

Showcouse on diesel importer

Star Report

The Third Assistant District Judge of Chittagong yesterday issued a show cause notice on a private sector importer of diesel oil after the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) filed an application on Saturday seeking an injunction on the import.

Meanwhile, the government continues to remain in a quandary about ways to reconcile the differences between the Import Policy of 1993-95, the Petroleum Policy of 1993 and the Petroleum Act of 1974.

It is learnt that the Ministry of Commerce has prepared a draft to add a condition for the import of diesel.

Imported by Q C Petroleum Ltd, the consignment of over 16,000 tons of high-speed diesel oil arrived at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port on December 27. Subsequently, the company paid all import duties for clearance of the imported diesel, but at the last moment the Customs Department refused to allow the discharge of the consignment.

Earlier, the BPC issued a show cause notice on the importer for having allegedly violated the Petroleum Act of 1974. But the private company replied to the Energy Ministry, the regulatory authority and not to BPC; that it did not violate any laws by importing the consignment of diesel.

The legal action by the BPC was prompted by a decision taken in an inter-ministerial meeting on January 2 asking the corporation, to take action under the Act of 1974. Again, on January 5, Chittagong Customs sent a notice to the importer asking for a 'no objection certificate' (NOC) from the Energy Ministry for discharging

the diesel consignment.

Accordingly, the company sought an NOC in a letter to the Energy Ministry, which, it contended, is the regulatory ministry for the petroleum trade.

The harassment of a private sector enterprise by a public sector enterprise — BPC — is an issue that can only be adjudicated by your esteemed ministry as the regulatory authority, the letter, addressed to the Secretary and signed by the company managing director, said.

Charging that action of the Customs Department, prompted by the undue intervention of the BPC, has resulted in a loss of 60,000 US dollars as demurrage costs for the company, the letter urged the ministry to issue the NOC in order to resolve the existing stalemate over the issue and for the realisation of the objectives set forth in the Petroleum Policy finalised in July, 1993.

The Petroleum Policy, as an objective, seeks both private and public sector financing for petroleum exploration, refining, import, export, storage, distribution and marketing.

It also seeks increased involvement of the private sector in the petroleum industry and trade.

Moreover, petroleum products were taken off the restricted list of the Import Policy Order of 1993-95.

However, according to an official source, the Commerce Ministry has already completed a draft to add a condition for importing petroleum products and by-products under the Import Policy, requiring importers to sign a petroleum agreement with the ministry.

PM's instruction to reduce system losses

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia last night instructed the authorities concerned to launch special drives for reducing system losses of the Power Development Board (PDB) and Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA), reports BSS.

The Prime Minister also instructed the officials of the two agencies to take stern actions against those who were involved in power pilferage and giving illegal electric connections.

Begum Zia was presiding over a three-hour review meeting on the progress of the annual development programme (1993-94) projects under the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources at the International Conference Centre in the city. Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khondaker Mostafizur Hossain briefed the meeting of the progress of the ADP projects.

3 new envoys to Bangladesh

By Staff Correspondent

Three foreign envoys will arrive in Dhaka shortly to take up their assignments as heads of their respective missions. The agreements in this connection have already been signed, it was learnt yesterday.

Michael Drury will be the new Representative of the European Community (EC) in Bangladesh. The EC Representative holds the rank and courtesy title of ambassador of the 12-member EC. Drury is an Irish national.

Jong Kyou has been named the new ambassador of South Korea to Bangladesh.

Sunthorn Vidiyathet will be Thailand's new ambassador.

Border confce with India today

A five-day border coordination conference between Bangladesh and India begins in New Delhi today, reports BSS.

The Director General of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Major General Mohammad Anwar Hossain, leaves here for the Indian capital this morning leading a 13-member delegation to attend the conference.

Missing new-born baby found

By DMCH Correspondent

The new-born baby, missing earlier from the post delivery bed of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, was found yesterday in Rugganj on the outskirts of the city.

Police arrested a senior nurse Habiba Begum, 35, for allegedly stealing the child from the hospital.

Medical sources said the arrested nurse Habiba confessed to the hospital's ward master that she removed the child from the delivery bed.

BUET guard beaten to death

By Staff Correspondent

A security guard of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology was beaten to death by a group of unidentified youths yesterday afternoon.

