

## Capacity 21: How Far to Go?

by Dr Mahfuzul Haque

There are ways and means, strategies and implementation mechanism to prepare a National Agenda 21 for Bangladesh. While doing so, it should be kept in mind that people from all walks of life are to be consulted in a countrywide consultation process.

THREE years from now, the world will step in to the 21st century, a century full of hope, promise and aspiration. In a world, marred with poverty, environmental degradation and pollution and low-income growth, global warming and sea level rise, we look forward towards the century, where, if not we, our progeny will have a chance to breathe fresh air, drink pollution-free water, have a roof over the head and access to the world of learning.

Agenda 21: In 1992 at the "Earth Summit" held at Rio de Janeiro, the world leaders sat together to draft an agenda for the 21st century, named as Agenda 21. Divided into 40 chapters, Agenda 21 explains that population, consumption and technology are the primary driving forces of environmental change. It lays out what needs to be done to reduce wasteful and inefficient consumption patterns in some parts of the world, while encouraging increased but sustainable development in others. It offers policies and programmes to achieve a sustainable balance between consumption, and population, and the Earth's life-supporting capacity. It describes some of the techniques that need to be developed to provide for human needs while carefully managing natural resources.

A major theme of Agenda 21 is the need to eradicate poverty by giving the poor more access to the resources they need to live sustainably. By adopting Agenda 21, industrialised countries recognised that they have a greater role in cleaning up the environment than poor nations, who cause relatively less pollution. The richer nations also promised more funding to help other nations develop in ways that have lower environmental impacts. Beyond funding, nations need help in building the expertise — the capacity — to plan and carry out sustainable development decisions. This will require transfer of information and skills.

Agenda 21 calls on governments to adopt national strategies for sustainable development. It puts most of the responsibility for leading change on national governments but says that they need to work in a broad series of partnerships with international organisations, business, regional, state, provincial and local governments and NGOs and citizens groups. Agenda 21 says, only global partnership will ensure that all nations will have a safer and more prosperous future.

**Commission on Sustainable Development:** In order to help the national governments to develop their capacity to implement Agenda 21, Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was set up. The

fifth session of CSD held in New York in April this year, reviewed the progress, failures, problems and prospects of implementation of Agenda 21 and made recommendations on Sectoral, cross-sectoral as well as international institutional arrangements for effective and successful implementation of Agenda 21. The special session of UN General Assembly held in June last was attended by the world leaders for reviewing and monitoring the progress of the Earth Summit that held five years ago at Rio.

Popularly known as "Rio plus five", the session made an attempt at stock-taking and to see implementation status of the Conventions including Agenda 21 signed at Rio. The meeting could not make much headway as some of the developed countries, especially, the United States rebuffed calls for a convention to protect forests, and watered down a text on global warming, which avoided any mention of specific targets to curb greenhouse gases blamed for the climate change. The final document however reflected deep concern of the participants that overall trends for sustainable development were worse today than they were in 1992.

**National Agenda 21 for Bangladesh:** Before preparing a National Agenda 21 for Bangladesh, it is worthwhile to make an inventory of plans and policies adopted and projects implemented by the government of Bangladesh targeting the Agenda 21. Questions are to be asked: a) where are we now; b) where do we want to go; and c) how do we get there? While taking stock, it is seen many national policies and plans have partially addressed the Agenda 21, if not fully. The important among them are: Draft Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002), Draft Participatory Perspective Plan (1995-2010), Three-Year Rolling Plan (1995-1997) etc.

Draft FFYP has a separate chapter on "Environment and Sustainable Livelihood", which elaborately discussed the issue of sustainable development as the country enters into 21st century. Referring to Bangladesh's commitment to the implementation of 22 international conventions/protocols related to environment signed or ratified so far, the chapter gave policy guidelines, identified goals and objectives and showed implementation strategies, including financial arrangements. Issues related to poverty alleviation, employment and HRD; women in development; participatory rural development and local governance; trade and external resources; private sector etc., came out prominently in the Plan.

The Draft Participatory Perspective Plan is a pro-poor plan

involving people at the grassroots level during its planning process. It also looked at incorporating the local Agenda 21.

**Sectoral Plans and Policies:** The most high profile environmental plan of the government, well acclaimed home and abroad is the National Environmental Management Action Plan, NEMAP. Published by the Ministry of Environment and Forest in 1995, NEMAP identified various environmental concerns of the country and gave recommendations including suggestive implementation mechanism. NEMAP chalked out by the people for the people partially addressed Agenda 21, if not fully. NEMAP is now being implemented with financial assistance from a number of development partners UNDP, World Bank and CIDA.

