

Ensure accountability of donors to make foreign aid effective

Development experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Development experts at a seminar yesterday called for ensuring accountability of the donor agencies and cutting their dominance over the developing nations to enhance effectiveness of foreign aid in promoting development and ensuring human rights.

Experiences suggest that various conditions and dominance of the donors often have adverse effects on the development process in the developing nations, they added.

The observations came at a national seminar on 'Aid effectiveness and role of civil societies (CSOs) organised jointly by Voices for Interactive Choice and Empowerment (Voice) and Reality of Aid Network at the National Press Club in the city.

"The donors must be under political dictate, but they want to dictate. That is the problem... and if the governments allow the donors to dictate, it is the governments' fault," said Reality of Aid Network Chairperson Antonio Tujan Jr.

He said relations between the donors and the recipient countries must be cooperative and not domi-

nating because developments will not occur until the local contexts are considered while designing any development strategies.

Putting emphasis on the CSOs, he said these are the organisations that are not meant to harmonise the policy prescriptions of the donors, but to play a role of watchdog on the accountability of the donors and governments.

He defined CSOs as citizens' organisations that include trade unions, NGOs, community organisations, professional bodies, farmers' organisations and women's forums.

"There might be differences in opinions and activities or fight against each other within the CSOs, because that is the democracy," Antonio Tujan said, suggesting creation of a committee to hold the governments accountable on ODA (official development assistance).

Going even tougher, Prof Anu Muhammad of Jahangirnagar University said the global financing institutions including World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) actually dominate the developing nations like Bangladesh.

One day the civil society will have

by giving aids.

"This is actually not aid, but a form of financing," he said, adding that they do not give the money just as charity, but they have greater interests behind this.

On the other hand, the governments of such developing countries do not truly represent people, rather they represent the corporate bodies, Prof Anu Muhammad said, adding that these financers also push the governments to own their prescribed policies.

He said the institutions like WB and IMF have a strong influence on the financial sector of Bangladesh.

"You will often see the presence of the representatives of IMF or WB in the important meetings of the CSOs, because that is the democracy," Antonio Tujan said, suggesting creation of a committee to hold the governments accountable on ODA (official development assistance).

These global organisations are actually responsible for the gloomy picture of the jute industry and energy sector of the country, the economist observed.

Dr Zafarul Islam Chowdhury of Gonosasthya Kendra said, "Donors do not give money to the developing countries for nothing. They are interested in Bangladesh because it can give service charge."

One day the civil society will have

to face trial if it does not raise its voice for people now, he said, urging all to realise the global economic regime and stand against all sorts of dominance.

Voice Executive Director Ahmed Swapn Mahmud said the donors create pressure on the governments to be accountable and transparent, but there is no mechanism to hold the donors accountable.

He said the donors should act according to the home-grown strategies, but unfortunately, the reality is that they dictate the governments to follow their policies.

"Thus the aid could not be truly effective," he added.

Ahmed Swapn said the bargaining capacity of both the governments and CSOs should be enhanced.

He also stressed that the output of aids should be critically assessed.

Proshika Deputy Director Omar Tareq Chowdhury, Coastal Development Partnership Coordinator Ashraf Alam Tutu, and WAVE Foundation Executive Director Mohsin Ali also spoke at the seminar.



PHOTO: STAR
The road near Jurain rail gate in the city lies in a dilapidated condition causing untold suffering to the commuters, but the authorities have turned a blind eye to the problem. The picture was taken yesterday.

RU Prof Taher murder case resumes Sept 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi district and sessions judge yesterday decided to proceed with the trial of a case filed for killing Rajshahi University (RU) teacher Prof S Taher Ahmed from September 27.

The case was shifted to the district and sessions judge's court from public safety tribunal on August 20 as Jahangir Alam Mollah, judge of the tribunal in Rajshahi, refused to conduct the proceedings due to "unavoidable circumstances".

The court of District and Sessions Judge AR Masud also rejected bail petition of former president of RU unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir Mahbubul Alam Salehi, also a prime accused in the case.

Both prosecution and defence lawyers locked into a heated debate over the public safety tribunal's refusal to move the case.

The prosecution lawyers told the court that the tribunal declined to move the case following threats from a suspected killer, who is currently enjoying bail from the high court.

