

Economist and professor Mahbub Hossain passes away

Senior Correspondent, bdnews24.com



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Renowned economist Dr Mahbub Hossain has passed away.

He breathed his last at 2:45am Bangladesh time on Monday.

He was under treatment for bypass surgery and valve transplantation at Cleveland Hospital, USA. He was 71.

Dr Hossain left behind his wife, two daughters and a son.

Besides being an advisor of the executive director of BRAC, Mahbub Hossain was a distinguished Professor and Chairperson of the Economics and Social Science department of BRAC University.

The former director of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Mahbub Hossain, was renowned for his research and scholarly writings on Agronomics (Agricultural Economics) and his innovative approach to agricultural development.

For his contributions to the agricultural development of Bangladesh, he was awarded a gold medal from the Bangladesh Agricultural Economist Association in 1984.

Known for his brilliance, the eminent economist also served as head of the Social Science division of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), besides being executive director of BRAC and director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

In the course of his career, he inspired many young minds, especially with his brilliance in the articulation of macro-economic analyses, path-breaking research work, leadership in agricultural innovation and deep empathy for marginalised people.

In his earlier life, after completing his Masters in Economics from Dhaka University, Hossain obtained his PhD from the Cambridge University.

Before long, he had published several research articles in international journals and written a series of books.

His books include 'Asian Rice Bowls, The Returning Crisis?', 'Rice Research in Asia: Progress and Prospects', 'Impact of Rice Research in Asia', 'Strategy of Development in Bangladesh', and 'Rural Economy and Livelihoods Insights from Bangladesh'.

The global magazine of politics and economics, 'The Foreign Policy', featured him in their list of 500 most prominent individuals in the international arena. Even before that, he had become an icon in his own country.

Hossain had been suffering from a heart disease for two years when he was flown to the USA in December 2015.

He was being operated on when his heart stopped beating.

On Hossain's demise, BRAC founder and Chairperson Fazle Hasan Abed said, "Very few people globally had such depth of understanding of development issues. Dr. Mahabub Hossain's life was a story of success against all odds. He had a persistent focus on creating opportunities for the poor."

His research, over many decades, on the proliferation of innovation in agriculture and on the improvement of the livelihood of marginalised farmers has been path breaking.

In the words of Fazle Hasan Abed, “We, his BRAC family, mourn today this irreparable loss with his friends, family and many people he touched during his life dedicated to public service.”