NEMAP Programme Formulation Mission has recently concluded a \$26 million TA project, titled, "Sustainable Environment Management Project" (SEMP). The WB-assisted "Bangladesh Environment Project" (BEP) is being finalized. CIDA-assisted "Strengthening of Department of Environment" project will be launched soon. Other plans adopted by the government in this sector are: Forestry Master Plan (1993-2013) and draft National Conservation Strategy (NCS). The policies are Environment Policy and Action Plan, 1992 and Forestry Policy 1994.

Besides environment, other sectoral plans and policies of the government that addressed Agenda 21 are: Flood Action Plan (FAP), 1989; Bangladesh Water and Flood Management Strategies, 1995; draft National Water Plan; National Energy Policy, 1995; Bangladesh Health and Environmental Action Plan (BHEAP); Environmental Guidelines of LGED, draft Education Policy etc.

**Projects related to Agenda 21:** Bangladesh since its independence has implemented a number of projects and programmes on agriculture, water, forestry, fisheries and livestock, having environmental components. It is true that some of them, especially the PCD and embankment projects failed to address the environmental concerns. Simmering discontents are there against the recently concluded Flood Action Plan involving \$150 million. Despite many faults, these sectoral projects were the forerunner of Agenda 21 in Bangladesh. On the forestry sector, the bio-diversity conservation of the Sunarbans, Thana Afforestation Programme, Participatory Forestry, Coastal Greenbelt Project, proposed high-profile Forestry sector project are some of the projects conserving bio-diversity of the country.

As a signatory to Bio-diversity Convention, 1992, Bangladesh has so far taken a

number of projects for conservation of bio-diversity [chapter 15] of the country. Although Bangladesh is yet to make an inventory of its bio-diversity and adopt an Action Plan, yet on atmospheric pollution [chapter 9], Bangladesh made a real headway. Following signing and ratifying of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), 1992, Bangladesh recently concluded the Climate Change Country Study funded by US government.

Through this study, Bangladesh is now aware of its carbon dioxide emission figure and strategies to be taken for climate change and mitigation, if climate change takes place, including measures to raise public awareness. On Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), 1987 [chapter 9] an "Ozone Cell" has been established at the Department of Environment and steps are being taken to contain ODS use in Bangladesh. On Basel Convention on toxic and hazardous wastes, 1989, [chapters 19 and 20] some rules have been drafted, which are yet to be finalized. Bangladesh has signed and ratified the Convention to Combat Desertification, 1994 [chapter 12]. Programmes are yet to be taken to implement it.

**National Laws and Regulations:** Chapter 39 of Agenda 21 called for implementation of international agreements at a national level. In Bangladesh, more than 200 laws are in force related to environment. Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1995 addressed most of the environmental issues of concern. Rules and regulations in order to activate EPA are being finalized. Sectoral laws are to be updated and developed in line with Bangladesh's commitment to international community.

This is brief resume of "Where are we now?" It will help us to analyse the gap vis-a-vis the Agenda 21. This gap analysis will lead us to go to our desired destination of sustainable development. "How to get there?" is now relatively easier to chart. There are ways and means, strategies and implementation mechanism to prepare a National Agenda 21 for Bangladesh. While doing so, it should be kept in mind that people from all walks of life are to be consulted in a countrywide consultation process. We should not forget that people, especially the poor, women and children are to be put at the centre-stage of development. These ultimate stakeholders are to be empowered through the process of participation in decision-making, as primary actors and not as beneficiaries.

The writer, the former Project Director, NEMAP, Ministry of Environment and Forest, is presently working at Planning and Development Academy.

## Bangabandhu Murder Case

### Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of Eighth and Ninth Prosecution Witnesses

CROSS-examination of Major (ret'd) Shahadat Hossain, eighth prosecution witness in Bangabandhu murder case, was completed on Tuesday.

Following are excerpts from his cross-examination by advocate Khan Saifur Rahman, defence counsel for accused Col (dismissed) Syed Farooq Rahman:

Q: Was Sheikh Jamal, the second son of Bangabandhu, killed by army while he was in army?  
A: Some dismissed and disgruntled people of army killed him.

Q: Will the disgruntled people of army be called mutinous?  
A: They have resorted to insubordination.

Q: Were they mutinous?  
A: Concerned authorities will decide whether they were mutinous.

Q: Was Bangabandhu's house under the control of army after the incident?  
A: I saw the house was under control of Major Noor and Captain Huda.

