

People worried

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Referring to the economic successes of China, he said, "I think a talent-based administration -- not the political cadres -- is behind the rise of China."

The Institute of Good Governance (IGS) of Brac University published the report, and the ceremony was held in the auditorium of Journalism Training and Research Initiative (Jatri) in the capital.

The report included policy research findings about the country's energy crisis, food security, digital Bangladesh, and migration of workers to foreign countries.

It said Bangladesh has good policies and regulations, but lacks effective implementation. The government also takes rather populist and short-term plans in important sectors, which are not sustainable in the long run.

"Institutions in Bangladesh are not working. There is a lack of commitment to reforming the institutions," said Irum Ali, editor of the report.

Addressing the audience as the chief guest, former chief justice Habibur Rahman said since the independence of the country, it has become difficult for the bureaucracy to control pro-ruling party officials.

"As a result, system loss in the public service sector has been increasing continuously."

The function of a government is to uphold public interest, not private ones, and that requires having a skilled administration. However, it has been seen in the last forty years that governments with two-thirds majority tend to run amok, he noted.

It would be quite disappointing if the members of parliament only say 'yes' or 'no' in the House, leaving the responsibility of framing laws to someone else, he said.

Stating that the constitution of the country has been violated

since the independence, the former chief justice said traditionally the general secretaries of ruling parties are appointed as the local government ministers, who usually concentrate on partisan interests rather than public interest.

"Now, power of the MPs in local government institutions is being increased beyond imagination," Habibur Rahman pointed out, urging all to adhere to the constitution, and to make the administration effective.

The report said private sector participation in the energy sector is being encouraged, but it lacks a regulatory mechanism. Right people are also not being posted to right places in the bureaucracy, and that ultimately making it inefficient, the report added.

IGS Chief of Programme Christina Rozario said the government has a number of social safety net programmes, but the ultra poor people often do not get the benefit of those. There are also much irregularities in government land distribution to the landless, she said.

The government wants to create a digital Bangladesh and framed the ICT Act, but institutions concerned actually do not reflect that they own the idea, she said adding, the concept appears as more of a technical issue, rather than an issue of taking the benefits of technology to the people.

On workers' migration, the report said the cost of getting overseas jobs is very high and jobseekers are harassed in the migration process, and at workplaces. There is a serious lack of regulation to protect migrant workers who contribute to the national economy immensely, it said.

BRAC University Pro-vice-chancellor Md Golam Samdani Fakir, and IGS Director Manzoor Hasan also spoke at the event.

OMS of rice extended to upazilas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended open market sales (OMS) of rice to the upazila level following a price hike of rice, flour and other commodities in domestic markets.

The programme allows an individual to buy 5 kg of rice a day at Tk 24.

Three dealers from each upazila will get one tonne of rice a day from the government stock, said Badrul Hasan, director of the Directorate General of Food, in a meeting at the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.

According to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, coarse rice now sells at Tk 32-34 and flour at Tk 28-33 a kg, which marks 20-44 percent and 21-53 percent increase in a year.

The food ministry asked the concerned officials to sincerely monitor the OMS operations and report on the sales and market situation regularly to gain desired outcome of the programme.

The programme was launched during Ramadan in the capital, divisional cities and some other districts affected by floods and cyclones.

3 jailed over trading of polybags

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday sentenced three businessmen at city's Karwan Bazar to short-term jail on charge of selling banned polybags.

The court also fined four polythene traders Tk 31,000, seized more than three tonnes of polybags and sealed a store during the drive.

After a weeklong break, the Department of Environment (DoE) resumed the anti-polythene drive yesterday. Executive Magistrate Roni Chakma led the mobile court, accompanied by DoE officials, Rab and police members.

The mobile court sentenced Abdur Razzak and Md Kaiyum to 15 days in jail each while Md Bachchu Mia to 30 days.

"Even though these traders were fined earlier, they did not stop selling polybags, and so they have been sent to jail," Sukumar Biswas, director of DoE, told reporters.

