

face to face

Abul Quasem Fazlul Haq: A Seer, a Visionary

ALWAYS forward looking, Abul Quasem Fazlul Haq is that rare sort of intellectual who remains dispassionate in analysing the trends of the society and writes not only to but for a public. His inspiring essays cover a wide range of subjects from history, philosophy, sociology to ethics, psychology and culture which help us to understand who we are and what we must do to build a new society. He has been the editor of the influential literary and cultural journal *Lokayata* for the last fifteen years now. His major publications include *Kaler Ytara Dhani*, *Ekushey February Andolan*, *Muktisangram*, *Sahitya Chinta*. A man of classical mould and temperament, Fazlul Haq has translated widely from Albert Einstein, Mao Ze Dong, Leo Tolstoy to Bertrand Russell.

He has been awarded the prestigious Lekhak Shibir Puraskar (1973), the Bangla Academy Puraskar (1981) and the Alawal Puraskar (1996). Born in 1944 in Kishoreganj, he did his Master's Bangla from Dhaka University in 1966. Currently he teaches Bangla Language and Literature at the University of Dhaka.

Interviewed by Ziaul Karim

The Daily Star (DS): How do you look at the whole concept of globalisation? And what do you think would be the face of national cultures in the 21st century?

Abul Quasem Fazlul Haq (AQFH): I feel this is a question of fundamental importance. The notion of globalisation has been interpreted in many ways and will continue to be interpreted till a new and more pressing concept takes its place. On the face of it, it seems that we have begun our journey to be coalesced into a process of world-state. The revolutionary developments in communication technology, Internet for example, brought people closer to one another and given unprecedented access to information. This has sowed a sense of living in a global community. The impact of this cyber revolution can only be compared with that of industrial revolution of the 17th century when people moved off the feudal social system to the new periphery of nation-state and with this the spirit of nationalism blossomed in human history. Much of the conflicts in the ensuing century erupted from the nationalistic interests. International relations, international law, international organisations - all these

phenomena came into history to negotiate the disputes along with the nation-states. The League of Nations after the First World War and the United Nations Organisation after the Second World War are two specific examples that were created to deal with the conflicts among and between nation-states. But since the '90s things began to change in a jiffy: Cell phones, Internet and cable television presented people with Aladdin's lamp. The nationalist spirit has over the past decade been badly bruised due to the bombardment of information through the new channels of communication. The traditional super-powers are now dictating more effectively and promptly their concepts and ideas through these new channels.

DS: Are you hinting at a new form of imperialism in guise of globalism?

AQFH: Yes indeed. In fact, we have already entered into this new global imperialism. The imperialists forces are now more organised and powerful than they were during the cold war.

DS: Certainly we cannot go back to pre-cyber era and can't stop looking at what is being packaged and circulated through the Internet or cable television. We have to move ahead in tune with the time, but how do we do that? How would the

nation-states reorder their traditional role in this changed scenario?

AQFH: The benefits of technology have not reached all and sundry and the resources and the wealth of the world have not been equally distributed. What we need now is a world government with representations from all the nation-states and we have to work out the modalities on how to make global state functional. The present globalisation is not paving that way forward. It is basically serving the interest of the traditional super-powers and trying to bring everybody into a monolithic cultural umbrella. What is being circulated in the name of globalisation is nothing but a hegemonic culture designed and shaped by the West. Now Washington is the centre of this unipolar world setting the cultural and economic agenda for the world. How can this world be called a global village? The way things are taking shape is not going to bring any good for the poor nations. The dream of economic emancipation for the hapless people of the least developed countries riding on the technological advancement will only remain a dream under the present world order.

DS: How is this so-called globalised environment affecting national cultures?

A: Those who are advo-

cating globalisation are in fact undermining national and regional culture. They are out to globalise cultures even: their aim is to construct a cultural language that replicates the pattern designed at Washington. Culture is not something static, it is always eclectic and like a free flowing river it incorporates and readjusts in its course of movement. Even the most homogeneous cultures will find cultural differences between communities. But then what purpose do the nation cultures serve? A national culture unites a group of people, gives voice to their collective dreams and aspirations. But the process of globalisation that is now taking place under the leadership of the US is aimed at bringing everything to simple and flat interpretations.

