The World Bank Vice President Joseph E Stiglitz called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganabhaban yesterday. — PID photo

## SC reprimands

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On the issue of granting bails to 1200 people, the court noted that "it is almost physically impossible" to deal with so many cases in such a short period.

"We were quite surprised to see from the impugned statement coming as it does from no less a person than the Prime Minister of the country."

The Supreme Court said: "If the Judges had that rate of disposal, there would not have been any backlog in Courts. We have for our satisfaction checked up and found that on the aforesaid two dates (26 and 27 August, 1998) the total number of motions in which Rule and bail were granted by the Bench concerned was (83+72) 155 and the number of persons released on ad-interim bail was (219+148) 367."

The court said, "The PM has mentioned newspaper reports as her source for the figure of 1200 cases although the name of or names of the newspapers have not been mentioned. However, it is quite likely that she might have seen such figures in the newspapers. But after all she is the Prime Minister of the country and was making comment on the performance of a superior court before the press."

"If upon obtaining correct figures she had felt even then that bail was being granted in too many cases and expressed her opinion accordingly we would have nothing to say because as the Chief Executive she was entitled to have her own views in the matter having regard to the law and order situation which is the concern of the Executive. The Court is accustomed to such executive chagrin in matters like this."

"Again there is nothing wrong on the part of the Executive to bring any matter to the notice of the CJ regarding a court's performance and grievance, if any, entertained by it. But nothing can be more embarrassing if the Chief Executive chooses to speak to the press involving the Chief Justice because the Chief Justice, unlike her, cannot readily take to the Press for giving a reply and further the people may get a wrong impression which is not at all desirable."

"It is entirely for the Chief Justice to decide about the constitution or re-constitution of a Bench of the High Court Division. Nobody has a say in the matter nor it is done at anybody's behest. It is exclusively a preserve of the Chief Justice and dependent on him ... How embarrassing the observation of the PM in the present case was can be imagined if she had only taken care to know the correct facts.

"The constitution of the Bench concerned (allocation of business) was changed by the Chief Justice long before the issue of granting bail came to be discussed in the Press and the decision was taken even before 26 August, 1998. The records will bear this out. The remarks of the PM, however, give the impression that the constitution of the Bench was changed at the instance of the Government which is not correct".

"The Chief Justice has felt extremely uneasy over the remarks made in respect of him, for, he cannot give a public reply nor he is obliged to justify or explain to the Executive any matter falling within the domain of his administration.

"In deciding, however, whether the facts before us call for drawing up of a proceeding for contempt we have decided to opt for discretion keeping in view the celebrated dictum of Lord Atkin (Andre Paul Vs. Attorney General, AIR 1936 PC 141) which has always been a guiding principle with this court. Said Lord Atkin: '..... The path of criticism is a public way: the wrongheaded are permitted to err therein: provided that members of the public abstain from imputing improper motives to those taking part in the administration of justice, and are genuinely exercising a right of criticism and not acting in malice or attempting to impair the administration of justice, they are immune. Justice is not a cloistered virtue: she must be allowed to suffer the scrutiny' ...".

The five judges concluded: "The Court expected more circumspection, understanding, discretion and judgement on the part of the Prime Minister because of the high office she holds in making off-hand remarks in respect of constitutional functionaries which have been alleged to be contumacious. For the reasons, however, the application is disposed of with the observations as above."

### Fire Service & Civil Defence Week opens

## One fire station in each thana HQs to be set up

Home, Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday said the government has decided to set up at least one fire station in each thana headquarters of the country on priority basis, reports BSS.

"The department is working with only 123 fire stations across the country," he said while inaugurating the Fire Service and Civil Defence Week-99 at the department's training complex at Mirpur in the city.

The newly appointed Home Minister said after coming to power, the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has taken initiatives to set up 155 new fire stations to meet the need of the time. Of them, construction work of 32 fire stations has already been completed, he said.

Mohammad Nasim said the number of factories and industries have increased sharply in the country but the Fire Service and Civil Defence Department is yet to be modernised.

He said the responsibility of protecting the lives and property of people depends on the department. Even the safety and security of the general people during the wartime also depend on the department, the minister added.

Mohammad Nasim urged the officers and staff of the department to work sincerely and honestly to protect the lives and property.

He also stressed the need for enhancing training facilities for the department's officials and the common people to save their lives and property from fire incidents.

The minister took salute and reviewed march past of three contingents of the department. He also witnessed mock-fire fighting in the training complex ground.

Later, he inaugurated a blood donation programme by the officers and employees of the department at the same venue.

