

# Petrobangla, Chevron move in WB court to settle dispute

UNB, Dhaka

Petrobangla and the US-based international oil company Chevron are preparing for a legal battle in the World Bank's independent arbitration court over 4 percent charge taken from the IOC for the use of gas pipeline.

The final hearing on the dispute will take place at the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) in London on May 18.

The dispute over the 4 percent wheeling charge is a longstanding issue between the government corporation (Petrobangla) and the foreign company (Chevron), which has stemmed from a difference of opinion between the parties regarding the use of the pipeline.

Petrobangla has been deducting 4 percent money as wheeling charge from the payments it make to Chevron for gas purchase from Jalalabad gas field operated by the American company under production sharing deals.

Chevron maintains that the 4 percent wheeling charge is not applicable as Petrobangla's own pipeline is being used to transport the gas from Chevron's Jalalabad gas field to Petrobangla's third party clients.

The same is true in the case of gas transportation from Bibiyana and Moulvibazar - the two other hydrocarbon

mines operated by Chevron.

The company sticks to its guns that the gas from all of its three fields is being supplied only to Petrobangla, and to no other third parties, and so levying the 4 percent wheeling charge is invalid.

On the other hand, Petrobangla says that it deducts the charge as per provisions of the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) and gas purchase and sale agreement (GPSA) while Chevron made no objection to it at the beginning.

Since the beginning of the dispute, both sides have tried to settle their conflict amicably as per the PSC. Having failed, the parties took the option of referring the dispute to ICSID for arbitration.

Initially, Petrobangla sought to fight this legal battle in the local court, but finally it agreed to move on to ICSID, which is the proper venue as regards the PSC.

In August last year, both sides placed their arguments and supportive documents in favour of their respective claims at the hearing held at The Hague's ICSID office.

Petrobangla's lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain made a submission on the issue while Chevron's made theirs.

"We are taking a full-dress preparation to make our argument in the ICSID. We're fully confident about winning the legal battle," said a Petrobangla director, Major (Retd) Muktaadir Ali.

According to Petrobangla officials, the state-owned agency would have to pay back about \$40 million to Chevron if it loses the case at the ICSID.

About the arbitration, Chevron's Bangladesh President Steve Wilson said, "Chevron is confident about the strengths and merits of its case. We are not commenting further until the ICSID rules on this issue."

Despite the dispute, both sides have been working on maintaining a professional relation.

Officials claimed that recently Chevron and Petrobangla came up with an innovative solution to bypass problems linked with various bottlenecks in the pipeline system by installing a spur line at Jalalabad.

The pipeline is supposed to be commissioned later this month and it will bring an additional 60-80 MMSCFD gas production to the north-eastern part of the country.

"We have always honoured the PSCs, which were based on Petrobangla's own model and whose dispute-resolution clauses direct for ICSID arbitration," said one official of Chevron.

"Chevron will respect the ICSID verdict, regardless of which party it favours. Whether Chevron wins or loses the arbitration, we are committed to honouring the decision of the ICSID arbitration tribunal," he added.

## Cattle trader killed in BSF firing

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader on Puthali border in Benapole yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Abdul Haque, 32, son of Hazra Morol.

BDR and villagers said the BSF troops from Angrali camp fired indiscriminately on a group of cattle traders who were crossing the border into Bangladesh with their cattle, killing one of them.

Later, the BSF men dragged the body into their territory.

## BDR MUTINY

## Authorities yet to determine number of missing arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities engaged in figuring out arms and ammunition at BDR headquarters are yet to determine how many ammunition went missing and how many were actually used by the mutineers during the mutiny.

Col Reza-nur-Rahman Khan, additional director general of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), said yesterday that the arms and ammunition are being counted under several categories.

"At the end of the counting, it would be possible to assess how many arms went missing. But it is not easy to assess how many ammunition were used by the mutineers and how many taken out of Pilkhana," he said.

According to sources, a huge number of personnel from all the agencies, including army, navy, air force, Rab and police, have been engaged in the counting process that started on Sunday.

Counting of the arms and ammunition would take at least a week more, a source said.

