

Probe corruption in PSC, bring culprits to book

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called on the caretaker government to bring reforms to the Public Service Commission (PSC) immediately through appointment of honest and competent officials as its chairman and members in order to bring dynamism and ensure transparency in its activities.

They also called for a thorough investigation into massive corruption in the PSC and punishment to the persons responsible.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the roundtable on 'Public Service Commission: Problems and Solutions' in the city with its Chairman Prof Muzaffar Ahmed in the chair.

"The PSC has been politicised to a great extent, putting the future of both the present and next generations at risk," Prof Muzaffar Ahmed said, adding: "We want a thorough investigation into all allegations against the PSC."

Former advisers to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan, ASM Shahjahan and Sultana Kamal, former PSC chairman Mostafa Chowdhury, former member Dr Hamida Banu, Justice Golam Rabban, Advocate Mahbulul Alam, Dr Syed Gausuddin Ahmed and Prof Atiqur Rahman of Dhaka University, former IGP and secretary Nurul Huda and Awami League leader Subhas Singh Roy took part in the discussion.

They emphasised the need to bring changes to the process of appointing PSC chairman and members and to the examination system in order to make the PSC free from all forms of corruption.

The system of recruitment must

be changed so that the elected prime minister cannot appoint the PSC chairman and members on political considerations, Hafizuddin Khan said.

ASM Shahjahan said those who are resorting to corruption in important organisations such as PSC should be given exemplary punishment.

Mostafa Chowdhury urged the caretaker government to launch an anti-corruption drive in the PSC.

Dr Giasuddin said a committee comprising prime minister, leader of the opposition, a member from the civil society and an expert should be formed to recruit PSC chairman and members.

Subhas Singh Roy termed the PSC a place of repression and demanded necessary action to reform it.

Presenting a diagnostic study, the

TIB put forward a 24-point recommendation for reforms of the PSC.

The recommendations are as follows: A special committee should be formed to reform the PSC considering its neutrality, independence and functions. Relevant laws should also be amended or new laws can be enacted.

There should be a system to review the assets of the PSC chairman, members, officials and staffs on a regular basis.

A strong probe body comprising neutral and competent persons should be formed to investigate the allegations of corruption and irregularities in the exams of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) and take necessary action on the basis of the probe body's recommendations.

All officials and employees of the PSC should be brought under a

certain system of transparency and accountability and a committee can be formed in this regard. Allocations for the PSC should be earmarked in the national budget.

An effective fact-finding committee should be formed to appoint PSC chairman and members. Persons who are acceptable to all and have experiences regarding public administration should be given preference during the recruitment.

A committee should be formed to reform and modernise the system of the BCS examination.

At least 75 percent of appointments should be made on the basis of merit; district quota should be abolished and freedom fighters' quota should be reviewed. A code of conduct for the PSC should also be formulated.

Referring to the widespread corruption, irregularities, nepotism, bribery and BCS question leakage, the speakers demanded immediate formation of a strong probe body to look into these matters for which, what they said, the PSC has lost its credibility.

Three examinees of the 24th, 25th and 27th BCS examinations expressed their grievances, saying that they were deprived of government jobs despite their brilliant academic career.

They also demanded stern action against the PSC officials who ensured jobs for some examinees in exchange for a handsome amount of money.

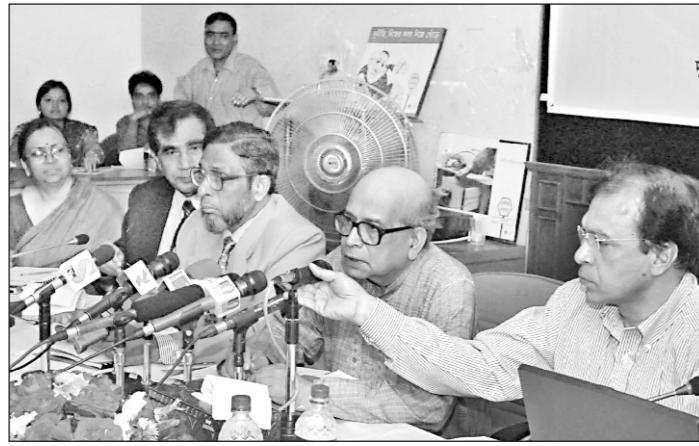


PHOTO: STAR

TIB Chairman Prof Muzaffar Ahmad speaks at a roundtable at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are TIB Treasurer M Hafizuddin Khan, former advisers ASM Shahjahan and Sultana Kamal and on his left is TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman.

