

# Make human development an enterprise of all humanity

Fazle Hasan Abed says at memorial lecture

DU CORRESPONDENT

Make human development an enterprise of all humanity, said Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairperson of Brac, at a lecture in the city yesterday.

"We must take up every acceptable implement—whether social, legal, scientific, economic or political—to make human development the enterprise of all humanity," he added.

Abed was delivering the Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Memorial Lecture 2008 on the 'Development as a Right: The Role of Legal Empowerment in the Making of a Just Society' at the National Museum auditorium. It was organised by Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Memorial Foundation at the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

"When a single member of our neighbourhood lives in poverty and squalor, we are all impoverished," he said.

It is for the governments, organisations and individuals who should practise as a daily act of social justice to make the society a just one, he observed.

The Brac founder said in an unequal society where the poor are already disadvantaged, it is important to provide legal safety nets before allowing market forces to operate freely.

The present global financial crisis is an example of the unfair economic and social policies at work, he added.

Abed said issues like sustainable development, responsible energy, carbon trading or water foot-printing, in the case of Bangladesh, have direct bearing on imminent challenges on several fronts, particularly in food security and climate changes.

"It is a sad reality that globally as well as nationally, we have had to wait for such grim realities to shake us out of our self-absorbed comfort zones

and make us connect the crucial dots between our rights, needs and responsibilities to our respective societies," he added.

The Brac chairman also mentioned the challenges that lie ahead for Bangladesh.

These include continued political instability and shrinking of secular, democratic spaces, constant upward struggle to ensure gender justice at home and in the workplace and coping with recurring natural disasters, he added.

Quoting an extensive study by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) in late 2007, Abed said it is predicted that the population of Bangladesh would be nearly 200 million with 40 percent under the age of 15 by 2030.

An additional six to eight percent land of Bangladesh would be permanently under water, and flood-prone areas

would increase from 25 to 40 percent by 2050, he added.

The Brac chairman further mentioned that environmental refugees from rural areas would be concentrated and over 80 million people would live in urban slums and Dhaka would be one of the world's largest cities with 30 million people.

He concluded the lecture quoting Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, as saying, "The right to development is the measure of the respect of all other human rights. That should be our aim: a situation in which all individuals are enabled to maximise their potential and to contribute to the evolution of society as a whole."

Prof AH Ahmed Kamal, chairman of the history department at Dhaka University, delivered a speech on the lecture.

The programme was also addressed by noted academics and journalists.



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina speaks at a meeting of AL-led alliance at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

## Biman cancels a direct Hajj flight from Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has cancelled one of the two direct flights for non-balottee Hajj pilgrims from Sylhet Osmani International Airport, said an official yesterday.

The national carrier fixed the flights on November 25 and November 27 to carry 628 pilgrims.

However, the first one (BG 311) is to take off at 9:15am on November 25, while the rest one scheduled on November 27 has been cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

The return flight has been scheduled on December 30.

## Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

MA Rashid, a social worker and former director of First Security Bank, passed away at a city hospital on Thursday at the age of 58, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, a son, a daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

His kulkhwani will be held at Sikdar Women's Medical College and Hospital at Dhanmondi today.

## Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the 13th death anniversary of Masudur Rahman, former headmaster of Ghorasal Pilot High School, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil, Qurankhwani and discussion will be held at his village in Ghorasal.

## Qulkhawani

BSS, Chittagong

Qulkhawani of Shahnaz Malik Halen, former ward commissioner of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) and organising secretary of Chittagong district Mahila Awami League, will be held at Sarder Bahadur Nagar Eidgah in the city after Asr prayers today.

Halen, who died at Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital in Dhaka on November 19, was laid to rest at Garibullah Shah Mazar graveyard yesterday afternoon after a namaz-e-janaza at the Eidgah.

CCC Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, city Awami League leaders Dr Afsarul Amin and Badiul Alam and acting CCC Mayor Alhaj Manjurul Alam Manju attended the janaza.

Halen was the wife of businessman Khizir Malik, sister of Prof Khaleida Khanam, a former Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad, and Rasheda Amin, a news editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).

