

# ‘Discuss the root causes’

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and six officials from the Emergency Response and Assessment Team of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

They held two discussion sessions with the Rohingya representatives at a camp in Ukhiya on December 18 and 19.

A total of 46 Rohingya representatives attended the discussion on the first day and 25 on the second day. ARSPH Chairman Mohibullah led the Rohingya representatives.

This was the third time Myanmar delegation visited the Rohingya camps after some 750,000 Rohingya fled a brutal military crackdown in August 2017.

Meanwhile, the Gambia filed a case with the International Court of Justice (ICJ), accusing Myanmar of genocide against the Rohingyas who were citizens of the country before 1982, but faced systematic persecution.

The statement said Chan Aye told the Rohingyas that the delegation had come to convince them for their return.

He also explained the process of repatriation with a PowerPoint presentation.

He repeatedly asked the Rohingyas that they have to accept NVCS and that they cannot change the 1982 citizenship law, the ARSPH statement read.

The leaders of the Myanmar delegation said Myanmar is a sovereign country and cannot allow international security for the safety of the Rohingyas.

The Rohingya leaders asked Aye why the Myanmar immigration

authorities used “Bengali” in the birth certificates while referring to the Muslims in Sittwe two years back.

“There was no answer!” the statement said.

Talking to the reporters after the meeting on Thursday, Aye said, “Based on legal and historical facts, we explained them the reasons why we cannot accept the ethnicity of the Rohingyas. But we didn’t deny the existence of their communities.”

The Rohingya leaders asked the delegation why the Myanmar authorities had destroyed more than two thousand houses in Myo Thu Gyi Village Tract in Maungdaw township and set up new military installations and other government offices, the statement read.

“How [would] you remove them? How [would] you resettle [us]? the Rohingya representatives asked the delegation, the statement said, adding that the questions were not responded to.

Nay San Lwin, the campaign coordinator for Free Rohingya Coalition, said the visit of the Myanmar delegation appears to be nothing but an eyewash and the Bangladesh government was wasting time by allowing their visit to the camps.

“Myanmar wants to show to the international community that they want repatriation to be done,” he told The Daily Star from Germany yesterday.

“We are waiting for the ICJ ruling next month. We already have begun ‘Boycott Myanmar campaign’ and will strengthen it so that Myanmar is obliged to change its laws and grant our citizenship,” he said.

FROM PAGE 1  
Alexander Haeusler, general manager of Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel; and Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

“In the last decade, from 2009 onwards, we have seen tremendous enthusiasm and tremendous activities in the ICT industry,” Kabir said.

For instance, in 2008-09 hardly 100,000 people were associated with the industry. But now that number has increased 10 times. The sector’s exports in 2008-09 were hovering around \$28-30 million. Now it has reached the \$1 billion-mark.

Digital commerce was non-existent before 2010. Now, hundreds of crores of taka are being transacted online, said Kabir.

“So this tremendous change in the ICT industry was possible because of the support of the government and we must thank the prime minister and her ICT adviser for their vision for building a Digital Bangladesh. We are on the right path.”

By 2021, 90 percent of the citizens will receive services online. So the industry will see a flurry of work over the next couple of years.

To make the most of the momentum, he made four recommendations.

Kabir, who is also the CEO of MetroNet Bangladesh, a fibre optic network provider, urged the universities to immediately incorporate real-life, practical skills in their four-year curriculum as well as skills needed to excel during the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) era.

The government must also make a guideline for adapting to new technologies, especially robotics, he said.

Robotics will most likely lead to

sudden mass unemployment. There should be a policy to implement the technology in the country.

When 5G will be introduced in 2021, there will be an explosion of internet of things (IoT) devices, so new risks, new crimes, and new security breaches will crop up, he said.

He urged the government to review and update the Digital Security Act to address these forthcoming issues.

Kabir also urged the industry to identify 2-3 areas to build expertise on. “We do not want to be the jack of all trades; it will get us nowhere.”

It could be animation, it could be mobile programming, it could be blockchain.

“When the outside world would think of those 2-3 areas, they would think of Bangladesh,” he added.

In his speech as the chief guest, Rizvi shared the origin of the catch phrase Digital Bangladesh. When preparing the election manifesto in 2008, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina suggested digitisation as one of the action points.

“We didn’t realise how those two words would catch the imagination of the young people,” he said, adding that even after the election, the Awami League had underestimated the potential of Digital Bangladesh.

