

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 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 Shafiuddin 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 have 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 Trishal 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.

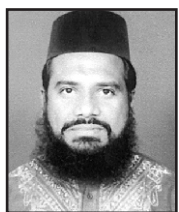
A three-day Nazrul Book Fair will be held from May 26 on the premises of Nazrul Institute here. The fair will remain open for all from 10:00am to 7:00pm.

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 immortal the creation of Nazrul before the future generation.

Nazrul Institute produced two documentaries on 'Nazrul in Trishal' 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.

Congratulations



their status in the first century after Hijrah, says a press release.

This is the first ever research work in Arabic conducted under the Institute of Modern Language, DU.

Mahmudul Hasan Yusuf, an assistant professor at Darul Ihsan University, is the eldest son of Dr AHM Muztaba Hossain, ex-chairman of Islamic Studies Department at DU.

Nasir Uddin's anniversary of death today



monthly Saugat, says a press release.

He also published The Begum, a weekly magazine for women, in 1947 from Kolkata.

On the occasion feeding to the destitute will be arranged and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 38, Sharatgupta Road after asr prayers.

Shaheed Mohammad Shamsuzzaman

Today is the 35th death anniversary of Shaheed Mohammad Shamsuzzaman, chief engineer of Chittagong port, says a press release.

The Pakistani occupation forces took him out of his office on May 21 in 1971 and he remained missing since then.

He supplied the record of the national anthem that was played at Kalurghat Shwadin Bangla Betar Kendra.



PHOTO: STAR

Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain speaks as chief guest at a seminar on 'Corruption: Awareness of Citizens' in the city yesterday. The Monthly Legal Aid organised the seminar at Cirdap auditorium.

UN STUDY

LDCs make significant efforts to establish democratic rule

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Despite constraints on human resources coupled with structural weaknesses, a number of poor countries have made significant efforts to establish democratic rule in the past 20 years, according to a new study released by the United Nations yesterday.

While the least developed countries (LDCs) continue to face enormous challenges, including corruption, lack of access to justice, and continued human rights violations, they can prove to be a global force behind practical democratic innovations, says the report titled 'Governance for the future: Democracy and development in Least Developed Countries'.

Jointly carried out by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the study challenges doubts around the poorest countries' ability to build stable democracies.

Citing roving judges in the Maldives and a community justice system in post-genocide Rwanda as solid examples of poor countries' stride towards democratic governance, the report shows that a nation's income level does not necessarily determine its democratic future.

One clear indication of how the LDCs have achieved a considerable level of progress in recent years is the advancement of women, according to the report.

Since 1991, the number of women in parliament of Mozambique has doubled while Rwanda now "leads the world" in terms of women's representation in the legislative business with more than 48 per cent.

This figure, they say, is substantially ahead of the United States, at 14.8 per cent, and the United Kingdom, at 17.9 per cent.

According to the report, building democratic governance means ensuring that the poor have "a real political voice", alongside access to justice and basic services, including health and education.

"The findings of this report are testament to the determination of the world's poorest nations to break through the barrier of underdevelopment," High Representative Anwarul K Chowdhury of Bangladesh said following the release of the report.

Some of the innovations featured in the report refer to the use of "mobile judges" in many Pacific LDCs, including Ventura, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands. The report also focuses on Rwanda's 'gacaca court' system, which

emphasises public involvement in rendering justice to the accused.

Others point to affordable communication systems in Solomon Islands, and the Rural Advancement Committee in Bangladesh, which allows schools to run part-time classes for children who otherwise might be unable to afford full-time education.

However, researchers acknowledge that despite such initiative, many LDCs continue to face difficulties.

Authors of the report concluded that increased support from the development partners and non-State actors is a must for the LDCs to achieve further progress because "global governance structures are often not favourable" to them.

"Much more now needs to be done to build on these successes," said UNDP Administrative Kemal Dervis. "Democratic governance is not only a good in itself, it is critical to further human development."