## EC forms body to finalise media code of conduct

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission will finalise a code of conduct for the mass media with suggestions from media personalities for the objective coverage of news during the upcoming elections.

The EC yesterday formed a committee comprising senior journalists both from the print and electronic media to make suggestions for finalising the guidelines for the media.

Unesco has provided a draft copy of the media code of conduct to the Commission recently.

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda constituted the four-member committee headed by ATN Bangla Chief Adviser Saiful Bari in a view exchange meeting with representatives from both the print and electronic media at NEC auditorium yesterday.

The other members of the committee are senior journalists Shykh Siraj, Amir Khasru, JI Mamun and EC Public

Relations Officer SM Asaduzzaman.

The CEC asked the committee to submit their suggestions within seven days to the Election Commission to finalise the code of conduct for the media.

He also sought cooperation from newsmen as some senior journalists termed the EC's efforts of formulating such a code of conduct a ploy to control the press.

The CEC said the political parties placed a proposal before the EC during their talks to formulate a code of conduct to ensure neutrality and transparency in election news coverage. "The EC wants to finalise the code of conduct after discussion with senior journalists," he said, affirming that the EC has been conducting its activities as per the constitution.

Election Commissioners M Sohel Hussain and Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawath Hossain and EC secretary M Humayun Kabir were present at the meeting.

## TEJGAON LINK ROAD Secy directs to complete work before Dec 16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Housing and Public Works Secretary ASM Rashidul Hai yesterday visited the site of Bijoy Sarani-Tejgaon link road and asked the officials concerned to complete necessary work for its inauguration on December 16.

"The road will be inaugurated by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed on December 16, but it will not be open to public on that day as the construction work of an overpass will not be completed by the time ensuring save movement of passersby," said the secretary.

"We will open the road for public two months later when the construction work of the overpass will be completed," he added.

The 60-foot wide and 2400-foot long road will link Bijoy Sarani with Tejgaon near Nabisco.

Joint Secretary to the ministry Akhter Ahmed, Rajuk Chairman Md Shafiqul Islam and Chief Engineer Shah Alam accompanied the secretary.

## Legally Tac can act

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anti-graft campaign. President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) Barrister Shafique Ahmed said, "There should not be two laws governing the same field of activities or offences. And that was the rationale of the High Court."

"The Truth Commission law should not have been formulated," Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury added.

People involved in anti-graft campaigns and judicial system also observe the commission not only failed in achieving its objective but also affected the judicial system, society and anti-graft campaigns severely.

"People normally have lack of faith in our judicial system and function of the Truth Commission would deteriorate if further," said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director Dr Iftekhar Zaman.

"If it was necessary to form a body like Truth Commission, why it was not formed earlier?

Why it was formed when many have already been convicted for the same offence from which people are getting released through the commission now?" he asked.

"The Truth Commission is antithetical to the anti-corruption movement. Normally it must have negative effects on society and people when the same offence is treated with different laws," Iftekhar Zaman explained.

He added, "And the process has also made anti-graft drives controversial."

The idea of Tac came to the fore last year as a means to allow offenders an opportunity to admit culpability and deposit their ill-gotten wealth to the state exchequer to be exempted from prosecution.

The idea emerged mainly to prevent without trial high-profile corrupt persons from contesting elections and holding public offices and posts in financial organisations.

"The Truth Commission has deviated from its objective

and there is not even any logic for it to function," said Iftekhar Zaman explaining that high-profile corrupt people did not go to Tac except some mid-level and low-tier government officials.

As many as 497 people have so far applied for making voluntary disclosures as of November 19. The list includes 364 government officials, 49 of their wives and 29 low-profile businessmen.

Of them, Tac completed hearing of 291, who admitted to having ill-gotten wealth worth only about Tk 29.87 crore since September 1.

"Formation of the Truth Commission is again an indication of the judicial process being intervened by the government and to undermine the due judicial process," Zaman added.

Noted jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik said, "If the same type of offence is treated differently under two different laws then the whole legal system suffers from double standard which is never helpful for the system."

## CG to consider its last power bid

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new project -- Bibiyana -- to be floated first.