Director General of the Department Brigadier Mohammad Obaidul Haque, Director General of the Narcotics Control Department Nazmul Ahsan Chowdhury were present on the occasion.

## Shazneen murder case

From Page 1

guard Humayun Kabir, maids Parveen and Minu. Of the accused, Humayun Kabir died of cardiac arrest on January 11.

During yesterday's proceedings, a bail petition was moved on behalf of accused Badal. The court, however, did not pass any order regarding this.

Following is a brief account of the answers given by Latifur Rahman during the cross examination by Mohammad Ali yesterday.

-- My relative Dinesh Durga Das is present in the court today. He is an Indian citizen.

-- There is a small dining room on the ground floor of my house used by my family members and another dining room is on the first floor for the guests.

-- Yes, I used to take my supper with my wife and daughter at my residence.

-- It is very usual, friends of Shazneen used to visit my residence.

-- Hasan was simply a contractor. It is not true that I used to take his opinion regarding running my company.

-- I did not suspect Hasan's involvement in the killing till the *qulkhwani* of Shazneen on April 26.

-- My wife and I did not suspect involvement of Badal till April 26.

-- I do not know how many sons and daughters Hasan have and I have never seen them.

-- Yes, I discussed with my son, son-in-laws and different officials of the company about the incident after the killing of Shazneen. But it is not true that I did it only to involve Hasan in the case.

Following is a brief account of the answers given by Latifur Rahman during the cross examination by Mosharaf Hossain yesterday.

— While filing the FIR, I knew the names of all the employees at my residence.

— I did not search for Shahid before 8 pm that night.

— I mentioned Shahid's name in the FIR on suspicion and also mentioned that some others might be involved in the killing.

— I filed the FIR at about 2 am.

— I did not write the FIR. My manager Faisal wrote it according to my direction.

— I did not mention the name of any other person except Shahid in the FIR.

— I did not come downstairs to look for my daughter between 8 pm and 10:15 pm.

— No, while filing the FIR, I did not know who was doing what during the incident. But I was told that Shahid was not at the residence.

—Yes, I handed over a list of names of the guests who were invited to my residence that day.

— No, no accused in the Jail Killing Case was present at the party.

— No, KM Obaidur Rahman along with his wife was not present at the party.

— I do not remember the names of how many guests were given in the list handed over to police.

— Faisal Hossain, my manager of personal office, was in chagre of sending invitation cards.

— I sent Faisal a list of guests.

The judge, AK Roy, fixed March 22 for further cross examination of the complainant.

## 40000 crude bombs recovered from truck in Laksham

COMILLA, Mar 14: Police recovered some 40 thousand crude bombs from a truck near Natar Petua market of Laksham and arrested one person yesterday morning, reports APB.

Police seized the truck carrying the 'chocolate' bombs belonging to one Dulal Mia, son of Akbar Ali of Kandirpar in Comilla town.

Acting on a tip-off they searched the truck parked at Kandirpar. Driver of the truck, however, managed to escape.

Dulal, in his confessional statement, said the bombs were collected from the Sarak Bazar of Brahmanbaria and were being taken to Sonapur and Ramganj of Noakhali district, police said.

Police suspected that the bombs had been smuggled into the country through the border area of Brahmanbaria to create panic.

## Workshop on SAARC law commissions begins Mar 20

A two-day regional workshop of SAARC law commissions will begin at a city hotel on March 20, reports UNB.

The workshop on "Capacity Enhancement of Law Commissions: In Quest of a Regional Approach" will start at 9:30 am with Bangladesh Law Commission Chairman Justice Kemaluddin Hossain in the chair.

Chairmen or members and secretaries of Law Commissions from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and host Bangladesh will attend the workshop, organised by Bangladesh Law Commission, as consultants.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru will be present as chief guest in the inaugural session while Justice Mostafa Kamal will attend as special guest.

### JS told

## Land Port Authority to be established

State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya yesterday informed Parliament that the government has already decided to establish a separate Land Port Authority to manage 12 land ports of the country, reports UNB.

Replying to Ali Reza Razu during the question hour, the State Minister said the government is considering enacting necessary law to implement the decision.

He said that all necessary facilities of a complete land port is available at Benapole under the Mongla Port Authority.

## 11 JS bodies

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charge, Dr Mizanul Huq, Tipu Sultan, Nargis Ara Huq, Tohura Ali, Dr Asadur Rahman, Abdul Alim, Momtaz Begum and Johurul Islam.

4) Standing Committee on Women and Children Affairs Ministry: President — Prof M S Akbar, Members: Minister in-charge, Khaleda Khanam, Keramat Ali, Meher Afroz, Prof Ethin Rakhain, Prof Sabita Begum, Kurshid Jahan Huq, AKM Hafizur Rahman and Mozahar Hossain.

