

# Frame comprehensive policy to resolve power crisis

Noted personalities urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted personalities have called on the government to formulate a comprehensive power policy to ensure 100 percent state ownership of the country's power sector in order to mitigate the excruciating power crisis.

Power crisis cannot be resolved through profit-oriented private sector, which is dominated by foreign companies. So, there is no alternative to long-term, mid-term and short-term government policies to resolve the prevailing crisis, they added.

They made the remarks at a discussion on 'Electricity crisis and functions' organised by Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) at its office in the city yesterday.

The speakers stressed the need for strengthening different state-run organisations like Power Development Board (PDB), Rural Electrification Board (REB) and Petrobranga and appointing expert professionals in those organisations.

Noted economist Prof Anu Mohammad underscored the importance of repairing the government power

plants to resolve the nagging power shortage.

He strongly criticised the government move to obtain rental power plants, saying that such initiative would make foreign companies profitable but would never benefit people.

On coal mining, Prof Anu said the government could take coal gasification project in lieu of open-pit mining as pilot project.

He urged the government to refrain from signing any export-oriented destructive agreement on energy, which might have boomerang effect on the nation.

Convener of National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Mineral Resources, Electricity and Seaports engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah said power crisis has arisen due to massive corruption of the government officials and lack of patriotism in politicians.

He also called on the government to concentrate on alternative energy sources, including solar and wind power, to meet its increasing demand.

Justice Ghulam Rabbani criticised the

government, saying that it only gives assurance to people, but does not take any executive step to cope with the crisis.

Presenting a keynote paper, Prof Shamsul Alam of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) placed some recommendations to this end.

He recommended that the government pass a law titled Banning of Export of Mineral Resources Act-2010, continue extraction of coal from Barapukuria coalmine, do not sign any contract with foreign companies for gas exploration and extraction in plain lands, start gas exploration under Production Sharing Contract (PSC) model, which are yet to start its operations and import gas and coal for long-term energy security.

CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan presided over the discussion, which was moderated by noted economist Prof MM Akash.

Politburo member of Workers Party of Bangladesh Bimal Biswas, economist Dr Asaduzzaman and engineer BD Rahmatullah also spoke.



ROAD No. 3 at Nikunja at Uttara in the city remains under sewage water for long due to poor drainage system, causing immense suffering to road users, but the authorities remain indifferent to the problem. The photo was taken yesterday.



Local residents carrying water containers wait in a queue to collect drinking water from the water pump of Dhaka Wasa at Farmgate in the city yesterday, as the area has been suffering from acute water crisis.

## Flood situation worsens

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Flood situation deteriorated in Khaliajuri, Kalmakanda and Madan upazilas in Netrakona yesterday, with damage to 20,000 hectares of Boro crops.

Floodwater damaged 15,000 hectares of Boro crops at Baghatia, Gondamara, Nogar, Balloppur and Jagannathpur haor in Khaliajuri upazila and Gobindashree and Ghatua haor in Madan upazila.

The flash flood also damaged 5,000 hectares of Boro crops at Medikanda and Naniarchor haor in Kalmakanda upazila.

A 10-kilometre portion of Jatrabari flood protection embankment was washed away by floodwater.

WDB sources also said the water level of the river Kongsha, Dhonu and Ubdakhali rose sharply.

## 2 Jubo League men among 7 held with firearms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested seven persons, including four arms traders, in Mymensingh town and Dhubaura upazila and recovered arms and bullets from their possession early yesterday.

The arrestees were identified Maznu Miah, 31, an activist of Dhubaura upazila Jubo League, Noor-e-Alam, 33, its joint-convener, Jamal Hossain, 25, and arms dealers Mazedur Rahman Khan Ripon, 32, Zahid Hasan Shamir, 26, Shah Alam, 20, and Shimul Miah, 26.

The arms recovered included one light gun, three pistols and nine rounds of bullet.

At a press conference at its office, Wing Commander Syed Anagh of Rab-9 said on secret information a tam of the elite crime busters rented several rooms of a hotel in the town Thursday evening in disguise of arms buyers.

They contacted Shimul Miah over a cell phone repeatedly with an offer to buy arms from him. The Rab team fixed the price of two pistols with magazines at Tk 1,80,00.