“The idea behind Digital Bangladesh was to digitise all government services and take them to the people’s doorsteps, make governance transparent, keep the costs of running the government low and make the government more accountable.

“And along the way we hoped other things will happen. In this case, the unintended consequences were far, far greater than what we could possibly

imagine. It has really provided the power behind our economic growth and expansion.”

He went on to state that Bangladesh would be beholden to the ICT industry once it becomes a higher middle-income country by 2030.

“Nothing could have unleashed the imagination and energy of the young people as ICT has done and now they have a battle on their hands to make a developed, prosperous Bangladesh,” he added.

This is an exciting time for Bangladesh’s ICT sector, as many homegrown tech-based products and services have found their way into people’s lives, said Brac Bank CEO Selim RF Hussain.

“Almost every service has arrived at our fingertips, from transferring money from Teknaf to Tetulia via bKash in a second, to commuting on Uber or Pathao, to getting repair services by engaging Sheba.XYZ, to ordering food on Hungrynaki and buying my son a panjabi from Aarong. Smartphones have become part of our DNA.”

He went on to add that Brac Bank would be playing a bigger role in promoting ICT ventures in future.

The Daily Star ICT Awards should be considered as the heart of the country’s ICT sector, said Md Sabur Khan of Daffodil International University.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said, “Many of you may think of your involvement with the ICT sector as good business and there is nothing wrong with that. But I think you should change your mindset and start thinking of it as a movement for the future of Bangladesh.”

He urged the ICT entrepreneurs to solve many of the societal ills by way

of technology.

The biggest challenge Bangladesh is facing right now is climate change, he said, urging to turn to technology to solve the problems brought about by this impending crisis.

The event was organised in association with Brac Bank, Daffodil University and BASIS. Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden was the hospitality partner.

This year more than 100 companies sought the awards in six categories. Some were shortlisted before being evaluated by a jury board comprising eminent members of the industry.

Fahim Mashroor, chief executive officer of AjkerDeal.com; Mike Kazi and Zara Mahbub, chairman and CEO of Kazi IT Centre; Prince Mojumder and Adnan Imam, CEO and MD of Genex Infosys; Ayman Sadiq, founder and CEO of Robi-10 Minute School; Sonia Bashir Kabir, founder and chairman of SBK Tech Ventures; and Habibullah N Karim, founder and CEO of Technohaven, received the awards from Rizvi.

The evening also saw a live performance of a medley of patriotic songs by Sandhi, Sovvota, Shovon and Shayonta.

## On this day

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The total number of refugees including those in India, is around three crore, reports of British NGOs says.

Commander-in-chief of Muktibahini Colonel MAG Osmani reaches Dhaka.

Bangladesh Government in Kolkata discusses with Indian representative DP Dhar about the return of Bangladeshi refugees.

## 6 killed in UP

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medical officer Rajkumar told AFP.

Rajkumar, who goes by one name, added that five police officers, including three with bullet wounds, were being treated in hospital.

Another demonstrator died of a gunshot wound in Bijnor district while the cause of the sixth death in Firozabad city was not yet known, local police spokesmen told AFP.

In the heart of India’s capital demonstrators held a sit-in protest at the Delhi Gate in the Old Delhi district, then marched to the country’s biggest mosque Jama Masjid in the afternoon.

The protesters later returned to Delhi Gate, where they clashed with baton-wielding police who deployed a water cannon to disperse the crowd.

The marchers, many chanting anti-Modi slogans, threw rocks at police in the street battle. At least one car was set on fire, and an AFP reporter saw demonstrators bleeding from their heads and mouths during the clashes.

“All the people here, be it those who are Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian -- they are all out on the streets,” Tanvi Gudiya told AFP at another Delhi rally in a Muslim neighbourhood after Friday prayers.

“So doesn’t it affect Modi at all? Does Modi not like anyone? Why is he becoming like Hitler?” In Modi’s home state of Gujarat, there were new clashes between security forces and protesters in Vadodara city, a day after battles in the largest city Ahmedabad left 20 policemen and 10 locals injured.

On Thursday, two people were killed in Mangalore when police opened fire on a crowd of around 200 people after they ignored orders to disperse, an official told AFP.

A protester also succumbed to gunshot injuries in Lucknow, said a doctor who declined to be named. Officers denied opening fire in the city.

Authorities have scrambled to contain the situation, imposing emergency laws, blocking internet access, and shutting down shops and restaurants in sensitive pockets across

the country.