The court fined Md Shahjalal Tk 1,000, Md Mamun Tk 10,000, Masud Tk 10,000 and Zakir Tk 10,000.

Sensing the presence of the mobile court Zakir shut down his store and fled the scene. At the direction of the magistrate, DoE broke in and seized polybags from the store. Later, the shop was sealed.

Govt official

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The driver fled with his vehicle immediately after the accident.

A case was filed with the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station in this connection.

Govt given

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Tagore passed the order after hearing a government petition seeking modification of the HC judgment over the four rivers.

Following a public interest litigation filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), the HC on June 25 last year directed the government to remove all structures from the four rivers.

The court on March 21 this year modified the directives and ruled that the structures set up by the government in public interests will not be removed.

The attorney general's office on Monday filed the petition either for modification of the earlier HC directives for removing the jetties, or for two years' time to dismantle the structures.

During the hearing yesterday, Additional Attorney General Murad Reza told the court the government has been removing structures from the four rivers around Dhaka as per the HC directives, and it needs more time to remove the heavy structures like jetties.

HRPB lawyer Manzill Murshid argued that the government has an intention to protect the jetties, which were set up by influential businessmen.

If the jetties are not removed, the rivers will not be saved, he added.



Richard Heck



Ei-ichi Negishi



Akira Suzuki

US, Japanese trio

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also of innumerable industrial synthetics.

"It is important to emphasise the great significance their discoveries have for both academic and industrial research and in the production of fine chemicals -- including pharmaceuticals, agricultural chemicals and high-tech materials -- that benefit society," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said.

Through their work, organic chemistry has developed into "an art form, where scientists produce marvellous chemical creations in their test tubes," it said.

Heck, 79, retired in 1989 from the University of Delaware in the United States; Negishi, 75, was also based in the United States, at Purdue University in Indiana; Suzuki, 80, was based at Hokkaido University in Sapporo, Japan.

The trio developed a process known as palladium-catalysed cross coupling, a means of knitting carbon atoms together so that they form a stable "skeleton" for organic molecules.

It has allowed chemists to synthesise compounds to fight colon cancer, the herpes virus and HIV, as well as smarter plastics that are used in consumer applications, such as ultra-thin computer monitors.

The discoveries "have had a great impact on academic research, the development of new drugs and materials, and are used in many industrial chemical processes for the synthesis of pharmaceuticals and other biologically active compounds," the academy said.

The Nobel has been awarded on four previous occasions for breakthroughs in organic chemistry -- in 1912, 1950, 1979 and 2005.

In the 1960s, Heck laid the groundwork for coupling between carbon atoms by using a catalyst, or chemical to promote the process.

Bangabandhu airport

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"It can be said the proposed airport will be built in greater Faridpur district as the prime minister has given her consent giving the Mongla seaport importance," a top government official told The Daily Star yesterday.

Concerned technical committee is evaluating the cost and benefit of the proposed airport in the greater Faridpur district. A feasibility study is under process, he added.

The government has drawn up a plan to construct the first phase of the proposed Tk 50,000 crore airport in next five years under build-own-operate-transfer basis.

As part of the plan, Civil Aviation Authority, Bangladesh conducted a feasibility study over the last few months where they identified three possible sites--two are in Mymensingh and one is in Tangail--for the airport.

Even an inter-ministerial meeting at the civil aviation and tourism ministry preferred the site at Trishal in Mymensingh.

But a section of ruling party

Food production

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will be presented at the conference organised by Bangladesh Society of Agronomy.

Mentioning Bangladesh as the country most vulnerable to climate change, the experts said the assumption of Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) about sea level rise comes true in Bangladesh.

Water level rises by at least 5.6 mm a year at Hiron point, 1.4 mm at Cox's Bazar and 2.9 mm at Khepupara, they said citing 2008 data from Bangladesh Water Development Board.

The country will need another 10-12 million tonnes of food grains in 2050 in addition to the 300 million tonnes now to feed its population, the experts said at the inaugural session of the conference.

