

SAVE DHAKA

CIVIC AMENITIES: Part -6

DESA: Old wine in a new bottle!

By Reaz Ahmed and Masud Arif

The power supply situation in the city seems to have improved little even after the emergence of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) in October 1991 because the major factors that impeded any tangible progress in this regard still remain there.

The DESA took over the power distribution network in about 7473 sq km area of greater Dhaka zone.

Unabated pilferage of electricity in the name of so-called system loss, existence of self-billing system, illegal power connections, delay in the disposal of cases in this regard, corrupt practices by a section of DESA employees, metre tampering and age-old power lines — are some of the major impediments.

The system loss is presently 30.18 per cent, said a senior official of the DESA. The loss was 38.26 per cent when the DESA took over charge from Power Development Board.

An expert of the DESA, however, said that system loss actually meant 'technical loss' caused due to resistance in the lines. The DESA suffers 15 per cent such technical loss, he added.

The rest is actually 'revenue loss' which is also included in the overall system loss. Non-payment of electricity bills by illegal connection holders and avoiding payment of full amount by consumers who enjoy the self-billing facility constitute the 'revenue loss' portion of system loss.

"These are not system losses in the real terms, rather one can call these pilferage. Some 30,000 domestic consumers in the city's posh Gulshan, Bardidhara, Uttara and Dhanmondi areas enjoy self billing system, which is something unique," said a senior official of the DESA.

Taking advantage of the self-billing, many consumers pay bills much lower than the actual metre reading and after a certain period when the amount becomes big they try

to replace the metre by another one, the official said. "I cannot deny the involvement of a section of DESA staff in this unfair practice," he added, requesting anonymity.

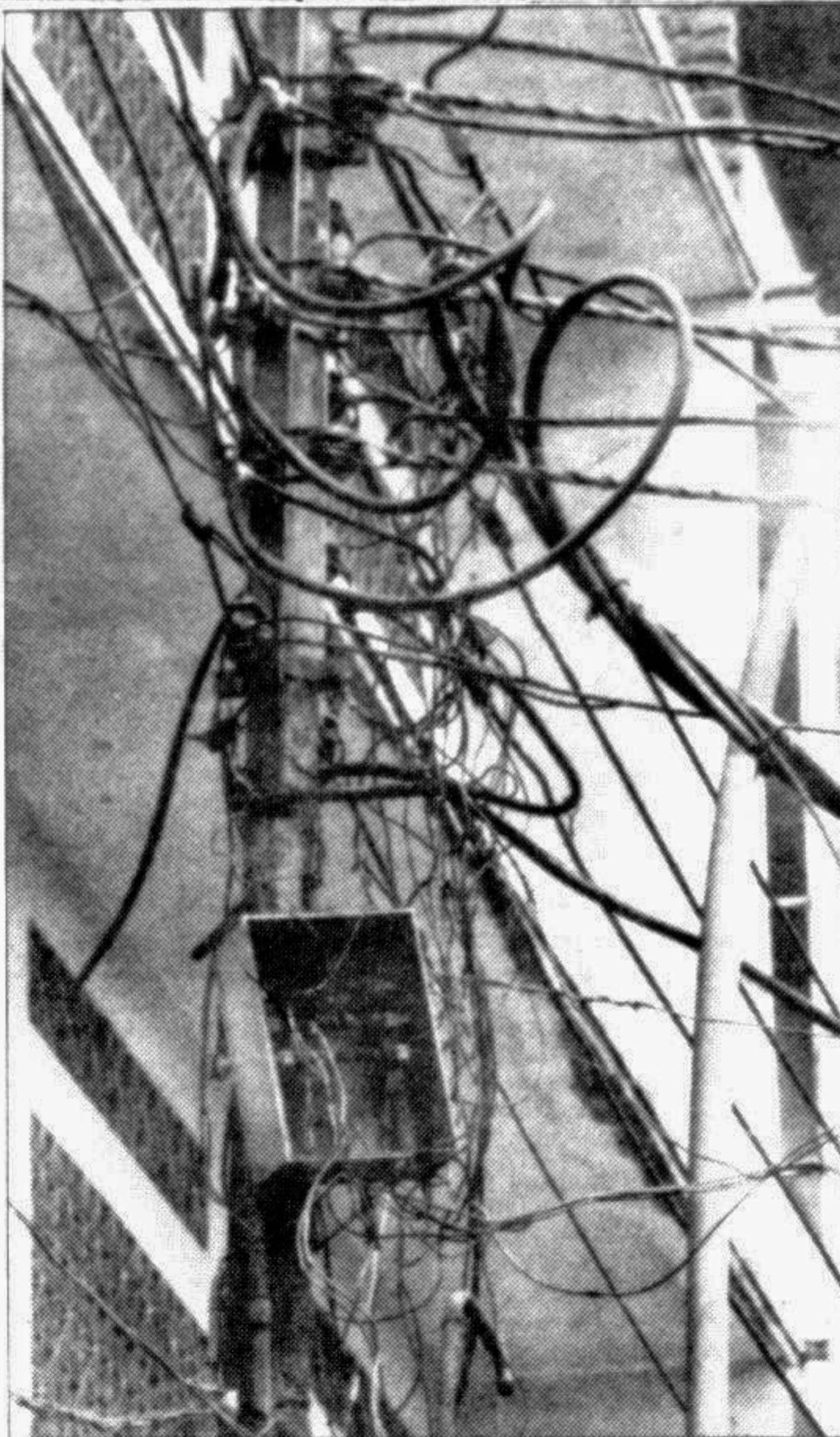
The DESA authorities have already recommended to the ministry concerned to replace the self-billing system since it is causing a huge revenue loss, sources said. The DESA is not permitting any new customer in those areas to have the self-billing facility. In addition, the authorities are cancelling this facility of the customers who are proved to have avoided the actual metre reading.

