

# The Daily Star

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*Development Expenditure 1991-2012*

## Ministers' home grounds got higher allocation

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Home districts of ministers have experienced higher development expenditure and resource allocation in tenures of both the Awami League and BNP since 1991, depriving the other districts, said a study yesterday.

Focusing on political power, the research found three advantaged districts -- Laxmipur, Munshiganj and Sylhet -- where the highest concentration of ministers during the BNP tenures existed.

Similarly, the fortunate districts during the AL regimes were Gopalganj, Madaripur and Habiganj.

There were 22 districts which continuously enjoyed the allocations and expenditures for being represented by ministers during tenures of both the political parties, it said.

In the same way, there were no ministers from another 22 districts, for instance Gaibandha, for which those experienced high incidences of poverty.

The Institute of Governance Studies of Brac University launched the annual research report, "The State of Governance in Bangladesh 2012: Regions, Representations, Disparity", in the capital's The Daily Star Centre.

The report observed that good governance was absent in almost every sector of the state -- parliament, political parties, health, education etc.

The parliament remained dysfunctional due to the boycott culture of the opposition and absenteeism by the ruling party.

For example, of 254 days in the first 13 sessions of the 9th parliament, the opposition BNP observed a boycott on 208 days. In the case of the ruling party, attendance of Tangail's lawmakers, all of whom are from the AL, was as low as 42 percent.

Besides, the foremost barrier to a democratic parliament from becoming effective was the concentration of supreme power in the hands of the prime minister, making her wield absolute power, it said. The neglect women empowerment faced can be exemplified by the 39 districts from where no woman was elected lawmaker in the last four decades.

However, 19 female MPs were directly elected from 17 districts in the 9th parliament. Earlier, the highest number of female representatives in a single parliament was eight, said the report. Health governance in district hospitals saw, on an average, vacancies in 40 percent posts of doctors and in 58 percent posts of nurses, it added.

Addressing as chief guest, former adviser to a caretaker government Hossain Zillur Rahman said citizens must be vocal to protect their rights otherwise there would be no democracy. On the January 5 10th parliamentary polls, he said people can protest the “voter-less” election wearing black badges as their franchise was “vanishing”.

He said the country was facing a crucial challenge to maintain democratic rule and good governance would not exist without proper rule of law.

Bangladesh Political Science Association President Prof Aaur Rahman and former health secretary Zafar Ullah Khan, among others, discussed these topics.

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