Computers and Information Technology: Some Cautionary Thoughts

by Jamal Nazrul Islam

Although it is true that the information superhighway has made accessible to many Third World residents a great deal of useful information, development in the real sense of Third World countries, which has been elusive so far, is likely to occur through commitment, of the political leadership, treatment, legal and other facilities, to all sections of the population and all regions of the country

It is well known that in the last few decades computers have been used increasingly in business, commerce, industry, government, scientific and technological pursuits, and academic matters, and in many other facets of social life. Over this period computers have become more efficient, smaller, faster and less expensive, and this process has not come to an end by any means. A concomitant development has taken place in information technology, that is, the processing of information for organisation, storage, communication and use.

The enormous benefits of this 'twin' development in the various fields mentioned — and more — are beyond question. These development have brought about a revolution in the ways of thinking, concepts and attitudes of the modern man; this is often compared with the industrial revolution of couple of hundred years ago, that started in Europe and has spread, to a greater or lesser extent, throughout the world. As indicated, there seems to be no abatement to this process in the foreseeable future. All this, of course, is very well known. However, these rapid development have raised some problems, the nature of which is not entirely clear, but signs are beginning to emerge.

While not denying the benefits, some people have expressed doubts and misgivings, pointing out that these advances do not always lead to unmixed blessings. This is also my personal view; I believe there is not sufficient realisation of the serious problems that may emerge if there does not exists enough control and monitoring. It is the purpose of this article to attempt to point out the possible negative sides of the developments referred to here. Some positive aspects will also be considered.

Let me begin with some comments made in the sixties, these are taken from the 1970 edition of Encyclopedia Britannica, from the article entitled "Information Processing." The section on "assessment" starts with the following paragraph:

"The information processing revolution is making an impact on every field of human endeavour. Great as the implications are, it is still to early to assess future benefits and costs with any confidence. As with other new technologies (for example, motor transportation and electric communication), the long range effects are difficult to forecast.

After nearly three decades, it seem to me, 'it is still to early to assess future benefits and costs.' Another expression of misgiving is contained in the following statement, also from the same article:

"It requires no surfeit of extrasensory perception to see some of the dangers that might face us if certain capabilities of the computer utility were to be misdirected. Together, the various data files of the different networks — medical, education, financial, legal, law enforcement, etc — could contain a complete record from birth until death of even the most private affairs of everyone."

I am not aware of any systematic study that has been carried out to examine if the 'private affairs' of individuals recorded in a computer has been misused by others, during the last two or three decades. A well known safeguard against such misuse is to allow access to such information only to responsible people connected with the institution concerned. Like ordinary theft or robbery, there are ways to get round such restrictions. We will come back to some wider implications of this kind of possibility. The final paragraph of the section on 'assessment' reads as follows:

"The wider implications of the information processing revolution, for future endeavour, are for benefits to mankind that will result from a great amplification of worldwide human intelligence. These benefits are accompanied by costs that may be incurred if this greatly increased intellectual power is misused. The rapid pace of the information revolution contrasts sharply with the relatively leisurely pace of the industrial revolution. Fortunately, advances in information processing capability should aid greatly in matching increased intellectual power against human needs."

This 'rapid pace' of the modern computer and information revolution brings with it inherent dangers. Great civilisations of the past, such as the Roman civilisation, took almost a thousand years or more to evolve; the decline occurred over a similar period of time. The relatively fast rise of the present civilisation, characteristic of modern technological advance, makes it difficult for human societies to adapt to the consequent changes. As a result, a crisis may occur which could cause as swift a decline as was the rise, which might be beyond anyone's control. Such an opinion has recently been expressed by the distinguished British physicist (resident in France) Brandon Carter, who thinks seriously about these matters. Besides, I do not share the optimism expressed in the last sentence of the above excerpt. I believe 'advances in information procession capability' are not adequate to deal with these difficulties. What is needed is the re-assertion of some of the traditional human values, such as cooperation, compassion, avoidance of greed, avarice and arrogance; the crisis is one of human conduct, not of problems of technical innovation.

The ultimate success of any major enterprise or project depends on its long-term viability. It can probably be safely stated that the more the enterprise in question provides a genuine service, in the long run, to the community at large, and the less the adverse effects on society of any negative aspects, the more the chances of success of the enterprise. It stands to reason that before embarking on any major enterprise, the proponents should carefully and seriously consider any long-term consequences which may be detrimental.