EU to celebrate 50th yr of Rome Treaty Mar 25

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Training rather than doling out money is more effective to make ultra-poor people of the country self-reliant, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They said those who are in dire need of financial support do not have the power to pay back the loan with interest.

The roundtable titled the 'Role of Brac's Targeting the Ultra Poor (TUP) programme in improving the life standard of ultra poor,' was organised by Brac Advocacy and Human Rights Unit (BAHRU) and the daily Naya Digaanta at CIRDAP Auditorium in the city.

While presenting a keynote paper Wajedul Islam Pahlooin, regional manager of TUP, said considering the inability of ultra poor to participate even in the micro-credit programme for different constraints, TUP was formed in 2002 to improve their socio economic condition.

After conducting a base-line survey they were provided with training on poultry and animal farming, cultivation and cottage industry, he added.

The beneficiaries of TUP were also provided with non-repayable financial grant at the primary stage of their business for maintenance until they could have regular income, he explained.

Until December 31 of last year, the number of beneficiaries was one lakh ultra-poor people of 13 districts including Rangpur, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Kishoreganj, Netrokona, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Sirajganj, Rajbari and Panchagarh.

TUP programme, supported by DFID and EU, targeted to increase the number of beneficiaries up to three lakhs by the year 2011, said Ruhul Amin, manager of BAHRU.

Dr Sa'dat Hussain, founding adviser of BAHRU and former cabinet secretary, said as government projects on poverty alleviation cannot be successful due to various constraints, different organisations should come forward to improve the condition of the ultra poor.

Presiding over the discussion Alamgir Mohiuddin, editor of the Naya Digaanta, asked for modifying the definition of poverty and not to do business with the poor in the name of development.

Farid Hossain, bureau chief of Associated Press (AP), and poet Al Mujahidi, literary editor of the daily Itefaq, also spoke.

Seminar on biochemistry

A seminar titled 'The role of biochemistry in pharmaceutical industries' will be held at Kamaluddin Ahmad gallery of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology of Dhaka University on March 24 at 10:30am, says a press release.

The Bangladesh Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology will organise the seminar.

Jawaid Yahya, managing director of Advent Pharma, and AH Zaker, manufacturing director of Beximco Pharmaceuticals, will attend the seminar as guest speakers.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and the regions of Jessore and Kushtia 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.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 35.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and lowest 19.1 degree Celsius at Chandpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:11pm today and rises at 5:59am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.8	23.3	81	75
Chittagong	29.7	22.6	78	91
Rajshahi	35.4	22.6	86	47
Khulna	33.4	24.5	82	69
Barisal	33.2	23.4	87	71
Sylhet	26.8	20.3	87	84
Cox's Bazar	30.6	20.2	67	79

Int'l Education Exhibition 2007 begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day International Education Exhibition-2007 organised by SSBCL begins at the Ball Room of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel today.

A number of universities from the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Ireland, France, Italy, South Korea, Poland, Russia, Netherlands, Spain, Hungary and Malaysia will participate at the exhibition.

The competition has been jointly organised with Tommy Miah's Hospitality Management Institute and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation.

The chef students of these institutes are invited to submit recipes combining European and Bangladeshi cooking traditions. A Jury made up of EU ambassadors, representatives of the news agencies AFP and UNB, Parjatan Corporation and Tommy Miah's Institute, will designate the best fusion dish in a live cooking final.

"I expect this to be an enjoyable opportunity to celebrate the culinary traditions of Europe and Bangladesh while exploring new, innovative fusion recipes. Our intention is to serve the best fusion dish at the traditional Europe Day reception of the delegation on May 9," commented Dr Stefan Frowein.

Interested students can get necessary information on overseas studies from the foreign participants at this exhibition, he added.

Poland representatives Prof S Ryszard Domanski and Aleksandra Modrzynska, SNN Editor Utpal Kumar Sarker and Mohabbat Hossain Chowdhury of Eastern Bank were also present at the press conference.

