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Power generation scene

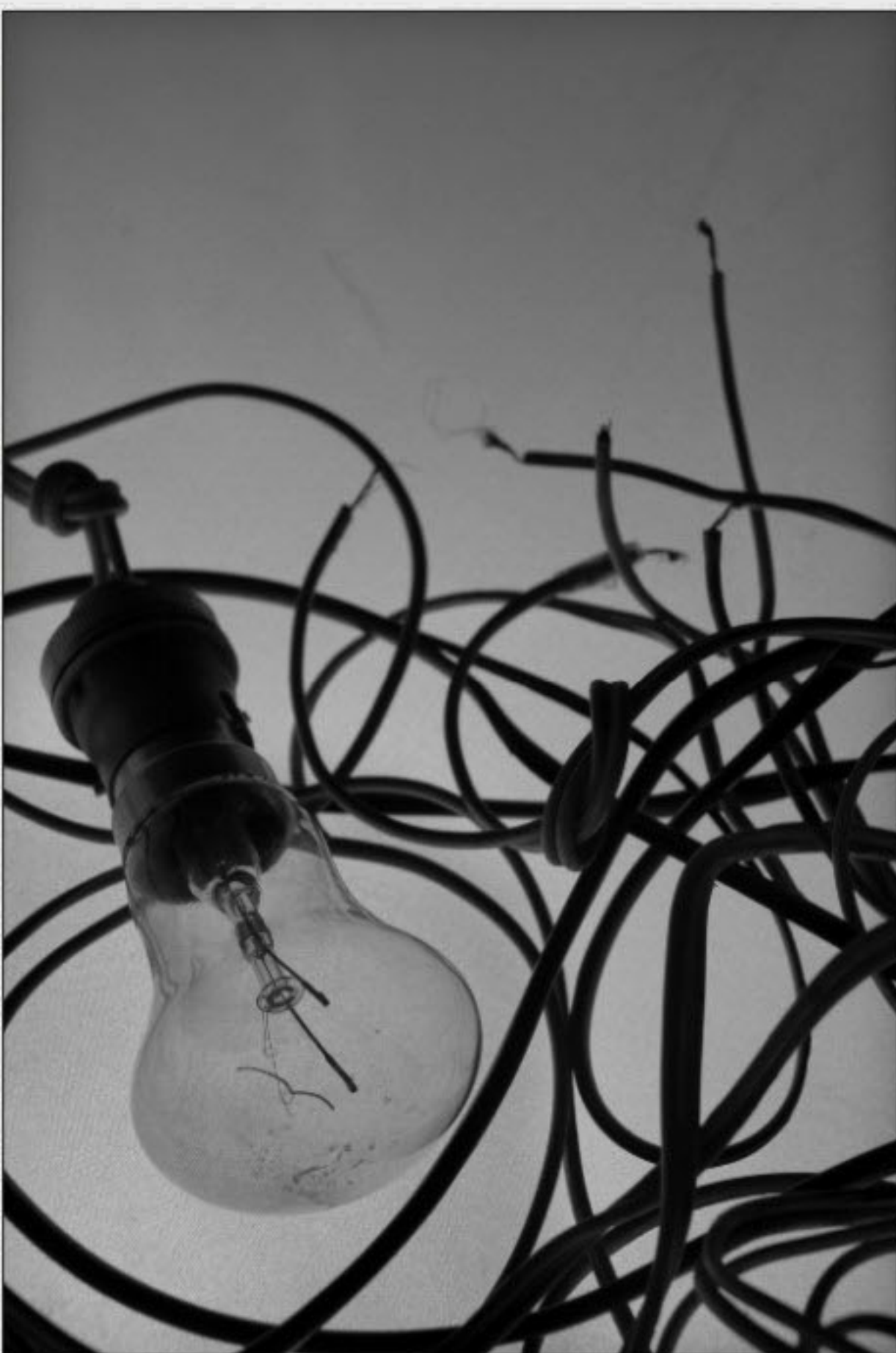


PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV

As per report in the DS on 09-08-10 total 871 MW of power has been added to the national grid since the present govt came to power. But this increase in power generation could not make any visible change in power supply as load shedding remains as before. This is due to the fact that in the mean time some running power stations were shut down. It is difficult to construct new power stations, but it is even more difficult to maintain a power station and keep it running in full capacity. Some examples of such power stations are:

Kaptai hydro power station: it can generate only 146 mw of power (which was 230 mw before) because unit 1 and unit 3 are out of operation.