## Edexcel introduces new IGCSE qualifications

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Edexcel, formerly known as University of London Examination and Assessment Council in UK, yesterday announced the introduction of its new IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) qualifications.

IGCSE teaching will begin in August this year where 14 new IGCSE subjects will be offered.

The new IGCSEs are the most up-to-date international qualifications available from the UK. Edexcel, a part of Pearson Company, the world's largest education service provider, offers academic and vocational qualifications in the UK and over 100 countries worldwide.

Edexcel organised a launching ceremony of the IGCSE-2009 at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital where it was said that the new IGCSE has been designed to be Edexcel's most up-to-date qualification.

Speaking as the chief guest, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said Bangladesh students will be greatly benefited from these new qualifications and will do well in the global competition.

Edexcel International Business Manager Dr David Davies said that Edexcel is one of the three examination boards, which are regulated by the UK government's qualifications and curriculum authorities.



Workers of K Ali Garments stage a demonstration in front of the factory building at Shyampur in the city yesterday demanding payment of salary arrears.

# New point-based system for migration to UK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Officials of the British High Commission at a seminar in Sylhet yesterday said that there had been major changes in the immigration laws worldwide and the British government has also pressed a new point-based system for migrating to the UK for work, study and training.

It is consolidating and simplifying more than 80 routes to the UK into just 5 tiers, which are being implemented gradually, they added.

The British High Commission organised the seminar on 'UK visas' at the M. Sajur Rahman auditorium in the city's Rikabibazar area.

Stuart Percival, head of immigration services of the British High Commission in Dhaka, presented the keynote paper at the seminar and replied to the queries.

A number of educationists from the British-Bangladeshi diaspora, head of the educational and professional training institutes, in addition to a number of students from different local universities attended the seminar.

Stuart said, "The UK is a great place to study and we warmly encourage more genuine appli-

cations from Sylhet and around Bangladesh since foreign students bring huge economic and cultural benefit to the UK. The new system is easy, simpler and transparent. It has been designed to facilitate entry to the UK of all those who want to go there for work, train and study."

The officials said the newly introduced point-based system would greatly benefit the genuine people interested to go to the UK in a proper way.

There are huge scopes for the young and qualified people to migrate to the UK, he added.

However, it will take time to reach the benefits to the target people, as it is being implemented phase by phase, the officials added.

The speakers said that the immigration law is diverse and confusing at times while vulnerable people need help of the experienced people in facing the different odds related to those.

However, often people get misguided at the hands of so-called 'immigration experts or advisers', the speakers said, adding that genuine foreign goers should remain alert before consulting those unscrupulous elements, who often do business in a wrong way only.

The officials further noted that there had been big changes in the British immigration laws in the recent years. Alongside the existing process online system of visa application for the UK had been introduced. No doubt, it has fastened the total process, they added.

Referring to some incidents, they said submission of false and forged documents do just cause refusal of any visa application. These all are harmful practice and filing such papers just damage the prospect of getting visas, they added.

Replying to the queries, Stuart Percival said there would be no provision for appeal against the refused cases under the point-based system.

But, scope for administrative appeal will remain. In Bangladesh more than 50 percent of the visa applications for UK are made from Sylhet division only, he said.

Settlement cases are also too high from this region. Considering all these points and reality, Sylhet has a different attachment with the UK for long, he added.

Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and Divisional Commissioner Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan also spoke.

## Repeal Labour Law (amend) Ord: Skop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (Skop) yesterday demanded repeal of the Labour Law (Amendment) Ordinance 2008.

In a statement, the labour leaders alleged that the caretaker government amended the Labour Law 2006 and it is fully undemocratic, anti-workers and violates the ILO convention.

They claimed that the workers are against the ordinance since its announcement and the Skop is demanding repeal of the ordinance since then.

They said that after the elected government taking power, a tripartite meeting was held among the workers, owners and government and the meeting decided repeal of the ordinance but the government yet to implement the decision.

The leaders cautioned that the ordinance has already produced enough anger among the workers. The government should implement the decision as soon as possible otherwise the frustration and anger among the workers may spread out.

