

Find coal's alternative

Environment experts put out call from conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The need to develop alternative energy sources replacing the use of coal was raised at a conference in the capital yesterday.

Speakers at the programme discussed the negative environmental impact and human health hazards of using coal energy with particular focus on the Rampal Power Plant.

They further said alternative energy sources must be considered if the country wants to reach middle-income status in 2021.

The conference on "Coal energy in Bangladesh: impact on water and climate" was organised by Waterkeepers Bangladesh, National Committee for Saving the Sundarbans (NCSS) and Waterkeeper Alliance at Brac Inn in Mohakhali.

Four keynote presentations were made in four sessions on the first day of the two-day long conference. Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Dr Mohd Abdul Matin, member secretary of NCSS, and Donna Lisenby

of Waterkeeper Alliance, USA spoke at the opening session.

From the environment perspective, using coal energy to generate power in Bangladesh is not feasible as severe water pollution occurs at every phase of using coal from extraction to final usage, they said.

Environmental scientist Prof Ainun Nishat suggested exploring the possibilities of producing hydro-electric power in partnership with India, as an alternative to coal-based energy.

Prof Abdullah Harun Chowdhury of environment sciences department in Khulna University presented a detailed study of the area surrounding Rampal and Orion coal-power projects and showed the impact they would have on the Sundarbans.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary at National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources, Power and Port, among others, spoke.

SEE PHOTO ONLINE



US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, accompanied by Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, meets BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at the latter's Gulshan residence on Friday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

ROW AT JU OVER NEW BUILDING CSE, geology students start fast-unto-death Teachers decide to resign

JU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of computer science and engineering (CSE) department and geological sciences (GS) department of Jahangirnagar University yesterday decided to resign and students of the departments began a fast-unto-death programme protesting the university authorities' decision to transfer another department to their building.

The teachers of CSE department submitted their resignation papers to the JU registrar yesterday, while teachers of the other department would submit them today, said assistant professor Mazeda Islam, chairman of geological sciences department.

Registrar Abu Bakr Siddique said measures would be taken according to the university act.

The environmental sciences department had been demonstrating since the beginning of last month demanding that the authorities transfer their department to another building, which houses the other two departments.

Earlier, JU syndicate formed a committee of five members to investigate the situation and give a recommendation.

Last Thursday, the syndicate decided to move the environmental sciences department into the building, which resulted in protest from the other two departments.

Road crashes kill 6, injure 3

CITY DESK

Six people were killed and three others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday and Friday.

In Noakhali, four people were killed and two others injured as a CNG run auto-rickshaw carrying them was hit by a tractor in Karalia area of Companiganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased were Rozina Begum, 50, Mousumi Akther Sumona, 18, Abdullah Al Mamu, 28, and auto-rickshaw driver Md Naser, 30.

In Narsingdi Sadar, Tofazzal Hossain Shamim, 37, was killed and his co-rider injured as a truck ramed into his motorcycle on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Baghata Palbari area yesterday.

In Jamalpur, Abul Kalam, 42, of Titpallya village was killed when a three-wheeler hit another one at Defla bridge intersection on Jamalpur-Islampur road on Friday.

Allies complain of AL's big brother

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general secretary Sharif Nurul Ambia told The Daily Star that his party first wanted to discuss the issue of city polls in its own forum before discussing it in the alliance meeting. "Every party has its own ideology, and the city election is a sensitive issue," he said.

JSD, which has six lawmakers and one minister (Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu) in the government, initially backed two mayoral candidates in the two Dhaka city corporations.

Later, JSD-backed mayoral candidate in Dhaka south Shahidul Islam quitted the race and threw his support behind the AL candidate while the second one, Nader Chowdhury, contested.

JSD and some other partners had candidates for the councillor posts.

The 14-party meeting held at AL chief's Dhanmondi office mainly discussed the city polls and the results. Tariqat Federation Chairman Nazibul Bashar Maizbhandari presided over the meeting.

Sources said the Workers Party of Bangladesh and National Awami Party (NAP) also expressed their disappointment over the city election at the meeting.

Workers Party politburo member Anisur Rahman Mollick told the meeting that no

discussion took place within the alliance although AL assured them of discussing the matter before finalising candidates. He termed AL's stand unfortunate.

Sources said NAP general secretary Enamul Haque expressed frustration over AL's "go-it-alone policy", saying the alliance's decisions were not implemented while AL did not discuss any major issue with its partners.

He also said only four partners of the combine had participation in the government and the parliament.

