

A glimpse into post-Liberation War challenges

Second volume of Prof Rehman Sobhan's 'Untranquil Recollections' launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

War-ravaged, Bangladesh faced crucial challenges centring nation building just after its birth. The economy ceased to function, as non-Bangalees, who controlled trade and industries prior to independence, seemingly disappeared overnight after the nation's victory on December 16, 1971.

Infrastructure was demolished. Two staple crops were affected, and the country was on the verge of famine.

On top of that, except for a few, namely Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, no one had experience of running a government. Most of the people working with the Planning Commission did not have any experience of working inside the government.

The then leadership had to set up all the institutions of government -- various ministries, financial institutions, tax collection mechanism, planning and related institutions. This had to be done in the shortest possible time with very limited experienced people, and that too amid a lot of constraints.

Prof Rehman Sobhan, who was a member of the first Planning Commission after the liberation in 1971, vividly described all these events -- the struggle to set up administration and fix the direction of the economy during the first three and half years of independence -- in the second part of his autobiography.

In his memoir, "Untranquil Recollections: From Dawn



Dignitaries at the launch of the second volume of Prof Rehman Sobhan's memoir, "Untranquil Recollections: From Dawn to Darkness: Political Economy of Nation Building in Post-Liberation Bangladesh" at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) office in the capital yesterday. In the book, Prof Sobhan gives vivid and personalised accounts of the first three and half years of nation building.

PHOTO: STAR

One-stop service for women, children

PM to formally inaugurate special desk at all police stations today

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN, back from N'ganj

Around 10:30am on Friday, 28-year-old Amena Begum was found pacing in front of the duty-officer's room at Narayanganj Sadar Model Police Station. She wanted to file a complaint but was hesitant to talk.

Noticing the situation, Constable Jannat of the station took her to the service desk for "women, children, disabled persons and elderly", where Sub-inspector Fahima Khanam was providing service. All officers in the room were women.

Amena then started talking to SI Fahima and informed that her husband, a driver by profession, would not buy food for her and their child, and often verbally abused her.

Fahima wrote down Amena's complaint and called her husband to the station. Police then asked him to not misbehave with Amena and provide food expenses properly.

During a visit to the station on Friday, this correspondent met Amena after the issue was resolved. "I never thought police would take action for my problem so promptly," she said.

SI Fahima, officer of the service desk, said they have registered around 218 complaints at the desk between January and April, most of them over family conflicts. "We have successfully managed to settle around 198 complaints by holding meetings with families. The rest were registered as cases."

"Rape victims often do not feel comfortable to talk to male officers, but those days are gone, as we are here to help," Fahima said.

OC Mohammad Shahzaman of the station said five women officers were assigned to address complaints round the clock. These officers have a room to rest on the upper floor of the station, so that the desks never remain unattended.

According to Police Headquarters (PHQ), to provide one-stop service to women, children, those with disabilities and the elderly, the service desk has been launched at all 659 police stations.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would formally inaugurate the initiative today through a virtual

arrangement, said PHQ.

A separate room has been arranged at every police station, in which a woman SI with a handful of trained women officers will provide service.

The desk will also inform visitors about other government services and provide legal aid to victims who are not financially well-off.

SI Laboni Khanam of Siddhirganj Police Station and officer of the service desk said the desk has been providing services since the last two years.

OC Moshir Rahman of the station said they are raising awareness about the desk.

Contacted, Haider Ali Khan, deputy inspector general of PHQ, said district police



PHOTO: COLLECTED

superintendents, range DIGs and metropolitan commissioners were instructed to monitor service-desk activities closely. Besides, PHQ also monitors desk activities to ensure the best service, he added.

The special desk started on a pilot basis from January 2020. So far, 1.81 lakh women, 32,286 children, 1.38 lakh elderly people and 11,081 people with disabilities have received the service.

HOME FOR THE HOMELESS

Police have also built 520 houses for the homeless under the jurisdiction of 519 police stations.

Each house, which has three rooms and 415 square feet of space, cost around Tk 25 lakh. The PHQ officials said primarily, they are handing over 400 of the houses to homeless families. The PM is also scheduled to inaugurate the initiative today.

One in 5 adults suffer from hypertension

Speakers tell webinar

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Affordable healthcare, medicine
- Increase in health budget
- Mass awareness



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of heart-disease patients in Bangladesh has been rising alarmingly, mostly owing to hypertension, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

About one in every five (21 percent) adults at present are suffering from hypertension, and the situation is bound to deteriorate unless measures are taken immediately, they said at the discussion titled "World Health Day and Hypertension".

Progga, an advocacy and research organisation, organised the event, with support from Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAII).

Dr Shamim Jubayer of National Heart Foundation presented a keynote at the webinar.

Speakers said hypertension causes increased risks of cardiovascular diseases and related mortality in manifolds.

"But, shortage of hypertension medicine at healthcare centres remains a big concern.

Medicine and treatment must be made affordable across the country," said GHAII Bangladesh Country Lead Muhammad Ruhul Quddus.

ABM Zubair, executive director of Progga, said, "The WHO recommends allocation of 15 percent of the annual budget of a country for the health sector, whereas in Bangladesh, allocation has been around 5 percent in the last few years."

The government has set a national target of 25 percent reduction in prevalence of raised blood pressure by 2025, as a measure for preventing non-communicable diseases.

Such target calls for mass awareness on the issue coupled with ensuring hypertension treatment and drug supply at all healthcare centres, speakers said.

First death anniversary of Hasan Shahriar

CITY DESK

Today is the first death anniversary of eminent journalist Hasan Shahriar, former president of Jatiya Press Club.

On this day in 2021, he died at a private hospital in Dhaka.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and a doa mahfil will be held at his residences at Segunbagicha, Dhaka and at Hasannagar, Sunamganj, said a press release.

Hasan retired from the editor post of Bangla daily the Ittefaq in 2008. He was the first editor of English daily the Daily Sun and chief editor of

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Commuters walk past huge heaps of garbage overflowed on the street in front of Gausia market. Due to the authority's inattention, shop-owners get away with dumping shopping bags and scrapped clothes on the open road. This adds to the congestion in the busy street, as the pedestrians have to walk in the middle of the road to get past the area, with high risk of accidents. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Minimum Fitra Tk 75

UNB, Dhaka

This year, the minimum Fitra has been fixed at Tk 75 per person while the maximum is Tk 2,310.

Fitra is an obligatory charity distributed to the poor at the end of Ramadan. The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Fitra Fixing Committee yesterday.

PRAYER TIMING



APRIL 10					
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:25	12:45	4:45	6:22	7:45	
JAMAAT 4:35	1:15	5:00	6:32	8:15	

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IFTAR
8	10		6:22
9	11	4:19	6:22
10	12	4:18	6:23

Don't want dev at nature's expense

Say speakers at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing development has been putting pressure on the environment, ravaging nature and shrinking spaces for healthy living, and thus imperilling posterity, said speakers yesterday.

They were speaking at a webinar titled "Life Exposed to Threat due to Environmental Pollution", organised by Movement for World Education Rights.

AHM Saadat, professor of environmental science department at Jahangirnagar University, said this is high time to ponder over development that has harmful impacts on people's life. He said development that is putting people and environment at risk is not development at all. It not only poses threat to human life, but also puts the economy at risk.

"Dhaka residents lose five to seven years of their longevity to pollution. We can't call this development," he said.

Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder, head of environmental science department at Stamford University, and Prof Mani Lal Aich Litu, departmental head of ENT and head-neck surgery at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital, also spoke.