They also alleged that the same accused hurled abuses to Taher's wife and Sub-Inspector Achanal Kabir, an investigation officer of the case, on the court premises earlier.

The defense lawyers told the court that it was the complainant, who pressurised the tribunal judge to take the decision.

Prof Taher, a teacher of geology and mining department, was killed on February 1, 2006. Police recovered his body from a sewer behind his house on RU campus on February 3.

Police submitted charge sheet accusing six people including two suspected masterminds-- Taher's colleague Prof Mia Muhammad Mohiuddin and Salehi--on March 18.

The other accused are Jahangir, Salam, Nazmul and Azimuddin Munshi. Of them, the first three in their judicial confessional statements said Salehi confirmed Taher's death pressing a pillow on his face. Later, Mohiuddin celebrated the death with Salehi.

GRAFT CASES AGAINST HASINA

HC delists hearing of petitions

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court, apparently out of reluctance, yesterday struck off from its cause list the hearings of long-pending petitions for quashing more graft cases, including one on frigate-purchase scam, against deserted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and co-accused persons.

The court order came following a time petition moved by Barrister Shafique Ahmed, counsel for Hasina.

On Thursday, a division bench comprising Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury and Justice M Ataur Rahman Khan discharged the long-pending petitions for quashing Mig-29 purchase- scam case against Hasina and others and thereby removed impediments to trial proceedings in the case.

Earlier, it was agreed between the court and the counsel for the accused facing the graft cases that all long-pending petitions for quashing the purchase scams of Mig-29, Frigate, appointment of consultant to BEPZA and Meghnaghat power plant site preparation would be resolved one after another.

Later, Barrister Shafique Ahmed put forward the unresolved petitions before another division bench comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Syed Abu Kowsar M Dabirish-shan for fixing the hearings.

The matter will come up on the cause list today for fixing the date of hearings of the petitions, court sources said.

Meanwhile, the counsel for Hasina and other accused yesterday filed with the Supreme Court leave-to-appeal applications to overturn Thursday's High Court judgment that discharged their petitions trying for quashing the Mig-29 case.

"The applications are likely to be heard today (Monday) by the apex chamber judge," said a counsel for Hasina.

Ex-BNP MP Prof Shahidul submits wealth report to ACC

BSS, Dhaka

Former BNP lawmaker Prof Shahidul Islam submitted his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday.

His wife Selina Shahid submitted it to the ACC on behalf of Shahidul who is on the run since the state of emergency was imposed in January.

According to the statement Shahid has 1,087 decimals of land and two 8.25 decimal plots, one at the capital's Uttara and another in Kushtia.

He has two vehicles - one Toyota and one Lexus, Tk 1,15,045 balance in six bank accounts, investment of Tk 2,15,700 in share business, insurance of Tk 9,77,075 and savings certificates of Tk 5,15,000.

Prof Shahid in his statement said he has a pistol and a shot-gun.

His wife Selina has 318 decimals of land and two plots of 1,125 sq ft and 3,000 sq ft in Kushtia and another 10 decimal plot in Mirpur.

She also has a Toyota car (duty free), Tk 27,777 balance in three bank accounts, investment of Tk 4,62,500 in share business, insurance of Tk 1,77,672, savings certificates of Tk 8,70 lakh and 10 tola of gold ornaments.

UN donates \$6m for flood victims

UNB, Dhaka

The UN Central Emergency Response Fund has allocated a sum of \$6 million for the flood affected people of Bangladesh.

Renata Lok-Dessallien, resident representative of UNDP in Bangladesh, said this during a meeting with Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury at his office yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed the current state of UNDP cooperation with the caretaker government.

"She stated that the UN Central Emergency Response Fund has as of now, allocated a sum of \$6 million for flood relief," Chowdhury told the media afterwards, adding, "Much of it is likely to be utilised for food purchase."

Partial eclipse of sun tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

A partial eclipse of the sun will occur tomorrow.

The eclipse will start at 16 hours 25 minutes 42 seconds (BST) and end at 20 hours 36 minutes 30 second (BST), said an ISPR release yesterday.

The greatest eclipse will occur at 18 hours 31 minutes 18 seconds BST. The maximum magnitude of the eclipse will be 0.751.

