

**Brac to open branches in Filipino provinces**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Already operating in nine countries, Brac, a leading development organisation of Bangladesh, will open branches in the Muslim dominated provinces of the Philippines this year.

Brac executive director Mahabub Hossain made the announcement while describing 40 years of the organisation's achievement at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

Brac will celebrate the 40th anniversary throughout the year, said Asif Saleh, director communications of Brac, adding that the celebration begins today with a discussion and cultural functions at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Brac founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed will participate in the discussion while UK's acclaimed Gandharva Lok orchestra will perform music of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Chinmoy in cooperation with Surer Dhara and girls from Brac's adolescent development programme.

The organisation will launch a CD on International Women's Day on March 8 to raise awareness on issues related to adolescent girls and award its staff on March 24. It will also organise an international conference in October. A book will be published on the activities of Brac in December.

Founded in 1972, Brac is dedicated to alleviating poverty by empowering the poor to bring about change in their own lives.

**BANANI PLOTS  
Legal action to be taken for false info**

Minister tells House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Legal action will be taken against those persons who had received plots in the capital's Banani by giving false affidavits during the BNP-led four-party government's tenure.

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan yesterday said this in parliament while replying to lawmakers' queries.

In his written answer, Mannan told the House that all the 55 plots in Banani were allocated "lawfully" based on their affidavits which stated that they had no other plots or flats in the capital after their names.

The state minister, however, backtracked on his earlier position when his party's deputies alleged that some of the 55 allottees, including BNP leader Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, were given plots "unlawfully".

When Awami League lawmaker Nazma Akhter questioned the credibility of Pinu's affidavit, the state minister said, "It's out of the question to believe that none of the 55 persons had a plot or flat in the city [while they were given plots at Banani]."

Mannan said a parliamentary sub-committee is investigating the allotment process of the plots. "I must take action against those who had got plots by giving false affidavits," he warned.

He said, "I am giving you [lawmakers] 100 percent guarantee that I will take action after I get the sub-committee report without delaying a moment. They will not be able to escape anyway."

The 55 plots were allotted to the past BNP-Jamaat ministers, lawmakers and other loyalists during its tenure.



Finance Minister AMA Muhith, centre, speaks at a programme in commemoration of National Professor Kabir Chowdhury at Bilia auditorium in the city yesterday. (From left) Prof Muntasir Mamun, educationist Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, Justice Gholam Rabbani and National Professor Salahuddin Ahmed are also seen at the event, organised by Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminals of 1971. PHOTO: STAR

**Musa set to conquer world's second highest peak**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The power of will was behind all his successes and anybody can succeed in life if he or she is strongly determined, Everest hero Musa Ibrahim said as he launched his first-ever book "Mission Bangaposhagor O Kilimanjaro" at the city's Liberation War Museum yesterday.

The book has been written to inspire people to overcome tough barriers of their mind to achieve anything, Musa said, adding that the book tells about his expeditions of conquering Kilimanjaro and crossing the 14km Bangla Channel by swimming.

Commerce Minister GM Quader, who unveiled the book, said Musa has been working for building the image of the country. Writing a book after this kind of achievement for the future generation is really a great work, he added.

The minister also handed over a flag to Musa and his co-mountaineer Niaz Morshed Patwari, as they are set to conquer Aconcagua, the world's second highest peak.

It is the third venture of Musa's seven-summit mission. As the first Bangladeshi, he has already conquered Mount Everest and Kibo, the highest peak of Africa.

Musa said the Aconcagua journey will start on February 12 and it may take 14 days to reach the top. The 22,841-foot high Aconcagua is the highest mountain in the Americas. It is located in the Andes mountain range in the Argentine province of Mendoza.

JAN Associates Ltd chief executive officer Abdullah H Kafi, Daffodil International University chairman Sabur Khan, and Extreme Bangla president Kazi Hamidul Haque, among others, also addressed the programme.

**Kabir Chy spurned Pak govt statement in 1971**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Professor Kabir Chowdhury had refused to sign a statement prepared by the then Pakistan government of 1971 stating that reports of mass killing and genocide in the country were "untrue", knowing that his life could be endangered by such refusal.

The Pakistan government, somehow, had published the statement in the New York Times with Kabir Chowdhury's name, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith in his Kabir Chowdhury memorial speech yesterday.

Intelligence officials of the Pakistan government later had asked Kabir Chowdhury to sign the document to authenticate the published statement,

he said. "And he [Kabir Chowdhury] refused once again."

Muhith was addressing the Kabir Chowdhury memorial speech and discussion at Bilia auditorium in the city.

Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminals of 1971 organised the event in commemoration of Kabir Chowdhury's 90th birth anniversary.

Speakers said Kabir Chowdhury was a teacher of teachers and a leader of politicians.

"He spent his entire life in teaching, from the beginning to the very end," said AMA Muhith.

When Kabir Chowdhury was requested to teach at the National University, he first wanted to design a whole new course on fundamentalism

and later teach that course there, said educationist Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir.

In fact, Kabir Chowdhury had spent his entire life fighting against religious fundamentalism as well as against moves to transform Bangladesh into another Pakistan, said National Professor Salahuddin Ahmed.

He was a strong advocate for the war crimes trial throughout his life, which makes it all the more sad that Kabir Chowdhury could not see a completion of the trial in his lifetime, the speakers said.

Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, Prof Muntasir Mamun and Justice Gholam Rabbani, president of the Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminals of 1971, also spoke.



(From left) Sabur Khan, Kazi Hamidul Haque, Musa Ibrahim, Sir Frank Peters, GM Quader, Abdullah H Kafi, and Sharmin Laki at the launch of the book "Mission Bangaposhagor O Kilimanjaro" at Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday. PHOTO: STAR



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**Minor boy murdered in city**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two and a half years old boy was allegedly killed by his stepfather in the city's Demra yesterday.

Police recovered the body of the victim Mahin at around 5:00pm.

Liza Begum, mother of Mahin, said she went to her sister's house in the morning, leaving the victim to her husband Mohammad Ridoy at home.

Returning home in the afternoon, she found the front door locked from outside and through the window she saw the body of her son lying on the bed. Later, she informed the police.

The police said they found injury marks on Mahin's head, shoulder and mouth.

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