Often it is difficult to make a proper assessment, but I believe it is quite essential to make and attempt in this direction. The concerned initiators and entrepreneurs should appoint, metaphorically speaking, one or more "devil's advocate." This term, informally expressed here, is taken from the Roman Catholic Church were, before canonization, that is, raising a deceased person to the status of sainthood (for example, Saint Augustine (354-430), Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Saint Joan of Arc (1412-1431), etc, in addition to finding out all the qualifications that justify such a step, a "devil's advocate" is appointed who finds out everything bad about the person concerned. If the person comes out of such a critical investigation unscathed, than his positive attributes are considered to see if canonization is justified. It is in this spirit, roughly speaking, that the criticisms of computers and information technology proffered here and elsewhere are to be regarded. There are some provision.

The subject is obviously a very complicated one, with scientific, technological, economic, political, social and psychological overtones, and perhaps other ones. To make a complete and objective judgement one has to have considerable amount of knowledge, adequate time and the competence to marshal the knowledge. However, often one has to make a judgement and decision based on partial and inadequate knowledge, especially on urgent matters. The judgement may be based on a few clear indications drawn from personal experience. If one insists on complete knowledge and objectivity in a judgement, one may find oneself in the position of the character (a philosopher) in Voltaire's novel *Candide* who, when the ship was sinking, was working out things "from the first principles." Speaking of Volataire (1694-1778), his biographer of the end of the nineteenth century, Gustave Lansen writes, "He is the necessary philosopher in a world of bureaucrats, engineers, and producers." It seems to me that the need for such 'philosophers' is greater now than even before. I suppose Professor Noam Chomsky, among others, would be considered by many as one such modern philosopher.

A fundamental point about educating the young is the development of basic knowledge and skills, in mathematics, the sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, etc), language, literature, grammar, history, geography, and so on. In the initial stages, especially, the teacher-student personal relationship and contact is of the utmost importance, as is a sustained personal effort by the pupil. The computer can play at best only a minor role in this process, and only if its use is judiciously and carefully monitored. If not properly utilised, the computer can be a hindrance, in the distraction of time, energy and effort, from the significant task of the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills. About a year or two ago a senior mathematician from Calcutta came to a conference in Bangladesh, at which there was a session on the use of computers. He said that the West Bengal government had decided against the use of computers in schools. I don't know if this decision has been changed, but this step reflects the sort of concern I have expressed. There were two university mathematics teachers from the UK at this conference; they appeared to share the concern about the use of computes in schools.

There was a report in the newspapers recently to the effect that in a 'computer fair' in Dhaka, about twenty-five crore taka (approximately five million dollars) worth of computers were sold. I will take a cue from this news item to discuss a point which I believe to be of crucial, worldwide significance. It is well known that computer companies and mass communication corporations have become multi-billion dollars concerns (see, for example, *Trends in World Communication* by C J Hamelink published by Southbound in 1994; we will quote from this book later). In a decade or two they may turn into multi-trillion dollar ones. The important point here is, where there are such large sums of money involved, the whole matter acquires a different dimension, as it were; financial considerations begin to superseded academic, social, etc, considerations. It will probably be stated by the relevant authorities that at every stage there are safeguards. This may be so, but alas, we know too well from many fields of human endeavour and activity, that in many situations, where there are very large sums of money involved, pressures become so great that in spite of good intentions safeguards are rendered less than effective. The enormous sums of money acquire a momentum and logic of their own which become difficult to deal with.

There appears to be some misunderstanding, particularly among lay people, about the term "information." This term may refer to a set of data needed for some system of knowledge, either theoretical or practical, or to recent progress in some filed of knowledge, such as high temperature superconductivity, or to announcement of a series of events, to some business opportunities, to particulars of some tourist resort, and numerous such things. What the 'information superhighway' does is to make a relatively large amount of information easily accessible and quickly obtainable, often in forms which were not available earlier, regardless of distance, that is essentially over a worldwide network.

One may distinguish here between two categories, the first being a form of 'book-keeping,' says a list of items available. The second category of information requires some effort to produce, such as results of research study, or extensive gathering of data, etc (There may be other categories). An important point to realise is that, for this second category of information to be really useful, it must itself be based on some form of knowledge. At some state this knowledge (on which the inform action is based) must be *created*; mere *exchange* of information can not create it, although it my help in improving it. Here again one has to be careful; if there is quick and excessive exchange of information, this may cause a deterioration of quality. The *creation* of knowledge, as is well known, is a long, difficult and often arduous process, requiring sometimes a life-long effort.