Later, Shah Alam came to the hotel with a magazine loaded with three rounds of bullet.

When the Rab men contacted with the gang again, they said if the money was paid to Shah Alam, two pistols would be delivered soon.

After such conversation, Rab team paid the amount to Shah Alam that inspired the gang to deliver the arms.

Later gang leader Mazedur Rahman Khan Ripon along with Zahid Hasan Shamir came to the hotel room and handed over a foreign made pistol to the disguised Rab members.

At this stage, the plainclothes Rab men staying in and around the hotel captured the four arms dealers around 2:30am.

According to the statements of the arrested, Rab later arrested Jamal Hossain, Noor-e-Alam and Maznu Miah from Dhubaura and recovered one light gun, two foreign made pistols and two magazines along with six rounds of bullets.

Rab sources said the arrested were handed over to Kotwali Police Station yesterday afternoon after primary interrogation at the Rab office.

## 3,892 bottles of Phensidyl seized, 2 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 3,792 bottles of Phensidyl were seized and two people arrested during three separate raids at Birampur and Nawabganj upazilas here yesterday.

Two trucks were seized arrested in this connection.

The arrestees were identified as Md Mominul Islam alias Lalmiah, son of late Abdus Sattar of village Kutipara under Saidpur upazila, and Hasan Ali, son of late Shamsur Ali of Laxmipur village under the same upazila of Nilphamari.

Sources said a BDR team of Phulbari 40 Battalion, led by Subedar Shafi Uddin Hawlader, carried out a dawn raid on Dalardargah village of Nawabganj and seized at least 1,600 bottles of Phensidyl and a sharp weapon.

The same team also seized at least 200 bottles of Phensidyl from a covered van (Comilla Ma-05-0005). It also seized the van but the driver and helper of the van managed to flee.

On the other hand, a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) team of Rangpur in another raid seized at least 2,092 bottles of Phensidyl from Durgapur village under Birampur in the early hours.

Rab men also seized the truck and arrested the driver and his helper for carrying the contraband Indian medicine.

## Suspected JMB man held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Police arrested a suspected member of the banned militant outfit JMB at Bamonitola village of Atrai upazila in the district on Thursday evening.

The arrestee was identified as Hamidul Haque Babu, 38.

At least three criminal cases were filed against Babu with Atrai Police Station in 2006 and 2007.

Police yesterday produced Babu before the court while the court sent him to jail.

## Community radio for agriculture to be set up in Barguna

UNB, Dhaka

A community radio station mostly highlighting agriculture will be set up in a remote area of Barguna district with a view to empowering nearly 3,00,000 rural people.

The station to be set up under a pilot project, 'Enhancing Rural Communication Services for Agricultural Development through Community Rural Radio', at a cost of about Tk 80 million (8 crore).

Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) will provide US\$ 457,500 apart from ensuring technical assistance, while Tk 32.6 million (3.26 crore) will come from the government.

An agreement to this effect is likely to be signed between the government and the FAO on April 29 at the Finance Ministry, said Agriculture Information Service (AIS) director Md Nazrul Islam.

On Thursday, the Information Ministry for the first time granted permission to 12 new community radio stations including 'Community Rural Radio'.

The AIS director said that the community radio station will run initially for eight hours a day by the officials of AIS, Bangladesh Betar (Barisal Centre) and Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

The station will air different programmes on agriculture like which soil is suitable for which type of crops, fertiliser management, livestock and fisheries. The programmes will be broadcast in local dialect.

On completion of the two-year tenure of the pilot project, the management of the radio station will be handed over to community people under the supervision of local government.

AIS director Nazrul Islam said some NGOs, who would like to work in agriculture sector, might be involved in the venture in future.

Apart from agriculture, the rural radio station will also broadcast programmes on education, nutrition, environment, forestry, and may forecast on possible natural calamity.

## UPL celebrates World Book, Copyright Day today

METRO DESK

The University Press Limited (UPL) celebrates World Book and Copyright Day today in solidarity with one of UNESCO's missions -- "to promote reading, publishing and the protection of intellectual property through copyright".

UPL wishes to make its publications available at all locations accessible to people. As a part of this effort, UPL is opening a new showroom on Pragati Sarani, close to Baridhara and Gulshan while also celebrating an auspicious day for publishers and writers, says a press release.