About illegal connections, DESA sources said the slum-dwellers are the main beneficiaries of this malpractice. They have a device of their own to take electricity to their dwellings at night time. The authorities have mobile inspection teams to keep vigil on such unauthorised connections. These teams do routine duty and sometimes make special drive.

"People enjoying illegal connections are so organised that our inspection teams sometimes cannot even enter their premises due to strong resistance. These groups are very strong in some areas of Mirpur," a senior official said.

The cases of illegal connections and other irregularities are dealt with by four magistrate's courts of the DESA. According to DESA sources, 86 cases out of 249 were disposed of by one of the courts in April last alone. In these cases, 16 people were awarded imprisonment and 41 fined, three cases were withdrawn and 21 dismissed.

The city dwellers almost everyday experience power load shedding. It is caused because the supply of power that DESA gets from the PDB is not sufficient to requirement of its four lakh consumers, sources said. The optimum demand in the greater Dhaka city is 841 megawatt (MW)



ELECTRIC CONNECTIONS GALORE: Several electric connections have been taken from a single electric pole in Dhanmondi. A number of them are reportedly illegal. The cable box cover is also missing. — Star photo by Enamul Huq

whereas DESA can provide hardly 600 MW per day.

DESA sources said, they get load shedding estimates from the PDB every morning and accordingly they chalk out a plan for the day when and where to shed load.

Load shedding occurred in the whole of May except on two days — May 14 and 15. "The maximum 144 mw of power was shed on May 7 and in addition to that, PDB shed 115 mw by direct switch off," a DESA source said.

Director (Planning and Development) of the DESA AB Shaha told The Daily Star that if the consumers became more responsive to the government's Load Management Policy, their sufferings would reduce to some extent.

He hoped that with the completion of the third phase of greater Dhaka Power Distribution Project by December this year, the power supply situation would improve considerably.

Serbs free 108 UN peacekeepers

NOVI SAD, Yugoslavia, June 7: Bosnia's rebel Serbs released 108 peacekeepers early Wednesday, and Serbia's president said he thought the nearly 150 remaining UN hostages would be freed within days, reports AP.

Two buses carrying the freed hostages crossed the Bosnian border into Serbia shortly after 1 am (2300 GMT Tuesday). They then headed to Novi Sad, a town about 50 kilometers (30 miles) north of the Serbian and Yugoslav capital Belgrade.