In many important cases, mere exchange of information, through the "superhighway," or otherwise, can at best have a marginal effect on the creation of useful or fundamental knowledge. In fact quick and 'instant' exchange of preprints/reprints of papers, and hastily produced 'response' papers and articles on the internet can be detrimental to real progress in a field, if one is not careful. Just as one can "play to the gallery," it become possible to "play to the internet."

Any scientist worth his salt, especially a physical scientist, knows well that in many important problems computes are extremely useful or even indispensable. For example, if the problem requires the solution of a system of non linear differential equations, and if analytic solutions are not possible, as is often the case, one has to resort to numerical solution carried out on the computer. Or one my require the inversion of an nxn matrix, where n is a large integer, say 100 or more. Such problems occur, for example, in the theory of stellar structure in astrophysics, and in economic problems respectively. There are obviously numerous such problems for which the computer is essential. Here again, one must have basic theoretical understanding of the relevant subject, to enable one to construct suitable imputes for the computer. The computer is simply an aid to widening this basis, uriderstanding.

There are many important problems in mathematical and theoretical physics and in pure mathematics of a fundamental nature in which the computer cannot help, at least not in the foreseeable future. Consider two examples: (1) A general solution of Einstein's vacuum field equations, and (2) Solution of the two-dimensional square-lattice Ising problem with and external magnetic field. Alber Einstein and Lars Onsager initiated these problems in 1915 and 1944 respectively. These problems are still unsolved. No amount of 'exchange' of information, on the superhighway or otherwise, is likely to help in the solution of these and similar important problems. It is a question of sitting down and calculating and thinking and calculating, for months or years.

After the moon landing of 1969 Bertrand Russell wrote an article in the London "Times" about it. This was shortly before his death in the same year at age 97 years. For various reasons he did not entirely approve of the moon landing. One thing he said has stuck in my mind, to the effect that: mankind should spend more time on quiet contemplation rather than bustling activity. Human beings are prone to bustling activity, and this is perfectly natural. But it is the 'quiet contemplation' that produces great works of art, litterature, philosophy, science and other fields, which are not just meaningful to an elite, but these help to create and sustain a civilisation and give it long-term stability.

The culture of computers and information technology is more like 'bustling activity' that inhibits 'quiet contemplation.' It is said that the internet has made readily accessible books in all the major libraries in the world, from virtually anywhere in the world. There are at least three aspects of this circumstance that should be kept in mind. Firstly, following my earlier remark on 'creation of knowledge,' the good and worthwhile books in these libraries have been composed by sustained, sometimes life-long effort. If the present trend continues, and not enough provision is made for 'thinking,' (recall that this includes a long period of acquiring basic knowledge and skills), in fifty years or so there may not be any worthwhile (new) books (or diskettes, for that matter) to look at.

Secondly, mainly for reasons of commerce, some computer companies may decide to 'improve' or 'upgrade' their internet systems, and significant number of users may be forced to buy the new model, even though the 'old' model could have been used for many more years. (This phenomenon is already noticeable). And so, many erstwhile internet users may find that the books in their local library (and other ones) are, after all, more 'accessible.'

Thirdly, because of the minimum amount of complexity, infrastructure (telephones, etc) and requisite finances, a significant percentage of humanity will *always* be outside the system. As Hamelink says: "As with so many other 'global' events: if there is a global information revolution, the majority of the world's population has not received an invitation." What is not sufficiently realised is, that a significant number may *never* receive an invitation. Although it is true that the information superhighway has made accessible to many Third World residents a great deal of useful information, development in the real sense of Third World countries, which has been elusive so far, is likely to occur through commitment, of the political leadership (of all parties, among whom there should be reasonable consensus regarding development matters), of the academic and professional leadership, of the society at large, to education, medical treatment, legal and other facilities, to all sections of the population and all regions of the country, with justice towards all citizens.

The necessary economic development will then occur in a natural manner. I believe it is unrealistic to assume that earning large sums of money, by whatever means, will solve the problems of the Third World in general, and this country in particular. As I have indicated before, the problem is more of conduct than of innovation.

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Improving the Power Generation and Supply System

Action Plan for Performance of BPDB : An Analysis

by Dr Golam Mohiuddin and Md Nurul Haque

Time has come to evaluate the ramifications of so-called reform programme. It is due to half-baked reform measures that the situation has deteriorated enormously and the administration of power supply system of Bangladesh has been in a total mess.