Zainul Abedin, president of the agronomy society, said climate change is affecting not only crop production but also health and nutrition of people and economic condition of the country.

"Ultimately serious degradation of livelihood may occur due to climate change," he said.

Drought, floods, water-

logging, salinity intrusion etc are signs of climate change that are affecting agriculture seriously. And agricultural scientists have to come forward to deal with this situation, Zainul said.

He mentioned that scientists have already innovated some varieties of rice which can tolerate salinity, flood water and even drought up to certain level. Bangladesh Rice Research Institute in cooperation with International Rice Research Institute has developed salinity-tolerant rice variety BR-47. They have also developed rice varieties which can tolerate submergence due to floods for about two weeks.

Yefes Osman, minister for science and information communication and technology, in his speech said it is the duty of the agronomists to help the farmers at field level and guide the policy-makers to achieve the desired yield of crops.

FAO representative in Bangladesh Ad Spijkers was also present at the conference being held at the Agriculture Research Council.

Recruitment

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The controversy promoted the government to suspend recruitment in 21 districts.

"...Always keep in mind that people voted us with a lot of expectations. We've to fulfil their expectations," a senior AL lawmaker quoted Hasina as saying.

The AL chief said she is collecting information about the lawmakers and monitoring their activities to consider their performance and decide on their nomination in the next parliamentary election.

She also urged party lawmakers to maintain good relation with the grassroots-level leaders and workers and evaluate their opinion in undertaking local development projects instead of patronising relatives.

She also asked them to pick a single candidate for each post in the upcoming elections to union parishes and municipalities, and directed to increase communications with the local leaders and workers to gear up party activities.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam opened the discussion at the ALPP meeting where nine other lawmakers spoke.

The lawmakers sought the premier's directives on the upcoming local elections, a number of MPs told The Daily Star.

Don't try to save

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criminals, corruptionists, and other criminals," Hasina said.

She said the notion that trying the war criminals would divide the country, will not be deemed reasonable by anyone.

"War criminals faced trials all over the world in the past, and our future generations will also hold trials if they find any war criminal in the country," the premier said.

She announced that corruptionists will also be tried, and her government will not interfere with the Anti-corruption Commission's activities.

"The US federal court has revealed how her [Khaleda's] son laundered money," she said adding, when BNP was in power its leaders made hundreds of crore of taka illegally.

Urging the main opposition to join the next session of parliament, Hasina asked them to work for the welfare of the people.

She gave an account of her government's measures to ease traffic congestion in the capital, for improving services at Chittagong and Mongla seaports, for generation of power to meet a growing demand, and for improving the quality of education.

In the speech of around 40 minutes, the premier also gave a brief description of her government's various measures to boost the agriculture sector and the country's overall economy.

"When Awami League is in power, it brings fame and award for the country. But when others are in power, their activities besmirch the country's image," Hasina said.

Hamid

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backward, rather that takes it forward," Hamid said.

He observed that parliamentary culture gets perfected through the constitution, rules of procedure and parliamentary norms and practices.

The speaker's remarks came in the wake of several Awami League lawmakers' blasting of some newspapers in the House on September 21. The lawmakers including two ministers accused those papers of engaging in 'conspiracy to foil democracy' and 'to tarnish the image of parliament and its members through publishing false news'.

Referring to the absence of opposition lawmakers, Hamid hoped they would join the next session of parliament.

He however said although Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia kept off the House proceedings, she has assisted in carrying out its activities through her criticism at different times.

"I congratulate her on this. I hope the opposition leader will join the House and speak for the sake of advancement of parliamentary democracy," the speaker said.

The sixth session that began on September 20 had 11 sittings and it passed 13 bills.

No bail

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that one centre is nearly two kilometres away from the other.

He also questioned the merit of the case, and said it was politically motivated.

Md Fazlul Haque, sub-inspector of the court, opposed the bail plea.

Following the attack, two cases were filed with Pabna Sadar Police Station accusing more than 100 people including 31 leaders and workers of Awami League and its front organisations.

In the face of widespread criticism and police failure to arrest the accused attackers, AL leadership asked them to surrender before the court.

Following the party high-ups' directive, twenty-one accused surrendered before the judicial magistrate court on September 26. Police earlier arrested five people in this connection.

US backs Afghan-Taliban talks, but says not involved

AFP, Washington

The White House yesterday backed the idea of Afghan government reconciliation talks with the Taliban, but said the United States was not a party to reported contacts between Kabul and militia leaders.

The Washington Post had earlier reported that the Taliban and the government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai had begun high-level talks over a negotiated end to the war, which it said were authorized by Taliban leader Mohammad Omar.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the Obama administration had "long supported" an "Afghan-led reconciliation effort," though did not specifically confirm the contents of the Post report.

"We and the Afghans have said that ... requires a renunciation of Al-Qaeda, following Afghan law and a renunciation of violence," he said, adding that such talks had to be conducted by Afghans.

"This is not something

Abdul Jabbar

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complications.

Md Muad Jabbar, son of the veteran singer, said he was admitted with chest pain and breathing problem. He was vomiting at that time, he said, adding that he has also been suffering from liver problem.

His father underwent heart treatment from America three years ago, he added.

A seven-member medical board headed by AKM Khorshed Alam, chairman of haematology department of BSMU, has been formed and the board held a meeting yesterday.

The doctors suggested sending him abroad immediately for better treatment, Muad said.

BSSMU Director Brig Gen Abdul Majid Bhuiyan is overseeing Jabbar's condition, he added.

Jabbar inspired the singers of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra during the Liberation War in 1971.

He sang the first song of SBBK, "Joi Bangla Banglar Joi", written and composed by Gazi Mazharul Anwar and Anwar Parvez respectively. The other patriotic songs rendered and composed by Jabbar during the pre- and post-Liberation period were "Salam salam hajar salam", "Mujib baiya jao rey", and "Banglar swadhinata anko ke Mujib Mujib".

Chinese firm

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the subject complaint appeal submitted to the CPTU is beyond SDEPCI and SEPCO 1's knowledge. We would request you to cancel all future course of action on the said appeal letter, if there is any."

Director General of CPTU Amulya Kumar Debnath told The Daily Star Shandong had paid taka five-lakh fee seeking remedy. Now this letter has created a puzzling situation.

"The decision [on the complaint] will be taken by the CPTU review panel," he said replying to a query as to whether the arbitration proceedings would now be dropped.

"We shall take a quick decision. As per the law, CPTU would have to decide on it within 12 working days of lodging a complaint."

PDB chief Alamgir Kabir acknowledged receiving the letter from Shandong, and said he was due to submit PDB's account before the review panel today as to why they selected Sinohydro.

Sources said Shandong has decided not to send anyone to the review committee's meeting today.

A reliable power ministry source said a powerful ruling party man who unofficially represented Shandong in this particular tender deliberately created the muddy situation.

This is the second time in Bangladesh that a Chinese company lodged complaint against another company in a tender of power plant. In the past, a company named CMC had levelled a complaint against the PDB for unduly favouring Harbin

This is the second time in Bangladesh that a Chinese company lodged complaint against another company in a tender of power plant. In the past, a company named CMC had levelled a complaint against the PDB for unduly favouring Harbin

The PDB floated tender of the Ghorashal plant for the second time in late July. The first tender was floated last year along with nine other

that we do with the Taliban. This is something that the Afghan government has to do with people in Afghanistan."

The Post cited unnamed Afghan and Arab sources as saying the talks were believed, for the first time, to involve representative authorized by the Quetta Shura, the Afghan Taliban group based in Pakistan, and Omar.

"They are very, very serious about finding a way out," a source close to the talks told the Post, referring to the Taliban.

Omar and other Taliban leaders on both sides of the border have insisted for years that no peace talks were possible before foreign fighters had left Afghanistan.

But sources told the Post that the leadership knows "that they are going to be sidelined," and was negotiating to ensure their positions were protected.

"They know that more radical elements are being promoted within their rank and file," the source said.

7 burnt

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tone built at the morgue tried to identify the charred bodies but failed.

According to the relatives, Shahinur, 30, Kohinur, 32, Sumi, 13, Shokhi, 17, Aleya, 25, Aklima, 22, were among the deceased.

Lily Chemical Company was housed in a tin-shed building where four enormous boilers were set for mixing chemicals. A huge number of chemical containers and sacks of phenolic resin were stockpiled in the front rooms while the boiler room--comparatively smaller--was deep inside the facility. The fire broke out in only a small part of the boiler room.

Jatrabari police said owner of the factory Mohammad Selim has been found nowhere since the accident. Sources said the factory used to produce LG Super Natural Rubber Solution and LG Synthetic Rubber Adhesive.

Meanwhile, AKM Roushan Alam, relief and rehabilitation officer of deputy commissioner's office, Dhaka, visited DMCH last night. He announced Tk 20,000 to each bereaved family for the funeral while Tk 10,000 to each family of the injured. He also assured of necessary medicines for the victims.

Anamika

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hospital on September 24 and shifted her to the city's Shishu Hospital two days later fearing the cost of treatment at Ayesha Memorial. But they brought Anamika back to Ayesha Memorial Hospital on September 29 as her condition deteriorated.

"We whisked her back to this hospital [Ayesha Memorial] when she developed a severe breathing difficulty and her skin turned blue," said Anil, the father.

But the unfortunate parents now want to take Anamika back to village as they have gone far beyond the capacity to bear the medical expense. By this time, the day labourer father has spent Tk 80,000 on the treatment. He has sold the family's last resort, the land they used to live on, and borrowed from friends and relatives to collect money.

"I am totally broke and cannot continue my daughter's treatment here," Anil choked several times with emotion while saying this to The Daily Star yesterday.

"It will take around Tk 10 lakh for the treatment which is simply impossible for me to manage," he added.

Anil and Geeta have been cutting all sorts of expenses by living in the corridors of the hospitals and eating bread, biscuits and banana for the last eight days.

"We ran out of every options

and now have not a single penny to buy Anamika's medicines," said Geeta, who looks too frail to cry anymore.

On September 22, Anamika felt pain in her neck and hands and collapsed to the ground. Her parents first took her to Matlab Sadar Hospital where the doctors suggested shifting her to a hospital in the capital for better treatment.

Yesterday Anamika was found on a hospital bed with two pipes through the mouth and nose. The doctors are administering saline too.

"She [Anamika] cried and asked me to massage her legs and hands when she woke up the last time," said the mother.

Initially the doctors assumed that Anamika was suffering from Guillain-Barré Syndrome but later they found her suffering from several complications followed by a brain stroke.

Ashish Kumar Chakraborty, director of Ayesha Memorial Hospital, said Anamika is now living on artificial life support and requires long-term treatment to return to her normal life.

Anamika's parents and the doctors are desperately waiting for response from the well-off community who can give the child her life back just through a gesture of sympathy.

Anyone willing to help Anamika start life anew will find her parents at Ayesha Memorial Hospital.

Reforms needed

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Inspector General of Police (Prison) Brig Gen Ashrafur Islam said that over 70,000 inmates are in 67 prisons against their capacity of only 28,000.

Some prisons are suffering more than others. For example, Narayanganj prison holds over 1,700 prisoners whereas it was designed for only 200.

Shafique said, "The jail authorities should be very careful while receiving inmates."

Explaining his comment, he said the authorities should regularly examine who are imprisoned, who are released and who have been in jails for years without any legal proceedings.

Law enforces often hide the age of children, implicate them in cases and send them to jail through the court, he added.

Supporting Shafique, Home Minister Sahara Khatun said it is necessary to introduce a system that can stop such lapses from happening in the first place.

The sponsors of the project have so far examined three prisons and identified 700 prisoners who don't have any case or particular charges against them.

They will find out such cases in other jails also, the home minister added.

Kiran Bedi, a Ramon Magsaysay awardee, and internationally renowned prison reformer from India, in