5) Standing Committee on Agriculture Ministry: President — Dr TIM Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury, Members: Minister in-charge, Mizanur Rahman Manu, Dewan Farid Gazi, Anisul Huq Chowdhury, Emdadul Huq, Abdul Hakim, Abul Kalam Azad Siddiqui, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar and Abdul Wahab.

6) Standing Committee on Fisheries and Livestock Ministry: President — Adv Mosharraf Hossain, Members: Minister in-charge, Syed Rafiqul Huq, AK Fazlul Huq, Dilara Harun, Kamrunnahar, Mizanul Huq, Dr Mohammad Ali, Fazlul Huq and Shamsuzzaman Khan Zoha.

7) Standing Committee on Shipping Ministry: President — Col (retd) Showkat Ali, Members: Minister in-charge, Dhirendra Debnath Shambu, Abul Kashem, Sakhawat Ali Daru, Mahmuda Sowgat, Golam Farook Ovee, Giasuddin Kader Chowdhury, Rafiqul Islam and Jafrul Islam Chowdhury.

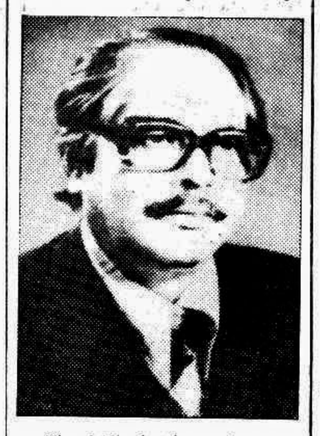
8) Standing Committee on Sports and Cultural Affairs Ministry: President — ASM Feroz, Members: Minister in-charge, Ramesh Chandra Sen, Abdul Latif Biswas, Adv Abdul Latif, Panna Kaiser, Tasmima Hossain, Shamsuddin Ahmed, Shamsul Alam Pramanik and Harunur Rashid.

9) Committee on Public Accounts: President — SM Akram, Members: Saifur Rahman, Mohammad Ali, Prof Ali Ashraf, M K Anwar, Mujibur Rahman, Vice-Principal Abdus Shahid, Abul Kamal Azad, Mostafizur Rahman, K M Asaduzzaman, Nurul Islam Nahid, Morshed Khan, Hafizuddin Ahmed, Abdul Mannan and A N M Mostafa Kamal.

10) Committee on Public Undertaking: President — Imran Ahmed, Members: Masud Reza, Khandaker Asaduzzaman, Adv Fazle Rabbi, Dabirul Islam, Kazi Shamsur Rahman, Abul Kalam Azad, A K M Mosharraf Hossain, Abul Hossain and Farook Khan.

11) Committee on Estimates: President — A K Khandaker, Members: A S M Feroz, Abdul Quddus, Dr TIM Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury, Prof M Abdullah, Sultan Mohammad Mansur, Akhteruzzaman, A K M Rahmatullah, Abu Hena and Mohammad Shahjahan.

## Dr Razee's death anniversary today



The 14th death anniversary of renowned political leader and parliamentarian Dr Aleem Al Razee will be observed today, reports UNB.

Dr Razee, also a jurist and educationist, had become a legendary figure in his lifetime for his uncompromising and courageous role in the struggle to establish people's rights, democracy and the rule of law.

In a message yesterday, President Shahabuddin Ahmed paid tributes to Dr Razee on the occasion of his death anniversary.

He said Dr Razee had alway played a strident role in establishing rule of law and democratic values in the country.

Various socio-cultural and political organisations have chalked out a five-day programme to mark the day.

## Fire kills 26 in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Mar 14: At least 26 people were burned to death and tens of thousands made homeless when a blaze tore through a sprawling shantytown in the Indian capital today, officials said, reports AFP.

Fire officer Ataul Kumar said 26 bodies had been recovered so far from the gutted Indira Puram shantytown.

"We fear the toll will cross 30 because some more bodies have not yet been recovered," he said as flames flickered six hours after the inferno erupted at 4:10 pm.

Rescuers estimated that a third of some 50,000 makeshift dwellings in the shantytown were devastated by the fire, the Press Trust of India news agency out the death toll at more than 30.