Serbia's security chief, Jovica Stansic, who negotiated the release for two days, said the hoped all the hostages "will be released very soon."

Ivor Roberts, the British charge d'affaires who visited the freed UN peacekeepers in Novi Sad said the group comprised 32 French men, 17 Britons, 58 Ukrainians and one Spaniard.

They were expected to be moved in two groups to Zagreb, the Croatian capital, and Split, an Adriatic port later in the day, Maj William Taylor, a UN spokesman in Zagreb said.

"They are in good spirits considering the very long journey they had" Roberts said in Novi Sad.

Dhaka for stronger multinational force in Bosnia

Bangladesh yesterday renewed its call for a strong multinational force to halt the continuous Serbian aggression against Bosnia Herzegovina, reports UNB.

The international community must act now to deter Serbian attack, a spokesman of the Minister of Foreign Affairs said.

Briefing newsmen on Dhaka's position on the situation in the war-torn Balkan peninsula, he said that the Peace Plan, already agreed by all parties concerned except Serbia, must be fully implemented to bring about a lasting solution to the problem.

Hartal observed at N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, June 7: A half-day hartal was observed in Narayanganj town today to protest the killing of two AL activists, Afzal Hussain and Murad Hussain were killed by unknown assailants on June 5.

Normal life was paralysed as all modes of transport off the roads. Most shops and business organisations were closed.

At least 100 cocktails were exploded in different parts of the town. One policeman was injured. Road communication with Narayanganj remained cut off while train services were normal.

AL memo

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Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at a press conference on Monday presented the alternative proposal for registration of voters through easy process.

She called the present voters' registration process as complicated and unrealistic which she feared would deprive thousands of people of exercising their right of franchise.

Meanwhile, a group of expatriate Bangladeshis residing in UK met the CEC and demanded that the expatriate Bangladeshis be registered as voters.

Dewan Gaus Sultana, organising secretary of the Awami League UK unit, submitted a memorandum on behalf of the expatriate Bangladeshis.

The CEC, assured them of taking steps to enlist them in the electoral roll.

PM: Edn week

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She said the government distributed 8.21 crore text books among the primary school students this year. Simultaneously, programmes have also been taken up for the improvement of standard of education, teachers' training and reforms of the academic administration.

Begum Zia distributed medals, cheques and certificates among the teachers, students and officials for their remarkable contribution to spreading the primary and mass education.

Among those who received the awards consisting of medal, certificate and cheques were three best teachers at the national level and 65 best teachers at the district level.

The three best national teachers are: Saleha Begum of Nababganj Government Primary School in Dhaka city, Upendra Chandra Bhoomik of Rasulganj Government Primary School in Habiganj district and Md Mosharrar Hossain of Bherbheri Government Primary School in Nilphamari.

ANM Azgar Hossain of Ramu Central Government Primary School was adjudged the best cub teacher.

Besides, one officer of Feni district primary education office, the TNO of Shibhalaya and three assistant thana education officers of Dhaka, Barisal and Khulna divisions received awards for the contribution in the field of education.

Fifteen students were awarded medals for securing first, second and third positions in different competitions.

Patarhat Government Primary School in Mehendiganj of Barisal, West Bhauraura government primary school of Sreemangal in Moulvibazar, Amanatganj ward committee of Barisal sadar and Kathaltala government primary school under Morelganj of Bagerhat district got awards as best school, best cub organisation, best ward committee and best school managing committee respectively.

The Midnight File

UN pullout from Bosnia will be disaster: Perry

WASHINGTON, June 7: Pulling United Nations peacekeepers out of Bosnia would lead to "humanitarian disaster," Defence Secretary William Perry told Congress Tuesday. A leading Republican called for massive US intervention if UN forces are endangered. With 1,500 US soldiers en route to a base near Bosnia, Perry and Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, described in detail how those forces might be used if the United Nations peacekeepers face a crisis and request evacuation, reports AP.

Hasina at city rally

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shad and his Jatiya Party in a bid to cling to power, ignoring public agitation against it, she alleged.

