METROPOLITAN/NEWS

Major change in policy a must to strengthen local govt

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion vesterday recommended a radical policy change including decentralisation of administration and formation of an independent finance commission to strengthen the local government and institutionalise the democracy.

They said concentration of political power in the capital has frustrated the local leaders over the years depriving the grassroots people of their democratic rights. The discussion was held follow-

ing a presentation on 'Current State of Local Government in Bangladesh' organised by Democratic Local Government Programme (DLGP) at its office in the city

The programme is supported by US Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Research Triangle

Institute (RTI) of USA. Terming the local government issue as a national problem, Awami League (AL) lawmaker Dr Abdur Razzak said the MPs always want to

expose their power to those who elect them. "This prompts them to make commitments for local proiects." he added. added

The local leaders also want allocations for such projects from the MPs that pave the way for some money for them, said Abdur Razzak who is also AL Agriculture Affairs Secretary.

"Fifty percent of the allocations for village level projects are distributed as per the dictation of the Prime Minister's Office." he noted. Razzak observed that a national level consensus should be reached

on the local government to bring about a real change for strengthening democracy and developing the country.

Prof Mahabbat Khan of Dhaka University said the concept and the role of local government should be made very clear to people. "Local government now is neither 'local' nor 'government'. It has no power to generate resources, fully dependent on the central policy makers," he

A radical change ensuring the formation of a finance commission for the local government is needed to make it independent. "Otherwise, the MPs will not be interested in local government," he added.

Presenting his research on Stakeholder Analysis and Institutional Mapping of Local Government' for DLGP-USAID. Dr Habibur Rahman said 77 percent of the respondents want a radical change in the local government.

The research, conducted in nine districts including Dhaka, reveals that overall support for elected local

government has declined from 92 percent to 65 percent, while the interest on the issue among the political leaders, civil society and civil servants declined dramatically. Dr Rahman, professor of Public Administration at University of South Pacific in Fiji, said the respondents suggested discussions within the political parties, debate in the civil society, lobbying through local government caucus and conducting more research and advocacy for major policy changes.

Durafshan H Chowdhury, senior programme manager of the United Nations Capital Development Fund and Taleya Rehman of DemocracyWatch also spoke. Later. Todd M Sorenson officially

launched the three-year DLGP-USAID programme that will work in 70 union parishads and 15 municipalities in Northwest and Southwest parts of the country.



A mobile team of the environment directorate measures emission of black smoke from a bus at Tejgaon area in the city yesterday.

Unlike him, Jahanara, a 35-year-old

housewife addicted to heroin, came

to the rehab centre of her own volition

and partly because of the repeated

coaxing by her school-going daugh-

ter to quit the habit. Jahanara's drug

abuse started 15 years ago, when

she was in college. First she would

take Phensedyl and then shifted to

heroin. Despite trying time and again

during the long 12 years of her mar-

ried life, she could not get rid of the

daughter with me, when I went to buy

heroin. He gave me the address of

this rehab centre and advised to get

admitted to it." she said with tears of

the Department of Narcotics Control

(DNC) or non-government body

knows the exact number of drug

abusers in the country. The DNC is

Since the independence, we

No government agency including

humility rolling down her cheeks.

"A drug-pusher once saw my

FROM PAGE 1

HIV quicksand

Six city hotel staffs shot by extortionists

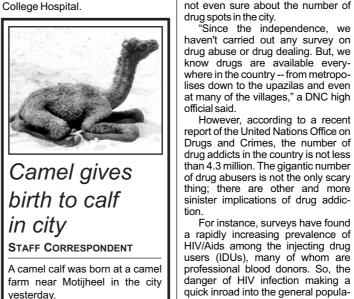
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agang of extortionists opened fire at a hotel last night for non-payment of toll, injuring six staffs at Kakrail in the city. Gias Uddin, manager of Kakrail Green Garden Residential Hotel

said seven to eight youths came to the counter of the hotel on the first floor at 7:30pm in search of him. The extortionists then demanded

toll from him, but Gias refused to pay. "All of a sudden, they started firing," he told reporters.

The indiscriminate firing left six hotel staffs injured. The wounded were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital



een given

looks after the farm.

time of importing from India.

Mahbube Khoda, owner of the

farm, imported 12 camels in 2004

and their number has now

increased to 37, sources said.

