



Fazle Hasan Abed receives Rockefeller award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brac founder and Chairperson Fazle Hasan Abed received this year's David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award in New York on Tuesday in recognition of his contribution to eradicating poverty and fighting social injustice.

He was honoured at an annual event titled 'University for a Night' at Lincoln Centre, attended by distinguished faculty and experts with diverse backgrounds and interests from around the world, reports News World.

Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan also received the award for her contribution to social service.

Wangari Maathai, a Nobel peace laureate and founder of the Green Belt Movement, Jeff Skoll, founding president of eBay and chairman of the Skoll Foundation and Participant Media, Peggy Dulany, Synergos founder and chair, Robert H Dunn, Synergos president, and David Rockefeller addressed the award giving ceremony.

The speakers said Fazle Hasan Abed has instilled a new hope in the poor people of the world who had been suffering from frustration. Bangladesh is a good example of it where thousands of people have become self-reliant by breaking out of the web of poverty.

Wangari Maathai called for worldwide concerted efforts to fight poverty and social injustice.

Receiving the award, Abed said Bangladesh once used to depend on others. "We've now become self-reliant. It's a great success," he said, referring to the success of Brac's microcredit programme.

Synergos confers the award each year on persons and organisations who work for the 'common good' by showing vision and courage in bringing people together to address global poverty and equity.

Last year, the award went to former South African president Nelson Mandela and Bill Gates, Melinda French Gates and William H Gates Sr, co-chairs of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Powder milk of Yashili, Sweet Baby brands seized in Rajshahi

RU CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court seized powder milk of Yashili and Sweet Baby brands from two shops in Rajshahi city yesterday.

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) launched the drive in the city to find powered milk manufactured in China.

During the drive, the mobile court seized three tins of Yashili from Bishal First Food and one Sweet Baby container from New market First Food.

BSTI Inspector Khademul Islam in association with the Rajshahi unit of Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) carried out the drive.

Earlier, the mobile court had seized seven tins of Sweet Baby and Yashili powered milk from different first food shops in the city.

No concession to loan, bill defaulters

Says election commissioner

UNB, Dhaka

Loan and bill defaulters won't be given concession allowing them to contest the upcoming elections, the Election Commission made it clear following allegations that such persons are again in the queue.

"It's not the right information that the loan and bill defaulters are being given concession during the elections," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (Retd) M Sakawat Hossain told journalists at his office yesterday afternoon, referring to some newspaper reports.

Replying to a question, Sakawat said the political parties should apply to the government for

permission to arrange their party councils, meant for updating their manifestoes to adapt to the changed political milieu.

He said the ballot papers for the general and upazila elections will be printed after completing the scrutiny of the candidatures.

"Some 10 to 15 symbols will remain on the ballots for upazila chairman elections," he said.

In reply, he said the nomination submission for both the parliamentary and upazila elections might be completed in a single day, but the scrutiny could be completed within a day or two thereafter.

Sakawat said the first consignment of the transparent ballot

boxes arrived from Canada and a Canadian trainer would conduct one-hour-long training with some 30 people to introduce them to the use of the new type of voting boxes.

Replying to another question, he said the Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADCs) will act as returning officers during the upazila elections.

Asked whether one candidate could contest upazila and parliamentary polls both at a time, he said one candidate could apply for nomination in two places but he/she could not contest in two places.

"The candidature will be dropped at one place during the scrutiny," he said.



Police intercept a procession of Bangladesh Awami Swachhchasebak League at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday. The procession was brought out demanding release of all detainees, including Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

DU FEMALE DORMITORY

Uncertainty again looms over its construction

DU CORRESPONDENT

Uncertainty again looms over the construction work of the proposed residential hall for female students of Dhaka University (DU) as the constructor concerned has refused to start the work with the existing fund.

Though the government had allotted 2.5 acres of land for the proposed 10-storey building in 2003 and funded Tk 6.50 crore in 2006, construction work could not start in last two years due to illegal occupation of the land and complicity over the naming of the hall.

On August 13, DU authorities with the help of the police evicted the illegal occupants, mainly slum dwellers from the land, situated at the opposite side of Fazlul Haque Muslim Hall.

After the eviction, the authorities asked the construction firm to begin the work, but the contractor refused to do so saying that the fund is not enough now to finish the work as the price of construction materials has increased manifold.

DU authorities issued a tender for the building on May 2007 mentioning that the selected construction firm will have to start the work

in February 2008.

