

Subsidy for services under PPP projects on the cards

UNB, Dhaka

The government is planning an option to subsidise services to be rendered by the projects under public-private partnership (PPP) as the guidelines are being prepared to facilitate the new budgetary concept of development.

"The subsidy is to ensure that people won't pay higher tariff for using the services," a senior official told UNB requesting anonymity.

For instance, he said, electricity consumers will not pay the power tariff to be charged by the private sector producer under the PPP.

Although the government would have to buy the service from the private producer, the consumers will enjoy the regular price.

"The difference will be paid from the PPP budget as subsidy," the official said.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith had already announced to make a substantial budgetary provision in the budget for 2009-10 to finance the PPP projects.

The government is already in the practice of buying electricity from the independent power producers at higher rate and selling back to consumers at administered tariff.

"The PPP budget will enable the government to keep the subsidy expenditure in the budget and make financial management efficient," said another official in the Ministry of Finance.

He said the government is going to set a general guideline to facilitate PPP, but the

modalities would be decided on case-to-case basis, considering the merits of the projects concerned.

A separate body with experts from the private sector will be set up to administer, identify, select and award the projects under the PPP.

The body will be provided with adequate authority to approve and award a project without going to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC).

The subsidy approach will be one of the three options the government is moving forward with to attract private entrepreneurs from both home and abroad to face the challenges of the infrastructure bottlenecks that have been hindering the economic development of the country.

The two other options of funding the PPP projects from the budget are meeting the cost of preparing project appraisals and holding shares of the projects by the government if it provides the fund as equity.

"The modalities will depend on how the private sector shows interest in a particular project," said the official.

He added that whatever might be the modalities, the interest of the consumers would be protected - be it a power project or projects in the energy, port, roads, expressways, elevated expressways and anything else.

"The service charges will also be decided as per the negotiation on a particular project or service," the official said.



Channel I Director (news) Shykh Seraj hands over a book containing a 39-point recommendation on agriculture titled 'Krishi Budget Krishoker Budget' to Finance Minister AMA Muhith at the conference room of the ministry yesterday.

Govt likely to introduce crop insurance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will hopefully introduce crop insurance and expand credit programme for crop stocks for the welfare of farmers, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday.

In the upcoming budget, the government will also provide special allocation for agricultural research, he said when Channel I Director Shykh Seraj handed over to him a 39-point recommendations on agriculture titled 'Krishi Budget, Krishoker Budget'.

Seraj presented the recommendations at the conference room of the finance ministry on behalf of the programme titled 'Hridoye Mati O Manush' which is telecast on Channel I, says a press release of Impress Telefilm Limited.

Referring to irregularities in various agriculture-related departments, AMA Muhith said once upon a time Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) provided to farmers a number of services, which may not be possible in that spirit now.

"But there is no doubt that we have to give special attention towards agriculture," the minister said, agreeing to most of the recommendations.

Seraj highlighted a number of challenges facing agriculture and said climate change, environmental degradation and many other man-made problems are becoming threats to agriculture.

The sector, therefore, deserves very special attention of the authorities concerned, he noted.

A video documentary focusing the field-level experiences was projected before submitting the recommendations.

Finance Secretary Dr Mohammad Tareq and other high officials of the ministry were present on the occasion.

Hridoye Mati O Manush started its pre-budget field level discussion and submission of recommendations to the government since 2005.

Woman commits suicide

UNB, Thenidah

A woman allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself over a family feud at Jalipur village in Moheshpur upazila on Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Halima Khatun, 28, an NGO worker and daughter of Kheder Sheikh.

Police on information recovered the body and sent it to Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.

TRIBUTE TO RP SAHA

Call to initiate trial of war criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to initiate the trial of war criminals who had killed many great people of the country during the liberation war in 1971.

The discussion, commemorating the 38th anniversary of the abduction of philanthropist Ranada Prasad Saha (RP Saha) and his son Bhabani Prasad Saha (Rabi) by the Pakistan army with the help of their local collaborators, was organised by Kumudini Welfare Trust (KWT) at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city.

Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, attended the discussion as chief guest. Mamunur Rashid, a cultural personality, said the country now needs people like RP Saha who devoted his life to the welfare of people.

Narrating her personal acquaintance with RP Saha, educationist Shyamoli Nasrin said trial of those who are responsible for the missing of such a great soul must be held.