Q: Was there any other member of army?  
A: There were members of Two Field Artillery and Lancer.

Q: Were the people of Two Field Artillery and Lancer, and Major Noor and Captain Huda members of army?  
A: Major Noor was a dismissed army officer. Captain Huda was in service. People of Artillery and Lancer were members of army.

Q: What weapons were being carried by the Lancers?  
A: As far as I can recall they were carrying SLRs and stenguns. I also saw tank.

Q: Did they show respect to you when you went there and told them about your mission?  
A: Yes.

Q: Who was your batman during the incident?  
A: I can't recall his name.

Q: Did you go to watch the museum at Bangabandhu's house?  
A: Yes. I went there about a year ago.

Q: And you went there for your own usual and mental attraction?  
A: Yes.

Q: Can you describe all the incidents that you witnessed at the house of occurrence on that day?  
A: No, I can't recall all the incidents.

Q: Did the guards of Lancer and Artillery continue their duty at that house?  
A: I don't know.

Q: Was there police at the house of occurrence?  
A: I didn't see any person in police uniform when I went there.

Q: Where you sure that there was no plainclothes policeman there?  
A: No, I was not sure.

Q: Did you see any maid servant at the house?  
A: No, I didn't see.

Q: Were you allowed to see everything or your movement was restricted?  
A: I was guided by them.

Q: Were you introduced to Captain Bashar?  
A: We were detained at the same camp in Pakistan. I had no contact with him after returning to Bangladesh.

Q: Is he a NCO post?  
A: Yes, non-commissioned officer.

Q: Did you go upto bedroom of Bangabandhu?  
A: Yes.

Q: How far was the body of Bangabandhu away from his bedroom?  
A: Approximately 20 to 25 feet.

Q: There is no place in a stengun to fix a bayonet.  
A: Yes.

Q: Did many army officers go to Bangabandhu's house before and after you went there?  
A: I don't know.

Q: Did you see anybody carrying G-3 rifle?  
A: I can't recall.

Q: Is breaking the chain of command a mutiny?  
A: The chief of army staff

can say, I can't say.  
Q: Did you submit any report on the breaking of the chain of command?  
A: I didn't say the chain of command was broken.

Q: Are the Lancer and Artillery incorporated in army?  
A: The Lancer and Artillery are under the organisational structure of army.

Q: All of you, the army officers, were involved in the incident?  
A: So far my knowledge goes, none of my brigade or unit was involved in the incident.

Q: You don't know who were the participants of the incident?  
A: I didn't see any one involved in the incident directly. However, I later came to know everything.

Q: Did you investigate?  
A: I informed what I witnessed. I was sent by my authority to submit a report after witnessing everything.

Q: Did you investigate anyone?  
A: I informed what I witnessed.

Q: While in service, did you apply to the authorities for a trial of the incident?  
A: It was not my responsibility.

Q: You gave a false statement.  
A: This is not true.

Examination by advocate Abdul Razzaq Khan in absence of Haji Nazrul Islam, defence counsel for accused Col (ret'd) Sultan Shahriyar Rashid Khan:

Q: You mentioned to the IO that the time of hue and cry outside your mess on August 15 was about 6:30 am.

Q: Did you tell the IO that you, after going to your unit, saw General Shafiqullah and others gathering there?  
A: I can't recall.

Q: Did you discharge your official duties after August 15 morning?  
A: Yes, I discharged my scheduled duties.

Q: Were you afraid of attack when you along with two other officers were going to Bangabandhu's house from the cantonment?  
A: I went there with necessary preparations.

Q: Were you attacked anywhere on the way?  
A: No.

Q: Was there any necessity to use arms on the way?  
A: No.

Q: When did you start from the cantonment?  
A: Approximately at about 8:45 am.

Q: Till then the chief of army staff could not believe that the President of the country, along with his family members, was killed?  
A: I think he could not believe that the President and his family members were killed.

Q: I think he could not believe that the President and his family members were killed. General Shafiqullah was also accompanied by 46 Brigade Commander Col Shafiq Jamil.  
A: Yes.

Q: You gave an arranged witness.  
A: Your statement is not correct.

Defence counsels of accused Abdul Wahab Joardar and Taheruddin Thakur declined to cross-examine Shahadat as he didn't mention their respective client's name.

**Ninth Prosecution Witness**

Later, the ninth prosecution witness in the case Lt Col (ret'd) MA Hamid made his deposition to the court.

After the launch break, cross-examination of PW-9 Lt Col (ret'd) MA Hamid began.