Mark Malloch Brown, the UN Deputy Secretary-General, agreed with Dervis. "No single model of democracy can or should be applied to all LDC or indeed, all countries," he said at the launch of the report in New York.



PHOTO: STAR

Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury presents a paper on earthquake analysis on Dhaka at a seminar in the city yesterday. Department of Architecture of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) and The Daily Star jointly organised the seminar on 'Safety and Security in Buildings of Dhaka' at the auditorium of Civil Building of Buet.

6 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least six people, including a schoolgirl, were killed in separate road accidents in Tangail, Manikganj, Jessore and Kishoreganj yesterday.

Our Tangail Correspondent adds: Two people were killed in a road accident on

Tangail-Mymensingh road at Kalihati upazila in the district yesterday.

The victims were identified as Majbar Rahman, 65, of Awliabad village and

Mohammad Gafur, 50, of Betdoba village under Kalihati upazila.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place when the driver of Sarishabari-bound

speedy passenger bus from Dhaka lost his control over steering. The bus crushed a

rickshaw under its wheels and later a passer-by on Tangail-Mymensingh Road at Kalihati College intersection at around 7:00 am, leaving a rickshaw a passenger and the passer-by seriously injured on the spot.

Local people rushed the injured to Kalihati Upazila Health Complex where the duty doctors declared passer-by Mozbar Rahman dead. The seriously injured rickshaw passenger Mohammad Gafur died on the way to Tangail General Hospital.

Kalihati police sent the bodies to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police seized the killer passen-

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 Gopalpur village under Sattaria 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 Baki, 25, field organiser of Sandhani Life Insurance Company, was taken to Manikganj Sadar Hospital.

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.

A Dhaka-bound pickup van ran over Shakila while she was crossing the road.

UNB adds: Two women were killed in separate road accidents in Jessore yesterday.

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 Jessore-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 Jessore General Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries at 2:00pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said in a forecast. It said that day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

Highest temperature 37.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 20.4 degree Celsius at Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:37pm today and rises at 5:13am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.6	26.4	67	44
Chittagong	35.5	25.5	68	66
Rajshahi	35.0	23.4	66	--
Khulna	36.5	26.5	67	57
Barisal	35.0	26.4	70	78
Sylhet	33.9	25.7	72	--
Cox's Bazar	34.4	23.4	63	67

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A two-day exhibition of photographs on Goa and prize-winning paintings by Bangladeshi schoolchildren on liberation war began at Nirbibi Orchid in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The High Commission of India has organised the exhibition.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Ambika Soni of the high commission jointly inaugurated the exhibition.

Rab man handed over to police for demanding toll in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A member of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) was handed over to police for allegedly demanding toll from a resident in Chittagong port city yesterday.

Mir Momtaz Hossain alias Mintu, 38, a resident of Ashkerdighirpar, handed over Rab member Mohammad Ishaq to Kotwali Police Station.

Mintu alleged that Ishaq went to his residence to investigate some complaints and demanded toll from him to settle the matter.

Rab-7 officials in Chittagong took Ishaq from police custody to their headquarters at Patenga for quizzing.

Rab sources said the accused has already been relieved of his post as deputy assistant director, and process is underway to take departmental action against him if the allegation is proved true.

Ishaq, who was a petty officer of Bangladesh Navy before joining the Rab, claimed that he was a victim of blackmailing.

Sources said a dispute over property had recently prompted Mintu's sisters to file a series of complaints with the Rab against him.

In their complaints, the sisters also identified Mintu as an accused in several criminal cases filed with different police stations in the city.

Being assigned to investigate into the matter, Ishaq along with another Rab member in uniform went to Mintu's residence on Thursday.

"But Ishaq again went to my house yesterday at around 10:15am, this time alone in plain clothes, and demanded Tk 5000 in toll," alleged Mintu and his mother Sabera Begum.

Rab sources confirmed that Ishaq was assigned to investigate the complaints against Mintu but he was not supposed to go there alone in plain clothes yesterday.