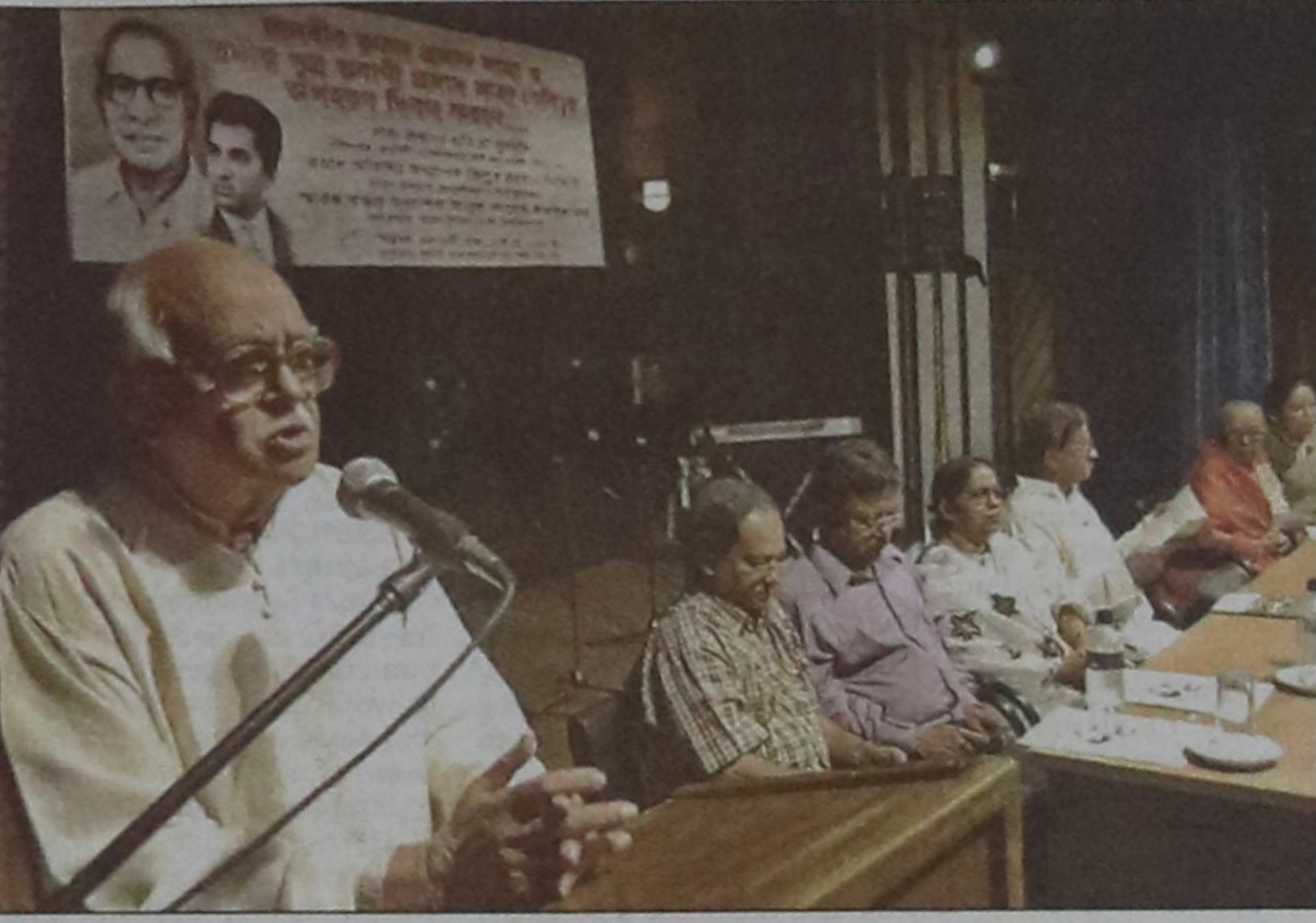
In his keynote speech, Prof Abul Quasem Fazlul Huq, chairman of Bangla department at Dhaka University, stressed the need for fulfilling the dreams of RP Saha who dedicated his life to the service of humanity.

Paying tributes to the memory of RP Saha, he said the great philanthropist had significant contributions to economic independence of women.

Earlier Bina Shaw, principal of Kumudini Nursing College, delivered the welcome address at the programme which was addressed by KWT Director Protiva Mutsuddy, Prof Nehal Karim and social worker Aroma Dutta.

On behalf Kumudini Welfare Trust, some memorabilia of RP Saha were handed over to Aly Zaker, a trustee of the Liberation War Museum, to be placed at the museum.

Later the students of Kumudini Hospital School of Nursing, Kumudini Women's Medical College and Kumudini Nursing College paid their respect to their founder through songs and dances.



Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui speaks at a discussion commemorating the 38th anniversary of the abduction of philanthropist Ranada Prasad Saha (RP Saha) and his son Bhabani Prasad Saha (Rabi) at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city yesterday.

ICT FAIR BEGINS TOMORROW

BTRC to review revenue from ICT equipment, services

CU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Brig Gen (Retd) Zia Ahmed yesterday said BTRC is putting emphasis on reviewing revenue from the ICT equipment and services to make them affordable for people from all classes of society.

"We have already proposed to reduce internet users' VAT from 15 percent to zero percent to increase users and disseminate information and communication technology (ICT) among the mass people, he said.