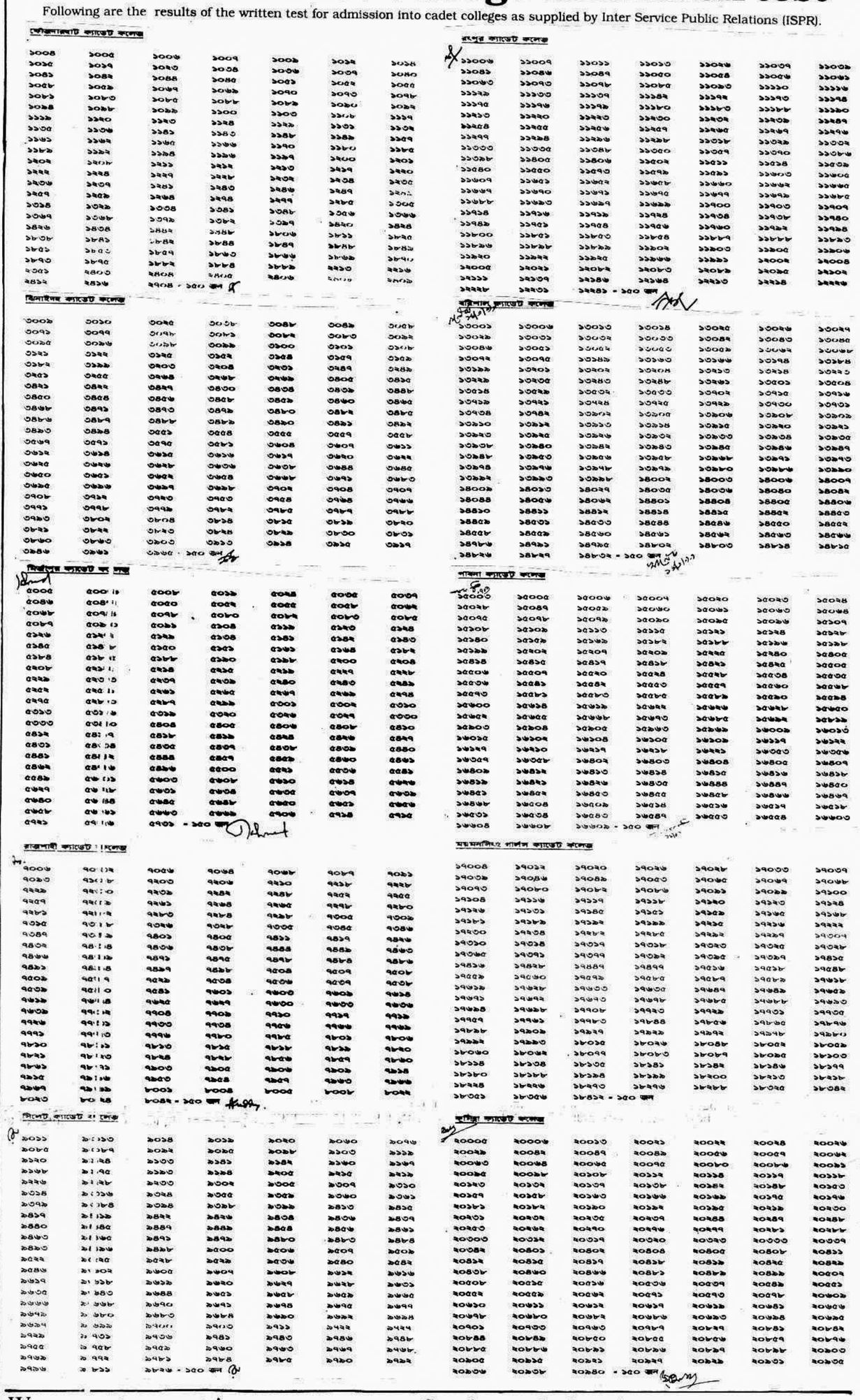
The blaze was so fierce that some from Indira Puram virtually blotted out the sun earlier today.

Police said five children and four women were among the dead brought out from a gutted mosque where panic-stricken residents took shelter as the fire raged out of control.

Some 50 others were rushed to hospitals and 18 were in critical condition, a rescue official said.

# Results of Cadet College admission test

Following are the results of the written test for admission into cadet colleges as supplied by Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR).



## We support concept of consensus govt: Ovi

As Jatiya Party is heading for a formal split, a young MP siding with Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju in the rift said their JP would work as a constructive opposition, reports UNB.

Golam Farooq Ovi, who is a bitter critic of Ershad from the beginning of the Ershad-Manju tussle, said: "We support the concept of national consensus government, but we are an opposition party."

Explaining his point, he said consensus government is a new concept in world politics, and with some limitations that showed success in Bangladesh.

In reply to a question, he said Manju's joining Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's cabinet was symbolic. "If we feel that democracy is not secure in the hands of this government, we'll not share any responsibility of the government."