A Rab press release said Mintu's sisters Akter Shirin, Nilufa Sultana, Kajal Sultana, Parveen Fatema and Baby Mostafa, in their written complaints identified him as an accused in 12 criminal cases and described him as a terrorist.

Mintu availed of the situation to get Ishaq trapped, the press release claimed.

Mintu along with his wife and mother was being interrogated at Rab-7 headquarters, it added.

Bogra Polytech closed on clash fear

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Bogra Polytechnic Institute has been closed for four days to avoid untoward clashes between locals and the students of the institution at Latipur colony in Bogra town.

The authorities on Friday issued a notice to the students asking them to vacate their dormitories by 9:00am yesterday.

Md Shahadat Hossain, acting principal of Bogra Polytechnic Institute, said the decision was taken following an emergency joint meeting of the employees and teachers on Friday night.

Earlier a students rally demanding punishment to extortionists vandalised buildings, private businesses and a hospital at Latipur colony area. Sources said a few miscreants entered the institute premises and demanded money from the students on Friday.

A number of students were beaten up when they refused to pay the money. Following the incident students brought out a really and ransacked a number of business institutions and Islamia Hospital alleging those businesses provide cover for the criminals.

They also ransacked academy buildings, principal's residence, and staff quarters on the campus. Police arrested eight students in connection the rowdiness.

Local businessmen, meanwhile, organised a protest rally at Latipur colony demanding arrest and punishment of the culprits who vandalised their businesses.

Police officials said additional forces have been deployed on the campus. Bogra Polytechnic Institute formed an eighth-member probe committee to investigate the incident yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Awami Jubo League stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting the killing of its activist in Sylhet.

Full implementation of CHT accord demanded

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Speakers at a council yesterday demanded full implementation of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace agreement.

They said nearly eight years have elapsed after the signing of the historic accord but the vital clauses of the deal still remain unimplemented.

The 13th council of Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP), a front organisation of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), began at the Shilpakala Academy in the district town.

The speakers said their struggle would continue until their right to self-determination is established.

They said they will never allow the cancellation of the landmark accord achieved at the cost of blood given by the ethnic people in two decades of bush war.

The speakers alleged that indigenous women are being raped by the settlers as part of a deep-rooted conspiracy.

They said the government is also hatching a conspiracy against

the jummo people to make them refugee by grabbing their land.

The speakers demanded an end to "military rule" in CHT, stopping of land grabbing and intrusion of outsiders in the region.

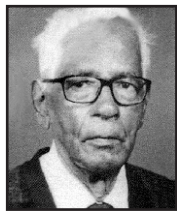
"The people and land in CHT belong to this country. So the government should not see them in discriminatory eyes," said Dr Abu Yousuf Alam, professor of Chittagong University while addressing the council as chief guest at the inaugural session.

PCJSS Central Committee Secretary Laxmi Prasad Chakma inaugurated the council.

It was also addressed, among others, by PCJSS Central Secretary Satyabir Dewan, PCP Central Secretary Binotam Dhamai and President Ujjal Chakma, CHT Mahila Samity Chairperson Madhabi Lata Chakma, CHT Regional Council member Ushatan Talukder and Advocate Shaktimani Chakma.

Later, a procession was brought out from Shilpakala Academy to municipality office where the council was held at its auditorium.

Obituary



city on Friday at the age of 89, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons and three daughters to mourn his death.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his residence at 76, Satmasjid Road on May 26 after asr prayers.

Jobeda Khanam



at a city hospital on May 19, says a press release.

She was buried at the Banani graveyard in the city yesterday after namaz-e-janaza on the Baitul Mukarram mosque.

She left behind her four sons, and two daughters to mourn her death.

DHAKA TODAY

Global Walk

World Food Programme organises 'Global Walk to End Child Hunger' to raise fund and awareness. Venue: IDB Bhaban, Agargaon. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable

Projonmo Academy organises a roundtable on 'Democracy and Fair Election'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.