Ghorashal power station: Unit 2 (produces 30 mw) and 3 (produces 210 mw) are running at present. Recently unit 6 (produces 210 mw) was severely damaged due to an accident.

Barapukuria power station: One unit was shut down and the other unit is producing 65 mw of power.

Khulna power station, Siddhirganj power station, Fenchuganj power station, Ashuganj power station are all in the same condition. Then, there is distribution loss and many other systems losses.

We need skilled technicians and technical support to solve present power crisis.

Md. Delwar Hossain
East Rampura, Dhaka

Decentralisation

Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, is beset with many problems and the problems continue to multiply. Apparently all incumbent governments try to sort out the problems, but the problems continue to remain. As for example, in an effort to reduce traffic jam, the authorities concerned tried to implement the lane concept resulting in severe traffic jam. This means the concept itself was wrong. In my understanding the authorities are not sincere or serious about solving the problems of the country faces.

Water scarcity is another nagging problem. Kalabagan, our abode, was the least affected area in this case. Nowadays the residents are experiencing this worst problem. The deep tube-well operators blamed it on frequent power failures, which could be true.

In an effort to overcome this problem, the government may consider installing solar panels at all deep tube well stations across the city gradually, and thus mitigate the sufferings of the city dwellers to a great extent.

The solution to all problems lies in decentralisation. Dhaka is massively overcrowded and people are alarmingly coming in thousands from all over the country compounding the already existing problems. To save Dhaka, nay Bangladesh, this trend of migration has got to be reversed and it can only be achieved by decentralisation. All that is required is sincere efforts to implement the idea.

Saleh Ayub
One-mail

Utilising natural resources

Natural resources are the raw materials supplied by the earth. These resources include soil, air, water, sunshine, forests, wildlife, fish, fossil fuels, metals and minerals. Using natural resources to

meet human needs has an impact on global environment. Each time raw materials are used to produce goods, there are ecological, social, and economic impacts. Sustainable management of these natural resources and utilisation of conservation techniques are necessary to meet present and future needs. Bangladesh is very rich in natural resources, specifically in coal, limestone, natural gas, peat coal, white clay, mineral sand, oil, etc. But yet we are not a developed country...why?

The answer is simple. We don't afford the technology to extract these resources. If our government asks for other country's help, they would happily agree to do so. They would send the technologies, experts and everything, but in return they would take away 75% of what would be extracted.

As the population grows, it puts pressure on resource bases. The government of Bangladesh must take necessary steps in utilising natural resources.

Tanha Kashfia Kate
Uttara Model Town, Dhaka

First day at school

For some of us school has already started and for others it will start after Ramadan. But all of us will have to go back to school sometime soon. Today was my first. Even if you aren't new at a school you still feel new on the first day. New teachers, new classrooms, new classmates, etc. But some of us dread this day and others wait all the year for this day. For troublemakers it's a new shot at buttering up the new teachers. For the goody goodies, it's also about buttering up the teachers for a whole new year. But if we go back to the same school with our buds then we feel good. This is the time of year we can make an impression and we all use it.

Tasnia Zaman
One-mail

Billion dollar loan

The billion dollar loan provided by India's Exim Bank is a façade of a loan, and under the present terms and conditions of the loan, it will not be substantially beneficial for Bangladesh.

The key condition of the loan is that 85% of all expenses made through the loan money will have to be bought from India. What this means is that, 85% of the billion dollar, i.e. 850 million dollars will go back to India. Bangladesh, therefore, will have only 150 million dollars to spare.