Meanwhile, the eclipse will start at 06 hour 02 minutes 37 seconds LMT at Bolivian capital La Paz on Tuesday and end at 16 hours 50 minutes 48 seconds LMT at the northern end of central Antarctica.

The greatest eclipse will occur at 06 hours 30 minutes 16 seconds LMT at the west of Shetland Island of Britain in the South Pacific Ocean on Tuesday.

The maximum magnitude of the eclipse will be 0.751 at this place.

This eclipse will not be visible in Bangladesh.

\$150m ADB support sought for good governance

UNB, Dhaka

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought 150 million US dollar in ADB support for good governance in the country, in line with a UN convention.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury made the request during a meeting with Country Director of the Asian Development Bank Hua Du at his office in the city yesterday.

While speaking to journalists after the meeting, he said, "We are looking to a US\$ 150 million ADB support for good governance which includes the implementation of the UN Convention on anti-corruption that we have signed."

The foreign ministry will coordinate an inter-ministerial committee to find out the gaps that need to be addressed in terms of domestic measures so that the government is able to fulfill the conditions of the Convention, he said.

Hua Du said the ADB would continue to "vigorously support" the caretaker government's activities in this respect.

Road accidents kill 6

STAR REPORT

At least six people were killed and 31 others injured in separate road accidents in Mymensingh, Chittagong and Rajshahi yesterday.

Our Correspondent in Mymensingh adds: Four people, including a bus driver and a minor girl, were killed and 20 others injured in a road accident at Sailor on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Trishal yesterday.

The victims were identified as bus driver Lui Jacob, 45, Rana, 35, Marzia, 7, and Abu Sayeed, 40.

Police and local sources said the accident took place when a Sherpa-bound passenger bus from Dhaka skidded off the road and hit a roadside tree as the driver was trying to avoid Marzia, a pedestrian.

Marzia along with the injured were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) where the on-duty doctors declared one of the unidentified persons dead.

The two injured, including a woman, were undergoing treatment there, hospital sources said.

Police detained the bus and truck while the drivers managed to flee, they said.

DHAKA TODAY

Workshop

The Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance and The World Food Programme (WFP) will jointly organise a workshop on 'Dynamics of food and cash transfers: Policy discussion on the results of the food and cash efficacy study'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 9:30am.

Discussion

Voice for Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICE) will hold a discussion titled 'Civil society and the effect of foreign aid'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 9:00am.

Roundtable

Save the Environment Movement organises a roundtable titled 'Artifact preservation policy'. Venue: Liberation War Museum. Time: 3:00pm.

Prize giving ceremony

The prize giving ceremony of Palli Ananda Bhaban Eid Fashion Contest 2007 will be held. Venue: Hotel Abakash. Time: 6:00pm.

Rotary Dhaka North

The regular weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka North will be held. Venue: Radisson Water Garden Hotel. Time: 6:00pm.

SPARRSO programme

The inaugural ceremony of the new satellite ground station of SPARRSO will be held. Venue: SPARRSO auditorium. Time: 3:30pm.

Consultation meeting

Formulation of Outline Participatory Perspective Plan (OPPP) - Project organises a consultation meeting on Bangladesh Vision paper (2030) and Participatory Perspective Plan (2007-2021).

Inaugural ceremony

The inaugural ceremony of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) Training Academy will be held. Venue: DSE premises. Time: 10:45am.

View exchange meeting

Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra organises a view exchange meeting on 'Violence against women and children'. Venue: UNICEF office. Time: 10:00am.

Orientation programme

The orientation programme of the first year students of Dhaka Imperial College will be held and the students who achieved GPA 5 in this year's HSC exams from this college will be accorded a reception. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.

Award giving ceremony

The award giving ceremony of Kabitangan Award 2007 will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

ACC yet to file case against Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

Despite receiving the inquiry report on his wealth statement about 45 days back, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is yet to file any case against detained BNP senior joint secretary general Tarique Rahman as it is conducting further inquiry into his wealth details.

Tarique, the eldest son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, submitted his wealth statement to the Commission on June 10.

ACC Deputy Director Jahirul Huda submitted the inquiry report to the Commission on July 25 recommending filing of a first information report against Tarique.

"The Commission is conducting further inquiry into Tarique's wealth," ACC Secretary Mokhles ur Rahman told reporters yesterday afternoon replying to a query about the detained young BNP leader, who used to be accused by many for