming feature in the otherwise dark picture is that a group of able personages has come at the helm of affairs of the Institute who are expected to restore its due role and also expand the scope of its activities. No one will like such a research centre to die out only because of lack of funds.

Research organisations of a nation represent an aspect of intellectual heart throb of its people, so say. To make the Institute cover a long mileage in its run, it behoves the government and the foreign agencies to evince active interest in the institution dedicated to the goal of extending the frontiers of knowledge in certain specific fields.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia went round different stalls after inaugurating the week-long Baishakh mela organised by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation at the Dhanmondi Club ground in the capital Thursday. — PID photo

Pahela Baishakh

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crackers announcing the turn of a century.

Different cultural troupes on open trucks moved about in the capital singing traditional and popular songs.

As the day dawned, thousands of people thronged the ancient banyan tree at the Ramna Park where Chhayana — a well-known cultural organisation — organised the welcoming of the new year 1401.

At least two dozen other cultural organisations held their functions at the Suhrawardy Uddan, Bangla Academy, Shilpakala Academy, Shishu Academy, the Zia Uddyan at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and at the Bahadur Shah Park.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia opened a week-long Baishakh mela at the Dhanmondi Club ground in the capital. The fair was organised by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation.

The PM also released a Taka two commemorative postage stamp and a First Day Cover of Taka five on the occasion. People from all walks of life in colourful attires attended the functions.

The 1400-year Celebration Council, headed by Poet Sufia Kamal, organised a function at the eastern gate of the Suhrawardy Uddyan to mark the turn of the Bangla century.

"Let peace be restored in Bangladesh and the world with the advent of the new century," said the octogenarian poet while releasing white pigeons from a raised podium.

Poet Shamsur Rahman, Syed Shamsul Huq, Dhaka city Mayor Mohammad Hanif and Obaidul Qader also spoke at the function welcoming the new year.

The Institute of Fine Arts

In Chittagong, the Sammitto Barsha Uddyan Parishad and the Pahela Baishakh Uddyan Parishad organised separate programmes to bid farewell to the old century and welcome the new.

The central focus of the festivity in the port city was on a Baishakh mela at the local stadium.

Similar programmes were also organised in Khulna, Rajshahi.

Li Peng

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that Bangladesh and China enjoy traditional relations that are excellent and that the two countries have no problems whatsoever.

The Bangladesh Foreign Minister conveyed to Premier Li Peng greetings of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. He mentioned that China was one of the first countries that Begum Zia visited in 1991 to manifest confidence that Bangladesh has in its friendship with China.

Rahman said Bangladesh is looking forward to China's role in helping Asian countries achieve economic development. He also briefed the Chinese Premier about the efforts of Bangladesh as chairperson of the SAARC to develop regional cooperation.

He raised Bangladesh's problem with India relating to sharing of water of Ganges and Teesta and the situation relating to Myanmar refugees where he said that China's silent yet useful support was helpful.

Li Peng said that during Begum Zia's visit to China in 1991 he had extremely useful exchange of views with her and that he is looking forward to his next meeting with her in Dhaka. He added that he is aware of necessity of Bangladesh and China to increase trade and economic relationship on South Asia. Li Peng said that China has good relations with all countries of the region. On India, he said, China's relationships are honourary and normal but there are still some problems. He, however, assured the Bangladesh Foreign Minister that China's improvement of relations with India will not be at the expense of its traditional old friends.

Saifur leads team to Paris aid club meet

Star Report

A seven-member delegation led by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman left Dhaka for Paris Friday night to attend the Paris Club aid consortium meeting, to be held in the French capital April 18-20.

The team members also include Finance Secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed and ERD Secretary Lutfulah Majid.

The team will seek 2100 million US dollars as foreign aid this year from the donors to continue the country's aid dependent development programme.

The team will highlight the country's 'improved economic situation' and a trend of 'increasing investment' as a result of the reforms in the economy.

The team will also reiterate the country's adherence to the reforms measures in the coming years and will also express the government's commitment to poverty alleviation.

Strained AL-BNP ties

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Menon recalled that the AL had alleged massive rigging in the parliamentary elections held under the Ershad regime in 1986 but had not abstained from attending the parliament sessions.

Asked whether he would follow the AL in boycotting the parliamentary standing committee meetings, Menon said his party had not yet discussed the issue. The WP legislator, however, said "the AL had not talked to him before taking the decision to boycott the meetings."

Gario Forum (GF) leader, Shahjahan Siraj MP, expressing his disappointment over the present crisis, said the conflict between the BNP and the AL would lead democracy towards what he said, an 'undesirable destination'.

Siraj, however said he would blame both the BNP and the AL for any such situation.

The GF lawmaker observed that the ruling party was insensitive to some important opposition demands like separation of the judiciary from the executive, accountability of the government to parliament and effective functioning of the Jatiya Sangsad.

"On the other hand, the AL is not addressing the real causes of the people on the streets," the GF leader felt.

