

No decision on Asia Energy until coal policy is formulated

Says Tapan Chowdhury

UNB, Dhaka

Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday said the caretaker government would not take any decision on Asia Energy until the proposed coal policy is ready.

"We won't go for any decision on Asia Energy until the coal policy is formulated," he told reporters at his Secretariat office.

The energy adviser was also critical of the Asia Energy's initial agreement with the government under which the UK-based coal mining company conducted a feasibility study on the country's Phulbari coalmine. "The country's interest was not fully protected in the agreement with the Asia Energy."

He observed that the agreement even did not keep any provision to impose any penalty on the mine developer if it fails to perform its job or for any other faults. "It's totally a faulty agreement... the royalty rate was fixed at 6 percent which is very insignificant. We can't accept it," he said.

Under a deal in 1998, The Asia Energy was allowed to explore coal from Phulbari coalmine.

But the company conducted a feasibility study in 2005 and submitted a proposal to the government for open cast mining, prompting the local people to resist the plan at any cost.

During their agitation in August 2006, seven people were killed in the firing by the law enforcers.

Finally, two ministers of the then BNP-led government signed an agreement with the local people assuring them that the government would cancel the deal with Asia Energy.

Following the incident last year, the government sent both the agreements -- the one signed with Asia Energy and another signed with the local people -- to the Law Ministry seeking its advice to take further action. But the Law Ministry is yet to give its opinion.

Tapan Chowdhury said his ministry would invite the country's coal and energy experts to a workshop in the middle of next month to accommodate their opinions in the proposed coal policy before having it finalised.

Asked about the UK government's pressure to take a decision on Asia Energy issue, the adviser said any country could pursue to protect their company's interest. "But we have to protect our own interest," he said.

Indo-Bangla border confce begins in Ctg Apr 23

A three-day Deputy Director General (DDG)-level border conference between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Border Security Force (BSF) of India will begin in Chittagong on April 23, says a BDR press release.

Bilateral border issues will be discussed in the conference, BDR sources said.

A 16-member team of BSF led by IG PK Mishra of BSF Tripura will arrive in Chittagong on April 22 to attend the conference.

Director General of BDR Breg General SM Golam Rabbani will lead the BDR team at the conference.

BDR team also includes sector commanders of Khagrachhari, Chittagong, Sylhet, Mymensingh and Comilla as well as officials of the headquarters concerned.



Eastern University Entrepreneurs' Club organises a daylong Baishakhi Fair on the university campus yesterday on the occasion of the Bangla New Year 1414.

'Promote good hygiene practice at home to ensure healthcare for all'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need for good hygiene practice in households as a first and foremost step to ensure healthcare for all.

North South University (NSU) organised the seminar titled 'Observance of the World Health Day 2007' focusing on the Day's theme 'Invest in health, build a safer future' in the city.

In his keynote speech, Dr Praful B Pawar, director of Medical Services and interim chief

executive officer (CEO) of Apollo Hospitals, said stakeholders of the health sector, including patients, are not satisfied with the existing healthcare service in the country.

Referring to the absence of ethical practice among doctors, he said doctors should establish a culture of competition for successful treatment of patients, instead of the competition to examine the maximum number of patients in minimum time.

Dr Praful called on the patients to launch a 'speak up'

campaign to ensure their right to know details of their diseases and remedies.

Explaining the theme of the World Health Day, Dr Iqbal Kabir, national consultant of World Health Organisation (WHO), said 'invest in health' does not necessarily mean establishing big hospitals and providing modern technologies.

He laid emphasis on the good hygiene practice at home, which can prevent 40 percent of infections, saying that such practice is one kind of investment.

He also stressed the need for advocacy through media to raise awareness about various misconceptions.

Thai Ambassador Suphat Chiranukroh was present as the chief guest while NSU Vice-chancellor Dr Hafiz GA Siddiqui was the special guest.

Dr David Sack, executive director of ICDDR,B, and Benajir Ahmed, chairman of NSU Foundation, also spoke at the seminar presided over by NSU Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr SAM Khairul Bashar.

ETV ISSUE HC refuses to hear govt's petition

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday refused to hear a government petition seeking modification of the High Court's interim order on ETV issue terming it a "throwaway application" and asked the government attorney to get the same corrected.

As the Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Syeda Afzar Jahan moved the application, a division bench comprising Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui, found it full of flaws and errors, court sources said.

Apparently irked, the bench asked the DAG to come up on April 23 with a proper application, the sources added.

The government filed the application seeking modification of the High Court's March 7 interim order, upon a pending writ petition filed by the ETV.

The interim order directed Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to allocate state-run BTV's terrestrial facility to Ekushey Television (ETV) for airing its programme.

ETV resumed its terrestrial telecast on March 30, a day after the BTRC regularised its VHF frequency, which was shut down four years and eight months ago following the Supreme Court orders that upheld a High Court verdict declaring illegal the licensing process of ETV.

The government decided to seek modification of the High Court order that was allegedly obtained by ETV by suppressing facts, said an official source.

ETV, the first private-sector television channel with terrestrial facility from the state-owned BTV, went on air officially on April 14, 2000.

Ctg BNP leader arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a top-notch criminal and local ward BNP leader in the port city yesterday.

The arrestee, identified as Shah Alam, also a BNP leader of Lalkhan Bazar ward unit, is wanted in around seven cases, including murder, kidnap and land grabbing, sources said.

He is one of the main accused in kidnap and murder of scrap vessel businessman Rezaur Rahman alias Zakir.

Acting on a tip-off, members of Rab-7 arrested Shah Alam and his brother Kamal from Chittagong Court building premise at around 1:30pm.

Shah Alam along with his brother went to the court to give statement as witnesses in a case, they said.



US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis talks to the journalists after a visit to an NGO in Rajshahi yesterday.

One killed by fellow scavenger in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A scavenger was killed in a scuffle with one of his friends over sharing the sale of the papers they collected in the capital yesterday.

Kader, 35, was killed by fellow scavenger Sohel near Karwan Bazar kitchen market at 3:00pm.

Sohel became angry after Kader disappeared with the papers they collected jointly in the morning. Kader

also sold the papers at Tk 20 and didn't give Sohel his due share.

As soon as Sohel found Kader, he started beating the latter indiscriminately. At one stage Kader fell down on the road and died on the spot.

Sohel was arrested from the spot.

"Kader held me by the collars of my shirt even after not giving me my due share from the sale of the papers. I could not resist myself and started beating him," said Sohel to the law

enforcers.

Kader and Sohel used to scavenge papers at the dustbins in and around Karwan Bazar kitchen market. Sohel is addicted to puff cannabis, police sources said.

"If no complainant is found shortly, police will file the case," said Sub Inspector Hafizur Rahman, duty officer of Tejgaon Police Station.



Former law minister Moudud Ahmed being taken to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court in the city yesterday.

Workshop on new technologies in teaching, learning

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) yesterday organised a workshop on 'New Technologies in Teaching and Learning' on its campus in the city, says a press release.

The initiative was taken to raise awareness among local teachers and learners about the importance of using state of the art technologies in teaching and learning process.

A large number of academicians, media personalities, as well as students from different institutions attended the workshop, which

is part of a series of such awareness campaign organised by the university.

Prof Joseph Luca, dean of Graduate Studies of Australia's Edith Cowan University, conducted the workshop inaugurated by ULAB Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr Rafiqul Islam.

Dr Kazi Anis Ahmed, director of Academic Affairs, and Prof Brian Shoesmith, dean of Media Studies and Journalism, also spoke on the occasion.