

National petroleum policy soon to attract private investment

The government is expected to adopt a national petroleum policy to attract domestic and foreign private investment for augmenting the country's petroleum resource base and meeting the ever increasing demand for energy.

Local private companies are to be encouraged to seek joint ventures with foreign companies, according to a draft policy which will soon be placed before the cabinet for consideration, an official source told PROBE on condition of anonymity.

The proposed policy aimed at expediting 'exploration and development of indigenous oil and gas resources' suggests that gas fields be developed through private sector as part of the government's privatisation policy.

It emphasises that oil import be replaced by gas as far as possible and energy supply be augmented by other developed commercial energy sources such as coal, peat as well as LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) and all other possible sources of primary energy.

The government will have to amend the existing laws concerning the energy and mineral resources sector, to implement the new policy.

The draft policy envisages systematic survey, exploration and exploitation of petroleum resources and their rational use for sustainable development of the country. It also underlines a

uniform policy for local and foreign enterprises in both public and private sectors.

Sources close to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources told PROBE that the government is under pressure from World Bank, ADB and other international development finance institutions to adopt the policy for ensuring private sector investment.

They however questioned the need of a separate petroleum policy when a national energy policy, which will include necessary guidelines for the petroleum sector, is being formulated.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman told parliament during the just-concluded budget session that an energy policy was under way. It was learnt that an experts' committee was preparing the draft energy policy to be submitted to the government by the end of August.

The new policy will emphasise on mobilisation of domestic and external financial and technical resources from private and public sectors for the development of petroleum exploration, refining, import, export, storage, distribution and marketing.

The other basic objectives underlying the policy are:

To strengthen the research, technical and administrative capabilities of the government agencies responsible for making policies and their effective im-

plementation; To increase involvement of private sector in the petroleum industry and trade;

To create a competitive environment for the benefit of the consumers; and To promote measures for environment impact assessment in this sector.

Knowledgeable sources, however, allege that the draft policy does not contain any specific guideline for protecting the interest of the consumers especially in the agriculture sector. It does not provide for 'check and balance' to enable the government to control this strategic infrastructural sector, they add.

The entire requirement of oil and coal is now met from import while the demand for natural gas is met from domestic sources.

The consumption of oil products in the country is about two million tons of which 50 per cent is diesel, 25 per cent kerosene, eight per cent motor spirit, 10 per cent fuel oil and the balance in other minor products.

Some 1.4 million tons of refined petroleum products are produced by the country's only refinery in Chittagong, Eastern Refinery, of which 20 per cent is diesel, 30 per cent kerosene, 15 per cent LPG and Gasoline and 35 per cent fuel oil.

The country has an excess supply gasoline and fuel oil while there is a shortage of one

million tons of diesel and kerosene. The sources said, the draft policy does not specify steps to minimize the mismatch.

The consumption rate of petroleum product is growing slowly but steadily at the rate of 2.5 to three per cent. Import of refined petroleum products remain essential.

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), now operating through seven subsidiary companies, was set in 1976 for importing, refining and marketing of Petroleum Oil and Lubricant (POL) product.

It is not clear what will happen to BPC when the private sector intrudes into distribution of petroleum products and distribution infrastructure and network.

The draft policy says that the gas producing companies will be assured a market outlet within a reasonable time of commercial discovery or the companies will find market outlet within the country—a provision that is likely to discourage potential investors as nothing is stated about gas export.

The petroleum policy will also be meaningless for the western zone of the country as it deals with eastern zone only.

At present the north and the west depend on the east for imported oil and other petroleum products, which has been ignored in the proposed policy.

Payoff scandal Indian press casts new doubts over Rao's alibi

NEW DELHI, July 17: Indian press reports attempted to cast new doubts Friday over Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's alibi in a month-old payoff scandal triggered by Harshed 'Big Bull' Mehta, reports AFP.

The government has claimed Rao was meeting a Pakistani

But a computer-enhanced analysis of the photograph commissioned by India Today magazine indicates that Shah's watch showed the time as 11:18 am. Give or take two minutes, the Indian Express said in a front-page report.

Reacting to the report an official source reiterated the government's stand that Rao was not at his residence for more than four hours starting around 9:00 am that day.