- ‘Unacceptable in a democracy’ - Opposition parties in India, as well as international rights groups, have raised concerns about the law and the growing protests.

Congress party president Sonia Gandhi yesterday slammed Modi’s Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, saying it showed “utter disregard for people’s voices and chosen to use brute force to suppress dissent”.

“This is unacceptable in a democracy,” she added in a video posted on Twitter.

West Bengal state Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, addressing a rally of more than 20,000 people in the state capital Kolkata Friday, said she “will not allow the federal government to implement” the law.

“India is burning. This is time for waking up,” she said, urging people to unite behind her movement.

More than 200 Christian leaders in India issued a joint statement Friday saying the laws passed since the BJP was re-elected in May have led “to the collapse of the democratic institutions of India... carefully and painstakingly built by enlightened leaders over the last seven decades”.

In a strongly worded editorial, the Indian Express said the government must do all it can “to keep the peace” in the country, home to 200 million Muslims.

“But in doing so the world’s largest democracy cannot look like it cannot accommodate its young who disagree, it cannot afford to signal that it is so ill at ease with itself.

“India risks a lot if it begins to be seen as a place where the dissenter’s mind is not without fear.”

## Condolences

FROM PAGE 1  
Liberation War, reports BSS.

“He also worked for rebuilding the war-ravaged Bangladesh after independence,” Hasina said, adding that the nation suffered an irreparable loss by the death of a humanitarian like him.

Brac also remembered the life and impact of Sir Fazle Abed.

In a statement, Ameerah Haq, chair of Brac Global Board, said, “Unflinching dedication, focus, and work ethic are what we have always experienced in Sir Fazle, or Abed Bhai, as the Brac family calls him lovingly. He always put others before himself and let his work speak for itself. Even when Brac attained its global stature, his concern and focus were on the less fortunate in society and those whose potential needed nurturing. He embodied the highest level of integrity, humility and humanity, which continues to be the essential guiding spirit of Brac.”

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Miah, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Agriculture

Minister Abdur Razzaque, Law Minister Anisul Huq, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Planning Minister MA Mannan, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, and State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid expressed their condolences.

Several socio-cultural organisations and distinguished personalities, including Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman, also expressed deep condolences over his death.

Social media was inundated with messages of grief and condolences.

## A light has gone out

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The founder of the world’s largest NGO

breathed his last aged 83 yesterday evening at the Apollo Hospitals in the capital. He was undergoing treatment for a malignant brain tumour.

Sir Fazle Abed leaves behind his wife Sarwat Abed, son Shameran Abed and daughter Tamara Abed.

Sir Fazle Abed’s entry into the NGO world came much before the formation of Brac. Working for the Shell Oil Company in Dhaka in 1970, he witnessed the devastating cyclone which hit the country, leaving 300,000 dead in its wake.

The disaster had a profound impact on him.

Together with friends, Sir Fazle Abed created HELP, an organisation that provided relief and rehabilitation to the worst of those affected in the island of Manpura, which had lost three-quarters of its population to the calamity.

The cyclone was followed by a bloody period in the country’s history as the Liberation War broke out a year later. The ravages of the war, coupled with Bangladesh having to take in millions of refugees, began to stretch already scarce resources.

This prompted Sir Fazle Abed to initiate Action Bangladesh and HELP Bangladesh, which lobbied the governments of Europe for his country’s independence.

At the time, Sir Fazle Abed was in London, where he was working as an accountant.

By 1972, however, he knew he could no longer stay away from his war-torn home. He quit his job, sold his London flat, and decided to spend all his savings to rebuild lives back home.

Sir Fazle Abed had found his calling. The Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee, as Brac was then called, took the first step of its thousand-mile journey from a humble office at Sullah, a hamlet of Sunamganj, in that very same year. It later styled itself as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, before taking on the name Brac.

The initiative caught the attention of major NGOs and Sir Fazle Abed’s Brac soon secured funds from development

agencies.

The NGO continues to grow and innovate even today, as it is heavily invested in yet another humanitarian crisis in Cox’s Bazar where it is working to help the Rohingya refugees.

Sir Fazle Abed’s body will be placed on the Army Stadium premises in the capital on Sunday from 10:30am to 12:30pm to let people from all walks of life to pay tributes. His namaz-e-ijanaza will also be held there at 12:30pm. He will be laid to rest at the graveyard in Banani the same day.