'Shaurav'.

danger of HIV infection making a quick inroad into the general population is obvious, considering the The newborn male calf has country mainly relies on professional

Judges defer agitation on assurance

The Daily Star

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Judicial Service Association (BJSA) yesterday postponed its next scheduled agitation following an assurance from the law ministry to meet its 11point demand.

The BJSA led by its President Mohammad Rafigul Islam and newly elected Secretary General Ataur Rahman met the Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Barrister Moudud Ahmed at his ministry around 3:00pm and placed their demands.

Following a long discussion. Moudud gave assurance to meet the BJSA's demands. The minister also told them the government would take necessary steps to meet the rest of the demands as the government had earlier met some of their demands, BJSA sources said.

PHOTO: STAR

pills, and Nalban in addition to the

injecting drugs like pathedrin, mor-

phine, Tidigesic, Monogesic and

drugs like Ecstasy tablet, cocaine

and LSD in Dhaka. But they are really

hard to get for a non-addict, who does

not know the cocaine chain." said an

addict coming from an affluent family

who had recently enrolled in a rehab

Contrary to the common percep-

tion that drug addicts mostly com-

prise of uneducated lower-class

people and delinquent upper-class

vouths, people from almost all the

professions are represented in the

"Apart from rickshaw-pullers, sex

workers, petty criminals and stu-

dents, many times we caught univer-

sity teachers, government officials

and employees, engineers, physi-

cians, businessmen, musicians,

iournalists, policemen and so on

taking drugs," said DNC Director

A recent survey of CARE covering

a number of districts revealed the age

group of drug abusers ranges from

social disease that has seized people

of all ages and all socio-economic

classes," observed a teacher of

osychology at the Dhaka University.

ringing for the nation, when the sixth

ound of National HIV Serological

Surveillance, 2004-05 reported that

as high as 7.1 percent of the IDUs in

the capital tested HIV positive. This

was the highest HIV prevalence rate

recorded so far among the vulnerable

groups sampled, which experts

The disease set alarm bells

"It's not only a crime but also a

"You can also get the costlier

Bunogesic.

programme

category

Mofazzal Hossain

0 to 41 years.

The extended meeting in the Judges Conference Room of Dhaka district court, chaired by the District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, judges from districts across the country put forward their opinions about the next course of action if the government did not meet their 11-point demand.

The judges observed a token protest against the government's delay in meeting their 11-point demand on January 15-17. The judges wore black badges during the court proceedings in those three days and vowed to go for tougher movement if the government failed to meet all their demands by January 29.

The January 29 meeting was postponed considering the Biswa jtema and the BJSA had rescheduled it for yesterday.

BJSA's demands include providing personal gunmen, tax-free vehicles and firearms for all the judges, guards at judges' residences across the country and compensation of Tk 50 lakh to each of the families of the slain judges in Jhalakati bomb attack on November 14 last year.

The government has met some of their demands but has not taken any steps for meeting the rest BJSA sources said.

In addition to their 11-point demand, BJSA placed a three-point demand to the prime minister on December 21 at their 55th annual conference. These include appointing assistant judges to the vacant posts, giving the district and sessions judges the status of joint secretary and appointing 50 percent of the High Court judges from the lower courts.

Two killed in city accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

consider to be a concentrated epi-Two people were killed in separate incidents in the city vesterday.

Move on to create non-secular state Says Shantu Larma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous people are still loosing their land because of planned and politically motivated Bengali settle ment in the indigenous areas of the country, said Jotirindra Bodhipriya Larma popularly known as Shantu Larma, Chairman, CHT Regional Council, at a book launching cerenony in the city yesterday.

The move to establish one reli-PHOTO: STAR gion, one language and one culture CPB President Manzurul Ahsan started in Bangladesh with a view to Khan presents a bouquet to veteran forming a non-secular state in an woman leader Hena Das on her 82nd autocratic manner, he said. birthday at the party office in the city

The rights of indigenous people won't be established until a democratic, secular and progressive government runs the country. He was addressing as a special

guest at the launching ceremony of a book titled "The Garos: Struggling to Survive in the Valley of Death" at Planning and Development Academy in the city. He said 80 per cent Garos have

no additional land except their living land and the extinction of Garos has already started in the country. Sanjib Drong, secretary, Bangladesh Adibashi Forum, said

Veteran woman leader Hena Das Garos have a country where they yesterday called on all to unite don't enjoy any right. against the anti-liberation forces Terming population settlement a who are now part of the ruling alliserious violation of human rights, ance, and launch a massive move-

Sanjib said the settlement of Bengali Muslims started in 1950 and in the

last 56 years Garos become the minority in their main land with only 15 percent population 14 students of Dhaka University.