About next upazila elections, Ovi said Jatiya Party would join all future hustings. About any future election coalition with the ruling Awami League, he said: "We don't do politics with the dream of any possible alliances."

Asked about the cause of conflicts with Ershad, he said the basic question is morality against immorality "a fight for principles and ideals against dishonesty".

Ovi, once widely known in campus politics, said: "Ershad has no leadership quality. Rather Ershad is a corrupt. He is more corrupt than I could think of".

Asked why he joined the Jatiya Party under Ershad's leadership, the young turk said he had thought that Ershad would come out as a new man after staying in jail for so many years, but his expectation proved illusive.

In reply to another question about the ex-President, Ovi said many people thought that Ershad had a good amount of money deposited with foreign banks.

"Sharing of his money can cause complexity among his family members and his so-called girlfriends," the JP MP said of their forsaken leader.

### Speakers at int'l seminar

## Need for speedy admin reform for overall development stressed

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at an international seminar yesterday stressed the need for accelerating the process of administrative reform for overall development of the country.

They regretted that successive governments had formed a number of committees and commissions for bringing about changes in the administration established during the colonial era and these bodies produced dozens of recommendations and suggestions, but none was implemented.

The speakers also suggested decentralisation of power, separation of judiciary, removal of all black laws, upgradation of local bodies, better remuneration for government officials, and transparency and accountability of the bureaucrats for a better, pro-people administration.

The seminar, "Administrative reforms for development of Bangladesh", was inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Hotel Sonargaon in the morning.

The three-day seminar is being jointly organised by Public Administration Reforms Commission (PARC), Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) and the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Two working sessions were chaired by water resources minister Abdur Razzaq and deputy leader of the opposition in parliament Dr Badrudozza Chowdhury.

Members of parliament Abul Kalam Azad and Barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan, former chairman of public service commission A S M Al Hossainy, former country representative of the World Bank Pierre Landle-Mills, politician Hasanul Haq Inu, Mujahidul Islam Selim, businessman Abdul Haq, Dr Harun-Or-Rashid of Dhaka University, former secretary M Nurunnabi Chowdhury, Nigel Thornton of DFID, former secretary of the Indian Government N R Ranganathan, Farah Kabir of the British Council, Rob Laking of Victoria University, UK, AMAH Siddiqui, former advisor to the caretaker government Syed Monjur Elahi, chief engineer of LGED Quamrul Islam Siddiqui, Giausuddin Ahmed and Waliur Rahman took part in the discussion.

Economist Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad and Aminul Islam, a PARC member, presented the keynote papers.

Narrating his experience during four years of office in Dhaka, Pierre Landle- Mills observed that the performance of bureaucrats in Bangladesh was horrific.

He criticised the politicians for not taking decisive action and keeping commitments. "They do not implement what they say. There is a big gap between the words and actions of the politicians."

Referring to the World Bank recommendations regarding privatisation, the former World Bank country chief said that though the ministers, parliamentarians and all other people concerned had agreed on the recommendations, none was implemented because some bureaucrats thought implementing those might be risky for the government.

The quality of the district officials has declined and reforms should be made in the local administration, Landle-Mills suggested.

Badrudozza Chowdhury underscored the need for separating the judiciary, scrapping all black laws and strengthening the power of parliamentary committees on different ministries.

"Bureaucracy in our country is not pro-people. On the other hand politicians are very selfish," he said.

The deputy opposition leader also criticised the ruling party for taking suppressive measures against the opposition political parties.

He observed that all reforms process gets stuck up at two levels-- political and bureaucratic.

Hasanul Haq Inu said the trend of politics in Bangladesh is still dominated by the concept of overthrowing governments. "At this stage, any reform in administration is very difficult." He also blamed the 'dual administration' for slow implementation of government policies.

Quamrul Islam Siddiqui suggested decentralisation of the administration and autonomy to all directorates, departments and divisions, making those accountable only to the minister, not the ministry. He also stressed the need for upgrading the status of the officials working at different departments and directorates.

"I command more than 10,000 workers and implement various projects spending around Tk 1500 crore annually, but my status is below to that of a joint secretary," the chief engineer of LGED lamented.

Quamrul said the administration at lower level is sandwiched between directorate and ministry. "The Health directorate has no control over doctors as they are being controlled by the (health) ministry."

Rabeya Bhuiyan emphasised the need for a consensus among the political parties for bringing about any change in the administration.

She also demanded that all bills presented in the parliament, and reports and recommendations made by committees and commissions be made public.

"Public has the right to know what is happening in the government", she said.