THE power supply system started in 1947 with only 21 MW generating capacity provided by small electric supply companies for mills, factories, tea-garden, railway etc. In 1948, an Electricity Directorate was formed to supply power until the high powered Water and Power Development Board (WAPDA) came into being in 1960 for the purpose. After the Liberation in 1971, the Power Development Board (PDB) was formed and entrusted with the responsibility of generating and supplying power. From 1982 following a number of donor prescribed reform programmes taken by PDB, the current responsibility of generation, transmission, distribution and supply of power lines lies mainly with the PDB along with Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) and Rural Electrification Board (REB) created in 1991 and 1978 respectively. All such reform programmes were taken up to improve the power supply system of Bangladesh but the practical experience remains otherwise.

Action Plan for Performance Improvement (APPI): In order to improving the performance of Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) reform practices were started in 1982. But the performance of BPDB had been below the acceptable level. It was pointed out by World Bank in the year 1979: "i) BPDB's return is low, ii) system loss is high", etc. They also urged BPDB to reduce system loss and improve performance to have financial assistance in any power project. In fact BPDB for the first time became aware of the system loss then. To find ways and means in resolving the problems, Overseas Development Agency (ODA) financed BPDB to appoint consultant Cooper's Lybrand and Delotti, a London based consulting firm to prepare necessary proposals for it. The consultants prepared some proposals under a package "Action Plan for Performance Improvement" (APPI). Some of the contents of the package were — i) creation of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) by separating Dhaka Electric Supply part of BPDB; ii) reorganization of BPDB's existing organogram of Member (P&D) and include Chief Engineer (Research & Development) to operate Management Information System (MIS) for BPDB centrally; iii) development of MIS formats for various functions namely generation, transmission, distribution, accounts, finance and administration functions; iv) to train officers on various activities of reform to help implementation of the programme; v) preparation of job description of the employees and officers of the Board; introduction of reward-punishment scheme on performance; vi) creation of Regional Accounting Offices (RAOs) headed by Deputy Directors (Accounts) and transfer of financial power of engineers to them, etc.

DESA and RAOs were created, MIS formats were developed and a reasonable number of officers of different disciplines were trained in London. The objective of the creation of DESA was to determine the system loss within the area and then take appropriate measure to reduce it. It was found, after creation of DESA, that system loss within the speculated area was abnormally high. Some inadequate measures were taken in the DESA's as well BPDB's areas to reduce system loss, which could not fulfil the requirement, rather at some stages system loss rose higher. The trained persons were not assigned with respective jobs for which they were trained. MIS formats, of all the six functions cited above, were prepared by the consultants and modified by twelve sub-committees. A full such set of MIS and its procedure was approved by the Board for implementation but was not implemented in full. Job description of distribution function, so far known, was prepared, but was not implemented.

The financial power was transferred to so-called financial experts by creating Regional Accounting Offices (RAOs). The RAOs have been working to improve the financial performance of BPDB for more than one decade, but over the period the financial performance of BPDB has deteriorated further.

All the activities of APPI are now lying in cold storage except punishment-reward scheme and RAOs activities. The punishment-reward scheme though giving a very nominal positive result, RAOs are not giving any positive result. So, possibility of reaching the goal i.e. reducing system loss to an acceptable limit (developed countries of the world have 10% as against Bangladesh's 35%), and improving financial performance is becoming impossible. Performance Contract (PC) to public enterprise based on the activities of some functional areas, was introduced in many countries of Europe, Africa and Asia and got some positive results.

Implementation of PC in Commonwealth countries was also being patronized by Commonwealth Secretariat. In Dhaka also the Commonwealth Secretariat organized a three-day workshop a few years ago. Representatives from India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nigeria and also from different organizations in Bangladesh participated in the workshop. In Bangladesh along with BPDB some other organizations also have been regularly making yearly Performance Contract with Ministry of Finance (MF). In this contract yearly target is set in different performance areas through discussion between the organisation concerned and MF. At the year-end MF evaluates the performances of all the areas set and determines reward-punishment for the organization. Existing reward-punishment scheme in BPDB also resembles to the PC scheme, but done in a different manner. So, PC in BPDB though in operation, it has become a routine matter having no reasonable implication to the performance improvement of the organization.