Rajshahi University, Chittagong University and Holy Cross College conducted the research and wrote the book

The book says that Garos were very much apolitical but politics has been inserted into them in order to divide them as the British did.

Todd M Sorenson, Director, Office of Democracy. Government and Education, USAID, Bangladesh, unveiled the cover of the book as chief guest. Susan Ward. Chief of Party, Academy for Educational Development (AED) Prof HKS Arefin of Anthropology Department, Dhaka University, Prof Dr Mizanur Rahman and Executive Director of ELCOP spoke at the function, presided over by Prof Mustafizur Rahman

The 303-page book was pubished by Empowerment Through Law of the Common People (ELCOP) and is available at Tk 330.

JS passes censure motion BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday unanimously passed a censure motion with amendment, protesting the cartoons on Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) published in a Danish newspaper and other newspapers in the West.

People, irrespective of religion, cast and creed, have been hurt by the publication of the cartoons, said the motion strongly condemning the act.

It also hoped that the respective countries would take punitive actions against their newspapers for their acts that offended the sentiments of the Muslims

Alhaj Nurul Islam Moni raised the censure motion in the House. Awami League lawmaker Suraniit Sengupta brought an amendment to the proposal.

Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami, Sarder Sakhawat Hossain Bakul, Mohammad Nasim KM Jahangir Hossain, Zahiruddin Swapan, Shahjahan Khan, State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharref Hossain Shahiahan, Col (Retd) Faruk Khan, Vice-principal Abdus Shaheed and Delwar Hossain Saidee took part in the discussion on the motion

100 illegal structures

CARTOONS ON PROPHET

Γhρ socialism and non-communal politics is yet to be fulfilled for which we fought against the British and Pakistani rule," she said at a programme marking her 82nd birthday. "After the assassination of

ment to restore the original constitu-

yesterday.

forces'

tion of 1972.

'Unite against

anti-liberation

Hena Das celebrated

82nd birthday of

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, we have been fighting against military rule and autocracy and now against militancy," she added.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) organised the programme to celébrate the birthday of Hena Das at its office at Purana Paltan in the city. CPB President Manzurul Ahsan

Khan said Hena Das took part in all progressive movements, including anti-British movement, language movement and the liberation war.

Sultana Kamal of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) said, "Hena Das is a source of inspiration for us and we want to move ahead following her footsteps.

Different organisations including Gono Forum, Committee to Eliminate the Killers and Collaborators of the Liberation War Chhatra Union, Left Democratic Front, Bangladesh Krishak Samity, Udichi Shilpa Goshthi, Bangladesh Shikhhak Samity, Nijera kori and Steps Towards Development offered floral tributes to Hena Das and wished her a long life.

Prof Muntasir Mamun, Dr Ajoy Roy and MM Akash also extended best wishes to her.

Nepali student loses certificates

A Nepali student lost her educational certificates at a bus counter in the city on Friday, says a press release

Bina Shrestha, a student of University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC), arrived in Dhaka from Chittagong by a night coach in the early hours of Friday

When she was waiting at the bus counter at Kalabagan for transport to reach her destination, she lost her suitcase containing some valuable documents.

The documents include citizenship card of Nepal, school leaving certificate. Indian school certificate MBBS certificates from USTC, and BMDC registration certificate.

A general diary has been filed with Dhanmondi Police Station



Special talk

4:30pm

Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises a

special talk on 'Chronology and

Environment of Early Man in South Asia

with Prof SN Rajaguru of Deccan College,

Pune, India as keynote speaker. Venue:

Seminar room of the Society. Time

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of a book titled

'Reflections on Diversity and Citizenship:

Bangladesh and Beyond' edited by

Mesbah Kamal will be held. Venue: Cirdap

Open discussion

Women Entrepreneurs Academy organises an open discussion on 'Potential sectors for women entrepreneurs'. Venue: Biswa Sahitya Kendra. Time: 10:00am.