However, at a meeting on Tuesday the DU syndicate decided to inform the ministry concerned of the situation, and accordingly the DU authorities yesterday sent a letter to the ministry.

DU Pro-Vice-Chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider told The Daily Star that the university authorities

would take a decision about the starting of the construction work after getting a response from the government.

DU Treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad said they will issue a re-tender to begin the construction soon if the present contractor refused to do the work with the existing fund.

Call to distribute 5,000 autorickshaws to drivers

UNB, Dhaka

Auto-rickshaw labour union leaders yesterday demanded that the government's promised 5,000 CNG-run auto-rickshaws be distributed among the genuine drivers.

They made the demand at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU).

Dhaka District Auto-rickshaw, Auto-tempo, Mishuk Motor Vehicle Labour Union Secretary Md Golam Faruque said the distribution process of 5,000 CNG-run auto-rickshaws was halted following a "false" case filed by the CNG-run

Association. He said the auto-rickshaw owners in a letter to the communication ministry had informed earlier that they do not need any auto-rickshaw. "But now they are opposing the government move without any valid reason," Faruque said.

He said the government has already signed an agreement with their union to distribute the auto-rickshaws among the genuine drivers. Accordingly, about 3,500 drivers have submitted required papers along with their applications to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

Extortionists clash with truck drivers, 3 injured in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three people were injured and four cars badly damaged in a clash between extortionists and truck drivers at Sonadanga Truck Terminal in Khulna on Tuesday night.

Witnesses said the clash erupted over collection of toll from goods laden trucks.

Locals and truck drivers alleged that a gang of extortionists blessed with a section of policemen of Sonadanga Police Station is involved in collecting toll from trucks after entering into the terminal.

Critically injured Bazlur Rahman and Hanif Sheikh were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) while truck driver Zahid to a local clinic.

The injured truck drivers alleged that the extortionists belong to Monir Bahini had attacked them in presence patrol police.

Transport owners said they would go for a movement shortly if extortion is not stopped immediately.

When contacted, Md Anisur Rahman, assistant commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, said necessary steps were taken to stop toll collection.

DCC project workers continue sit-in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three hundred employees of Slum Development Project of Dhaka City Corporation continued their indefinite sit-in programme along with their children for the second day yesterday on Nagar Bhaban premises demanding their arrear salaries of 15 months.

"We will continue our sit-in programme until our demand is realised," said Md Abu Yousuf, a senior caretaker of the project.

"Although we had decided to stage the sit-in programme during the office-hour only, but we are now continuing the programme without any break," he added.



Prof Nizam made Scouts National Commissioner

METRO DESK

Prof Nizamuddin Ahmed, a Scouts Woodbadge, was appointed a National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts.

President and Chief Scout Iajuddin Ahmed has given consent to the appointment of Prof Nizam, says a press release.

Chief National Commissioner Md Abul Kalam Azad has entrusted Prof Nizam with the charge of Extension Scouting and of the Scouts Foundation.

A Paul Harris Fellow, Prof Nizam is presently serving as deputy district governor of Rotary International Bangladesh.

A teacher and architect by profession, he has also been contributing to The Daily Star as a columnist since 1995.



National Girl Child Advocacy Forum organises a painting competition with the support of Plan Bangladesh at the Shishu Academy in the city yesterday, marking the National Girl Child Day.

MEENA DAY CELEBRATED

'Promote inclusive education to end exclusion'

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday celebrated 'Meena Day' under the theme of 'Inclusive education -- Quality education to end exclusion'.

The celebration of Meena Day was marked by the launch of four new Meena TV spots and episodes by M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education at Bham auditorium.

These new Meena cartoons, produced with UNICEF support, promote equal participation in education, teacher's positive role, love of books and child-friendly school environment. The episodes are: 'Let's go to school together', 'Teacher helps to learn', 'We love books' and 'My school is fun'.

As part of Meena Day programme, children disguised as Meena, Razu and Mithu participated in a parade on the streets of Dhaka. Bangladesh Shishu Academy also organised cultural programmes to observe the day. Children's groups performed drama on different parts of the city to increase awareness on the importance of quality education to end exclusion.

Bangladesh has recorded remarkable successes in increasing national rates of school enrollment over the past decade. However, some groups of children remain out of school or drop out before reaching grade 5.

These include children with special needs, children living in urban slums or in remote rural areas, working children, children from very poor families and from ethnic minorities. Only a small fraction of disabled children enroll in school.

