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## The Daily Star Roundtable

# Immediate steps for large power projects stressed

Experts also favour electricity import, daylight saving steps, energy rationing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday urged the government to float tenders for five or six large power projects immediately and pursue short-term strategies to improve the power situation to save the country from an impending power

debate.

They emphasised faster and professional decision making process and full activation of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC).

Participants at the roundtable on "The state of power sector and the way forward," organised by The

Daily Star at its office, included former ministers, bureaucrats and experts. Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam moderated it.

The roundtable blamed the immediate past alliance government for destroying the sector through corruption and mismanagement, and demanded the gov-

ernment bring the persons responsible to justice.

The caretaker government (CG) should consider immediate purchase of power from private captive plants, import from neighbouring countries, rationing of energy during the coming dry

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Participants at The Daily Star roundtable on "The state of power sector and the way forward" held at its office yesterday.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Immediate tender for five to six large-scale power projects

Desa should be given charge to generate and supply power to Dhaka

Each of Reb's 70 paili bdyut samities should generate 20 MW to 30 MW power

Division of the national grid between east and west zones and special attention to build 3,000 MW power in the power-deprived western zone.

The government should form a special committee to publish a white paper on the power sector within one month

Autonomy and financial discipline for PDB and Desa to help them run on their own and take faster decision

Implement load management measures and power plant maintenance works as a short-term solution. This can save or add several hundred megawatts of power

Consider power import from neighbouring countries through regional cooperation

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

## Civic movement needed to stop wetland encroachment

Seminar told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urban development experts, environmentalists and eminent citizens yesterday demanded immediate reform in Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) and a civic movement to stop illegal real estate companies from destroying the wetlands and flood plains which are clearly earmarked in the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP).

They, during a discussion on conservation of wetlands at the city's Brac Centre Inn, also unanimously demanded the newspapers and other media refrain from carrying advertisements of illegal real estate projects.

Wetland filling and filling of flood plains by real estate developers are not only ushering an imminent environmental disaster but also consistently choking the capital with perennial water logging and creating a mess in the sewer system, they said.

Architect Iqbal Habib in his speech at the discussion, organised jointly by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) and Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (Bapa), said severe water logging occurs because of filling of wetlands and flood plains and creating obstructions in the city's canals and lakes.

"The overflowing sewage dries on the city streets and people of all ages particularly the children develop respiratory diseases due to this," Iqbal said.

He demanded that the government ask the organisations assigned for drawing up the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) under

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

# EC reform proposals ignored for 25 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Moves to strengthen the election administration under successive Election Commissions (EC) have not seen the light of day in the last 25 years due to indifference of previous governments.

Recommendations for inclusion of the officers of EC Secretariat in the mainstream civil administration and for introduction of an election cadre service remain shelved despite repeated persuasion by chief election commissioners (CEC) in the past.

Now the EC is preparing a set of proposals including one for separation of its secretariat from the Prime Minister's Office, but it does not have any plan to persuade the

government to implement any of the previous reform proposals, sources said.

Officials of the EC Secretariat however fear that independence of the secretariat might not bring expected results unless the existing system, which allows an election officer to work at the EC Secretariat for his or her entire career, is changed.

Many officials believe that the current system caused unbridled financial corruption in the election administration, as some officers established unethical influence within the secretariat as well as in the field level, staying at a place for a prolonged period.

A number of senior officers of the EC Secretariat have been

accused of financial irregularities, but the EC could not take any measure against them. Now the commission is even facing difficulties in bringing some changes in its secretariat to clean up its image, as it could not transfer some of the officers who had allegedly been involved in corruption in updating the voter list, sources said.

"Any officer could have been transferred from the Election Commission Secretariat had the jobs were included in the mainstream administration," a senior EC official said. "Many officers from the mainstream administration are transferred to the EC Secretariat, but none of the EC officers is ever transferred from here," he said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

# Army offers to prepare voter ID

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army yesterday proposed to the caretaker government to consider its expertise in preparing the voter identity cards to be used in the next parliamentary election.

At a presentation on the preparation of voter identity cards before the council of advisers at the chief adviser's (CA) office, the army representatives described the technical aspects of preparing the voter list with ID cards.

CA Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, members of the council of advisers, Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda, election commissioners and high civil and military officials were present on the occasion.