Bibiyana project was based on gas supplies from the Bibiyana gas field developed by the US company Chevron.

Earlier this year, the Power Cell awarded four rental power projects totalling 170mw to inexperienced Energy Prima, which is owned by the Hosaf Group.

These plants were supposed to come into operation within 120 days of agreement or in mid-May. But none of these projects could go online as per schedule.

Of these four, Energy Prima launched a 50mw plant in Kumargaon from July and another 50mw Shajibazar plant from early November. But it could neither launch its 20mw Bogra plant nor the 50mw Fenchuganj power plant. Energy Prima is now fighting a legal battle to avoid payment of liquidated damage to the government for its failure.

A British company Aggreko installed a 40mw power plant in Khulna 15 days behind schedule in June, while another company Kaltimax that was supposed to launch a 34.5mw plant in Bhola in May made almost no progress till date.

Local Precision Energy was given the contract to install a

60mw plant on rental by September but made almost no headway.

Meanwhile, local company GBB after a lot of delay implemented a 20mw plant in Bogra on a 15-year rental term.

Another company Doreen Power is making surprising progress in launching a 22mw power plant in Tangail (15 years contract) this month -- two months ahead of schedule.

This company is also making fast progress with 22mw Feni and 22mw Narsingdi 15-year rental power projects.

In October, the Power Cell sought proposal for the 50mw Sikaibaha plant -- to be expanded to 100mw capacity in future. Though rental power is costlier than conventionally produced power, this project was emphasised considering severe power crisis in Chittagong.

The Cell floated the tender seeking offer for both diesel and HFO-based power plants, although price of diesel is much higher than HFO.

"It's because we were not sure if power companies would at all bid for an HFO-based plant, which is costlier than diesel-based plants to install but cheap to run in the long term," said an official.

Three bidders chose HFO as their fuel and three others diesel. Instead of evaluating

these bids in two categories, the Cell put all the weight on the price of power.

"As a result, the bid of Royce Ltd turned out to be the lowest. But this was really comparing an apple with an orange. Such evaluation destroys bidders' confidence in the long run," he added.

"The Power Cell didn't work on the environmental aspect of HFO. It didn't ask or seek documents from Royce about how the environmental issues will be handled," he observed. "The power ministry's recommendation did not say anything about environment."

Royce Ltd stated that its power generating equipment is 15 years old. The Cell did not inquire if such an old generator would pose any environmental hazard and also did not ask for any environmental plan from the company.

But the ministry argued that the price of diesel was Tk 55 a litre and HFO Tk 30. It also noted that rental plants running on petroleum charge more tariff than the power board's selling price.

At the present rate, PDB will have to be given a subsidy of Tk 21.37 crore each month due to this reason.

Presently, the country has only one HFO-based power plant -- the Khulna 110mw

Summit power plant. Summit spent \$8 million extra (not required for diesel-based plants) just to address the environmental problems caused by fuel.

Following press reports earlier this month, the Cell checked back some documents submitted by Royce Power taking help from Bangladesh mission abroad. These include confirmation that Royce Ltd had supplied 22.6mw rental power equipment to a Chinese company and that the bidder has a liquid fuel fired 55mw generator.

But the Cell hurriedly forgot to check whether the bidder indeed has three years experience in providing at least 20mw power on rental terms or as Independent Power Project developer.

The Cell's over-enthusiasm in recommending Royce Power itself had raised questions back in October.

Whereas no tendering authority completes evaluation of bids within a month, it sent its recommendation in favour of Royce Power on October 19, just three days after bid submission.

This had prompted the power ministry to ask the Cell to review its decision and check back all the claims made by Royce Power.



Agitating supporters of Awami League leaders who did not get party nominations run for cover as police resort to baton charge to disperse them in front of Sudha Sadan at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

## 'No need for powdered milk for babies'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reiterating the importance of breastfeeding for the children, experts at a roundtable yesterday declared that there is no need for powdered milk for the babies.

"The mothers should change the practice of feeding infant formulas to the children. If they heed to feeding breast milk to children aged up to two years along with home made complementary diet, it would be more helpful for their children," they added.