Siraj, while talking to this correspondent Tuesday, maintained that an effective dialogue could alone resolve the present crisis. "The time for such a dialogue is not yet over," Siraj observed and hoped the parties concerned would realise the need for reaching an understanding soon.

Suranjit Sengupta of the Gonotantri Party (GP), while evaluating the situation, said if the present state of relations between the BNP and the AL continued, the democratic system would be in danger.

Criticising the ruling party's alleged uncompromising attitude towards the opposition, Sengupta said there was no scope for obstinacy in a parliamentary system.

The GP leader said the government had now no scope for ignoring the opposition demands like holding of the next general elections under a caretaker government, independence of the judiciary and the government's accountability to parliament.

Sengupta felt that Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia herself should take an initiative to resolve the crisis. "The Prime Minister should open a national dialogue to re-

Trade pact

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force by next January 1 "or as early as possible thereafter."

The declaration also said —

Conclusion of the round "will strengthen the world economy and lead to more trade, investment, employment and income growth throughout the world."

Trade liberalisation and strengthened rules achieved in the Uruguay Round "will lead to a progressively more open world trading environment."

Ministers will strive for "greater global coherence of policies in the fields of trade, money and finance, including cooperation between the WTO, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank."

Ministers welcomed the active role played by developing countries and pledged to facilitate the expansion of trade and investment opportunities in those countries.

Iraq : 26 killed

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the Hinds," said Lt. Gen. Richard Keller, chief of staff of the US European Command in Stuttgart, Germany. Audio and camera tapes from the aircraft will be studied in the investigation, he said.

Asked what threat the helicopters might have posed that justified shooting them down, Keller replied, "I honestly don't know."

One F-15 fired a radar-seeking AMRAAM missile, the other a heat-seeking Sidewinder, the general said in a telephone briefing with reporters at the Pentagon.

Shallikashvili, the Joint Chiefs chairman, said the final order to shoot normally is given "on the scene" and not from military commanders at the jets' base in Incirlik, Turkey.

"Clearly, something went wrong, and an investigation will have to determine exactly what did go wrong," said the four-star Army general, who spearheaded the relief effort for the Kurds in 1991.

Meanwhile the United States on Friday suspended air patrols by combat planes over Northern Iraq for one day to reinforce safety procedures that failed shockingly in Thursday's shootdown of two US helicopters.

While the F-15 fighter pilots were being given additional safety briefings Friday, AWACS early warning radar planes continued operating over the no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel, said defence officials who spoke on condition they not be identified.



A mythical dragon forms part of the rally brought out in the city on Thursday in celebration of the Bengali New Year's Day. — Star photo

Launch mishap kills 9

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launch 'ML Zaman' that was passing through the area. A team of the Conservancy and Pilotage Department of the BIWTA joined the operation half-an-hour later. The team rushed to the spot on board the survey vessel 'Titus' from the Pagla VIP Ghat on receipt a wireless message from the control room.

Divers of the Fire Brigade's Munshiganj unit joined the rescue operation at 2 pm. The search for bodies and survivors ended at 3 pm with the salvage of the sunken launch.

Officials of the Munshiganj district administration and the BIWTA were present during the recovery.

All the nine bodies were brought to the Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy Thursday night but none was handed over to the relatives until this afternoon. Relatives of the victims alleged that the bodies were not released due to procedural delay.

Abdul Hakim, a survivor, told The Daily Star he had seen three to four bodies taken away by their relatives from the spot of the mishap and claimed the number of

3 killed in Ctg truck mishap

CHITTAGONG, Apr 15: Three persons were killed and three others injured when two loaded trucks collided head on at Madambirhat under Sitakunda thana on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in the early hours of today, reports BSS.

According to police, the accident occurred when two speeding trucks coming from opposite directions collided killing two helpers of the Chittagong bound truck on the spot, while, the driver of the Dhaka bound truck succumbed to his injuries at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital, hospital sources said.

60 shacks gutted in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 15: At least 60 Thatched dwelling houses were gutted and five firemen were injured in a fire that broke out in a slum at Roomghata West Bakalia under Chandgaon police here this afternoon, reports BSS.

Fire brigade and police sources said the fire originated from a kitchen which engulfed the entire slum.

The Midnight File

Rwandan talks open

KIGALI, Apr 15: Rwandan rebels and government forces opened United Nations-brokered talks here today, meeting for nearly an hour in the Meridien Hotel, an AFP correspondent reported. The talks, originally planned for Thursday, were delayed as the rebels and government soldiers continued battling for control of the body-strewn capital after eight day of ethnic slaughter that claimed 20,000 lives. Details of the talks were not available.

Serbs renew attack on Gorazde

SARAJEVO, Apr 15: Bosnian Serb forces launched a renewed offensive on the Muslim enclave of Gorazde today and UN officials said the town could fall unless action was taken soon. "The Serbs are on the edge of town. The situation is very serious. It's possible the Serbs will take the town in the very near future," said Major Dacre Holloway, a UN protection force (Unprofor) spokesman in Sarajevo, reports Reuter.

