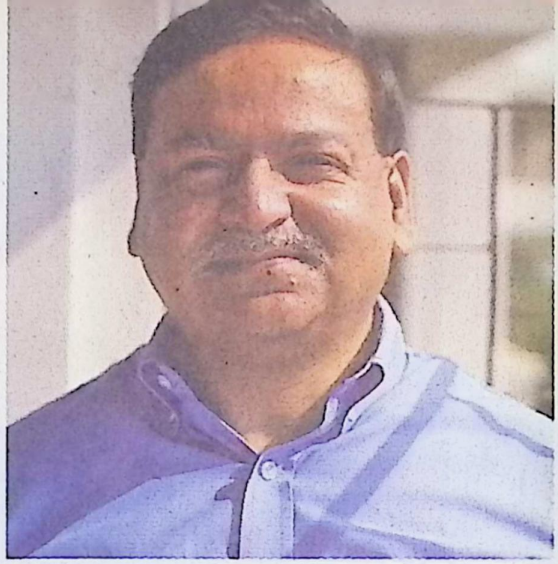
The Climate it is a-changing



Dr Saleemul Huq

Dr Saleemul Huq is the director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and a leading expert on climate change issues in the world. A senior fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Dr Huq was a lead author of the third and fourth assessment report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Educated at the Imperial College, London, he teaches a course on global environmental policies in the same college.

In your opinion, what are the key areas for intervention to protect the environment in Bangladesh?

In my view there are three inter-linked longer-term issues for Bangladesh that need to be tackled simultaneously and in a concerted way. These are firstly the rapid urbanisation of the country, secondly, the environmental degradation and in particular the challenges of adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change and finally the need to educate the next generation of children and youths to be knowledge workers and not manual workers. All three problems need to be tackled over next two decades.

Experts say that in future, parts of Bangladesh will go under water when sea level rises. How many people will be affected?

Bangladesh is very vulnerable to the impacts of climate change including sea level rise. However the actual numbers of people who will be affected by salinity, followed by loss of land is not known accurately but will certainly be in the millions. Some areas of the coast are already facing severe challenges in getting fresh drinking water. Hence this is both an immediate problem as well as a longer-term problem that needs to be tackled.

If that happens, there will be a large number of environmental refugees in Bangladesh. What plans, if any, do the Government of Bangladesh and the International community have in place to rehabilitate them?

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The government and people of Bangladesh have developed the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) which has six pillars and over forty actions identified which are now under implementation. One of the problems identified is the potential migration of people from the coast inland as well from rural to urban centers. Both of these issues are linked and are still in planning stage but will need to be addressed soon.

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