News of his death sent shock waves throughout the world, with many renowned personalities expressing their deepest sympathies.

Former president of the US Bill Clinton, in a message to Brac, said, “Abed’s story proves just how much people with vision and commitment can change the world.”

Brac Bangladesh Executive Director Asif Saleh said the Brac family will continue its journey to fulfill Sir Fazle Abed’s remaining dreams.

“He was a symbol courage and passion,” Asif added.

Sir Fazle Abed kept himself busy the last few months to look after Brac’s global governance. A global board has been formed comprising three members.

Brac’s future activities will be conducted under the governance of the global board, Asif said, adding that they have taken a 10-year strategy to run the organisation’s activities.

### HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed was born in Baniachong of Habiganj on April 27, 1936, to Siddiq Hasan and Syeda Sufya Khatun.

He passed his higher secondary exams from Dhaka College in 1954 and got into the physics department at Dhaka University.

After a few years, he set off for England to study naval architecture. During this time, Sir Fazle Abed realised this new discipline did not have much prospect in Bangladesh and he focused on accounting, graduating from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants in London in 1962.

After the Liberation War, he returned to Bangladesh, where he would go on

to begin his life’s seminal work.

### FROM ONE SMALL OFFICE TO 11 COUNTRIES

Since its inception, Brac has gone on to becoming the world’s largest NGO, operating across 11 countries in Africa and Asia. It employs almost 2 lakh people across the world and its microfinance programme alone involves some \$3 billion.

Brac has always been at the forefront of empowerment issues and poverty reduction. It has led the way in many other social issues as well.

Brac was also the first to package and showcase the work of Bangladeshi artisans in Aarong, earning the craftspeople premium prices.

Brac’s diverse programme portfolio and global outreach now covers income generation, healthcare, education, agriculture and food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, advocacy and human rights, gender justice and diversity, environment, and climate change; all achieved under Abed’s leadership.

### IN ILLUSTRIOUS COMPANY

Sir Fazle Abed is the second person in his family to be knighted by the British crown, the first being his great-uncle Justice Nawab Sir Syed Shamsul Huda. He was knighted in 2010.

In November this year, he was also honoured with the Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau for his successful work in alleviating poverty, especially of women and children. It was bestowed upon him by King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands.

In 1981, Sir Fazle Abed became a visiting scholar at the Harvard Institute of International Development.

The next year, he was appointed as a member of the Board of Trustee of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies. He was also made the chairman of the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh.

This famous benefactor became a member of the World Bank NGO Committee in Geneva in 1986. The following year he was appointed as a member of the International Commission on Health Research for Development.

Sir Fazle Abed was also became the chairman of the NGO Forum for

## Russian media say Moscow gunman had shooting hobby

AFP, Moscow

Russian media yesterday identified the man who opened fire near the headquarters of the FSB security agency in central Moscow, killing one person and wounding five, as a 39-year-old who practised shooting as a hobby.

There has been no official confirmation of the identity of the attacker who was shot by security forces after the exchange of fire on Thursday, but Russian media named him as Yevgeny Manyurov, a former security guard who lived in the town of Podolsk, some 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of Moscow.

Numerous channels on the Telegram messenger service published a photo of the dead gunman, a bearded man in glasses with his face bloodied, dressed in black with a wolf’s head design on his sweatshirt.

The tabloid Komsomolskaya Pravda and Ren TV channel reported that the alleged shooter had an arsenal of seven guns that he owned legally, citing an investigator.

A leader from Gazipur, Saiful Amin, said, “Quader bhai is fine but his physical condition is not well. The next general election is scheduled to be held in 2023. So we need a leader for the post who will be able to take up the challenge for the next three years.”

Another leader said they needed someone as competent, dedicated and tested as Quader ahead of the election.

According to AL sources, Quader went to the Gono Bhaban on Thursday night but couldn’t meet Hasina.

This led to speculation within the party that he might not get a second term as the GS.

Several names, including that of Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque, Housing Minister SM Rezaul Karim, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, Gazipur city AL President Azmatullah, have been in the discussion for the post, said party insiders.

The previous council held in October 2016 elected Hasina as the party president and Obaidul Quader as its general secretary.

Diplomats from the USA, the UK, Japan, Germany, North Korea, India, South Korea, the EU, China, Vietnam, Iraq, Palestine, Thailand and the representatives of Democracy International and the Department for International Development (DFID) joined the programme yesterday.