



Muslehuddin Ahmad critically ill

Muslehuddin Ahmad, former ambassador and founder vice chancellor of North South University (NSU), has been critically ill for the last two months. He suffered a stroke and has been in a coma since July 1, says a press release.

Muslehuddin's career has been a symbol of leadership in public policy and innovation in higher education. He joined the government service in 1956 through Central Superior Services.

Muslehuddin contributed to the independence of Bangladesh as a freedom fighter in Paris during the 1971 Liberation War. Supporting the cause of his homeland, he defected from the Pakistan Embassy in France.

With his wife Shaista Ahmad, he set up a safe haven for Bangladeshis in his small family apartment, which later became the first Bangladesh embassy in Paris.

On his return to Dhaka, he took over Bangladesh Biman to lead the airline as its first and only chairman. He also served as a secretary and ambassador.

Muslehuddin is perhaps best known as the creator of private university movement in Bangladesh and the founder of the country's first private university--NSU.

He authored a book on the Palestine-Israeli conflict, "Promised Land", on which he delivered lectures and attended workshops in England, Malaysia, and the USA.

As a political commentator, he often appeared on television and in print media.

At this moment in his life, Muslehuddin's family has requested all to pray for his recovery.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits a highly sensitive scientific installation at Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission at Ganakbari in Savar yesterday. Earlier, she inaugurated 3MV Tandem Accelerators Facilities and five other highly sensitive scientific installations there. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: PMO

Dhaka city fails to become successful economic hub

Says Brac University research

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although Dhaka city had a favourable geographical location to become a successful hub of economic opportunities, it has failed to make its way due to a lack of proper planning, a recent study on urban life and governance has revealed.

The research has identified planning deficit in the administration, social formation, politics, and economic development.

Titled "State of Cities: Urban Governance in Dhaka", the research was carried out by the Institute of Governance Studies, Brac University. Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, vice chancellor of University of Asia Pacific, uncovered it at the university on Wednesday.

The report is based on an eight months' detailed field research (January to August 2011) and analysis of urban situations for urban governance reform. During the period, individual households were surveyed across the capital on the assessment of services delivered by the authorities of Dhaka city.

Regarding poor quality of civic services, the research blamed corruption and political patronage.

Major political parties have organised themselves right down to the ward level, it said. "They strongly control the appointment of ward commissioners, ensure mobilisation of local support in the form of votes and determine the terms of access to public goods and development resources locally."

For instances, it says, the Dhaka city corporation and Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha enjoy less autonomy to make independent decisions. "They are subject to and part of this very well integrated and systematically managed political framework."

The study also detected serious flaws in the transport sector management of Dhaka city and blamed political patronage for the poor service.

It expressed deep concern over the role of Road Transport Commission in regulating the public transport service, because the sector is regulated by the transport owners' associations having strong political connections.

In the context of urban governance reform for Dhaka city, the study suggested strengthening citizens' ability to hold their local elected institutions accountable.

REDRAWING PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

EC to hold talks with civil society, journos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many people including some ministers and MPs have applied to the Election Commission (EC) demanding redrawing the boundaries of the country's parliamentary constituencies.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad said this at a press briefing at the EC Secretariat conference room yesterday.

"On consultation with civil society personalities and senior journalists, we will finalise

the course of actions to this effect," he said.

"It is difficult to satisfy everybody by the redrawing task," he added.

As per the schedule, the EC will hold talks with civil society personalities on September 13, and with senior journalists later.

About holding talks with political parties, the CEC said the EC would invite them to the talks in a convenient time.

He said the EC would begin the process for registering political parties with it.

"A political party willing to get registered may apply anytime," he said.

INTERNATIONAL RIVERS
Dam building without consent breaches treaties
Say water experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Construction of a dam by an upper riparian country to draw water from international rivers without the consent of the lower riparian countries is unacceptable and a breach of international conventions, water experts said yesterday.

They suggested intense negotiations at multi-levels to resolve the pending issues on water sharing of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basins.

The recommendations came at the end of a two-day regional conference, "Development and Management of River Basins: The Case of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna", in the auditorium of Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) in the capital.

BISS, in collaboration with German-based think tank Konrad Adenauer Stiftung's Saarc Regional Programme, organised the conference.

"Withdrawal of water from an international river by an upstream country, whether it be China or India, is unacceptable," said Prof Sanjoy Hazarika of Delhi-based Centre for North East Studies.

Former ambassador Farooq Sobhan said low flow rates in rivers of Bangladesh means more salinity intrusion, which has immense adverse effects on farm activities and livelihoods.

This also means that people of the country would migrate outside the country in search of livelihoods, he said.

China has a mutual approach while dealing with the management of river basins of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Meghna and Teesta, stated Dr Li Zhifei, an assistant professor of Asia-Pacific Security and Diplomatic Studies.

In a presentation, BISS Research Fellow Sufia Khanom said joint studies must be conducted before any interventions are carried out on the rivers, the lifeline of the GBM basins and sizeable sources of protein, livelihoods and energy.

"Communicate with other stakeholders in the basin, talk to them. Find a solution that all can live with," she added.

Former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and BISS Director General Maj Gen Muhammad Imrul Quayes also spoke at the programme.

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