The victim, Wahid, 50, came under attack of the armed gang at around 2:00 pm near his quarters at Palashi on the BUET campus.

Wahid succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital four hours after the incident.

Police said Wahid allegedly molested two minor girls in his room early yesterday. When the girls complained to the local people, some of them became enraged and carried out the attack.

The investigating officer was not available to comment when contacted last night.

The body of the victim was sent to the DMCH morgue.

3-day strike

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strike from the same day to press home the 21-point demands of the doctors. The negotiations between the government and the BMA leaders, held on January 8 and 9, failed to solve the problems.

Meanwhile, the coordination council of the agitating government officials and the professionals, including engineers, agriculturists and doctors, (PROKRICHI) yesterday decided to advance the date of the organisation's conference of representatives from February 4 to January 22.

Meanwhile, a press release of the association of the Education Cadre of the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) said the current Degree final examinations of the university will be exempted from the strike programme.

The press release, however, called on the association members, not involved with the examinations, to observe the strike.



The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) brought out a procession in the city yesterday. — Star photo

I want to serve: Abbas

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Ahmed Siddiky, Amanullah Aman, MP, Salahuddin Ahmed, MP, Begum Khawja Ahsanullah, MP and leaders of the BNP's front organisations.

State Minister for Civil Aviation Abdul Mannan and some other central leaders of the party were present on the huge dais where a bicycle — Abbas's election symbol — was displayed.

Earlier, processions carrying banners, placards and election symbols and portraits of the mayoral and commissioner candidates from all directions of the city thronged the meeting venue at downtown Gulistan. The processionists chanted slogans for their candidates. Some of the processions were followed by marching bands.

Addressing the projection rally as chief guest, Salam Talukder noted that the BNP government had amended laws providing for direct elections to the country's city corporations since the government believed in democracy and wanted democracy to get institutionalised in every tier of local government.

The mayors appointed by the BNP government resigned before contesting the city corporation polls because they had confidence in the people and the democratic system," he said, adding that the resignations were, however, not due to opposition demands, as claimed by some quarters.

"We also set such a trend while Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar contested a by-election in Dhaka," he reminded the audience.

The BNP secretary general also called on the commissioner candidates to make all-out efforts in their respective areas to let the upcoming city polls be held smoothly.

In an oblique reference to the Awami League, the BNP leader said none but this particular party questioned the fairness of the elections held under the present government.

"This particular party even alleged subtle rigging in the

1991 general elections, which were highly praised as the fairest, at home and abroad," he said.

The LGED Minister sought votes for the mayor and 90 commissioner candidates in Dhaka so that the elected representatives could work for enhancing civic amenities.

Introducing the commissioner candidates of the party, Mir Shawkat said victory by the BNP supported commissioner candidates would help the mayor to develop the city.

Speaking on the party's mayoral nominee, he said, "Abbas is an experienced, tested, honest and hard-working man."

In his speech, Tariqul Islam told the rally the citizens of Dhaka had elected all the BNP candidates in the '91 polls because the party had fought against autocracy and defeated it.

On the other hand, the city people rejected the Awami League for their collaboration with the autocratic regime, he added. This time too, he hoped, the city voters would give their verdict in favour of the BNP candidate.

Dr. Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain termed Mirza Abbas, MP as a symbol of the hopes and aspirations of the citizens of the capital.

Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia blasted the AL leadership for what he termed as 'its advance allegation of vote-rigging' and alleged that the party did not believe in fair balloting, rather it preferred to win elections through unfair means.

Goyeshwar Roy alleged that the Awami League nominated a man of autocrat Ershad as its mayoral candidate. Like Ershad, his follower would also be rejected by the people, he commented.

Fazlur Rahman alleged the AL-backed mayoral candidate Mohammad Hanif was not seen in the forefront during the anti-autocracy agitation but the BNP's choice Mirza Abbas was always by the people during the nine-year struggle against Ershad regime.

EC working hard

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A Z M Shamsul Alam, Secretary of the Election Commission and joint secretary of the Commission S M Zakaria were also present.

Explaining the relevant provisions of the country's Constitution and rules relating to the corporation polls, the Chief Election Commissioner said the Head of State and the executive wing of the government were under legal and constitutional obligation to provide the Commission with all logistic support in holding the polls.