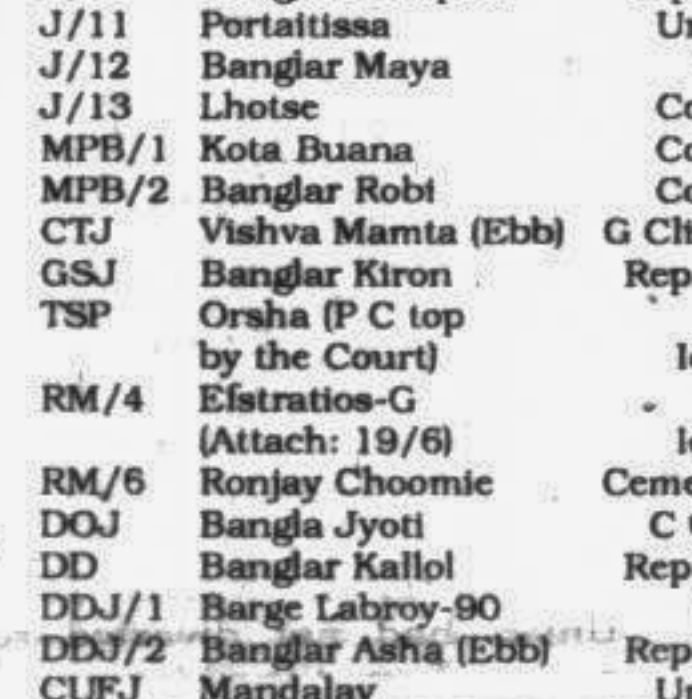
He said appointments sometimes tended to overlap and that the computer analysis did nothing to dilute the government denial.

Mehta, chief suspect in a 1.3 billion dollar bank scam, sparked a political storm by alleging on June 16 that he had given Rao 10 million rupees (333,000 dollars) for political patronage and blessings.

Opposition parties called for the resignation of the Prime Minister, who described Mehta's allegation as a malicious lie. The stockbroker in turn has accused the government of trying to cover up the truth.

The Pakistani delegation was one on a record of visitors who called on Rao at his office on November 4, 1991. Former Kashmir governor Jagmohan, whose name was on the list, cast the first doubts over Rao's alibi when he denied meeting him.

It has released a picture of the premier meeting members of the delegation, led by former Pakistan Foreign Minister Agha Shahi, seen sitting on a sofa with his wrist watch partly visible.



Narasimha Rao

delegation at his office and was not home on November 4, 1991 at 10:45 am, the time the controversial stockbroker says he met him at his residence and gave him a suitcase stuffed with money.

It has released a picture of the premier meeting members of the delegation, led by former Pakistan Foreign Minister Agha Shahi, seen sitting on a sofa with his wrist watch partly visible.

Dhaka Stock Prices Losers dominate

At the close of trading on July 17, 1993 Losers dominated the floor of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) on Saturday, opening day of the week. A total of 38 stocks were traded against Thursday's 34. Of these, 11 gained, 14 lost while 13 others traded at previous rates.

Turnover in volume made a little gain of 4.611 per cent. It reached 6375 issues from 6094. Turnover in value dropped to Taka 676983.75 from Taka 727855.00 showing a fall of 6.989 per cent.

The DSE Composite Index decreased slightly. It fell to 417.8284 from 417.8293.

DAY'S TRADING AT A GLANCE

DSE Share Price Index	417.8284
Market Capitalisation (Tk)	NA
Turnover in Value	6375
Turnover in Volume (Tk)	676983.75

Company's Name	Previous Price Tk	Closing Price Tk	Change (absolute) Tk	Change (% over of share price)	Number sold
Gains (11)					
Shares:					
Islami Bank	1450.00	1500.00	0.50	0.034	15
BGIC	203.38	207.86	4.48	2.202	280
Green Delta	211.50	211.80	0.30	0.141	50
United Insurance	212.00	213.00	1.00	0.471	10
Aftab Automobiles	175.00	176.00	1.00	0.571	30
Aziz Pipes	255.00	255.83	0.83	0.325	10
Quasem Drycells	9.30	9.40	0.10	1.075	100
Rahim Textile	95.00	96.00	1.00	1.052	20
Bestmco Infusion	227.92	235.00	7.08	3.106	240
Debentures:					
Bestmco Infusion	1715.00	1717.14	2.14	0.124	14
Bestmco Pharma	1080.00	1082.00	2.00	0.185	6
Losses (14)					
Shares:					
IFIC	185.00	180.00	5.00	2.702	5
Uttara Bank	100.00	96.00	4.00	4.000	20
5th ICB M Fund	95.00	94.00	1.00	1.052	50
B Thai Aluminium	88.02	88.00	0.02	0.022	100
Eastern Cables	78.63	77.25	1.38	1.755	5
Howlader PVC	106.25	106.00	0.25	0.235	20
Bengal Food	117.25	116.69	0.56	0.477	200
Dhaka Vegetables	76.00	75.18	0.82	1.078	275
Eagle Star Textile	15.00	14.80	0.20	1.333	170
Saifam Textile	82.92	82.00	0.92	1.109	160
Ibnstina	101.00	99.50	1.50	1.485	80
Wata Chemical	131.42	131.00	0.42	0.319	80
Apex Footwear	178.53	178.39	0.14	0.078	780
Bestmco	20.50	20.00	0.50	2.439	1900

Traded at previous rates (13) Shares: National Bank (20), Rupali Bank (10), 6th ICB M Fund (1600), Singer Bangladesh (10), Atlas Bangladesh (50), B Autocars (170), NTC (40), B Oxygen (112), Padma Textile (120), Bestmco Pharma (138), Pharmaco (5), Savar Refractories (75), Usmania Glass.