Abdul Matin Master, Abul Bashar, Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, Dr Wajedul Islam Khan, Meshbah Uddin Ahmed, Shafiqur Rahman Majumder, Khalilur Rahman, Razequzzaman Ratan, Zakir Hossain, Badol Khan, Delwar Hossain, Mujibur Rahman Bhuiyan and Mamunur Rashid, among the SKOP leaders, signed the statement.

## 2 muggers held with firearm

UNB, Rajbari

Police arrested two alleged muggers with a shutter gun from Pangsha upazila headquarters on Sunday night.

A patrol police team arrested Zillur Rahman, 20, and Abdur Razzak, after one Rezaul Karim informed the police that the two took away a mobile phone set and Tk 5,000 from him at gun point at about 10:00pm.

The police also recovered the booty.



Child participants in a drawing competition receive certificates after the competition at Garib-e Newaz Avenue branch of Prime Bank Limited in the city on Saturday. Prime Bank organised the competition. Mahbubul Alam, additional managing director of the bank, William C Angels, principal, Prime Campus, Prime Bank Foundation, Ferdousi Sultana, senior vice-president and head of public relations, Mahmudur Rahman, head of brand, and Mostafa Hasan, chief of the Garib-e Newaz Avenue branch, were present.

# Expat seeks govt intervention to stop Rajuk harassment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi expatriate in Canada yesterday sought intervention of the concerned ministries to stop harassment by the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) authorities to get approval of a layout plan to construct a building on his plot.

He alleged that Rajuk has been harassing him since March 2007 by not approving the layout to construct the building despite a High Court division bench fined one of the Rajuk officials in this connection.

Expatriate SM Fareed-ul Islam at a press conference at the National Press Club said over the last two years, he came to Bangladesh thrice to get his plan approved by Rajuk to construct the building on his Plot-19, at Road-22 in Sector-14 of Uttara.

On March 28, 2007, deputy director of Rajuk received his application with the proposed layout plan and other necessary documents, he added.

After submitting the layout, he started some development work on the plot, the expatriate said, adding that the authorities in a letter asked him to meet their estate

officer on August 15, 2007.

Fareed met the then state officer Abdulla-al Baki on the date, but they did not inform him the reason, rather asked him to come three to four days later, he said.

Accordingly, he met the estate officer at Rajuk office again, but Baki did not let him know the reason as to why his layout plan was not approved.

However, he went to Canada after his five months' stay in the country as he did not find any answer from the concerned authorities.

The victim's younger brother, on behalf of him, filed a writ petition with the HC accusing five officers, including its chairman and the estate officer, on January 2, 2008.

The HC bench termed sending of the letter to Fareed illegal and fined the then estate officer Tk 25,000 on July 31 in the same year. It also ordered the officer to pay the fine from his own pocket.

Fareed said he bought the plot from a lessee of the plot. Rajuk also gave him the necessary documents, stating that the ownership of the plot was changed to him from its earlier owner on February 6, 2007.

## Vow to resist anti-liberation forces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the slogan 'Pledges of Liberation War -- Secular Bangladesh', Sammilita Nagorik Andolon inaugurated a 16-day programme at the TSC road island on the Dhaka University campus yesterday to mark the Independence Day.

Shahriar Kabir, acting president of Ekattor Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, presided over the inaugural session.

A discussion was also held at the venue.

Speakers at the discussion vowed to resist conspiracies of the undemocratic and anti-liberation forces.

They demanded steps to start the trial process of BDR massacre, Bangabandhu killing, August 21 killing and jail killing cases immediately.

## Youths urged to establish dignity of Bangla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at a seminar yesterday said it is young generation who will take the lead to establish dignity of mother tongue in real sense in future.

Speaking as the chief guest, Dipu said, "Youths have organised a language festival so many years after the language movement. It is a significant event for the nation," she added.

The minister said this at the seminar 'The limits of language mean the limits of my world: Rethinking language in today's world' at the Central Public Library marking the two-day language festival organised by Amra Bayanno Foundation.

Noted economist Dr Atiur Rahman said, "The importance of language is undeniable in our daily life as well as in the development of human civilisation. We believe youths will spread the real spirit of language movement from generation to generation."

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