

Four get World Food Prize

Dr Bouis, who helped Bangladeshi scientists breed world's first zinc-enriched rice, among winners



The 2016 World Food Prize Laureates (from left to right) - Dr. Maria Andrade, Dr. Robert Mwangi and Dr. Jan Low, three scientists of the International Potato Center (CIP), and Dr Howarth Bouis, founder of the HarvestPlus.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Founder of an international organisation that helped Bangladeshi scientists breed the world's first zinc-enriched rice has been announced this year's World Food Prize recipient along with three other pioneers of biofortified crops.

Names of Howarth Bouis, founder of HarvestPlus, and three scientists of the International Potato Centre (CIP) - Maria Andrade, Robert Mwangi and Jan Low -- were announced as the 2016 World Food Prize Laureates during a ceremony at the US State Department in Washington DC yesterday.

Releases issued by the World Food Prize authorities and HarvestPlus Bangladesh said the four winners would receive the award at a ceremony to be held at the Iowa State Capitol building in Des Moines, Iowa, USA, on October 13 this year.

The World Food Prize, created in 1986 by Nobel Peace Prize recipient Norman Borlaug, is the most prominent global award for individuals whose breakthrough achievements alleviate hunger and promote global food security. Last year's recipient was Sir Fazle Hasan Abed. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus also won the World Food Prize in 1994.

This year's \$250,000 prize will be divided equally among the four recipients. The prize rewards their work in countering world hunger and malnutrition through biofortification, the process of breeding critical vitamins and micronutrients into staple crops.

Over the last 25 years, Howarth Bouis, popularly known in scientific fraternity as Howdy, pioneered the

implementation of a multi-institutional approach to biofortification as a global plant breeding strategy.

Bouis recognised that what mattered was not just how many calories people get, but the nutritional value contained in their food. Today, more than 2 billion people -- one in three -- do not get enough essential vitamins and minerals. Undernutrition contributes to almost half of deaths in children under 5. More than one in three children under 5 is stunted in most parts of Africa and South Asia.

He pioneered promotion of biofortification as a process to breed critical vitamins and micronutrients directly into staple crops to improve their nutritional quality.

As a result of his leadership, crops such as rice, beans, wheat and pearl millet have been biologically fortified with iron and zinc and those along with Vitamin A-enriched cassava, maize and orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) are being tested or released in over 40 countries.

Maria Andrade, Robert Mwangi and Jan Low of the CIP, which has had sweet potato in its research mandate since 1988, are being honoured for their work developing the single most successful example of biofortification - OFSP.

Thanks to the combined efforts of these four laureates, over 10 million people are now positively impacted by biofortified crops, with a potential of several hundred million more in the coming decades.

Under the support of HarvestPlus, Bangladesh has released since 2013

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UK minister hails Dhaka's commitment to try extremists

Calls on the govt to uphold human rights; criticises deaths in crossfire

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UK Minister of State Foreign and Commonwealth Office Hugo Swire has welcomed the commitment by the Bangladesh government to bring those responsible for the recent extremist attacks to justice.

"We have also made it clear, in public and in private, that justice must be done in a manner that fully respects the international human rights standards that Bangladesh has signed up to," he said in a debate in British parliament yesterday.

The minister said mass arrests and suspicious "crossfire" deaths at the hands of the police undermine confidence in the judicial system.

Investigations must be conducted transparently and impartially, irrespective of the identity of the victim or the alleged perpetrator.

Anyone arrested should be treated in full accordance with due process and Bangladeshi law. It is also important to explore the root causes of the attacks involving international links, he added.

He urged Bangladesh, as a vibrant, modern and rapidly growing democracy, to protect and promote freedom of expression as one of its core values.

"Prime Minister Hasina has repeatedly extolled the secular, tolerant nature of Bangladesh. Her government must be unequivocal about protecting the rights of all citizens, including those who express different views or lead different lifestyles. The victims themselves should not be blamed," he said.

British lawmaker Simon Danczuk has said democracy has now "broken down" in Bangladesh and there is "irrefutable evidence".

The independent MP for Rochdale moved a debate on current situation in Bangladesh on Tuesday at the Westminster Hall and made the remark.

He also spoke of the "restraint on freedom of expression and the pressure being put on the free press".

In his remark, Danczuk said the current situation in Bangladesh has some relationship to the war for independence in 1971, but it is also very much the result of the seriously flawed general election on 5 January 2014.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The call of 300 feet

SYED RAIYAN ABU ZAFAR

Most metropolitan cities from Cairo to Paris to Lahore are known for their roadside cafes and food streets where everything under the sun is discussed and debated by the young and the old alike. From national politics to business to career plan. A large number of these street food lovers are students.

In Dhaka, Bashundhara Residential Area is one such street food zone with a number of trendy cafes for the rising population of mostly students of two big private universities. The road is popularly called 300 feet.