The Australian High Commissioner Douglas Foskett said this while handing over around 1,000 pairs of spectacles to Md Omar Shafayat Kausar, district governor of the International Association of Lions Club in Dhaka, says a press release.

"I hope these spectacles will give poor eye patients in Bangladesh the ability to have better sight," added the Aussie envoy.

The Lions Club will distribute the items free of cost among poor eye patients in Bangladesh including the poor patients who have had cataract surgery at the Lions Eye Hospital.

The spectacles have been donated under a project jointly organised by Foresight Australia an Australian International non-profit organisation committed to the prevention and cure of blindness, and the Lions Club of New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory.

Speakers at a seminar here yesterday laid emphasis on protecting renewable sources of water particularly the rivers through checking pollution with a view to coping with water scarcity.

Massive pollution of rivers is shrinking the stock of usable surface water while increasing pressure is causing a fall in the underground water level, they observed.

The speakers called for creating



PHOTO: ISPR

Visiting US Congressman Curt Weldon calls on Army Chief Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed at the army headquarters in the city yesterday.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

UN bodies stress replication of Bangladesh model in Asian cities

BSS, Dhaka

Officials of UNDP and UNESCAP yesterday suggested replication of a Bangladesh model of waste management in Asian and African cities to protect environment, create employment and expedite development.

"The model developed by Bangladesh's Waste Concern meets all the criteria under the new approach of solid waste management" under the UN campaign called Trash to Cash, Bangkok-based economic affairs official of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Adnan Hameed Ali said in a press briefing here.

He said UNESCAP was assisting two cities in Sri Lanka and Vietnam in replicating the Waste Concern model that earned the Bangladeshi research and consultancy organisation the UN Poverty Award in 2002 for suggesting ways to reduce transport costs, improve collection services and provide higher and regular income and better working condition to waste pickers.

His comments came at the end of a regional training workshop

for Sri Lankan and Vietnamese waste management officials staged by Waste Concern in Dhaka while UNDP's Assistant Resident Representative Shirin Kamal Sayeed also attended.

"The model ensured every angle of sustainable development by cleaning environment, generating income, addressing gender issues and producing composts from wastes," Shirin Kamal told the function.

UNESCAP assists Sri Lankan town of Matale and Vietnamese city of Quy Nhon in replicating the Bangladesh model that also explored ways to reduce, reuse and recycle solid wastes "as many stages as possible" under an approach involving community in the process of eventually producing environment friendly organic fertilisers.

The model also earned Bangladesh the chance of getting the world's first Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project largely removing the Dhaka City Corporation's responsibility of waste disposal and disposal sites.

Dhaka city currently produces 3,200 tonnes of municipal garbage everyday of which the DCC can collect only 1,200 tonnes in a crude and unhygienic manner at its Matul site producing bad odour and polluting air and water bodies.

The CDM mechanism, also described as carbon trading,

Robbery in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Agang of robbers looted money and valuables totalling Tk 5 lakh from a house at village Moijipur in Biswanath upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

His comments came at the end of a regional training workshop

TK 24 CR BILL ARREARS

N'ganj chemical co gas line disconnected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A mobile court of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Co. Ltd. disconnected the gas line of Talukder Chemical Company at Tarabo in Rupganj yesterday for not paying the bill arrears amounting to Tk 24 crore.

The mobile court led by Magistrate Khalil Ahmed also arrested Manager Ataur Rahman of the company during the drive against bill defaulters.

The mobile court conducted the drive with the help of joint forces yesterday afternoon.

Magistrate Khalil Ahmed said that the company also had an illegal gas connection and it had been tampering with the gas meter for long.

Owner of the company Mozammel Haq Talukder has been arrested.

According to Titas Gas officials, Talukder Chemical Company is the

biggest gas bill defaulter in N'ganj.

Memorial meet on Waheedul Haque today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A daylong meeting in memory of journalist and Tagore song specialist Waheedul Haque will be held on Ati Bhawal High School premises under Keraniganj upazila in Dhaka today.

The programme will begin at 9:30am.

Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui will be present as chief guest with educationist Matiur Rahman Bhuiyan in the chair.

Members of different organisations, including Chhayanaut, will perform in the cultural function.

Alleged arms dealer killed in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

An alleged arms dealer was killed in 'crossfire' between Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices in Joynagar area at Daulatkhan in Bhol