One might argue, at least, we are getting goods worth 850 million dollars from India. However, this is not a grant, but a loan, which means, essentially, we are spending our own money to buy goods from India worth 850 million dollars. This will go on to imbalance our balance on current accounts in the national accounting.

Furthermore, the 1.75% interest rate on this loan means that we will not even enjoy the entire 150 million dollars of the loan. We will have to pay out an additional 17.5 million dollars to India.

Repayment of a billion dollar loan will severely deplete our foreign reserves. Bangladesh could've spent the billion dollars internally to develop its infrastructure, which would have positive effects on the local economy, instead of spending 850 million dollars in India.

In essence, this loan means that Bangladesh will be spending a total of 867.5 million dollars in India, which can be considered as a very expensive gift.

Ratib M Ali
BRAC University

Premature death

Premature death in road accident is a commonplace event in Bangladesh. There is no improvement at all in the situation. Why? Why doesn't the government take any initiative? Where is the problem?

Ismat Ara Runa
Hiroshima University
Japan

Miserable traffic

I don't know whether "miserable" is the correct word for Dhaka traffic. Every day the situation is getting worse. The sign of improvement is not there at all. I tried to change my schedule and thought of moving around the city after 10:30 pm, tried it for a week, but eventually gave up, as Dhaka during the night is a different city. Though the traffic is less but it is dangerous as no one cares if the signal is red or green. The fast moving trucks are all over the city making driving even more dangerous. The daytime traffic is no longer a topic to discuss, as it simply doesn't move. The number of new cars, rotten old buses with new paints, unusable footpaths and the rickshaws in each entry point of the lanes have made life horrible in Dhaka. The drivers and the traffic police in action have no understanding of the traffic rules. Who will take the responsibility of educating these people? Jay walking is another factor which contributes to the traffic mess. The situation is out of control already. Relocating English medium schools and private universities has become a must. The BDR and the cantonment need either to be shifted somewhere outside Dhaka or should be opened for public use. We have to find a new place for shifting the airport.

I hope our children would see a city much better than this.

Sohel Ahmed
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Foreign managers

I think Mr. Mamun (letter published on Aug 10th) understood differently from what I understood after reading the original post by Mr. Imtiaz (letter published on Aug 1st) on this topic. If I understand correctly the proposition of Mr. Imtiaz, it is not the question whether our educational institutes are

producing capable managers, but rather whether we have done enough to groom our local people before allowing the recruitment of otherwise costly and partially grooming-inhibitive foreign experts. We need to understand that expertise does not come overnight. This is true for a foreign business-school graduate and this is equally a harsh truth for us too. Further, we do not have the dearth of resources.

Before suspecting qualification as a problem, the question is that how far have we gone to check whether we have commensurate resources of our own? That's the missing part here. Even in the US, an employer has to go through certain clumsy and expensive process and justify to the government that it tried to hire a local resource but went in vain and hence it needed to hire a foreign candidate. US government charges a good amount of money against the employer for two main purposes, first, to encourage the employer to do hard work before deciding to recruit a foreign candidate and secondly, to re-invest the money for the development of resources at home. If the world's largest economy can do that, why can't we?

Again, we are not talking about our people's capabilities to take the helm of the Fortune 500 companies and relocate to their base countries. On an average, our English may not be at par with a country where English is being used as a state language. Nevertheless, we have efficient people well-evidenced by their significant presence and respectable positions in the in-country management of both domestic conglomerates and MNCs.

Sainul Hossain

Tokyo, Japan

Floods in Pakistan

Recently Pakistan is facing the worst floods in the last 80 years, which have killed over 1600 people, left two million people homeless and washed away crops and firm animals. The flood situation is getting worse day by day.

Pakistan is under pressure. Will the floods have an impact on the country's politics also?

Fahim Ibne Sarwar
Department of
International Relations
Jahangirnagar University

Combating load shedding

The news was about the government's desperate bid to end load-shedding from early next year through awarding contracts to about 2 dozen fast-track oil-based power projects which the government hopes will significantly cut power crisis but feared that it would impose huge petroleum import and cost on national exchequer.