Seminar on cinema Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) organises a seminar on 'Representing Asia in colonial and post-colonial cinema' with David Hanan of Monash University, Australia as keynote speaker. Venue: IUB Baridhara campus. Time:

3:45pm. Stakeholders

UNB. Dhaka

6:00pm today

temperature.

Citv/Town

Chittagong

Rajshahi

Khulna

Barisal

Sylhet

Cox's Bazar

Dhaka

6:32am tomorrow.

major cities and towns yesterday were

meeting Cake festival Centre for Women and Children Studies (CWCS) organises a 'Stakeholders' meeting for effective law enforcement of Saarc convention on trafficking'. Venue: CWCS, New Eskaton, Time: 10:00am,



WEATHER TODAY

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours till

early morning, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged night

at Chittagong and lowest 11.3 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

Temperature

in Celsius

Max

31.1

32.5

30.0

31.0

30.2

31.8

32.0

Light fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during

Highest temperature 32.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday

The sun sets in the capital at 5:52pm today and rises at

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some

Min

16.0

16.0

14.5

16.6

15.4

16.0

16.5

Humidity in

percentage

55

55

90

86

90

49

52

Morning Evening

55

58

61

60

73

40

Dry weather likely

auditorium. Time: 3:00pm



BSS. Chittagong

Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) on the first day of its threeday drive demolished nearly 100 unauthorised structures at Andarkilla, Nowab Sirajuddowla Road and Karpashgola in the city vesterdav.

The authority started the drive to expand road from Andarkilla to Karpashgola Crossing up to 60-feet at a cost of Tk 26 crore, the CDA officials said.

The eviction drive began led by CDA Magistrate Tahera Ferdous under the direct supervision of CDA Chairman Eng. Shah Mohammad Aktheruddin

AL leader Imamuddin passes away

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Language Movement veteran, Awami League advisory committee member and former parliament member Imamuddin Ahmed succumbed to his injuries at the Sikder Medical College Hospital in the city vesterday at the age of 75.

He had been undergoing treatment at hospital after he suffered severe injuries in his head in an accident in Faridpur on February 8. He was first admitted to Faridpur General Hospital from where he was shifted to the Sikder Medical. He was operated upon at the Sikder Medical.

AL central leaders rushed to the Sikder Medical hearing his death news and expressed their deep condolences. They also consoled the members of bereaved family.

His first namaz-e- janaza was held on the AL central office premises before taken the body to his home district Faridour.

AL central leaders, including Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed and Obaidul Kader, attended the janaza. They also placed wreaths at the coffin on behalf of the party President Sheikh Hasina.

He is survived by his wife, two sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death

Hasina expressed her deep shock at the death of Imamuddin.

the name 0 blood donors to meet its bloodtransfusion needs.

"It is the first case in camel In the recent past, the police breeding where the mother camel wiped out a number of drug spots in became pregnant in this country." the city but could not do away with said Syed Mehdi Hasan who drug dealing. Drug barons have invented alternative ways of drug Earlier, four other camels gave pushing, like taking orders over cellphone and delivering the narcotbirth to four calves in the same ics to clients at inconspicuous renfarm named Babe Madina Camel dezvous. Farm. They were pregnant at the

Some new drugs also have joined the league. Yaba tablet and Sinkara syrup are being increasingly abused in addition to the popular drugs including cannabis, heroin, Phensedvl. hashish or charas. opium, sedatives and hallucinogenic

The survey report said approximately 44 percent of the female IDUs were street-based sex workers. some 82 percent of whom had shared needles/syringes while taking drugs in the previous six months. They constitute the group that has a direct HIV-transferring link with the general population.

demic.

The findings of the survey reiterate the warning issued by its forerunners that time is running out fast for Bangladesh to act to prevent the concentrated epidemic from spreading to other social sections and thus pull the nation out of the drug-HIV quicksand it is sinking into.

A speedy passenger bus ran over Matiur Rahman. 35. a commuter, at Savdabad leaving him dead on the spot while he was crossing the road at 2:00pm.

Demra Police sent the body to Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy

Meanwhile, Momtaz Hossain, 36 a labourer of Kamalapur Internal Container Depot (ICD), was killed as a crane of 40 tonnes hit him.

The accident occurred when Momtaz was standing behind the crane at 3:00 pm. The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Govt blames hoarders as boro wilts Obituary

FROM PAGE 1 night Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman blamed hoarding and black marketing of diesel for the current crisis and said, "We've convened a meeting of all the stakeholders tomorrow [Monday] to go deep into the issue.