Other activities relating to BPDB's performance improvement : Some more activities are practiced in BPDB like commercial operational procedure, system loss monitoring, system loss reduction schemes etc. to improve system operation, but all are now routine matters and their contribution, to the targeted performance improvement, is negligible.

Reform proposal by inter-ministerial group and creation of Power Cell: The last reform practice, by restructuring BPDB and DESA, taken in hand by GOB is being implemented presently. A London based consulting firm namely London Economics (LE), appointed by Power Cell (PC), made elaborate recommendations on : i) the strategic framework for reform, ii) retail, bulk supply and transmission tariffs; and iii) design of regulatory framework. Restructuring of utilities, rationalization of distribution system and preparation of power tariff on Long Run Marginal Economic Cost (LRMC) basis to help concentration of private investment; creation of PGCB and implementation of Independent Power Producers' (IPP) scheme under guidance of BPDB and PC were set under strategic reform. Preparation of basic proposal for above reform by appointing consultant, under the supervision of PC (to be created new under MEMR), was proposed by an eight-member inter-ministerial group, constituted by GOB.

Creation of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB): The most of present reform proposal now is PGCB. It is designed that when it would be in operation, in its full compass, it would bridge the generation companies and IPP's with distribution companies. It would purchase power from generation companies and IPP's and sell it to the distribution companies. This is called a vertical separation of BPDB. The consultants LE also made some other modes of restructuring. Each of the companies would perform as a profit centre at any cost. As mentioned earlier a reform project namely APPI created DESA to make it a profit centre. It is presently functioning like a distribution company. Creation of some more companies in the name of reform would give birth to some more companies like that of DESA. There is no calculated outcome that can be achieved from the creation of PGCB.

Some officials of BPDB, who expected to join PGCB, worked hard to bring it into being. They did not perhaps consider the interest of the utility. They were very careful to ensure their position in PGCB. Frequent violation of "Terms of Reference" give support to suspicion. So, PGCB lacks honesty and earnestness to improve the fate of utility. It can be concluded that traditional reform programme cannot bring good to the utility, so, present reform activity should be revised and PGCB scrapped like IPP programme.

Effort to introduce ROM (rehabilitation operation and maintenance): In the very recent past power crisis was very severe. To overcome generation shortfall the government declared a number of unprecedented incentive packages to private investors in power sector. Several numbers of IPP also could make contract with GOB/BPDB under incentive scheme. To enable small scale investors in power sector government declared 100 per cent duty free and other incentive packages towards the import of generators up to 10 megawatts capacities. Some investors took initiatives to install generators up to 10 MW capacity. But support services in respect of availability of land, gas connection and ultimately distribution network to sell to consumers were not easier. Thus individual initiators stopped their race. At this stage, it is understood, some dealers took the advantage to be the owners of some existing power generating units of BPDB.

This way some existing power generating units, if can be acquired in the name of ROM, then an investment on construction of power generator could be saved. The policy faced some obstructions from different corners and the process is presently lying dormant. So, the idea of ROM which was born suddenly in the PC house should be scrapped forever.

Achievement from reform: After a twenty years' reform practice we see that present national system loss is 35 per cent, accumulated accounts receivables is equivalent to over seven months electricity bills, sale-generation ratio 65 per cent etc. Almost same figures had been prevailing in and around 1980. So, the reasonable investment made in the so-called reform might of course, help us to do something if spent to improve efficiency and system reliability. Reform to BPDB's system might do well, if appropriate measure would be taken. Some of the techniques of reform so far tried, seemed to be suitable to make the utility efficient to some extent, but were never implemented in full. The programmes were always trial and error practice and kept half done.

Activities of Distribution Sector of BPDB and comparison with REB: The overall performance, in terms of quality and reliable power supply, service to the electricity consumers, efficiency, bill collection and system loss in the distribution areas under Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) is very poor. Rural Electrification Board (REB) in its area is maintaining overall standard service and the Palli Bidyut Samitys (PBS)/ rural electric cooperatives under it are financially viable. Distribution areas under DESA and BPDB are plunged into darkness of irregular activities.