Well, there is no doubt that to keep the main pinion running to keep other pinions moving to keep the entire economy of the nation running, there is no alternative but to generate power. The government will have to do it at any cost. But importation of "huge" petroleum reminded me of a story of children reading books. Although it does not fit well here but I want to quote a bit of it for citing an example. The story goes like this.

One day a fox went to river side to drink water. Suddenly a crocodile caught hold one of its legs. Fearing danger, the fox used his intelligence and cried out "crocodile brother why are you pulling my stick? Please release my stick and catch my leg". The crocodile released the leg and lost everything.

The world's major drilling companies like Cairn Energy, M-I-Swaco, Chevron, Tullow etc are the same companies who are also working in our immediate neighbouring countries.

These companies drilled 208 oil/gas wells in Thailand during 2008 and 2009. The Indian govt faced criticism for drilling only 44 wells in 2009, Bangladesh

Suicide along with children!

Of late, the print and electronic media have been chock-full with suicide news committed by the dejected women, that's too along with their children.

Only yesterday (August 09), a mother with her baby daughter jumped before a running train near Sainik Club at Banani, as her husband divorced her to marry someone else. Maksud Begum, 32, wife of Ashraf Uddin of Arahazar upazila in Narayanganj, and her one and a half-year-old daughter Tanzina were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Earlier on August 5, distraught over her husband's second marriage, Bilashi, 28, set fire to herself and her two children Abu Raihan and Rajani in the capital's Kamalapur. They all died at the burn unit of DMCH.

On June 11, aggrieved by her husband's negligence and second marriage, Farzana Kabir Rita, with her 12-year-old son Pabon and 10-year-old daughter Payel committed suicide by taking sedatives in the city's Jurain.

It's really distressing not only for the near and dear ones of the victims, but

for all of us. I would urge all the divorced, deprived and dejected women not to go for suicide. It's not the solution. Try to live and overcome the misery with courage and struggle. Pray to God and the eternally merciful God always answers.

I would pertinently insist on the government, particularly the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to do something to help these hapless humans.

Well-to-do people and the NGOs concerned should also come forward. Please open crisis centres in each ward of the city and in each upazila of the districts and inform the people about those through the media. Counselling is very important along with immediate material help like food and shelter and rehabilitation. Sometimes, medical and psychological cares are also necessary. Let the people know that the government and the sensible beings are there to help them.

Hafeejul Alam
A former civil servant



PHOTO: STAR

government drilled 17-19 wells in 37 years of the same depth of wells. While these companies drill a well in 2 weeks time in other countries our BAPEX opens "tender envelope" in 2 years' time, what an unimaginable speed.

I believe importation of extra liquid petroleum is not a best solution. At Sungu more than 4 existing wells have been kept closed to avoid situation like Tangra Tilla because of high pressure of gas drilled with weak instruments. Our government can immediately drill 4 to 6 wells there on emergency basis to meet the extra requirement. Let the government utilise the country's existing capacity first and then think about import. I believe the Bangladeshi government agencies including the Energy Ministry should be energized first before importing petroleum to avoid draining from the already weak exchequer. They feel more relaxed in importation than increasing their own speed of work. Creation of bottlenecks in everything is their habit.

I have a great hope on the present prime minister who is working relentlessly on other important issues. I believe, she will look into this most vital issue personally.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

Corruption and government

It refers to the editorial of The Daily Star that there is little question that corruption in government is a sad reality we have lived with for years. Even so, there is in us that certain feeling that as governance improves and public sensibilities get to be more sharpened, such wrongdoing will be rolled back and the country can move on toward its desired goals. That being the sentiment, it comes as a shock for all us that some government staff have been involved in the crime of leaking question papers in return for dishonest financial gains. Candidates are in for a shock when they come to know about the cancellation of the exam after reaching their test centres. Question paper leak of entrance or skill tests and competitive examinations has almost become a routine affair in the country. Such leakages

have taken place in the past. Every time it happens, an inquiry is ordered. Police catch smaller fishes. But after initial action, hardly anything is done to reach the mastermind. As a result, thousands of students suffer almost every alternate year due to various admission or employment scandals. The education mafia, which runs the seat-fixing racket and is involved in leakages, however, continues to operate with impunity.