To mark the occasion, a brief discussion session and a modest opening ceremony will be held.

Md Manzurul Rahman, registrar, Copyright, Ministry of Culture; Fazole Rabbi, former director of National Book Centre, and Prof Anisuzzaman, Department of Bangla, University of Dhaka will be present as guests.

The entire range of UPL titles in print will be available for sale at special discount during the "Open House" from 11:00am to 6:00pm, added the release.

## Poor public services

**FROM PAGE 1**

general of Bard, in the preface to the study published in January.

"Improvement in public service delivery needs capacity building of the government officials, transparent and more accountable relationship between service providers and service receivers, removal of political interference, effective monitoring, change in mindset of the service providers and decentralisation of authority," Aataur said citing the findings of the study.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the study titled "Service Delivery and Good Governance: A Micro Level Study".

Abdul Karim, deputy director (project division) of BARD, carried out the study.

It involved collecting data from different government departments at upazilas and villages.

Thirty-seven government officials of 16 departments in two upazilas -- Chauddagram of Comilla and Nasir Nagar of Brahmanbaria -- and some 100 villagers as service receivers were interviewed.

The main responsibility of the state is to serve its citizens and local government departments are supposed to deliver all sorts of services related to human development and social development.

But the study portrayed a gloomy picture of the service delivery system, which remains mostly underutilised.

Low quality services, highly bureaucratic process, lack of professionalism, poor access to information, weak relation between service providers and service receivers and insensitivity to clientele needs make the service delivery system ineffective, inefficient and less credible to service receivers, observed the study.

It said the system's effectiveness suffers from villagers' lack of knowledge about services of different government departments, government officials' lack of motivation for delivering services sincerely, inadequate number of staff at the government departments, shortage of materials and inputs, and rent seeking of government officials during the delivery of services.

In most cases, departments provide services on ad hoc

basis or based on projects taken by central government. There should be an annual plan for service delivery by government departments based on area and beneficiary coverage through a public consultation process, the study said.

**HOW PEOPLE SUFFER**

Despatches by our Pabna, Patuakhali and Dinajpur correspondents also reflect the poor condition of service delivery to people.

Mujahidul Islam Badsha, a farmer living in Sahapur village under Ishwardi upazila of Pabna, said he had been visiting upazila land office since 2007 to correct a name recorded against 20 decimal of land.

"I have already spent around Tk 10,000 visiting the land office from my village. But I didn't get remedy," he told The Daily Star last week at the land office of the upazila.

Rafiqul Islam, a farmer living in Jolisa village under Dumki upazila of Patuakhali, said he had visited the upazila land office five times in last one month. "I paid Tk 800 as bribe for mutation of four land documents. I was compelled to pay the extra money as the

land officials refused to work without taking money (bribe)," he told The Daily Star correspondent.

The plight of Rawshan Ali, a retired schoolteacher of Gorobdi village under Dumki, is worse. He retired from service in December 2008. But he is yet to get his pension benefit, as the officials at the upazila AG office didn't clear the files.

"I paid Tk 10,000 to an official of the AG office for the clearance. I was given the assurance that the cheque would be delivered today [yesterday]. But I was again asked to come next week," Rawshan, who is a patient of heart disease, told The Daily Star.

Mokdes Ali, a farmer living in Madhabhati village under Biral upazila of Dinajpur, recently talked to The Daily Star correspondent on the upazila land office premises.

His plot of land measuring four decimal was wrongly recorded in the name of another person during the survey.

"I came here to see the document. But I had to pay Tk 200 as bribe to have access to the document," he said.

## Tk 56,000, valuables looted in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A gang of robbers looted over Tk 56,000, four cellphone sets and gold ornaments from two houses at Purba Hashli village in Manikganj Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Masked robbers entered the house of Abdur Rahman, a member of Ward 7 of Bhararia Union Parishad, at around 2:00am as he was sleeping in the veranda keeping the door open.

Tying the hands, legs and mouth of the inmates, the robbers looted Tk 55,600, two mobile sets and 1.5 vories of gold ornaments from the house.

The criminals also beat up the inmates as they tried to protest, they said.

The gang then went to the house of Alek Ali of the village and looted Tk 1100 and two mobile sets from the house the same way.

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