More than 20 per cent of electricity generated is made subject to theft. Allegedly, about 500 crore taka is misappropriated annually through theft of electricity and other dishonest means. The money is equivalent to the implementation of a 100 MW barge mounted power plant. Honest and efficient service can help to gain more than 500cr taka annually. Low return against electricity bills, from public and private consumers is also a vital issue. This increases accounts receivable. Most of these unpaid bills turn into bad debt. The bills, which are not realised automatically merge with system loss. If we consider a turn over against bill as 80 per cent and system loss 30 per cent, then 20 per cent unpaid bills of 70 per cent (after 30 per cent system loss) sold i.e. another 14 per cent, adds to the system loss thus raising it to a tune of 44 per cent. Among the unpaid bills there is certain amount, which in fact has been shown in Monthly Operation Data (MOD) of commercial operation divisions, but was not actually billed to the consumers. This helps to lower system loss, which is a target bound item under annual reward/punishment scheme. Billing by computer is being considered a way to system loss reduction. But the present system of billing by computer is not contributory to system loss reduction. Because, collection of meter reading is traditional. Some meter readers, who have allegedly been tampering meter reading, for years together, are doing same thing for computer billing: The data/reading led to the computers by computer operators are taken from the prescribed data sheet and filled up with reading collected by the so-called meter readers. The technique of tampering by meter readers is always one step ahead to the system developed new.

Prospect and problems of FMU project: A project namely Financial Management Upgrade (FMU) is being implemented presently. This will cover billing and accounting system of DESA areas by a computer system meant for DESA and the areas under Comilla and Chittagong of BPDB by another separate computer networks. In accounting system RAOs concept is being implemented. A large area of BPDB will not be covered by this computer network system. The areas remaining beyond this system will have their billing and accounting done in traditional system. In addition to billing the networks will take care of BPDB and DESA's Management Information System (MIS) in a brief and semi network process. But collection of meter reading still remaining dependent on meter readers in the very traditional fashion, scopes of meter tampering/pilferage remain as usual. So to have desired fair output from the system, basis to reach the goal should be prepared from now.

As present system does not permit to expand Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) up to meter reading collection level, so dependence on meter reader for collecting meter reading, cannot be avoided. So, the authorities need to be careful in this regard, until meter reading, up to the consumer level, can be brought under SCADA system in full. In the distribution area thieves allegedly have a chain to drain cash money from a part of electricity supplied and from consumers while providing new connections and attending complaints.

Standard and performance of REB: REB has a very standard distribution system in respect of employing men and materials. In development of distribution system, REB trains the engineers of consulting and construction firms. The industries, which prepare materials and hardware at REB's standard, are listed for supplying to REB and quality of materials is strictly maintained. Employees under PBS are employed on yearly contract basis and formation of Trade Union/CBA is banned. In the recent past a group of employees tried to form trade union and they were trying to do the same in the wake of authority's obstruction and against the prevailing rules of PBS on the issue. The authority dismissed all the accused employees. In spite of all these strict measures, the system loss of REB is 17 per cent as against 3-5 per cent of similar utilities of many countries of Asia. Similar administrative system and standard may be introduced to BPDB by preparing rules in the light of REB's. Only commitment from GOB and political parties may be required. If it is done handing over BPDB's areas to REB may not be required; rather it can expand its system to new areas, as it has enormous scopes to include new rural areas.

Activities of employees and officers in the event of restructuring of BPDB: The employees and officers are in worries to lose their jobs due to restructuring of BPDB under present reform programme. Different associations of engineers, officers and employees are under same banner to stop restructuring. They are aware that restructuring is due to irregular and inefficient performances of BPDB. Knowing all these they signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and have bowed to provide honest and appropriate service to the BPDB. To retain the integrity of BPDB and overcome the speculated problems this united will force may be utilised.

Activities of MEMR and its suitability to BPDB: What MEMR plans is rarely found to be good for the utility and the country. MEMR always wants to be supreme authority of the utility. Persons from administration cadres, police cadres and some other cadres were appointed as Chief Executive (CE) in the last decade. It has been observed that they would run the organization by force. Team work with the deserving and appropriate technical persons were absent. In most of the cases the autonomy of PDB was tarnished. There were direct interference from the powerful secretaries of the ministry.

Conclusion: In the reform programme, it is also stated that PDB's generating until will run in peak load whereas the IPP and private power will operate in the base load period. This is nothing but an untenable proposition on the part of the donor community to further cripple and destroy the country's power system. Time has come to evaluate the ramifications of the reform programme. It is due to such so-called reform measures, that the situation has deteriorated enormously and the administration of power supply system of Bangladesh has been in a total mess. However, supposedly to salvage the situation, a leader from the engineering profession has been given new responsibility four months back. He made an appeal to evaluate the donor-prescribed experiment oriented reforms and not to dismantle the existing system of PDB.