

# Corruption, wrong policy blamed for power crisis

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Widespread corruption, wrong policy and mismanagement are responsible for the severe crisis in the power sector, speakers at a dialogue said yesterday.

They strongly criticised the alliance government and the state minister for power for failing to add a single megawatt' electricity to the national grid during the last four and a half years.

To resolve the power crisis, the speakers suggested formulating a long-term master plan, setting up small power plants in all upazilas and giving the charge of the ministry of power to experts.

They also called for setting up power plants in the western region to reduce system loss during transmission, reducing dependency on foreign consultants and encouraging the local entrepreneurs to invest in power plants.

The Centre for Studies in Social Transformation organised the dialogue titled 'Demand, generation and distribution of electricity in Bangladesh' at the National Press

Club in the city, with its President Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury in the chair.

The speakers called for identifying the vested quarters who are amassing wealth through corruption and mismanagement in the power sector.

Prof Serajul Islam said acute shortage of electricity has severely hampered the growth in industrial sector and deprived the people of education, leading to the rise in militancy, terrorism and crimes in the country.

Nuruddin Mahmud Kamal, former chairman of Power Development Board (PDB), presented a keynote paper titled 'The power system of Bangladesh is in crossfire'.

The government's inability to take proper decision and feuds between the minister and bureaucrats over power generation have brought the power sector to the verge of ruin, he said.

Although the demand for electricity has continued to increase -- 400 megawatt additional electricity a year -- the government did not

take any measure to generate more power, he added.

The former PDB chief suggested formulating a proper plan for generation and distribution of electricity with private sector's involvement and strengthening the energy regulatory commission.

He also recommended privatisation of the management of the PDB and DESA to improve the system of generation and distribution of electricity.

Prof Anu Muhammad said that although additional power could not be generated in the last four and a half years, electricity lines have been expanded due to mismanagement, corruption and the vested quarter's intervention.

Besides, a large amount of electricity has been used in unproductive sector, he said.

He also suggested bringing the vested quarters to book to get rid of the prevailing crisis.

Former advisor to the caretaker government Amanul Islam Chowdhury, Prof MM Akash, General Secretary of Bangladesh Steel Mills Owners' Association

SKM Masud, former president of the Institute of Diploma Engineers' Association Shafiqul Sarker, Dr Zakir Hossain, Dr Parvin Hasan and former chairman of FBCCI Abdul Haque also spoke.

## Nazrul's 107th anniversary of birth May 25

BSS, Dhaka

Cultural Affairs Ministry and Nazrul Institute jointly chalked out a four-day programme to observe the 107th birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam on May 25 in a befitting manner across the country and Bangladesh missions abroad.

Secretary of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs ATM Ataur Rahman stated this at the press conference at Nazrul Institute in the city yesterday.

The programmes include placing wreaths at the poet's mazar, rally, discussions, cultural events and Nazrul Book Fair.

The day's programme will start with placing of wreaths at the poet's mazar at 6:00am in front of the Dhaka University Mosque.

The main programme of the day will be held at Trishul upazila of Mymensingh district. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the programme as chief guest.

Besides, the poet's birth anniversary will also be observed with due honour in Comilla and Chittagong on the day.

A three-day Nazrul Book Fair will be held from May 26 on the premises of Nazrul Institute here. The fair will remain open for all from 10:00am to 7:00pm.

As part of the programme, the ministry of cultural affairs will also publish colourful posters as well as souvenirs.

The secretary said the ministry and the Nazrul Institute are working to immortalise the creation of Nazrul before the future generation.

Nazrul Institute produced two documentaries on 'Nazrul in Trishul' and 'Nazrul in Comilla'. Two other documentaries on 'Nazrul in Chittagong' and 'Nazrul in Dhaka' are also on the way to production. Selected poems of the poet have been published from China in collaboration with the cultural ministry, he added.

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UNB adds:

Two women were killed in separate road accidents in Jessor on the road.

One of the deceased was identified as Halima Begum, 50. Identity of another woman, aged around 45, could not be known.

Police said the unidentified woman was crushed under the wheels of a bus near the picnic corner on Jessor-Khulna highway in the morning.

Halima sustained serious injuries when a tempo hit her at Monoharpur Bazar in Sadar upazila at noon. Halima was admitted to Jessor General Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries at 2:00pm.

The body was sent to Manikganj Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Our Correspondent from Kishoreganj adds: A primary school

student was ran over by a pickup van on Kishoreganj-Bhairab highway at Charipara area of Katiadi upazila yesterday.

The dead was identified as Shakila, 7, daughter of Abdul Halim of Charipara village. Shakila was a student of class two of a local primary school.

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ger bus but its driver and helpers managed to flee.

A case was filed with Kalihati Police Station in this regard.

Our correspondent from Manikganj reports: A motorcyclist was killed and another injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday.

The dead was identified as Abdul Aziz, 37, son of Gazi Gawal of Gopalpura village under Saturia Police Station in Manikganj.

Police said the accident occurred at 3:20pm when a Paturia-bound coach hit the speedy motorcycle coming from the opposite direction at Jagir High School area under Manikganj Sadar Police Station leaving the motorcyclist dead one on the spot and injured another seriously.

The injured Fazlur Rahman Bakri, 25, field organiser of Sandhini Life Insurance Company, was taken to Manikganj Sadar Hospital.

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