Referring to the BNP's recent offer for dialogue, Hasina said they always called for dialogue but forgot it when they appointed the Chief Election Commissioner unilaterally. How could they realise the need for talks as they were busy conspiring to rig the polls? she asked.

Repeating her allegation that the BNP men earned Taka 400 crore from the recent fertiliser scandal, the AL president said the country would face a food shortage next year and the following years would bear the impact of the crisis.

Accusing the present government of failing to realise the due share of the Ganges waters from India, Hasina reiterated that if voted to power, her party would ensure the country's due share of the waters.

Cellular phones

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national newspaper following the expiry of Hutchison's exclusive operation rights for five years.

Hutchison Telecom had obtained the right to operate a cellular or mobile telephone system in the country from a company called Bangladesh Telecom Limited (BTL).

BTL got the licence on July 25, 1989, to operate cellular telephones, paging, rivering and radio trunking system in Bangladesh for 20 years, including a five-year monopoly right.

The monopoly period having expired on July 25, 1994, the T&T Board floated international tenders inviting more firms to operate cellular radio telephone system.

Thirty-two local and foreign firms submitted tenders but the T&T Board could not dispose of them due to an injunction given by the court.

Phool Banu

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Later, four days after the Eid, Rahima was informed that her daughter was alive and remained confined at a brothel in Jamalpur town. On February 26, with the help of her mother, police recovered Phool Banu from the brothel and sent her to jail custody.

The madam of the brothel, Selina Begum, told police that a rickshawpuller had sold Phool Banu to her for Tk 3000.

Finally, Phool Banu was released on bail on Monday. While releasing her, magistrate Mostaq Ahmed directed the police to find out the actual identity of body of the girl buried earlier.

Referring to the reported allegations against her party of being pro-Indian, Hasina said during her recent visit to different areas of the country, she saw that said Indian goods were being smuggled unabated and "We found border areas flooded with Indian commodities." The northern region was turning into a desert due to the lack of Ganges waters, she said. The PM sold out the country to India by signing an anti-national agreement with that country. Now people have understood who are the agents of India," she said.

Regarding the 7th June, the AL chief said that the 1966 movement for six-point demand under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman culminated in the nation's struggle for independence.

"But the leader of the independence war was killed in 1975 to destroy the spirit and ideals of the war," she said.

Addressing the rally, AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman said that they would not let the BNP blame the AL for failure of a dialogue, if held without any specific agenda.

Mayor of Dhaka Mohammad Hanif said that they would not accept any fresh voters' list unless it was endorsed by the AL chief.

Revised MOU

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Women and Children's affairs, he added. All sides agreed to initiate an all out effort to create a sufficiently large fund for the proposed rehabilitation programme with a large contribution from the BGMEA, the source noted.

A BGMEA source said that the Association's negotiating team led by Redwan Ahmed would be able to sign the revised MOU if it is formulated within the ambit of the resolutions passed at its extra-ordinary general meeting on May 17.

At that meeting, the BGMEA members rejected the earlier draft MOU and unilaterally announced the total elimination of child labour from the garment sector by October 31 next. This prompted negotiations for a revised MOU and the present round of talks, Wednesdays' meeting was the third in the series.

The BGMEA's rejection of the earlier MOU also prompted a US umbrella organisation, the Child Labour Coalition, to threaten to launch a boycott campaign against Bangladeshi garments in the American market. But it later postponed the campaign when negotiations for a revised MOU was initiated.

Nat'l Craft Award introduced

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday announced the introduction of National Craft Award for the exporters of crafts to promote the sector, reports UNB.

The award will be instituted from this year to give state honour to the best craft exporters every year, in addition to the President Export Trophy.

Begum Zia made the announcement while inaugurating a two-day National Crafts Exhibition-95 organised jointly by the Export Promotion Bureau and Banglacraft at Sonargaon Hotel in the evening.

SAPTA to take off ahead of schedule

The South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) is likely to take off ahead of the schedule, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman yesterday said the implementation of SAPTA would start before its scheduled time, December 8 this year.