This is absolutely unacceptable and undesirable. The difference between cultures will remain. And don't you think it is more exciting to live in a multicultural world rather than slip into a monotonous world culture? Maybe there will be time 200 years from now when the world will be a big community and the cultural differences will merge to give birth of a unified, global culture. But definitely not the way things are progressing now. We should now not only uphold our national culture, we

must defend it if necessary. For the initial growth one needs one's own strong cultural identity. Nationalism and internationalism are basically supplementary to each other. We are still not in an environment where we can push national culture out of our collective psyche. A world-state can only be conceived when the gulf of difference between the developing and the developed world will be overcome. The influx of people from developing countries to the developed countries has never been as greater as it is now. Western cultures also have readjusted their cultural forms and patterns with the influences coming from outside their culture. If we look at the new writings in English we will see that the traditional centre of English literature has welcomed the new writing which has brought fresh taste to the English literature. "English has been overtaken by the non-English speaking people," to quote from Vikram Seth.

In this changed scenario, the UN has to change its role as well. Rather than working as the mouthpiece of the US, it has to speak for a poly-cultural world. Within a decade this present globalisation process is bound to face stiff resistance from different quarters, from progressive circles and eventually has to readjust and harmonise

with the national interests. We are passing through a period of transition and a period of confusion as well. I feel some of the cultural and conceptual confusions are planted by the super-powers. One such planted disturbing phenomenon is 'fundamentalism'. Political and the opinion in the many societies of the developing countries are sharply divided in the question of fundamentalism. I look at it as the modern version of the nineteenth-century divide and rule policy. I urge the intellectuals, politicians and student leaders of the developing countries to come out of this mouse-trap set by the world superpowers.

DS: Who is to blame for this intellectual inertia and the inability to interpret the changing pattern of the

world order? Don't you feel our intellectuals have failed in guiding us to meet the challenges of the 21 century?

AQMH: Looking back in history, one would be convinced of the rich intellectual tradition of the Bangladeshis. The nineteenth century witnessed a vibrant intellectual activities in this part of the world in Rabindranath Tagore, Bankimchandra, Rammohan Roy, Akhaykumar Dutt, Bidyasagar only to name a few. The writings of these great minds can well be compared to those written at that time in the west. Before blaming the intellectuals we must look at the degeneration in our political leadership and criminalisation of politics. When leadership fails eve-

rything else fails too. It's worthwhile to mention that the intellectuals have become corrupted as well, they have lost their integrity to petty interests and gains.

And they have become virtually spokespersons of political parties rather than analysing the situation to steer us through, plus the idealism to change the society for a better world that propelled the intellectuals in the '40s or in the '70s to raise voice for territorial identity has been replaced by cronyism and the plundering of national wealth and advantages. Basically the mindless plundering of national wealth in post-independence era set the precedence of a foul and dishonest culture of deceit and debauchery.



Bangladesh Railway

Engineering Department (East Zone)

Tender Notice

Tender Notice No: CE/E-38/2000/W(II)

Sealed tenders are invited for the following works from the enlisted 'C' Class contractors of Bangladesh Railway East Zone those who successfully completed construction of building costing at least Taka 15 (fifteen) lac in a single contract agreement in Bangladesh Railway East Zone.

Name of work	Approximate cost	Earnest money
At BCI: Construction of two storied GRP and Ansar Barrak and one storied GRP's Thana Building (as per approved plan).	40.00 lsc.	2% of the quoted price.

1. Tender documents will be sold from the Offices of the Chief Engineer/East, Bangladesh Railway, Chittagong, Divisional Engineer/II/Bangladesh Railway/Dhaka, Divisional Commissioner/Dhaka on cash payment of Tk. 750/- (seven hundred fifty) only (non-refundable) during office hours up to 14-11-2000.

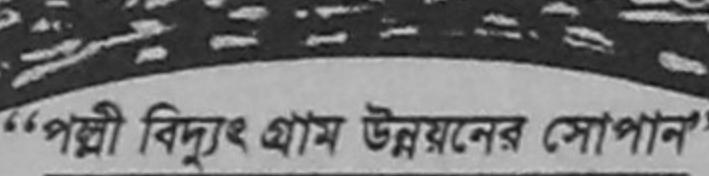
2. Tender documents are to be dropped in the tender box set apart in the aforesaid offices at 12.00 hrs. on 15/11/2000 and the same will be opened publicly at 12.30 hrs. on the same date.