Replying to a question, the Chief Election Commissioner said he was satisfied with the cooperation the government had so far provided to the commission.

About the allegation of the violation of election rules by some candidates, he said he had already warned several candidates and discussed the matter with the political leaders. "We shall apply the rules strictly in case persuasion fails to stop the violation of the rules," the CEC said, adding that gentle persuasion was important, especially when the nation had just begun the process of institutionalising democracy.

Explaining the rules relating to the city corporation polls, Justice Rouf observed that the citizens would witness fair polling.

Referring to a sub-rule, the Chief Election Commissioner said a person would be considered guilty of exercising undue influence if he or she used any official influence or governmental patronage in the elections.

"Wall writings are also a contravention of the rules and punishable under the penal code," Justice Rouf said.

The CEC told newsmen that he would soon call the political leaders of the country once again to extend him all out cooperation in holding the elections in a free and fair way. "I shall also request them to provide the polling agents of the candidates with training on the election rules so that they can

act according to the law during polling."

The EC itself plans to train the polling officers, presiding officers and the assistant presiding officers before the city corporation elections scheduled for the 30th of this month.

Replying to a question, Justice Rouf said that around 1.75 crore taka would be spent by the Election Commission in conducting the four city corporation polls.

MCCI

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"We feel that if the legitimate revenue of the government needs to be protected, it should be done through import duty structure which should be applicable uniformly to both public and private sector importers and not by preventing private sector from imports at substantially lower price," Azimur Rahman pointed out.

He termed the incident a 'grave discrimination against the private sector' and said it shows how a public sector enterprise has been allowed to misuse the regulatory authority of the government against its competitors in the private sector.

He also alleged that their action apparently has been given the government's tacit approval with a view to protecting government revenue ignoring the consumers' interests.

This is unfortunate, as instead of encouraging free competition, specially in an area which can yield immense revenue for the government and yet ensure price benefit to the consumers, a short-sighted move has been taken in a most high-handed manner," Azimur Rahman said.

He, however, urged the government to release the legally imported HSD consignments immediately to save the imports from unjustifiable demurrage charges and then call a meeting for a dispassionate review of the related issues.

The Midnight File

IAEA to transfer uranium from Iraq to Russia

BAGHDAD, Jan 9: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts are preparing the transfer of a second batch of Iraqi enriched uranium to Russia. UN sources said here today. The team is working at a site near Baghdad and hopes to complete its mission by the end of January, the sources said without specifying the quantity involved, reports AFP.

Fresh fighting in Kabul

KABUL, Jan 9: Fresh fighting erupted in Kabul today ending a 30-hour ceasefire. Two people were killed in Mervaran district, the scene of some of the worst fighting last week, sources said, while others reported that fighting also resumed around noon today (0730 GMT) in Kabul's volatile southeastern districts, reports AFP.

Dhaka to relay BBC

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The process of concluding the agreement is now underway, they said, adding that the agreement will be initially for one year, which can be renewed.

According to a source in the BBC, its executives are now working with the aim of signing the agreement within this month and for commencing the relay in February.

A proposal of the Information Ministry to allow BBC for the purpose has already been approved by the Cabinet last month.

Following the agreement, the BBC will be permitted to relay its programmes everyday for a total of nine hours 45 minutes, staggered over different sessions. The programmes will include the English BBC World Service and the Bangla programmes of the Eastern Service.

The BBC programmes, broadcast from Bush House, London, are usually received in Bangladesh. But, with the planned relay in Dhaka, the programmes will be more clearly audible within a radius of 25 miles from the transmitting point.

The BBC will arrange everything for the relay and will supply equipment needed for receiving the signals relayed via the AsiaSat communication satellite. The BBC will also pay Radio Bangladesh rent for using the transmitter on an hourly basis in addition to bearing the cost of power for the relay.

However, the Shahbagh transmitter will also continue broadcasting development and welfare-oriented local programmes.

Strike at Osmany hospital

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 9: Patients suffered much in the M A G Osmany Medical College Hospital here as the Class III employees of the hospital began a 48-hour strike this morning to protest the 'illegal' transfer of an employee.