Following are the excerpts from cross-examination of Hamid by advocate Mahbubur Rahman, state defence counsel for accused Major (ret'd) Bazul Huda:

Q: With whom did you meet after arriving at your office on August 15 morning?  
A: I found my troops outside my office. They told me that they knew nothing. They also said tanks were moved beside the 46 Brigade. But they could not realise that killings would take place.

Q: Can you mention one or two names?  
A: Subedar Kazi Majid and Havildar Siddique.

Q: From whom the permission is to take to move tanks outside the cantonment?  
A: Normally from the Commanding Officer.

Q: You were a Lieutenant Colonel. That means a Major is junior to you and also your subordinate officer.  
A: He is junior to me, but not necessarily that he would be my subordinate officer.

Q: You were not bound to carry out an order of a junior or subordinate officer.  
A: Not, I was not bound. But I had to follow the order if it was with the authority of superior officer.

Q: Did Major Matin mention about any senior officer when he asked you at about 3 am on August 16 for burial of the bodies?  
A: I had asked him with whose order. He replied that with the order of superior authority, I again asked who. He said army chief, naval chief and air chief, and above all the President are here. Matin also said I might go there for confirmation, but it would take time.

Q: You did not go to Bangabandhu's house after August 15.  
A: You are not correct.

Q: Bazul Huda, did not receive you at Bangabandhu's house on August 15.  
A: He received me.

Q: You were not taken by Huda inside Bangabandhu's house or shown anything.  
A: This is not true.

Q: You did not know Huda. You never saw him.  
A: You are not correct.

Q: You have been taught by prosecution and giving false witness.  
A: Not true.

Cross-examination by advocate Jasimuddin, state defence counsel for absconding accused Lt Col (ret'd) Aziz Pasha:

Q: Who was senior between Huda and Pasha?  
A: May be Pasha.

Q: Were you and Pasha at the same unit and time?  
A: No.

Q: You didn't know Aziz Pasha.  
A: I first came across him on August 15. I didn't know him earlier.

Q: Aziz Pasha was not at the place of occurrence. You didn't see him.  
A: He was at the place of occurrence. I saw him.

Q: You had no talks with Aziz Pasha.  
A: I had talks with him on that day.

Q: Aziz Pasha didn't receive you at that day.  
A: Pasha didn't tell Huda to take you inside the house and show the bodies.

Q: He told Huda this.  
A: You have given false statement.

Q: You are not correct.  
A: You are not correct.

Cross-examination by advocate Abdul Wahed, state defence counsel for absconding accused Major (dismissed) Shariful Haq Dalim:

Q: How long you were the Military Secretary?  
A: Approximately till 1974.

Q: Where you and Dalim at the same unit and time?  
A: No.

Q: To which unit Dalim was posted during the incident of August 15, 1975?  
A: He was dismissed from the service before the incident.

Q: Was it not violation of army rule that a dismissed junior officer goes to the place where senior in-service officers play games?  
A: He should not go there.

Q: Did you inform the mili-

tary police or intelligence about Dalim's presence there?  
A: No, I didn't.

Q: Is the security duty in cantonment vested with the units one after another?  
A: There is a security unit. Besides, the respective units are responsible for respective unit areas.

Q: Did you contact other units or regiments in Dhaka cantonment after being informed that the President was killed?  
A: No. It was not my duty.

Q: What was your duty as the Station commander?  
A: Station Commander is an administrative officer of the station.

All administrative works are under his disposal. He is the chairman of cantonment board and cantonment school. He looks after development, construction etc. works.

Q: You went to the Army Headquarters on August 15 morning. How many officers were there?  
A: I was going to the office room of the Chief of Army Staff. I found 20 to 30 officers gathering in front of the office room of Col Nooruddin.

Q: Who were present at the Headquarters among the senior most officers?  
A: Major General Shafiqullah, Major General Ziaur Rahman, Brig Khaled Mosharrafi, Col Nooruddin, Col CR Dutta.

Q: Did you leave the place when, according to you, Dalim at sten gun point asked all to get away?  
A: I left the place later as I was at gun point.

(Court: Whether could you flee or not?)  
A: I could not flee instantly.

Q: Was there any order from the Chief of Army Staff for burial of the bodies?  
A: I mentioned it earlier.

Q: Matin informed me about the matter with the authority of the top most authority.  
A: Major Dalim did not go to the tennis court. You also didn't see him.

Q: You are not correct. He went there and I saw him.  
A: Dalim didn't come to the Army Headquarters on August 15 morning. He also did not threaten you pointing stengun.