3. Experience certificate should be issued by an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer mentioning his telephone number and full name.

4. All terms and conditions regarding the above tender will be available in the tender documents.

5. Railway Administration reserves the right to accept the tender in whole or in part thereof and to reject the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Md. Nurul Islam Mian
Chief Engineer/East
Bangladesh Railway
Chittagong



RURAL ELECTRIFICATION BOARD INTERNATIONAL TENDER FOR ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION LINE MATERIALS

Project : ACRE-V-A

Fund : SAUDI FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT (SFD) Loan No-11/364.

Sealed tenders are hereby invited by Rural Electrification Board, Bangladesh according to the following descriptions:

Category	Description of Materials	Bid Package No.
1	Wooden /SPC Poles, Cross Arms & Anchor Logs.	SF-01
	Hardware, Distribution Transformer (10, 15, 25, 37.5 & 50 KVA), Conductor, Insulators, Conductor & Guy Accessories, Guy and Grounding Wire, Connectors, Fuse Cut-Out, Surge Arresters, Fuse Links, Meter (3 Phase & 1 Phase) & Accessories, Meter Seal Twist Type.	SF-02
2	Sub-Station Power Transformer and Accessories, Sub-Station Switches, 3 Phase Automatic Circuit Recloser, Sub-Station Automatic Voltage Regulator & Accessories.	SF-03

2. Schedule of selling of bidding documents and receiving /opening of tenders :

Bid Package No.	Bid Document Sale Date		Bid Receiving		Bid Opening	
	From	To	Date	Time	Date	Time
SF-01, 02, 03	02-11-2000	09-01-2001	10-01-2001	Upto 12:00 Noon	10-01-2001	12:15 Hours

(Sale will be on during working days and office hours only; time mentioned will be Bangladesh standard Time indicated by time-signals on Bangladesh Betar).

3. Price of Tender document : Taka : 3000/- (Taka Three Thousand only) for Bid Packages No. SF-01, 02 & for Bid Package No SF-03 Taka 2500.00 (Two Thousand Five Hundred Only) payable in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft in favour of "Rural Electrification Board" for each copy of Bid Package.

4. Bid Bond : At least equal to 3% (Three percent) of the offered value.

5. Tender Document will be available at Directorate of Procurement, Rural Electrification Board, Head office Building (7th floor), Zor Sahara, Khilkhet, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh. (Through an application along with a Pay Order/Bank Draft of price amount).

6. Mode of payment : For Goods Supplied from abroad through letter (s) of Credit and for Domestic Goods Direct Payment will be applicable.

7. Source & Origin of Material/Equipment : All countries except Israel, Serbia & Montenegro (Breaks-away of former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). Bidders/Suppliers who are not subject to the Boycott regulations of the League of Arab states or of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will only be considered.

8. No tender document will be sent by mail/courier service by REB.

9. Any bidder can purchase bidding document himself or through his agent. One Bid Package cannot be used for submission of bid proposal(s) by more than one bidder. One Bidder, however, may submit bids against IFB included in the package by purchasing only one copy of the Bid Package.

10. The offer of material and equipment must be quoted on FOB/EX-factory and CFR basis. Offers must be submitted as per terms and conditions set forth in the bid document. Querries, if any, must reach the undersigned at least 30 (Thirty) day's prior to the date of opening of tender.

11. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents at the office of the undersigned during the sale period of respective Bidding Documents on and during working days and office hours.

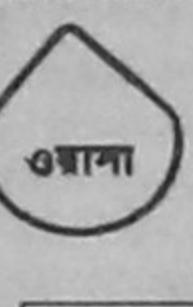
12. Rural Electrification Board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without assigning any reason there to.

13. Place of Tender receiving and opening : Rural Electrification Board Auditorium (Tenders will be opened in presence of the bidder or their representative if any).

WASA Bhaban
Head office Building, Nikunja-2, Khilkhet, Dhaka-1229.
Tel : 8916420, Fax : 8916400.