The roundtable was organised jointly by the Food and

Drinking Programme of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), Bangladesh Consumer Rights Protection Group and Cats Bangladesh at Bapa office in the city.

At the discussion titled 'How much powdered milk is needed for the children', the experts said the mass media should gear up the campaign to motivate the mothers for feeding breast milk to their children.

They demanded proper facilities in offices, educational institutions and courts for the working mothers so that they can feed breast milk

to their children.

They also called for stern action against the traders selling banned and adulterated powdered milk, and formulation of a regulatory commission to control the standard of foodstuffs.

Establishment of highly equipped laboratories at district and divisional level is also important, they added.

The speakers said price hike of essentials in one hand is forcing people to intake less calorie and on the other hand food adulteration has been posing serious threat to their health.

## 18 politicians join BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 18 politicians, including three former ministers and six lawmakers and leaders of Jatiya Party, Progressive Democratic Party and Awami League, joined the BNP yesterday.

The leaders led by ex-minister and LDP leader Tajul Islam Chowdhury presented a bouquet to BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia at her Gulshan office in the city.

Asked about the reasons for their joining the party, Tajul told reporters that they had decided to join the BNP inspired by its idealism.

He said they left LDP because it has failed to fulfil their expectations in the present situation after the 1/11 changeover.

PDP leader and ex-minister Col (ret'd) HM Gaffar, ex-minister Quamrunnahr Zafar and ex-lawmakers Fakhru Islam, Noor Mohammad, Farid Ahmed, Sultana Zaman Chowdhury, Mohammad Ali and Motiur Rahman, among others, joined the party.

Two upazila-level leaders of AL also joined the BNP.

## CS Karim meets FAO DG

BSS, Rome

Agriculture and Water Resources Adviser and leader of Bangladesh delegation to the 35th special session of FAO, Dr CS Karim, met FAO Director General Dr Jacques Diouf on the sideline of the session on Friday.

During the meeting, Dr Karim appreciated the role of the FAO in addressing the challenges of global food security.

He hoped that a renewed and revitalised FAO would be able to cope with the emerging challenges including those emanating from climate change.

## Training on journalism for ethnic youths ends

METRO DESK

A three-day training on basic journalism for ethnic youths with a view to ensure their representation in media and facilitate better coverage of the groups in mainstream media concluded at Modhupur in Tangail on Friday, says a press release.

Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) organised the programme under a project titled 'Bridging media and ethnicity'.

Twenty-four ethnic youths from different ethnic groups in Mymensingh and Tangail took part in the training.

Qurratul-Ain Tahmina, journalist and trainer, Sharier Khan, deputy editor of The Daily Star, Shahana Huda, manager, Media and Communications, Manusher Jono Foundation, conducted the training.

Four among the participants in the training will be selected for a six-month journalism internship in two local newspapers.

## Tigers crash to innings defeat

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Bangladesh's nondescript second innings was a fighting unbeaten 43 off 69 balls by left-handed Mehrab Hossain. He also shared 44 runs, the highest stand in the second innings, with Shahadat Hossain for the ninth wicket.

Paceman Shahadat was also involved in a 60-run ninth wicket stand with wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim in the first innings. Makhaya Ntini started the carnage on the day by removing Bangladesh skipper Mohammad Ashraful who could only fend a rising delivery to Neil McKenzie at gully. With the departure of Ashraful, who made 13 runs, wickets fell like ninepins. Steyn took his first wicket in the very next over with Shakib

Al Hasan thick edging an attempted cut shot behind the wicket.

It was more frustrating when Mushfiqur Rahim was run out while attempting a quick single. The last recognized batsman Nayeem Islam looked like a fish out of water against an express delivery from Steyn and ended up offering a tame catch to wicketkeeper Mark Boucher.

Steyn, who put the last nail in Tigers' coffin by removing Shahadat, finished with 5-63 in 18 overs while Jacques Kallis and Ntini took two wickets each.

Bangladesh will fly for Johannesburg tomorrow to play the second and final Test that starts at Centurion on November 26.