Q: You are not correct.  
A: Dalim did not take away General Shafiqullah at gun point.

Q: He took away General Shafiqullah at gun point.  
A: You are not correct.

Q: You have given false statement.  
A: You are not correct.

Cross-examination by advocate Nurul Islam, state defence counsel for absconding accused Major (dismissed) Noor:

Q: Were you and General Zia coursesmates?  
A: Yes.

Q: What sort of officers used to play at the tennis court?  
A: There were three courts. The senior most officers used to play at the central court.

Q: Was there any permission for the junior officer to play?  
A: Not. The retired officers used to play there.

Q: Where the retired officers allowed to play there?  
A: None of the retired officers used to go there.

Q: Was Major Noor in service on August 15?  
A: He was dismissed before.

Q: Did you ask Zia about the permission?  
A: No, I didn't.

Q: Major Noor didn't go to the tennis ground as he was terminated.  
A: He went there.

Q: The story what you told the court about seeing Noor is a false.  
A: Not true.

Q: You are an arranged witness of the state.  
A: This is not true.

The court was adjourned till 10:30 am Wednesday.

Verbatim texts of further cross examinations will be published as and when received.

## Metropolitan



The UAE Red Crescent Society handed over a cheque for US\$ 75,000 (over Tk 32 lakh) to the Bangladesh Hospital Trust from the donations of Sheikh Zayed Humanitarian Foundation and others including Bangladeshi residents in the UAE for construction of a hospital in Dhaka. The cheque was handed over by a director of UAE Red Crescent Tariq Ali Ghalib to Viquar Choudhury of the Trust in Dhaka Tuesday. The Charge d'Affaires of the UAE Embassy in Bangladesh Abdul Razak Mohammad Hadi was also present.

## Weather

### Light rain forecast

Light to moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office says day temperature may remain nearly unchanged throughout the country. In its outlook for subsequent two days weathermen forecast little change. Giving extended outlook for another five days Met Office predicted gradual increase in rainfall activity at end of period.

Country's highest temperature 37.7 degree Celsius was recorded at Bogra and the lowest 24.4 degrees at Kutubdia. Meantime, Cox's Bazar had 21mm rain in the last 12 hours till 6 am yesterday.

The sun sets today at 6:21 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:39 am. Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	37.5	27.7	70	71
Chittagong	35.8	27.2	70	79
Rajshahi	36.5	27.4	73	87
Khulna	35.6	27.6	63	79
Barisal	35.6	27.0	73	87
Sylhet	36.6	26.7	60	67
Cox's Bazar	35.6	26.2	70	89



MA Mannan, chairman and managing director of Butterfly Marketing Ltd inaugurating a showroom at Mohammadpur.

## HERE and THERE

### Mujibnagar Officer Kallyan Samity

Leaders of Mujibnagar and Muktiyoddha Officer-Karmachari Kendriya Kallyan Samity yesterday urged the government to punish the anti-liberation forces who had burnt the portrait of Bangabandhu on Aug 24, reports BSS.

President of the samity Dr S A Samad and general secretary Mohammad Musa in a statement said the nation will not forgive those anti-liberation elements who had burnt the portrait of father of the nation. This shameful act has belittled our image before the global community, they observed.

### Anjuman-e-Headayatul Ummat

Election of a new executive committee of Anjuman-e-Headayatul Ummat, Bangladesh, was held recently, says a press release.

The following members were elected: President — Maj Gen Sardar, Md Ali Hasan (Ret'd), senior vice president — Prof Dr Md Fazel Elahi, vice presidents — Prof A M Mahabubur Rahman, and Principal AKM Idris Hossain, general secretary —

Md Ertaj Alam, joint secretary Hafez Mohammad Zafar, treasurer — A Rouf, members — Obaidul Huq, Brig Dr Md Yunus Dewan, Prof Abdul Bari Sarker.

Prof M A Hai, Md Emdad Hossain, Mohammed Ibrahim, Dr A Q M Shamsur Rahman and Mohammad Shahidullah.

### PhD awarded

Muhammad Maniruzzam An, Associate Professor, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Carmichael College, Rangpur, has been conferred PhD degree from the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University, says a press release.

He completed his thesis entitled "Zaminars of Bengal: Case Study of Selected Rangpur Zaminars 1793-1950."

He started his career as a college teacher in 1968 at Nageswari College (Kurigram) and then served in Lalmonirhat Govt College, Lalmonirhat from 1970-1991. He crossed over to India and joined the Liberation War in 1971.

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