The proposal to allow relayed transmissions of BBC programmes was placed before the Cabinet in October last year, but it was not approved then since the government favoured better utilisation of the FM transmitter by broadcasting welfare-oriented local programmes for the audience. The government later reconsidered the issue and okayed the proposal.

According to the official source, the use of the Shahbagh transmitter for local programmes, along with those of the BBC, will ensure its optimum utilisation.

Following shifting of the National Broadcasting House to its new premises at Agargaon in the mid-Eighties, the previous Radio Bangladesh, Dhaka studios at Shahbagh had been relegated to broadcasting less important programmes and the External and Transcription Services.

Homecoming

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garland the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the city and elsewhere in the country.

The day in the capital will begin with the hoisting of party and national flags atop the Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue at 6 am. Party leaders and workers will gather at Bangabandhu Bhawan in Dhanmondi to garland the portrait of Sheikh Mujib at 7 in the morning.

The party will hold a public meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue at 3 pm. The AL chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will chair the meeting which will also be addressed by the party's central leaders.

Meanwhile, the AL general secretary Zillur Rahman and the party's city branch president Mohammad Hanif and general secretary Mofazzul Hossain Choudhury Maya, in two separate statements, urged all concerned to make the homecoming day's programmes, including the public meeting, a success.

Bangladesh Shilpa Bank

Head Office, Dhaka

Assets Disposal Department

Sale Notice

Mortgaged Assets of M/s. Rupayan Textile Mills Ltd, Comilla

The Project is a Textile Finishing Unit having capacity of dyeing, printing and mercerising of 60.00 lacs yards of cloth per annum.

Mortgaged land, building and machinery of M/s. Rupayan Textile Mills Ltd, Comilla will be sold by the Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) on cash payment and on 'as-is-where-is basis' for realising BSB's amlan loan and dues of Tk. 870.36 lacs as on 30-6-93 plus additional interest and other expenses until realisation of this amount from the above company and its directors as per Article 34 of BSB order, 1972 (P. O. No. 129/72) read with BSB (Direct Sale of Mortgaged Property) Rules, 1980.

2. The following persons are the directors of the company: (1) Mrs. Rokeya Rahman, (2) Mr. A. S. M. Shafiqur Rahman, (3) Mr. A. N. M. Daudur-Rahman.

3. Schedule of Property: All that piece and parcel of land measuring an area of 1.97 acres under Mouza Durgapur, P.S. Kotwali, Dist. Comilla, Touzi No. 252, Khattian No. 4/1/26, C.S. Plot No. 1177, 1164, 1173, 1176, 1175, 1174, 1171,

1163, 1172, 1161, 1165 and Khattian No. Raioti-4 under Khattian No. 1/Pot No. 1165, 1177 & 1178 together with building and machinery etc. thereon.

4. Tender Schedule containing the details of the assets and properties (alongwith the list of machinery) may be obtained from the Assets Disposal Department BSB, Head Office, Dhaka on cash payment of Tk. 250/- (Taka two hundred fifty) only (Non-refundable).

5. Intending tenderers/buyers may drop their tenders/offers in sealed cover alongwith earnest money (refundable) 5% of the quoted value in Bank Draft/Pay Order in favour of Bangladesh Shilpa Bank in the tender box kept at the BSB Head Office on 31-1-94 at 12:00 Noon.

6. On acceptance of offer, the successful bidders/tenderers shall have to deposit 50% of the bid or tendered money within 7 (seven) days and the balance within 30 (thirty) days from the date of acceptance of tender. In case of failure in making payment of the bid amount within stipulated time, the earnest money or the tender money (as the case may be) shall be forfeited and the mortgaged property may be resold. The project assets will be handed over to the successful bidder (s) by the bank on fulfillment of the conditions.

7. Tenders will be opened on 31-1-94 at 12:30 p.m. at the Assets Disposal Department, BSB Head Office in presence of the tenderers (if any). For further information, if any, the undersigned may be contacted. Bidders may purchase the above mentioned movable and immovable property in a lot or separately. No tender schedule will be sold at the day of opening of tender.

8. The BSB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender/offers without showing any reason.

Asstt. General Manager

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Published by Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed at City Publishing House Ltd, 90, Kalra, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct). Fax No: 88-02-863035. GPO Box No: 3257. Cable: DAILYSTAR DHAKA.