JP, BNP akin: Manju

From Page 1

general elections. "I am not opposed to negotiation aimed at getting out of the prevailing political impasse," he said, adding that till date there has been no positive initiative from the government to end the crisis.

Replying to a query, he said he was aware of some kind of communication from the Commonwealth Secretary General with the leaders of the government party and the Opposition. But it is yet to take a positive turn to resolve the longstanding crisis.

About the opposition's future plans, the JP Secretary General said everything largely depended on the government's position about a caretaker government and future elections.

Asked if there was any negotiation or understanding between the ruling BNP and his party, the new JP secretary general said, "I'm not aware of it. I've seen it in the papers. I'll welcome it if there is any."

But he said no understanding is possible without the release of former president Ershad.

Pointing to the politics of the JP and the ruling BNP, Manju said it is not entirely wrong to say that the two parties are closely akin from the ideological point of view.

"We represent the same politics, practically, we have no differences. The only difference we have is one of presentation of our politics, and both the parties are aspiring for power."

He went on to add that the conflict between the BNP and the JP is like "a conflict within a family. Here it is a clash of personalities — who will uphold the politics."

Asked if the JP was planning to form an election alliance with the BNP, Manju said there would not be any electoral alliance with any political party.

In reply to a query on the recent joining of the BNP by several JP MPs, Manju said this might be because of local political and election factors. Those who are joining other parties might have thought that they would not get the JP's nominations for the coming elections.

Cancel voting right of 'war criminals': Nirmul

By Staff Correspondent

Some 85 founder members of the Ekattarer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee and 18 member of its advisory council yesterday demanded cancellation of the voting right of the "war criminals" and of those using religion in politics.

In a joint statement, they urged the ruling and the opposition parties to include the trial of war criminals and banning the religion-based communal politics in their election manifestoes.

They also called for enacting to prevent the 'war criminals' from taking part in the coming elections.

The signatories to the statement include Sufia Kamal, Shawkat Osman, Justice Debesh Battacharya, Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Kalim Sharafi, Gazil Huq, Syed Hasan Imam, Moulana Abdul Awal, Kaiyum Chodhury, Kamal Lohani, Ataus Samad, Hashem Khan, Prof Humayun Ahmed, Hasan Azizul Haq, Shahrier Kabir, Muntasir Mamun, Selim Omrao Khan and Kamal Pasha Chowdhury.

Saifur opposes withdrawal of lock-in period

From Page 1

lio investments and cautioned against seeking a bubble economy. "You will have a smile for minutes but tears for years, if you want a bubble economy."

Sounding upbeat about the prospects of the economy, the minister emphasised the need for empowering the local investors and noted that foreign investors are needed more in a supportive rather than a substituting role.

Morshed Khan, on the other hand, spoke against the present lock-in provisions for foreign investors. "I would support the lock-in provisions, but not the whole hog," he said. "This kind of lock-in is not the type we can afford nor is it desirable."

He suggested keeping the lock-in provision for big companies which command a large percentage of the market capitalisation of the stock market and withdrawing it for buying shares of small companies coming with new issues.

"Any changes in the capital market is sensitive and we should be very, very careful. Let us not close the door in the name of lock-in," he said.

servated that the role of the regulator and the operator should not be in the same hand to ensure competitiveness in the market place.

The SEC Chairman noted that upto March this fiscal, 16 companies were listed in the stock market with a market capitalisation of Tk 2.7 billion, which is a 200 per cent increase over that in 1993-94, when 12 companies were listed with a market capitalisation of Tk 1.2 billion.

He said that a detailed guideline for "full and fair" disclosure procedures for the listed companies are going to be formulated soon.

The DCCI President, in his welcome address, suggested keeping the lock-in provisions in abeyance for a period of at least two years. "The lock-in and gain tax measures had a discouraging effect in the expansion of the capital market which should be resolved without further loss of time," he said.

Maksud Khan called for preparing a master plan for privatisation, involving both the public and private sectors, to make the privatisation drive a success.

