



PHOTO STAR
The road show styled 'Esho Bangladesh Gori' is now in the city after making a successful countrywide tour. The picture was taken from Jatrabari yesterday.

Curb extortion to fight graft

BIDS fellow tells seminar on US study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities in the developing countries having resource constraints should give more emphasis on curbing extortion than bribery to combat corruption effectively, said Prof Fahad Khalil, a visiting fellow of BIDS, yesterday.

"Extortion and bribery are just two forms of corruption and both should be eliminated. But the authorities should first deter extortion, because it seriously affects development," said the professor of economics at the University of Washington, while presenting a study titled 'Bribery vs Extortion: Allowing the lesser of two evils'.

In 2007, Professors Fahad

Khalil, Jacques Lawarree and Sungho Yun of the University of Washington conducted the study which was presented during a seminar at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in the capital.

Prof Khalil said bribery occurs when a supervisor accepts a payment in return for misreporting an information to benefit the agent, while extortion occurs when the supervisor obtains a payment from the agent by threatening to misreport the evidence that was favourable to the agent.

Thus, with bribery the supervisor and agent forge information to maximise their joint surplus, while with extortion,

the supervisor acts alone by threatening to suppress evidence since he/she is acting against the agent's interest, he added.

Extortion, therefore, seriously hampers business, said Prof Khalil, adding, "Our results suggest that organisations that must rely on soft information may need to allow bribery."

Developing countries with less resources, technological abilities and weak legal environment have also less capability to make information hard, and therefore they should be expected that bribery is a more pervasive problem.

"The fight against corruption should therefore focus on the reliance on hard evidence," said

Prof Khalil.

He said bribery would not be reported other than by whistleblowers, but extortion may be relatively easier to deter using an appeals process for agents subjected to extortion.

Asked how morality other than legal framework or technological capacity plays role in checking corruption, Prof Khalil said honesty surely is the most important element in eradicating corruption, but whenever any framework is designed to deter such menace, qualities like morality or honesty should not be considered.

"You have to make the legal mechanism in such a manner that all engaged in the process are accountable," he added.

WOMEN LEADERSHIP Khelafat remarks protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Karmojibi Nari (KN), in a statement yesterday, resented the demand of Khelafat Andolon in a dialogue with the chief adviser on Saturday that no woman can become the head of the state.

Protesting the demand, President of Karmojibi Nari Shirin Akhter and General Secretary Sharmin Kabir said the speech of Khelafat Andolon leaders is quite offensive and ill-motivated.

While demands were raised from across the country for women empowerment, the speech of Khelafat leaders goes against the spirit.

Such speech also goes against the constitution and the state policy, the KN leaders said, adding that the country's legal system does not bar women's participation in state affairs. They asked the leaders of Khelafat Andolon to withdraw their ill-motivated demands, says a press release.

Draft coal policy to be placed in cabinet soon

UNB, Dhaka

The draft coal policy with options for open pit and underground mining is being sent this week to the cabinet division for the government approval.

"We've completed all necessary procedures. Now the draft will be sent to the cabinet division any time this week for approval, Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Power and Energy Ministry M Tamim told the news agency yesterday.

terday.

The inter-ministerial meeting discussing the draft policy had given the green signal to go ahead, he added.

The Buet professor-turned-career government functionary said options for both open pit and underground mining methods were kept in the draft policy.

"Development method of any coal field will be determined on the basis of the coal conditions," he said, adding that there is no provi-

sion for any pilot- or experiment-based project of open pit mining.

Full compensation, including rehabilitation of those affected by the mining, was provided in the draft policy. But they would not get the land back on completion of the mining as was proposed in the earlier draft policy.

"Land ministry has suggested that this is not a pragmatic provision as land returning process to the original owner may create a lot of complications after a long time of acquisition," Dr Tamim added.

A high-level technical expert committee drafted the coal policy and placed it to the energy division in January this year.

Energy division reviewed the policy and took suggestions and opinions of other ministries concerned before finalising the draft.

In the absence of coal policy, the energy ministry's move for developing the country's coal fields remained stalled.

So far, six coal fields with a total reserves of 2.55 billion tonnes have been identified, mostly in the northern region.

Of those, Phulbari Coal Mine project, for which a UK-based company Asia Energy conducted a feasibility study and submitted an open pit mining development project remained stalled for the government's approval.

Similarly, Tata Group of India also showed its interest and placed a proposal for development of Barapukuria Coal Mine project through open pit method. But the government is taking a decision for the policy.



PHOTO STAR
Speakers at a discussion titled 'We want a corruption-free and proud Bangladesh' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. From left are Nurul Islam Nahid, Dr Kamal Hossain, Bimal Biswas and Pankaj Bhattacharya. (Story on Page 2)

JCD, BCL RALLIES AT DU 'Free Hasina, Khaleda'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of Awami League (AL), and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of BNP, yesterday reiterated their demands for the permanent release of Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia.

Leaders and activists of BCL formed a human chain in front of the arts building on the Dhaka University (DU) campus around at noon, while JCD activists formed a human wall stretching between Shahbagh and Doyal Square (in front of the Curzon Hall).

BCL also demanded unconditional release of its detained General Secretary Mahfujul Haider Chowdhury Rotan, lifting of the state of emergency, holding of national election, trial of war crim-

inals and bringing down the prices of essentials to a bearable level.

BCL leaders Mahmud Hasan Ripon, Syed Abul Kalam, Sohel Rana Tipu and Sazzad Saqib Badsha participated in the programme.

Meanwhile, JCD leaders and activists with banners and placards in their hands at the human wall demanded release of Khaleda Zia, her two sons -- Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman, and JCD President Azizul Bari Helal.

They also demanded immediate lifting of the emergency and holding of the national election before holding any elections in the country.

JCD leaders Sultan Salauddin Tuku, Shafiq Bari Babu, Khairul Hasan Jewel and Akram Hasan took part in the programme.



PHOTO STAR
Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka unveils the name plaque of Bir Uttam ANM Nuruzzaman Road from Asad Gate to Shyamoli, previously known as Mirpur Road, in the city yesterday. The wife and the daughter of the martyr were present. DCC also renamed the road from Shyamoli Cinema Hall to Gabtali Bridge as Bir Uttam AW Chowdhury Road.

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Corporate Office: All Mansion, 1173/1207 Sadarghat Road, Chittagong, Bangladesh | Tel: +880-31-2854901-10 | Fax: +880-31-610101 | E-mail: mail@bsrm.com
Dhaka Office: Mahub Castle (2nd & 4th Floor), 35 Purana Paltan Line, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh | Phone: +880-2-8313135, 9358135, 8311994, 9356344 | Fax: +880-2-8312905 | E-mail: bsrm@allbd.net