While Mahmudur Rahman denies any supply dearth of diesel from the government's part, Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers-Distributors Agents and Petrol Pump Owners Association President Md Nazmul Hoque claimed, "We're not getting enough from the government to meet the market demand.'

"There may be some hoarding practices here and there, but the supply shortage from the government is the main crux of the problem. The government should identify and publicise the names of black marketeers and hoarders so that we can take punitive actions." he said.

While the policymakers and trading circles remain busy with holding meetings and making plans after plans, time is running out fast for farmers to irrigate their paddy fields. Experts expressed the fear of a drastic fall in boro output if the farmers fail to operate the irrigation pumps due to lack of diesel and power.

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud's commitment to provide irrigation pumps with uninterrupted power at least eight hours a day fell flat as many of the northern farmers have been forced to shut pumps due to damages caused by low voltage and frequent power outage. Iqbal on February 7 told a review meeting with PDB and REB officials at Rajshahi that eight-hour power supply to irrigation pumps would be guaranteed.

But the ground reality is the oppo-

site. Most farmers in the northern district of Dinajpur are complaining of getting electricity supply for only two hours at a stretch, as against a daily minimum requirement of eight to 10 hours of uninterrupted power, reports our correspondent Kongkon Karmaker.

"Most irrigation pumps have remained inoperative for frequent fluctuations of electricity," Tazim Uddin, a local farmer alleged to The Dailv Star.

Besides, most of the diesel-run pumps also remain inoperative due to the shortage of the fuel. Department of Agriculture Extension sources apprehend if this situation continues the production of boro will be greatly hampered in the district during this season.

Our Bogra correspondent Hasibur Rahman reports, against a daily requirement of 18 lakh litres of diesel in the northern region, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) is able to provide six lakh litres

Our Rangpur correspondent Rafique Sarker reports that all the filling stations in Rangpur and the adjoining districts are running short of fuels as the depots of the three staterun distribution companies could not supply diesel, petrol and octane for two days, putting irrigation of boro fields at serious problem.

Hundreds of lorries from across Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha and different upazilas of Rangpur district waiting at Padma, Jumuna and Meghna depots in Rangpur have failed to get any fuel.

A Padma Oil official preferring anonymity told this correspondent that the BPC supplied two rakes containing 24 wagons of diesel to three depots of the three companies

two weeks ago. But by now the stock has almost dried up.

Rangpur Chamber of Commerce and Industries President Mostafa Azad Chowdhury Babu, who also owns a filling station, demanded an investigation into the fuel crisis.

He said the BPC dealers in the northern districts are not getting fuels, while some people are selling those at rural markets illegally

Meanwhile, a huge number of electric motors used in the irrigation pumps burnt down due to frequent power interruption, our Gaibandha correspondent Rezaul Hag reports.

According to the Power Development Board (PDB), the overall power supply to the northern zone aggravated as the 125 MW thermal power unit at Baropukuria, 100 MW plant at Baghabari and another private-sector unit went out of order due to mechanical troubles during this peak boro season.

While visiting Baghabari Ghat in Sirajganj yesterday, a Daily Star correspondent saw a large number of tank-lorries standing in a long queue waiting for fuel, while most of the consumers were seen going back empty handed, failing to purchase fuel from shops and filling station in

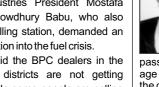
the district They complained some filling station owners were asking prices inflated by Tk 5 to as high as Tk 30 per litre for diesel and petrol

anniversary of Abdus Salam, The Bangladsh Observer and a Language Movement

veteran, says a press release. On the occasion, a milad mahfil

will be held at House No-2/3, Bloc-D, Lalmatia in the city after Maghrib prayers today.

Relatives and colleagues have been requested attend the milad.



Hossain, a social worker and former general secretarv of All Pakistan Women's

Meher Afroze

Association passed away on Friday due to old age ailments at Apollo Hospitals in the city at the age of 80, says a press

release She was the wife of Delwar Hossain, a senior most retired officer of erstwhile Police Service of Pakistan

She left behind one son and two daughters.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at Baridhara Jame Masjid after asr prayers tomorrow while gulkhwani will be held at The Trellis, House no-8, Dutabash Road, Baridhara after Maghrib prayers on Thursday.

Death anniversary

Today is the 29th death former editor of