Later, presenting a paper in the first session of the seminar, Rajesh Sethi, corporate financier for the Indian Subcontinent of Smith New Court Far East Ltd, said there is no general rule saying that lock-in periods are bad, asserting that the foreign investors can get around it. "The lock-in period is a concern but its not as important as it is made out to be," he added.

The lock-in provision "is a distraction and not a complete no-no for foreign investors, they can just change their strategy," he said. "Every country has its own way of deciding how to move forward."

He listed Bangladesh's attraction as: having a strong corporate culture, a well-developed banking system, international accounting system, simplified tax regime for stock market investment, simplified settlement procedures, attractive share price to earning ratios, low market capitalisation to GDP ratio and good return in previous years.

He went on to list the distractions as: the recent SEC decisions to restrict foreign investment, amplified reports of labour unrest, forthcoming

elections, low savings rate, lack of knowledge about global trends, and the absence of locally conducted research on the capital market.

Sethi identified the low rate of savings as the primary reason holding back the Bangladesh economy, which, he noted, was doing well compared to those of other regional countries. He suggested that the savings rate can be "incentivised" through mutual funds. The foreign fund managers are primarily concerned about the low level of liquidity or supply of good shares in the Bangladesh stock market.

To tackle the liquidity problem, he suggested providing incentives for increased company listings in the stock market and dilution by local financial institutions and mutual funds.

But he singled out privatisation of state-owned entities as the most important avenue to develop the capital market of Bangladesh. Large issues would increase the supply of shares in the market and long-term investments could really boost the stock market, he said.

ঢাকা ওয়াসা জরুরী বিজ্ঞপ্তি

(পানি ব্যবহারে সীমাবদ্ধি হোন। বাজিজে নির্দিষ্ট মাগের জলাধার নির্মাণ করুন)

আপনি কি লক্ষ্য করেছেন?

- পানি ও পয়ঃ অতিক্রমের বকেয়া পরিশোধের নিমিত্ত বিভিন্ন মাধ্যমে তাগিদ দেয়া সত্ত্বেও বকেয়া পরিশোধে ব্যর্থ গ্রাহকদের সংযোগ তাত্ক্ষণিকভাবে বিচ্ছিন্নকরণের জন্য বিশেষ অভিযানের কার্যক্রম আরো জোরদার করা হয়েছে।
 - বিশেষ অভিযানকালে ম্যাজিস্ট্রেটের স্থায়ী ও তামামাণ আদালতের মাধ্যমে প্রচলিত আইনের আওতায় বকেয়া আদায় এবং অন্যান্য অবৈধ কার্যকলাপের বিরুদ্ধে শাস্তিমূলক ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হচ্ছে।
 - ইদের মাস বিবেচনায় গ্রাহকবৃন্দের বিশেষ অনুরোধে হালনাগাদ বকেয়া পরিশোধকারীকে সর্বশেষ ৩০শে জুন '৯৫ইং পর্যন্ত সারচার্জ ব্যতীত বকেয়া পরিশোধের বিশেষ সুবিধা দেয়া হচ্ছে।
- বকেয়া অনাদায়ের কারণে সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন এবং পিডিআর এ্যাক্টের অধীনে মামলার বিড়ম্বনা এড়ানোর নিমিত্ত আজই বকেয়াসহ হালনাগাদ আপনার পানি ও পয়ঃ অতিক্রম পরিশোধ করুন।
- ইতিমধ্যে মে-জুন '৯৫ইং মাসের বিলও জারী করা হচ্ছে। সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন এড়ানোর জন্য বিল পরিশোধের নিমিত্ত প্রয়োজনে ঢাকা ওয়াসার স্ট্রিট রাজস্ব আঞ্চলিক অফিস বা প্রধান রাজস্ব কর্মকর্তা (ফোনঃ ৩২৫২৪০) বা বাণিজ্যিক ব্যবস্থাপক (ফোনঃ ৩২৭২৪৫) অথবা সদস্য (অর্থ) (ফোনঃ ৮১৬৭৯৯) -এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।



আপনাদের সেবায় নিয়োজিত

ওয়াসা ঢাকা ওয়াসা

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