Of all the surveyed population groups, children living in the urban

slums have the lowest rates of net school attendance far below national averages.

"Without access to quality education, these children are denied the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, capacities, skills and self-confidence required to break the inter-generational poverty cycle and therefore move out of exclusion," said UNICEF representative Carel de Rooy.

"This is why it is important to have a special attention for these groups of vulnerable children. We need to ensure that they are offered the same quality education than the majority of children in Bangladesh," Rooy added.

Factors such as poor quality of teaching, weak school management, curriculum irrelevance and language also lead to marginalisation and exclusion of children, even for those who are attending schools.

Children may sit in the classroom,

but feel excluded from learning in the classroom because of the teachers' and peers' attitudes.

To address this situation, inclusive education is incorporated into all components of the second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP II) and at all levels of the education sector from the ministry to the classroom.

This approach aims at removing all barriers to learning and acknowledging individual children's needs and potential. Such barriers include culture, gender, work, negative attitudes, illness, school facilities, location, language, disability, lack of awareness about the importance of education, race, malnutrition and poverty.

Many children could attend school if families, communities, schools and the education system at large were more responsive to their requirements.



Children touch two animated characters Meena and Mithu, who stand for child rights and gender equality, at a programme on Bangladesh Shishu Academy premises in the city yesterday to mark Meena Day.

Saga of Anjuman's public-spirited services

RAKIB AHAMMED

With a view to alleviating poverty in the society and developing the living standards, Anjuman Mohidul Islam (AMI), a voluntary organisation providing humanitarian services to the poor, has been furnishing its services diligently for over five decades.

Veteran Indian Muslim icon Ibrahim Mohammad Duplay launched its journey in 1905 in Kolkata with the primary objectives to bury the unidentified and unclaimed dead bodies of Muslim believers maintaining the duetuals.

In course of time, the organisation has become one of the pioneering charities in India. AMI started its journey in Bangladesh chapter in 1947.

While talking to The Daily Star recently, AMI Vice President Azim Box said the century-old organisation is now conducting its service activities in 43 districts, including all divisional cities, in the country. It has a plan to extend its function to

every nook and cranny across the country by next two years.

Anjuman Mohidul Islam is involved in a number of humanitarian and social development activities mainly serving the poorer section of the community.

Over time, AMI has continuously improved and expanded its activities which include collection and burial of unclaimed dead bodies, free ambulance service, running homes of orphans, non-formal education centre, a junior girls high school and a technical training institution.

It is also running a poverty alleviation project which aims at rehabilitating the people who are living below the poverty line.

From 2005 to '08, AMI buried a total of 6,371 unidentified and unclaimed dead bodies, according to the annual administrative and organisational and financial report (2007-08) of the organisation.

A total of 18,959 patients received ambulance facilities free of cost and 1344 patients with dona-

tion while the total number of dead bodies carried out across the country free of cost was 2,215 and 2092 with donation during the period, the report added.

Two orphanages, one for girls and another for boys, are being run by the institution in Dhaka city where about 150 orphans receive food, shelter, education, clothing and medicare facilities.

It further said the organisation is going to start three more orphanages at Narayanganj, Narsingdi and Netrokona by January next.

Azim further said AMI has a plan to build up a 25-story commercial complex on the land of 0.50 acre of its service centre in the city. A modern medical service centre would be built up in the building.

The main source of income of this charity organisation is individual donation and rents of the houses and shops. It also gets an annual grant from the government.

The organisation receives around Tk 20 to 25 lakh from selling donated lather of animal in Eid-ul-

Adha every year. It also finds Tk 58 lakh as government allowance and receives Tk 90 to 95 every year as Zakat (religious donation), informed Azim.

The organisation celebrated its centenary amid two-day gala programmes in the capital in 2005.

For its outstanding contribution in humanitarian service, AMI received the country's highest award 'Independence Award' in 1996. In 2004, it received 'Rafiqul Islam Banking Award' as the best social welfare institution, Islamic Foundation Award in 1994, Dr Ibrahim Memorial Award in 2004 and Nagar Padak in 2005.

Besides, Conrad Hilton Foundation of Los Angeles of the United States nominated AMI for 'Hilton Foundation Award' in 1999 for its humanitarian services.

The report mentioned that AMI is totally a non-political Islamic welfare organisation. People from all political ideologies are associated with the charity with the principle of 'Good to the Humanity'.



Hundreds of vehicles get stuck in a gridlock in front of Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR