

## PADMA BRIDGE GRAFT Prof Anu blames consultants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted economist Prof Anu Muhammad yesterday alleged that a group of consultants and their associates at home and abroad are involved in the corruption of Padma Bridge project.

In collaboration with the local associates, the foreign consultants showed huge expenditure for the construction of the bridge, he said.

Prof Anu was addressing a view exchange meeting on "corruption in different sectors" at Jatiya Press Club in the city, organised by Chhatra-Shikhak-Peshajibi-Janata, a citizens' platform led by journalist Syed Abul Moksud.

The Jahangirnagar University professor questioned how the expenditure of Padma Bridge project was doubled within one year from Tk 10,000 crore to around Tk 21,000 crore.

He also observed mismanagement in Dhaka-Chittagong Railway project, saying the cost was estimated at Tk 1,000 two years ago, and now it has been doubled.

The economist said the minister (communications) is busy taking the big project while the condition of the roads and highways of the country is very poor.

BNP joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said foreign donors are "plunging the country into destruction" putting pressure on the government due to lack of minimum understanding among political parties.

He said corrupted persons are stronger in the political parties while some politicians are destroying democracy, reporting blames of each other to foreign diplomats, he added.

The BNP leader also expressed concerns over abduction of people, which, he said, is an alarming signal for the country.

He said the citizens' platform will hold a protest rally against mismanagement and corruption in different sectors including communications ministry on October 20 at Central Shaheed Minar.

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, former organising secretary of Awami League also spoke at the programme.



A luxury vehicle bearing the sticker of a member of parliament parked half over the kerb and half on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Paribagh in the city yesterday, a clear violation of traffic rules.

PHOTO: STAR

## DU admission aspirant handed over to police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday handed over an admission aspirant to police after he was found receiving answers from outside through an electronic device in exam hall.

The candidate identified as Sikder Muhammad Zayed Bin Amir sat for Ka unit admission test under the 2011-2012 academic session. He was seated at Lalmatia Women's College.

Prof Dr Amzad Ali, acting proctor, DU, said an invigilator found Amir using the device looking like a wrist-watch, but the boy failed to give satisfying reasons.

A total of 41,434 aspirants sat for the DU admission test under Ka unit yesterday from 10:00am to 11:45am at 65 exam centres in and outside the university.

## COMMONWEALTH ESSAY CONTEST Bangladeshi students dazzle in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 50 young Bangladeshi writers won Silver and Bronze awards in a global Commonwealth Essay Competition this year, said a press release by Commonwealth Society of Bangladesh yesterday.

The writers below 18 were among 6,000 competitors who wrote on the subject: Women as agent of change, the theme of this year's Commonwealth Day.

Sponsored by Royal Commonwealth Society, the competition is one of the world's oldest global writing contests for young people. It is open to young writers below the age 18.

## ERD report sees donors' fund idle

UNB, Dhaka

Lack of coordination among agencies and departments, gap between commitment and disbursement and weak participation in the negotiation process hamper the implementation of donors-aided development projects in the country.

"There's a gap between commitment and disbursement as sometimes ministries don't know how much they have in the pipeline. Sometimes, development partners divert money from projects to mitigate emergencies caused by disasters. Sometimes projects are late to start because of litigation over land ownership. So, donor money lies idle," says a report of the Economic Relations Division (ERD), a government body.

The report titled "A Document on Aid Management in Bangladesh-A Review of Policies and Procedures" says, "Despite serious commitment by the government and its development partners... development effectiveness remains a challenge."

It says the pattern of foreign aid has undergone a striking transformation in Bangladesh during the last four decades with average yearly aid reaching US\$ 1.3 billion over the 40-year period.

Although aid only accounts for roughly 2 percent of GNI, it constitutes almost 50 percent of the country's annual development budget. In fiscal 2009-10, the amount of foreign aid disbursed was US\$ 2.2 billion.

It says the dominant role of the Planning Commission in programming and budgeting

is necessary because individual line ministers do not have the strength to withstand "lobbying" and "political interference".

Besides, the complex process is meant to reduce the risk of corruption and misuse of funds. "Contrary to this traditional school of thought, the reality in aid management is that the complexity of the process contributes to delay and efficiency loss, and reduces transparency and accountability."

The report presents the findings and recommendations of a review of policies and procedures relating to aid management in Bangladesh. The assessment is based on the analysis of relevant studies and other documents as well as discussions with a number of government officials, involved directly or indirectly, with aid management.

According to the report, the aid management procedures followed by the government suffer from a number of general weaknesses, including substandard format for loan agreements.

There are problems of coordination among agencies and departments involved in aid management. For instance, it was reported that there is a lack of coordination among the debt management department, foreign exchange department and statistical department of the Bangladesh Bank.

"There is weak participation in negotiation process where national priorities should be mentioned properly. Implementing ministries are violating the planning discipline, as a result project suffers seriously and revisions are needed," the report says.

## Leave opportunistic nature

Urge left-leaning political leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Left-leaning political leaders yesterday called upon the country's youth to leave behind opportunistic nature patronised by imperial forces and join the movements for the commoners' interests and build a discrimination free nation.

Stating that new imperialism is promoting consumerism and division in the political system of developing countries like Bangladesh, they said this trend must be prevented for the sake of the country's social and economic stability.

The leaders were speaking at a discussion organised by Biplobder Kotha (stories of the revolutionaries), a left-

leaning think tank, in the city's Liberation War Museum marking the birth centenary of 15 revolutionaries of the Indian sub-continent.

The revolutionaries are anti-British movement leaders Dinesh Gupta, Preetilata Waddedar, Bina Das, Saroj Mukherjee, Barin Dutta, Binod Bihari Chowdhury, Binoy Chowdhury, Gopal Basu, Prankrishana Chakravorty, Jyotindra Moitra, Promothnath Nandi, Sudha Roy, Tribid Chowdhury, Chanchal Kumar Sharma and Shudhi Prodhan.

Addressing as the chief guest, former Chief Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman said many state of affairs of

today create frustration but there are people at various corners of the globe rising with new hopes.

"For our own sake, we have to join in to meet our aspiration for betterment," he said.

Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal General Secretary Khalequzzaman, Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidulla, journalist Mozammel Haque Monju, anti-British movement leader Comrade Jasimuddin Mandal and Sheikh Rafiq, editor of Ognijuger Biplobi, also spoke.

## Bangladesh's potential may help get duty free access

Says USAID

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

USAID Administrator Dr Rajiv Shah said Bangladesh has the potential to be included in the "partnership for growth" programme which may facilitate Bangladesh's bid for duty and quota free access to US markets.

He said this during a meeting with visiting Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni in Washington DC on Thursday, says a foreign ministry press release.

"Partnership for growth", a USAID programme, pursues for bilateral trade concession for member countries including Philippines, El-Salvador, Ghana and Tanzania.



Former adviser to a caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman addresses a discussion organised by Biplobder Kotha, a left-leaning think tank, in the city's Liberation War Museum yesterday marking the birth centenary of 15 revolutionaries of the Indian subcontinent.

PHOTO: STAR



An anxious guardian waits outside Arts Building at Dhaka University yesterday while students attend the admission test under Ka unit inside.

PHOTO: STAR

## Khaleda's comment fueled communalism

Says Suranjit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia fueled communalism and hurt the religious sentiments of the country's minorities by her "communal speech", said Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta yesterday.

Suranjit was speaking as the chief guest at a discussion styled "Amendment of Vested Property Return Act 2001: Finalisation and victim's expectation" in the city's Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad, Ain O Salish Kendra and six other non-government and social organisations organised the discussion.

Khaleda, at a rally in Sylhet recently, questioned the religious identity of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after the latter visited Dhakeswari National Temple during Durga Puja, the largest religious festival of the Hindu community.

"If the government does not protect the rights of the minorities, then both the parties should give up expectations on each other and it will change the political equilibrium in the country," he said.

Addressing the function, veteran leftist politician Ajoy Roy opined for placing the vested property issue in the UN Human Rights Commission for its resolution.

Arpito Sampotti Ain Protirodh Andolon General Secretary Subrata Chowdhury placed a seven-point demand for inclusion in the amendment.

Justice Ghulam Rabbani chaired the function, where representatives of different non-government organisations also spoke.

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