Zia was addressing a press conference at Chittagong Circuit House to brief the two-

day programme beginning tomorrow to mark the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD)-2009.

The event with the slogan 'Protecting children in cyberspace' will be celebrated this year in Chittagong instead of the capital to popularise the concept, create awareness and ensure participation of the youths.

Zia said they are determined to increase internet connectivity and fibre network in the remote areas of the country since the country will be covered with WiMAX and 3G technologies soon.

He said parents would have to play a vital role in protecting their children from unfair use

of the net and ICT access of the children is a must since it is a right now.

He said BTRC has chalked out the programmes at Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) Chittagong centre to mark the day targeting the vision 2021 to materialise the dream of building 'digital Bangladesh'.

There will be 20 stalls at the venue where the programmes like ICT-based exhibition, ICT classes, seminar and online competitions will be held, he added.

BTRC Vice Chairman Hasan Mahmood Delwar and Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Farid Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury were present at the press conference.



Banglalink takes out a procession at Chittagong city to mark the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2009 yesterday.

Jessore fisheries meet country's 70pc demand for fish fry

METRO DESK

Jessore Fish Farmers' Association and media professionals at a discussion in Jessore on Thursday stressed that the country's fish sector still has potential as an effective earning source if some policy initiatives are taken, says a press release.

They said the media can help draw attention of the government and policymakers about the problems of this sector, including shortage of quality fish fry, lack of technical knowledge, natural calamities, spiraling price of fish feed and inadequate number of fish research institutions.

Business Reporters' Network (BRN), Jessore Fish Farmers' Association, and

Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) jointly organised the discussion 'Jessore fish cultivation: Its growth, opportunities and obstacles' with support from Katalyst.

Mobinul Islam Mobin, publisher and editor of the daily Grameer Kagoj, moderated the discussion where Saifuz Zaman, president of Jessore Fish Farmers' Association, presented a keynote paper on 'Jessore fish cultivation: Its possibilities, opportunities and present crisis'.

Zaman said Jessore fisheries itself account for Tk 100 crore revenue, creating work opportunities for more than 10 lakh people. But as the successes of Jessore fisheries are not being reflected properly in the media, they are being unable to get

necessary policy support and investments.

He also expressed hope that better media coverage will help remove the barriers, adding that reporters will contribute more to improving the scenario in this sector.

BRN members Ruqunuddoula, staff reporter of the daily Sangbad, Jessore, and Moinal Haque, Jessore correspondent of private TV channel ETV, presented another keynote highlighting the problems and potential of this sector as well as the role of media.

They also mentioned that 70 percent of the country's total demand for fish fry is produced by Jessore fisheries.

MRDI Executive Director Hasibur Rahman described the background of the forma-

tion of BRN and MRDI's activities to bridge the gap between the media and businesses like fisheries, flower cultivation, foundry and alike.

He said as part of business-media cooperation, business issue-based interaction programme can be organised for journalists with support from the business community.

Simultaneously, entrepreneurs and officials of business firms can be trained for maintaining communication with the media on a regular basis to address such obstacles and accelerate growth, he added.

Jessore fisheries' owners and farmers along with leading media professionals, including BRN members, took part in the discussion, followed by a field visit at Jessore Fisheries Research Institute.

'Country lacks leaders since Bangabandhu's killing'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his contribution to the country will remain in the pages of the history of Bangladesh as long as the world exists, speakers said at a programme yesterday.

Writers' Foundation Bangladesh organised the programme titled 'Bangabandhu Festival-2009' at the Liberation War Museum in the city.

The speakers also said that Bangabandhu will always remain in the heart of the people of the country.

Foundation President Engr Shamsuzzoha Chowdhury chaired the programme con-

ducted by its Chairman Dr Abul Kalam Azad.

Educationist Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam presented a keynote titled 'Bangladesh of Bangabandhu: Bangladesh of Bangladesh'.

In his keynote, Prof Islam said Bangabandhu is the great leader of the crores of people of the country. However, he pointed out that the country is suffering from a leadership crisis since the killing of Bangabandhu.

University Grants Commission Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said Bangabandhu's Bangladesh is advancing fast amidst huge obstacles and they will be able

to build a prosperous and developed country that Bangabandhu dreamt of.

Poets Asad Mannan and Zakia Setu Sumi recited poems on Bangabandhu.

Chief Coordinator of Sector Commanders' Forum Lt Gen (retd) Harun-Ar-Rashid, President of Bangladesh-India Sampriti Parishad Advocate MA Bari, Deputy Attorney General Fazilatunnesa Bappi, Director of National Public Library Aminul Islam and Adviser to the advisory council of the programme SM Omar Faruk also spoke.

Later, a documentary on the life and works of Bangabandhu was also screened.



Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam speaks at a programme titled 'Bangabandhu Festival-2009' organised by Writers' Foundation Bangladesh at the Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday.

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only ... For all the above positions, candidates must be computer literate with a good command of written and spoken English
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