

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

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 financiers 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 Bangladesh Bank," he added.

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

Dr Zafarullah 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 Swapan 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 Swapan 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.

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.

Bea Ten Tusscher new Dutch envoy to Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bea Ten Tusscher has been appointed as the new ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Dhaka.

She replaced Ambassador Kees Beemsterboer, who has completed his tenure in Bangladesh.

According to the Netherlands embassy, Ten Tusscher will arrive in Dhaka on September 13 to take up her new assignment.

Prior to this assignment, she served as ambassador in Guatemala. Ten Tusscher was the head of the women and development division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Earlier she served in Zimbabwe and Czech Republic.

Ambassador Ten Tusscher will concurrently hold the local EU presidency on behalf of Portugal.

In her EU capacity, she hopes to focus on the development programmes of the EU member states present in Bangladesh and on the promotion of human rights and democracy.

Besides intensive political and trade relations, the Netherlands maintains an active development cooperation programme with Bangladesh.

Through this programme it contributes towards improving access to health, basic education, drinking water and sanitation, management of water resources as well as to private sector development, good governance and gender equality.

For this programme, total expenditure is expected to reach more than 64 million Euro (Tk 547 crore) this year.

Ambassador Ten Tusscher looks forward to taking up her position in Bangladesh and hopes that the friendly relations built up over 35 years of intensive cooperation will be strengthened even further during her tenure.

\$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 Bailor 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 Sherpur-bound passenger bus from Dhaka skidded off the road and hit a road-side 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 all the four victims succumbed to their injuries at night.

Following the accident, people put a barricade on the highway that disrupted vehicular movement for over an hour.

On information, Trishal police rushed to the spot and took the

situation under control.

CU Correspondent reports: Two people were killed and five others injured in a road accident on Dhaka - Chittagong highway under Sitakunda upazila in the district early yesterday.

One of the dead was identified as Mohammad Jasim Uddin, 38, son of late Haru Mian of Daudkandi under Comilla district while identity of the other and injured could not be known.

Sources said the accident occurred when a Chittagong-bound passenger bus of Saudia Paribahan collided head-on with a truck at around 6.30am at Abul Mansur Sarak near Sitakunda Eco Park, leaving Jasim dead on the spot and six others injured.

Three of the injured were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) 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.

Indo-Bangla Dialogue begins in New Delhi today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 12-member Bangladesh delegation, led by Chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Prof Rahman Sobhan will leave for New Delhi today to attend a five-day Indo-Bangladesh Dialogue.

The dialogue, being organised by India International Centre (IIC), will focus on politics and security.

Beginning today in the Indian capital, the dialogue, a track two initiative of the civil society of the two countries, will address relevant issues related to politics and security of the two neighbouring countries.

According to a CPD press release, the dialogue is part of a series of Indo-Bangladesh dialogue being jointly organised by the CPD in Dhaka and IIC in New Delhi since 2005.

The first two rounds of Indo-Bangladesh dialogue held earlier in Dhaka and New Delhi focused respectively on trade, investment, transport, media and culture.

The Bangladesh delegation includes former adviser to caretaker government and editor of The Independent Mahbubul Alam, former foreign minister Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud, former foreign secretary Faruq Ahmed Chowdhury, former high commissioner Mostafa Faruque Mohammed, former ambassador Nazrul Islam Khan, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and Managing Director of Transcom Group Latifur Rahman, former army chief Lt Gen (Retd) Harunur Rashid, Maj General (Retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, Prof Rounaq Jahan, Prof Amena Mohsin and Anisatul Fatema Yousof of CPD.

Indian Vice-president Hamid Ansari is expected to inaugurate the dialogue and Minister of State for the Ministry of External Affairs Anand Sharma will be present as chief guest at the concluding session.

Apart from discussion, the delegates will call on the Speaker of the Indian Parliament Somnath Chatterjee.

DU medical science exams as per schedule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The viva voce, practical and clinical examinations of different postgraduate courses under the faculty of Postgraduate Medical Science and Research of Dhaka University (DU) will be held as per schedule from September 15, says a press release.

New dates for the examinations postponed between August 25 and September 13 will be announced later, the press release added.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Aminul Haider Chowdhury Malu, senior sports reporter of The Daily Sangram, will be held at his Fakirpulp residence in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Aminul passed away on Friday at his residence due to cardiac arrest at the age of 68.

Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) President Alamgir Hossain and General Secretary Shahed Chowdhury expressed deep shock at his death and conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

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 Achanul Kabir, an investigation officer of the case, on the court premises earlier.

The defence 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.

At least 26 witnesses have given their accounts since the beginning of the trial in the public safety tribunal on July 3.

According to the prosecution, Mohiuddin and Salehi masterminded the killing by professional killers. They promised the killers jobs in the university.

Investigation officials also told the court that Mohiuddin plotted the murder apprehending a possible dent to his career by Prof Taher, who detected plagiarism and piracy in Mohiuddin's 10 out of 11 research papers submitted to the authorities with a prayer for promotion.

Govt to purchase 1 lakh tonnes of wheat locally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The adviser committee on purchase yesterday approved buying 1 lakh metric tons of wheat from local importers at a cost of Tk 260.53 crore.

The government will sell the wheat at a lower price to mitigate the sufferings of the poor people, Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam, who chaired the meeting, said.

After the meeting, the finance adviser told the journalists that the government has sufficient food stock at present comparing to the corresponding period last year. However, the food price is slightly high in the local market due to the high price in the international market, he added.

Earlier, the government invited tenders from the local importers and following that procedure the government will buy the targeted amount of wheat at between Tk 25.78 and Tk 26.83 per kg.

The committee also approved purchasing machinery for establishing the proposed Tk 296 crore Central Effluent Treatment Plant at Savar. The government has aimed to construct the plant, following its earlier decision to shift tannery industry from Hazaribagh to Savar.

The earth filling work of Uttara residential project (third phase) was also approved by the committee.

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 detained 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 Kowser M Dabirush-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 lakh.

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 sft and 3,000 sft 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.

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 Jahiur 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 Mokhes ur Rahman told reporters yesterday afternoon replying to a query about the detained young BNP leader, who used to be accused by many for rampant corruption during the last BNP government's rule.

Asked if there is any specific timeframe for filing FIR against an individual after receiving inquiry report, he said he would make it clear after having a clear idea about it.

Replying to a question about detained former rime ministers Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, Mokhes said investigations are going on against them.

He said the draft recruitment and service rules of the Commission were sent to the Cabinet Division yesterday for its approval.

Sylhet city BNP president Ariful, his wife sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against Sylhet city BNP President Ariful Haque Chowdhury and his wife Shama Haque Chowdhury for concealing wealth worth over Tk 1.58 crore in the statement they submitted earlier.

ACC Deputy Director, Sylhet Md Nasir Uddin filed the case with Kotwali PS yesterday night.

Arif is one of the 50 corruption suspects of ACC's first list.

However, Chowdhury, a close aide of former finance minister Saifur Rahman, had been in jail hajat and facing trial in an extortion case.

Int'l workshop on dynamics of food, cash transfers today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An international workshop will be held today to debate on the relative merits of food and cash transfers in alleviating extreme poverty in Bangladesh.

The daylong workshop titled 'Dynamics of food and cash transfers: Policy discussion on the results of the food and cash efficacy Study' will be held at Hotel Sheraton in the city.

World Food Programme (WFP) in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh and DFID is organising the workshop, said a press release.

In an effort to examine the efficacy of food and cash transfers in enhancing food security and livelihoods of the ultra-poor in rural Bangladesh, WFP commissioned IFPRI (The International Food Policy Research Institute), Washington DC, USA, to conduct the study. The workshop will disseminate major findings of the study.

High-level representatives from headquarters of WFP and IFPRI, development partners, donor agencies, Bangladesh government and NGO officials, including eminent and foreign researchers will take part in the workshop. ERD Secretary Aminul Islam Bhuiyan will inaugurate the workshop.

The workshop also include a deliberation from the Secretary, Planning Division, Planning Commission Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury on the 'Study Findings and the PERSP Perspective'.

In responses to food security, the study investigates the benefits of providing food aid and cash transfers to the hungry poor. A number of special papers will be presented in the workshop, including gender-related impacts of food and cash transfer.

WFP Bangladesh Representative Douglas Broderick said, "I believe the study findings and the vibrant discussions in the workshop would enable us to strengthen our safety net programmes in Bangladesh." He added "We are proud to have the opportunity to host the workshop jointly with the Government of Bangladesh."

Being the world's largest humanitarian organisation, WFP welcomes all efforts and creative initiatives to help better understand the circumstances in which cash, food or a combination of both can be the most appropriate solution to help those in need.