Koirala faints again

KATHMANDU, Apr 15: Nepalese Prime Minister Girtija Prasad Koirala fainted Thursday while attending an official function at the royal army headquarters, sources close to the premier said today, reports AFP.

It was the second time within a month he has collapsed in public. On March 4 he fainted in Parliament. He was hospitalised suffering from exhaustion and released three days later.

His collapse Thursday occurred during army Nepalese new year celebrations attended by King Birendra.

He suddenly felt faint and stumbled but a member of the royal family caught him before he fell to the ground, the sources said.

Reported banning of speech protested

By Staff Correspondent

Dr Ahmed Sharif yesterday protested banning of his proposed speech at the Bangla Academy by the government.

In a press statement, Dr Sharif said he had agreed to deliver a written speech at a Bangla Academy function on Pahela Baishakh at the invitation of the Director General of the Academy.

But on Wednesday, the Bangla Academy authorities reportedly informed Sharif that the minister concerned had banned his speech. The academy also did not print his speech submitted earlier for distribution among the audience.

ALCWC meets

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Parliament. Before taking a decision for boycotting the next session, the AL should consult its partners on the issue, the leaders argued.

Earlier, two five-member committees were formed to look into the internecine conflicts in the party's Narshingdi and Narayanganj district units.

The meeting also resolved to "continue the party's struggle" for repeal of the Vested Property Act.

The meeting also adopted an obituary resolution at the deaths of some political and academic dignitaries including the founder-editor of the daily Morning Sun Anwarul Islam Bobby, former party MP Abdul Quddus Makhani and Mahfuzur Rahman, chairman of the central command council of the freedom fighters.

Presided over by Sheikh Hasina, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 to resume again at 9:30 this morning.

Postagola fire

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before the fire service vehicles reached the scene.

Severely burned Beauty was immediately taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared her dead.

The fire at Montu Slum at East Razabazar Thursday evening made some 300 people homeless, but no casualties were reported.

বকেয়া আদায়ের লক্ষ্যে গ্যাস লাইন বিচ্ছিন্নকরণের বিশেষ অভিযান

গ্যাস অত্যন্ত মূল্যবান জাতীয় সম্পদ। এর পরিমিত ব্যবহার তবীব্য গ্রহণকে জ্বালানী স্রোত থেকে রক্ষা করে।


বাক্স শেষ হওয়ার সাথে সাথেই গ্যাসের চুলা বন্ধ করুন। বিদ্যুৎ ও সার উৎপাদনে এবং অন্যান্য শিল্প ও বাণিজ্যিক কার্যক্রমে গ্যাস দেশের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের চাবিকাঠি। তাই সর্বক্ষেত্রে গ্যাসের অপচয় ও অবৈধ ব্যবহার থেকে বিরত থাকুন।

বকেয়া আদায়ের লক্ষ্যে তিতাস গ্যাস আওতাভুক্ত সকল এলাকায় সরকারী ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানসহ সকল খেলাপী গ্রাহকের গ্যাস লাইন বিচ্ছিন্নকরণের বিশেষ অভিযান ৫ই এপ্রিল '৯৪ থেকে পুনরায় শুরু হয়েছে। ১৯৯৩-৯৪ অর্থ বকসের উক্ত তৃতীয় বিশেষ অভিযানে ১২-৪-৯৪ ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত মোট ১১৫ টি গ্যাস সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন করা হয়।

সকল সম্মানিত গ্রাহককে অবিলম্বে বকেয়া গ্যাস বিল পরিশোধ করে সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্নকারী দলকে গ্যাস ব্যবহারের স্থানে বকেয়া পরিশোধের রসিদ প্রদর্শন করার অনুরোধ জানানো হল। সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্নকৃত গ্রাহক বিকাল ৫-০০ টার মধ্যে কোম্পানীর সর্টিফট জোন/অফিসে পরিশোধিত বিলের রসিদ দেখাতে পারলে তৎক্ষণিকভাবে পুনঃসংযোগ প্রদানের ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন ৩ (তিন) মাসের মধ্যে পুনঃসংযোগ না নিলে গ্যাস সংযোগ স্থায়ীভাবে বিচ্ছিন্নকরণসহ গ্যাস সরবরাহ চুক্তি বাতিল করা হবে।

বকেয়া আদায় এবং গ্যাসের অপচয় রোধ ও সত্রুক্ষণকল্পে সকলের সহযোগিতা আমাদের একান্ত কাম্য।



তিতাস গ্যাস ট্রান্সমিশন এন্ড ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

পেট্রোবাংলার একটি সার্বস্বিয়ারী কোম্পানী

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"গাছ লাগান, পাছের পরিচর্যা করুন এবং পরিবেশ বাঁচান"-প্রধানমন্ত্রী

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