DSE SHARES AND DEBENTURES

Company	FV/ML (Taka)	Closing Rate (Taka)	Northern Jute 10/50	NT Shamsur Jute 100/5	Specialised Jute 10/50	Shine Pakur Jute 100/5	Sorali Ansh 100/5
BANKS (12)							
Al Baraka Bank	1000/1	900.00					
A.B. Bank	100/5	192.00					
City Bank	100/5	330.00					
Eastern Bank	100/20	110.00					
IDLC Ltd	100/20	220.00					
L.F.C.	100/5	180.00					
Islami Bank	1000/1	1500.00					
National Bank	100/5	100.00					
Pubali Bank	100/5	100.00					
Rupali Bank	100/10	68.00					
U.C.B.L.	100/5	88.00					
Uttara Bank	100/5	96.00					
INVESTMENT (06)							
ICB	100/5	100.00					
1st ICB M Fund	100/5	370.00					
2nd ICB M Fund	100/5	177.00					
3rd ICB M Fund	100/5	150.00					
4th ICB M Fund	100/10	152.00					
5th ICB M Fund	100/10	94.00					
6th ICB M Fund	100/10	60.00					
ICB Unit Cert.							
PHARMACEUTICALS & CHEMICALS (18)							
Amber Pharma	10/50	12.70					
BGIC	100/10	207.86					
Green Delta	100/10	211.80					
Peoples	100/10	330.00					
United	100/10	213.00					
ENGINEERING (18)							
Aftab Automobiles	100/5	176.00					
Atlas Bangladesh	10/50	42.50					
Aziz Pipes	100/5	255.83					
Bangladesh Autocars	100/5	62.00					
Bangladesh Lamps	100/5	297.26					
B. Thai Aluminium	100/10	88.00					
Bengal Carbide	100/5	251.00					
Bengal Steel	10/50	20.00					
Eastern Cables	100/5	77.25					
Howlader PVC	100/10	106.00					
Karim Pipe	100/5	84.00					
Metalex Corp.	100/5	36.00					
Monro Staffers	100/5	165.00					
Norona Jute	100/5	300.00					
National Tubes	100/10	65.00					
Panther Steel	10/50	8.00					
Quasem Drycells	10/50	9.40					
Renwick Jagganwar	100/5	85.00					
Singer Bangladesh	100/5	910.00					
FOOD & ALLIED (28)							
A.B. Biscuit	100/5	200.00					
Alpha Tobacco	10/50	45.00					
Aman Sea Food	100/5	15.00					
Apex Food	100/5	60.00					
Aroma Tea	100/5	60.00					
Bangs	100/5	120.00					
B.D. Plantation	100/5	500.00					
Bengal Food	100/5	116.69					
B.L.T.C.	100/5	800.00					
B.T.C.	10/50	74.00					
Cig. Vegetable	100/10	66.50					
Dhaka Vegetables	100/5	75.18					
E.L. Camella	100/5	1040.00					
Frogleg Export	10/50	3.00					
Gemini Sea Food	100/5	70.00					
Hill Plantation	100/5	550.00					
Modern Industries	100/5	320.00					
N.T.C.	100/52	207.00					
Rabeya Flour	10/100	NT					
Rupali Oil	10/100	4.50					
Tulip Dairy	100/40	50.00					
Yousuf Flour	10/50	NT					
Zeal Barilla Sugar	10/50	6.80					
SERVICE (20)							
Bangladesh Hotel	10/50	12.00					
Bd. Service	10/50	NT					
MISCELLANEOUS (18)							
Apex Footwear	100/20	178.39					
Apex Tannery	100/5	335.00					
Aramit	10/50	30.00					
Bata Shoe	10/100	37.50					
Bestmco	100/100	20.00					
BSC	100/5	83.00					
Chittagong Cement	100/5	207.69					
G. Q. Ball Pen	10/50	79.00					
High Speed	10/5	50.00					
Himadri Ltd.	100/100	6.00					
Miner Tannery	100/5	11.00					
Monro Ceramic	100/5	288.00					
New Dhaka Refic	100/20	80.00					
Phonox Leather	100/5	100.00					
Savar Refractories	100/5	79.00					
The Engineers	100/5	100.00					
Texpick Ind	100/10	100.00					
Usmania Glass	100/5	251.00					
DEBENTURES (24)							
Bestmco	1990/1	1915.00					
17th 1998	1990/1	1717.14					
Bestmco Infusion 1500/2	1717.14						
(17th 1998)							
Bestmco Pharma 1428/1	1082.00						
(17th 1998)							
Quasem Silk	1500/1	1200.00					
(17th 1994)							
Note: FV = Face Value ML = Market Lot NT = Not Traded AL = Allotment Letter							

Phoenix Insurance declares 10pc dividend

The Phoenix Insurance Company Limited declared a dividend of 10 per cent to its shareholders for the year 1992, says a press release.

It was disclosed at the company's 7th Annual General Meeting held on Thursday at the head office of the company with its Chairman Major General Abdul Mannan Siddiqui (Retired) in the Chair.