In the past, BCS question paper was leaked. A committee was formed to probe the leak but nothing concrete happened thereafter. Beside question paper leakages, almost every year scores of paper solvers and impostors are caught in scheduled examinations of professional courses and board examinations. Inquiries have revealed that these solvers and impostors are small fish. Most of the time they are students who are lured by money or coerced by the racketeers. My personal suggestions are: the question papers would be sent through the Intranet 1 day before the examination is to begin and the offices of the Deputy Commissioners will be responsible for print out question sets, kept in the safe custody/treasury offices and supervise for fairness including distribution to centres. At present, the question papers are printed a few weeks ahead of the examination and the chances of such leaks are increased.

But now that it is the Government Press which is involved, one can only guess what might happen and on a graver and bigger scale - in future if the problem is not tackled right away. No mercy should be shown here. The arrest of the government employees for allegedly engaged in taking a bribe indicate the alarming growth of corruption and black money. As a result, pension-less citizens are made to bear the high cost of living and reduced interest on government's pledge for free and fairness. It is time the CID and other intelligence agencies are expanded and made to scan every government official, high profiled civil servant or even a minister and bring to book.

Gopal Sengupta
Canada

Why not nickname?

In response to the article, "Why nicknames", I have some more points to add. At the very beginning I would like to thank to the writer M. Rukanuddin for selecting such an interesting topic.

Every man has some rights. Every man has the right to make his own fortune. He can take decision in his own way. So why can't he select a nick name or pen name of his own choice?

Th name that we have is mostly decided by our parents. We may find out another better name in the future. Why can't we select that name? Our life is very short. To enjoy this life, a person can bring any change in his life without creating any harm to others. Nick names are often very sweet to hear and also easy to pronounce. For example, Zitu, Sagar, Pintu and so on. Of course, the persons who are not very intimate, they should not use this nick name. In this sense, I agree with the writer.

Like nick names, there are many successful writers and actors who had pen names. People do not know their original name. For example, Samudra Gupta of our country and Dilip Kumar of India. Samudra Gupta's real name is Abdul Mannan and Dilip Kumar's real name is Yusuf Khan. We have nothing to say here. There are many others. Namely, Parabat and Bonoful. Even our Tagore too used to write with his pen name initially. In western countries, we would find thousands of examples.

Acitizen
One-mail

In the name of Allah...

'Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim' (English translation: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful") is neither a mere collection of words nor a sentence but it is the first thing a Muslim child learns and in everyday affairs "Bismillah" is the first word a Muslim utters. Except one, 'Bismillah...Rahim' heads every Surah (chapter) in the Holy Quran and these words which contain two attributes of Allah, Rahman and Rahim, give expression to divine love and mercy.

It is the duty of a Muslim to maintain the sanctity of "Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim".
Professor M Zahidul Haque
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Dhaka

Doctors in rural areas



The prime minister recently warned the doctors against their absence in rural and upazilla hospitals where they are posted. In Bangladesh, various NGOs have appointed a good number of doctors in rural areas also and they are working there regularly. But in case of government service the scenario is different. The doctors are taking salary and other benefits from the tax payers' money but the people are deprived of getting proper service. Moreover, they reside in the towns or capital city for private practices and for other benefits.

The situation could be changed if the doctors were appointed by the local authority (or by a panel of local body executives headed by the civil surgeons of the districts) for a particular union parishad or upazilla parishad health complex with full compensation package from the national revenue budget. Before appointment if the doctors know that they are being posted for a particular hospital and there is no scope of transfer, then their presence would be ensured and the people could get their deserving services. Moreover, the doctors would be encouraged to go to their own areas to serve the people of their locality and have an easy life living in their own houses.

So, the government may re-consider the present system of appointing doctors in public sector for the sake of providing better services to the people.

U.K. Roy
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

PHOTO: STAR