These are a perfect place for outing all year round for the students who are otherwise cooped up in their rented rooms they have come to call their home. On weekdays, the rush is low in the morning because of regular classes and exams. Still, the attraction of the place pulls them in. It's only a TK 20 ride on rickshaw from their campuses, which are getting more and more crowded every semester because

of fresh enrolments.

Plus the variety and quality of some of the food, especially the coffee, on the campus is below standards. Some say the coffee available on the campus is like hot water mixed with powder.

Besides, the cafes on 300 feet



road provide a Dhaka University's TCS canteen-like experience for the students who long for some space. It's not that there is no space inside the residential area. Jamuna Future

Park is an option but it's too far and too expensive a rickshaw ride for them. Also, prices are high at food courts at the very popular and one of the largest malls in Asia with a minimum of 15 percent VAT on all food items.

At 300 feet, where students get together every midnight, the VAT is 7-10 percent. In addition, students get some 10 percent discount in most shops. The crowd is particularly large on weekends. Briefly relieved of class pressure, the time is perfect for them to hang out and talk whatever they want to talk. Such nighttime outing for Sehri becomes an everyday matter during Ramadan.

Whatever the reasons, 300 feet is on the daily itinerary of most students living and studying in Bashundhara area. This stretch is the place for the "coffee house er shei adda" by Manna Dey for these homesick boys and girls.

(The writer is a student of Independent University.)

A lot goes on around us. In this new news project, we started running feature contents based on personal experience. We also invite our readers to send similar write-ups for publishing, subject to editing and verification. Please send your pieces and also comments and feedback to reporting@thedailystar.net.

Passport most corrupt sector

FROM PAGE 1

TIB researchers Waheed Alam, MN Alam and Farhana Rahman presented the findings at a press conference at the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) office in the capital yesterday.

"Corruption appeared to be an assault on our morality. Bribe has become a part of the daily life. Each and everybody gets involved in corruption, willingly or unwillingly. This is the greatest concern for us," said TIB Trustee Board Chairperson Sultana Kamal.

It has become difficult to get services from the people responsible to provide those. And the most affected are the common people, especially those who have no one to back them up, she said.

The TIB National Household Survey 2015 is the seventh since 1997, when the graft watchdog started doing such survey.

The service sectors it covered include health, education, electricity, local government institutions, banking, NGO, agriculture, land administration, insurance, law enforcing agencies, judicial service, passport, gas, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, tax and duty.

Conducted on the basis of experiences of the households, the survey is meant to expose the trend and extent of

TOTAL PROJECTED BRIBE IN 2015 (in Tk.)			
Land administration	2,450.3cr	BRTA	156.3cr
Law enforcement agencies	1,702.4cr	Insurance	114.9cr
Electricity	1,613.4cr	Banking	110.4cr
Judicial services	808.5cr	Agriculture	85.5cr
Gas	734.0cr	Health (govt)	57.0cr
Education (govt and MPO enlisted)	413.1cr	Tax and duty	49.9cr
Passport	295.0cr	NGO	10.7cr
Local government institutions	192.3cr	Others (BTC, Post, WASA etc.)	60.5cr
		TOTAL	8821.8cr

● Total amount of projected bribe in 2015 is 0.6% of GDP of FY 2014/15 budget and 3.7% of revised budget
 ● The total number of households in Bangladesh is 3.18 crore

SOURCE: TIB

corruption faced by people in seeking various services from public or private entities, and to help authorities take effective measures in checking corruption.

PASSPORT Authorities have introduced machine readable passports to ease passport service, but various irregularities remain high.

At least 3.5 percent of the households surveyed received services from the passport office, and 77.7 percent of them were victim of corruption.

On average 76.1 percent service recipients had to bribe Tk 3,120 each. Besides, 12 percent service recipients had to face unnecessary delays in getting services, 3.1 percent faced fraudulence and 1.7 percent faced

different directions when the shooting started. I hid under the counter where I was standing and a couple of the ground staff did the same," South African university administrator Judy Favish told eNCA television in her home country.

Favish said she and other travellers were ushered to the basement before emerging about two hours later.

"We walked through the airport and saw debris and blood. It was just chaos. It was horrible."

'DECLARATION OF WAR' Analyst Soner Capagayt, director of the Turkish Research Programme at The Washington Institute, described it as a "symbolic attack against the heart of Turkey".

"If this Islamic State is indeed behind

nepotism.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

At least 65.9 percent service recipients from law enforcers had to bribe, 6.5 percent faced threats or misconducts and 5.3 percent faced false cases, the survey found.

Other irregularities include arrests for no reasons, negligence in accepting general diary or first information report, submitting false charge sheet and delay in issuing police verification certificates.

Service recipients had to pay the highest amount of bribe, Tk 7,697, to thana police, and the lowest, Tk 942, to the Special Branch of police (SB).

The respondents said they were forced to bribe because otherwise they would not get the services in time or not at all. Some also bribed to get illegal services or before schedule.

EDUCATION

Nearly 58 percent service recipients had to bribe while paying exam fees, 39.5 percent in paying registration fees, 36.8 percent in withdrawing certificates and 25.9 percent faced corruption while taking admission or re-admission. The average additional amount they paid is Tk 95.