The Bangladesh Army has the expertise in preparing the voter identity cards, Army chief Lt Gen

Moeen U Ahmed said in his brief introductory speech at the presentation.

The army is ready to do the task if the government decides to use their expertise, sources quoted the army chief as saying.

During the presentation, senior army officials said they would need eight to ten months and around Tk 300 crore to prepare the voter list with identity cards, sources said.

While exchanging views with representatives of the civil administration, political leaders, journalists and representatives of government and non-government agencies at Bandarban Cantonment on February 8, the army chief expressed the same view about the time and expenditure for the task.

An election commissioner yesterday termed the army's offer to use their expertise in preparing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

# Naser Rahman, others sued for demanding toll from contractor

UNB, Sylhet

A case has been filed against former BNP lawmaker Naser Rahman and seven others by a contractor for allegedly demanding toll from him.

M Nuruzzaman, executive director of Mohammad Yunus and Brothers' Ltd, filed the case against them with Kotwali Police Station on Friday night.

The other accused are city BNP President Ariful Haq Chowdhury, Moulvibazar Municipality Chairman Faizul Karim, BNP leader Wali Siddiqui and engineers of Roads and Highways Department Abdul Khaleque, Safiqul Islam, Monwar Sadik and Asmat-ud-Dowla.

In the FIR, Nuruzzaman alleged that he had got five contract works through participating in bidding in 2002-03 for construction of roads,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## SUPERCURE CEMENT

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## 4 cops closed for bribery

UNB, Sherpur

A police sub-inspector and three constables were closed to the district Police Lines here yesterday on charge of bribery.

They are Sub-Inspector Nasiruddin and constables Hye, Sattar and Aziz of Sherpur Sadar Police Station.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

# Relief goods found at Jamaat MP's house, party office

CI sheets recovered from farm of ex-BNP lawmaker's son

STAR REPORT

The joint forces last night recovered a good number of corrugated iron (CI) sheets of government relief fund from the house of former Jamaat lawmaker Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and a local jamaat office in Nilphamari.

The same day they arrested a former pourasabha chairman in Rangpur.

Earlier on Friday night, law enforcers recovered government relief materials raiding a former BNP lawmaker's residence in Sylhet.

Meanwhile, the joint forces recovered 11 CI sheets of government relief fund raiding a poultry farm owned by the son of a former BNP lawmaker from Pabna-3 KM Anwarul Islam yesterday noon at

Chatmohar upazila in Pabna.

They however could not arrest the son, KM Monwarul Islam, or any one else during the drive. Locals alleged that earlier 82 CI sheets had been removed from the farm by the owners.

The crack forces arrested 1,554 people on various charges and recovered 16 firearms, six homemade bombs and 121 bullets in the 24 hours preceding 6:00am yesterday across the country.

Our correspondent from Nilphamari reports: During the raid on the ex-Jamaat lawmaker's house, the security forces arrested Jamaat Rokon Abdul Latif and worker Abdur Rahman.

Mizan, who was elected from Nilphamari-3 (Jaldhaka and part of Kishoreganj) in 1996 and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

# Expose those who whitened black money

Hasina asks NBR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) Chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to reveal the names of people who have whitened their black money.

Demanding scrutiny of the wealth that the corrupt people have amassed since the country's independence, Hasina also came down heavily upon those who make sweeping criticism against politicians.

"Those who blame the politicians are now trying to be politicians," the AL president said while exchanging views with the representatives of 'Bangalee Sangskritik Mancha' at her Dhamondio office.

"Why are you so eager to join politics after abusing the politicians so much?" Hasina posed the question without naming anyone. She noted that those who want

to be politicians 'all of a sudden' would cause disaster to the country and pollute politics. "Those who started politics after capturing power first could not give anything to the nation, rather only looted the public wealth."

The former prime minister said there is no difference between the corrupt, bribe takers and interest takers. "Those who take interests not only failed to eradicate poverty, but also nurture poverty," the AL chief noted.

Saying that there are many honest politicians in the country, she asked people concerned not to make any sweeping allegations against politicians.

"Don't mix up the politicians with those who are involved in criminalisation of politics," Hasina said, blaming previous BNP-led four-party coalition government

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

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