পরি/জন (১৬)/২০০০-২০০১ DFP-26171-29/10



Dhaka WASA

Tender Notice

পানির অপচয়োধে কাজ শেষে কলের মুখ বন্ধ করন

Tenders are invited from class I, II, and III mechanical and electrical contractors enlisted with Dhaka WASA for the work of producing 25 pieces reducers, 25 pieces 6" dia CI socket, 60 pieces 7" dia CI socket, 70 pieces 8" dia CI socket, 10 pieces of rechets head of 50 and 75 HP Newman motor and 200 pieces of rechets pin for FM Division. The estimated amount of money for the work is 2,46,589/- taka. Tenders will be received on 20/11/2000 till 12:00 Noon and will be opened the same day at 2:00 PM before tenderers or their representatives (if anyone remains present).

Schedule of tender will be available in the office of the Chief Accounts Officer of Dhaka WASA, WASA Bhaban, 98, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka and all MODS Zone offices of Dhaka WASA. Other details will be available in the office of the undersigned.

Address:
Mirpur, Dhaka.
WASA: PI-343/2000
DFP-26187-29/10
G-1933

Dhaka WASA
Tender Notice

(পানির অপচয়োধে কাজ শেষে কলের মুখ বন্ধ করন)

Tenders are invited from class I, II and III civil contractors enlisted with Dhaka WASA for filling up earth at Matuail proposed deep tubewells (2) site. The amount of estimated money for the work is 3,46,275/- taka. Tenders will be received on 20/11/2000 till 12:00 Noon and will be opened the same day at 2:00 pm before tenderers or their representatives (if anyone remains present).

Schedule of tender will be available in the office of the Chief Accounts Officer of Dhaka WASA, WASA Bhaban, 98, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka and all MODS Zone offices of Dhaka WASA. Other details will be available in the office of the undersigned.

Address:
WASA Bhaban
98, Kazi Nazrul Islam
Avenue, Dhaka
WASA-PI-341/2000
DFP-26185-29110
G-1932

Md Ramzan Ali
Executive Engineer
Water (নিঃ ও টেক্স) Division
Dhaka WASA



Bangladesh Power Development Board

দেশপ্রেমে উদ্বৃক্ষ ইউনিট
বিদ্যুতের অবেদ্ধ সংযোগ বন্ধ করন

BPDB's International Tender Notice

International sealed tenders are hereby invited by the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) for repair of spare parts of 20MW Bheramara Gas Turbine Power Station from the renowned manufacturers/reputed repairing agencies/workshop and supply of spare parts for Khulna Barge Mounted Power Plant from renowned manufacturers/suppliers against the following tender enquiries:-

Sl No	Tender enquiry No & date	Name of stores	Value of T docs	Submission of T docs	Opening of T docs
1)	Pur-428/2000 dt. 18.10.2000	Repair of spare parts for Bheramara Power Station, PDB, Bheramara	3000/-	17.01.2001 11:00 AM	17.01.2001 11:30 AM
2.	Pur-430/2000 dt 18.10.2000	Supply of spare parts for Khulna Barge Mounted Power Plant, Khulna	2000/-	05.12.2000 11:00 AM	05.12.2000 11:30 AM

A complete set of tender documents including detailed specifications, terms & conditions may be sold to the interested eligible bidders against a written application to the undersigned on payment of taka (non-refundable) mentioned above against each tender in the shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh favouring Director of Purchase, BPDB, Dhaka. The bidding documents will be available from 31.10.2000. The closing date of selling document against tender enquiry No. Pur-428/2000 will be on 12.01.2001 and against tender enquiry No Pur-430/2000 will be on 30.11.2000.

All bids must be accompanied with a bid bond in the prescribed bid format @ 2% of the total bid price from a scheduled bank of Bangladesh in accordance with instructions to the bidders. Tender will be received up to 11:00 AM & will be opened at 11:30 AM on the same date in presence of the bidder or their representative, if any.

No tender documents shall be sent by post and no Telex/Fax offer will be acceptable.

Biddut/Jana-791 (5)/2000-2001
DFP-26094-29/10
G-1927

Director of Purchase
PDB, Dhaka