Besides, they faced irregularities in getting stipend, books and suggestions. "The poor are affected the most as the burden of bribe is more for them,"

said TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman.

According to the survey, the households earning less than Tk 16,000 a month each paid 2.16 percent of their income in bribe, while those earning more than Tk 64,000 paid 0.03 percent of their income.

The researchers observed corruption in 2015 went up in local government institutions and electricity compared to 2012, but went down in land administration and judicial services.

Also, corruption in rural areas was more (faced by 69.5 percent households) than urban areas (faced by 62.6 percent households).

The government has an electoral mandate and a national strategy, laws and various institutions to check corruption, but its prevalence is rising, said Iftekharuzzaman.

"Those who are committing corruption are not being punished. This is the major reason why corruption is not falling," he told journalists.

It is very unfortunate that the regulatory institutions that are supposed to check corruption and crimes get involved in corrupt practices themselves, he said.

He said there is also political influence on various institutions, recruitments and transfers. Such practices have to stop if corruption is to

be checked.

"If the big corrupt people go unchecked, it has its ripple effects on the lower level," the TIB official said.

Sultana Kamal said it was becoming difficult to take action to check corruption as there was a tendency on the part of the authorities to deny corruption allegations.

'OLD INFORMATION'

Home Secretary Mozammel Haque Khan rejected the TIB findings on law enforcement agencies and passport department, arguing that the survey is based on "old information".

"We hope the TIB will soon realise its mistake and withdraw their statement," he told journalists at the secretariat.

Brig Gen Masud Rezwani, director general of the passport department, said if a person gave money to a broker, bank official or police member for passport-related activities, the DIP would not take that responsibility.

He added the TIB survey gave last year's picture of the department.

"After taking charge this year, I have motivated my officials who are working hard day and night to serve people. If the TIB now says the passport office is the most corrupt, how will these officials continue to provide services?" he said, adding that they already spoke with the TIB and protested the report.

It's IS attack: Turkey

FROM PAGE 1

Prime Minister Yildirim said the three suicide bombers had arrived at the airport in a taxi and opened fire at the entrance to the international terminal before detonating their explosives.

Security camera footage widely circulated on social media appeared to capture two of the blasts. In one clip a huge ball of flame erupts at an entrance to the terminal building, scattering terrified passengers.

Another video shows a black-clad attacker running inside the building before collapsing to the ground -- apparently felled by a police bullet -- and blowing himself up.

The attack came just as Turkey, which had found itself increasingly friendless on

the international stage, begins rebuilding relations with Israel and Russia.

It follows coordinated IS suicide bombings at Brussels airport and a city metro station in March that left 32 people dead.

'WALKING LIKE A PROPHET'

An AFP photographer saw bodies covered with sheets at the terminal, where bullet holes peppered the windows and shattered glass was strewn on the floor, along with abandoned luggage.

Otfah Mohamed Abdullah was checking her luggage in when she saw one of the attackers pull out a hidden gun.

"He's shooting up, two times, and he's beginning to shoot people like that, like he was walking like a prophet," she told AFP TV.

"Everybody started running in

different directions when the shooting started. I hid under the counter where I was standing and a couple of the ground staff did the same," South African university administrator Judy Favish told eNCA television in her home country.

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"If this Islamic State is indeed behind

this attack, this would be a declaration of war. Turkey's vengeance will come down like rain from hell on the Islamic State."

The attack prompted the suspension of all flights at the airport, but operations were resuming yesterday with some delays.

There was chaos at the nearest hospital in Istanbul's Bakirkoy district, which was inundated with relatives desperate for news of loved ones.

Brussels airport, the scene of suicide bombings just months ago, tweeted condolences, saying: "Our thoughts are with the victims of the attacks at @istanbulairport."

The US and French consulates warned people to stay away from the area. Erdogan met his prime minister and

military chief after news of the carnage broke.

"We urge the world, especially Western countries, to take a firm stand against terrorism," Erdogan said in a statement.

"Despite paying a heavy price, Turkey has the power, determination and capacity to continue the fight against terrorism until the end."

Istanbul, a major tourist hub that is home to some 15 million people, has suffered a series of attacks in the past year, including a bombing in the heart of the tourist district that killed a dozen German visitors and was blamed on IS.

Two months later, three Israelis and an Iranian were killed in a bomb attack on the city's main Istiklal shopping street, also blamed on IS.

A blast on the tarmac at Istanbul's

other international airport, Sabiha Gokcen, killed a cleaner in December.

Turkey has been hit by at least five attacks blamed on IS jihadists, including a blast in Ankara in October 2015 that left over 100 dead, the worst in the country's modern history.

The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK) -- seen as a splinter group of the rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) -- also claimed a car bombing in Istanbul in June that killed 11, and warned foreign tourists they would not be safe in Turkey.

It said its action was to avenge a sustained offensive against the outlawed PKK in southeastern Turkey following the collapse of a ceasefire last year.