Nazibul Bashar alleged that there was no coordination among the partners for Dhaka city polls.

'FREE, FAIR POLLS'

Briefing reporters after the meeting, 14-party spokesperson Mohammad Nasim said BNP boycotted the city election to make it controversial.

Claiming that the city polls were free, fair and neutral, the AL leader also said, "One or two isolated incidents might have occurred during the polls. The local government elections even claim lives. But such incidents did not take place during this election."

He also said AL-backed candidates won the mayoral posts in all three cities because the party avoided mistakes and took lessons from past faults in five other city polls.

Wendy Sherman for

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4th Partnership Dialogue, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman stressed the need for a transparent investigation into the electoral irregularities.

"I think what everyone needs to focus on how the next election is highly improved and that is very important for democracy," she said. "I am here to discuss finding ways that two moderate, pluralistic nations can work together to advance common goals."

Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque, who led the Bangladesh delegation at the two-day dialogue, said they discussed issues of three broad areas -- development and governance, trade and investment, and security cooperation.

"We're extremely happy as the meeting was held in a very productive manner," he said.

Speaking about the partnership dialogue, Sherman said they have broadened the discussion to include an emphasis on the environment, health and infectious diseases, and the blue (maritime) economy. She termed relations with Bangladesh strong, deep and vibrant. "We support Bangladesh's goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2021 -- and we are actively partnering with Bangladesh and investing our resources to make it a reality," she said.

Appreciating Bangladesh's contribution to the peacekeeping efforts, the US official said Bangladesh's contribution in peacekeeping is second to none.

She mentioned that in a just few days, they are providing Bangladesh with its second Coast Guard Cutter. "Ambassador [Marcia] Bernicat will deliver the ship to Vice Admiral [Farid] Habib at a ceremony in California on May 6."

The under secretary thinks expanding the country's investments in women and girls will foster broader and more sustainable economic growth.

"Prime Minister Hasina (Sheikh Hasina) has been an outspoken champion of empowering women and girls, and we share the view that a country's true strength is determined by how well it integrates its entire population."

KHALEDA-SHERMAN

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has informed the visiting US diplomat of the widespread irregularities and vote rigging with documents in the election to three cities.

Before leaving Dhaka on Saturday, Sherman went to Khaleda's Gulshan residence, along with Ambassador Bernicat, and held nearly a half-an-hour meeting. She did not talk to the press about the outcome of their meeting.

However, talking to reporters, BNP standing committee member Abdol Moyeen Khan said the BNP chief projected the country's political situation, the government's repressive acts, sacking of opposition-backed elected representatives from different local government bodies, repression on the opposition leaders and activists, and filing of false cases against them.

Khaleda also provided Sherman with various documents and footage on the issues, he added.

Meeting sources said the BNP chief told Sherman that her party is repeatedly calling for dialogue but Sheikh Hasina is not paying any heed to their call.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rawshan Ara Begum, mother-in-law of Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman, died on Wednesday. She was 80.

She left behind two sons and two daughters, and was buried in Jamalpur Central Municipal graveyard. Her kulkhwani was held at Gulshan Azad mosque after Asr prayers yesterday.

Prodiip Kuar Das

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Freedom fighter Prodiip Kuar Das died at his home in Nazirpur upazila in Pirojpur yesterday. He was 59. He was an assistant teacher of Kailani Girls' High School in the upazila and Nazirpur correspondent of Bangla daily Inkilab.



Managing Director of MGH Group Anis Ahmed, second from left, hands over a cheque for Tk 1 crore to Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor as a contribution to the construction of the new Liberation War Museum in the presence of the museum trustees, from left, Rabiul Hussain, Z Tariq Ali, Aly Zaker, and Mofidul Hoque, on the museum's current premises yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

PM wants

FROM PAGE 3

election day, Hasina said their aim was to make the polls questionable.

Ban Ki-moon strongly criticised violence and subversive acts and said there was no place of such activities in a democracy.

The UN chief said BNP's participation in the polls was relieving. However, he expressed concern over the party's withdrawal from the election in the middle of the voting day.

Ban Ki-moon also said that the UN had been informed about some irregularities in the elections.

The UN secretary general informed the prime minister that he gave responsibility to Assistant Secretary General Oscar Farnandez Taranko to hold talks on the overall situation.

In Memoriam

Syed Tanweer Murshed
1938-1988

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Always in our thoughts and prayers.
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Ameen.

Yasmeen, Maher and Madiha Murshed

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