

Expat experts

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stimulate a fresh perspective on the draft coal policy, land subsidence at the Barapukuria coal mine site and human resettlement issues.

"The discussions here have been highly academic. The non-resident Bangladeshis are not related to any private company working in Bangladesh and they have not been involved with the drafting of the policy in the past. They are not debatable, though some quarters are trying to make the people suspicious about this session," said an official of Petrobangla present at the discussions.

The discussants felt that the draft coal policy had a lot of chapters not relevant as policy. "We all agreed that this document should be confined within policy matters," said a source.

The draft also seeks to ensure coal reserve to meet 50 years of demand. The discussants felt that it was not realistic as, in the course of time, there would be many unpredictable developments that would demand changes in the strategy.

The country did not have adequate data on proven coal reserve except for the case of Barapukuria and Phulbari deposits and therefore it should take up extensive feasibility study of other discovered coal deposits.

Bangladesh should mark a mining zone and begin exploration extensively, they said.

The draft policy projected coal demands mainly on the basis of power sector requirements. But the policy should take into cognisance other sectors' requirements.

In the high-energy demand scenario, the experts find no reason to allow export of coal. However in some peculiar conditions, the provision of export should be kept there. For instance, due to power plant failure in Barapukuria, the coal mine there now has so much surplus coal that these should be exported or removed to other places to ensure safety.

To develop the coal sector huge resources are required. This resource may be derived from public-private partnership, share market, issuance

of bonds, loans from development partners, leasing etc.

Besides the session discussed about financial incentives for investors and gathering of baseline data from the coal deposit areas.

Double PhD holder from UK and Australia on minerals, Dr. Nasir Ahmed is acting as the coordinator of the expatriate group. Other expatriate experts are: Dr. Saad Andalib, Professor and the Chair of Marketing, Pennsylvania State University, USA, Dr. Khalequzzaman, head of Geology Department of Lock Haven University, Pennsylvania, US based environmentalist Dr. Sarwat Chowdhury, mining engineer working in Queensland coal and iron mines Masud Hossain, and Melbourne based Global Positioning System and Global Information System expert Sultana Nasrin.

The chairmen of Petrobangla and Power Development Board (PDB), members from Geological Survey of Bangladesh, Bureau of Mineral Development, Barapukuria Coal Mine Company, Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd, Dr. Hossain Monsur of the Geology Department of Dhaka University, and representatives from the Rajshahi University and the Chemical Engineering Department of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) are participating in the session.

Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1
neighbouring countries' claims submitted to the UN. ASIAN HIGHWAY

In response to AL lawmaker Shahiduzzaman Sarker, Hasina said the cabinet has already approved in principle to join the Asian Highway.

On approval of the cabinet, a proposal to this effect will be sent to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The work for implementation of the Asian Highway will begin upon approval of ESCAP.

6 CPI-M workers

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killed since Sunday.

"Central paramilitary forces are available in adequate numbers and they will aid and assist the state police," P Chidambaram said.

Thousands of villagers in Lalgarh, 130 kilometres (80 miles) from the state capital Kolkata, ransacked and torched police camps and houses belonging to communist leaders and stopped troops from entering the area.

"Villagers dug out roads and blocked the roads with wooden trunks," said police Inspector General Raj Kanooja.

The villagers accuse authorities in the state of committing atrocities against them and neglecting development in the region.

Police say Maoist guerrillas are aiding tribal villagers who dominate Lalgarh and surrounding areas.

Earlier Wednesday, suspected Maoist rebels shot dead three Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) activists at a tea shop in the village of Jhargram, 178 kilometres (110 miles) southwest of the state capital Kolkata, said Kanooja.

The rebels are also suspected of gunning down another three CPM workers on Sunday morning.

28 Taliban killed

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demolished during the ten-day revenge campaign, with Taliban fighters currently surrounded on a mountain-top in the Ghazni area.

Pakistan's government has in the past encouraged the formation of lashkar to help the official armed forces in their fight against militants, and say they want to build up and arm such community forces in the north-west.

The military launched its northwest push after the Taliban advanced to within 100 kilometres (60 miles) of Islamabad in early April, violating a deal to put three million people under Sharia law in exchange for peace.

In a statement Wednesday, the army said they had killed 20 suspected militants in the last 24 hours in Lower Dir, while two more -- including a rebel commander -- were killed in Swat district.

Elders of the area have

decided to organise defence committees for guarding against resurgence of terrorists," it said.

Pakistan's army claims to have killed about 1,475 insurgents since the campaign began, however their tolls are impossible to verify independently.

Home minister

FROM PAGE 16
two Dhaka Polytechnic Institute students and the alleged torture of three people by plain-clothed cops in the city.

About the reported involvement of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists in tender manipulation, the minister once again said, "None would be spared."

Asked about the preparation of a list of bad cops who are failing to perform their duties properly, Sahara replied, "Wait and see."

The Prime Minister's Office had earlier asked the home ministry to prepare the list.

Outsiders

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Mohsin Ali allegedly controls biddings at the project site and is an Awami League leader of Phulbari. He reportedly manipulates tenders using his political influences. Sources allege that he never allows others to tender bids.

The external pressure groups started campaigning among the miners about three years ago. Now mine officials feel that miners, like in many other trade-union dominated government organisations, do not care about authorities or the institution they work for.

"About 800 miners' behaviour toward BCMCL officials have become reckless ever since they formed BCMCL Miners Rights Protection Committee in the name of protecting their rights," said a BCMCL source.

According to the locals and BCMCL official sources, a few Bangladeshis miners including Rabiul Islam Rabi and Nur Islam are steering the unity of the miners in the name of BCMCL Miners Rights Protection Committee. Nuruzzaman is the adviser and he spearheads any movements for the cause of miners and villagers, they alleged.

At least 15 villagers around the BCMCL project area have been mobilised to realise the compensation for land subsidence victims, they added.

Nuruzzaman said if the BCMCL does not pay proper damages to victims of land subsidence then there will be a movement. He said coal production increased as Bangladeshis miners became united and formed the miners association.

On May 5, the underground miners went on a rampage demanding arrears for three months.

A BCMCL official seeking anonymity said, "If investors are harassed by such trade union activities, then foreign investment to the country will be under threat."

Faruk Khan

FROM PAGE 1
Investigation Department (CID) is interrogating each of them, which needs time. So, the investigators should be given sufficient time for investigation.

Faruk, who heads a committee for coordinating measures of the Prime Minister's Office and the home and defence ministries in the wake of BDR carnage, said the next coordination meeting on restructuring and renaming of BDR might be held on June 25.

He said BDR's new name, uniform, motto and insignia are now under government's consideration.

Gaziul Haque

FROM PAGE 1
heart disease and old-age complications.

His first namaj-e-janaja will be held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 10:00am today.

After the funerals, the body will lie in state on the premises of the Central Shahid Minar from 10:30am to 11:30am for people to show respects to the great national hero.

Later, his body will be sent to his hometown Bogra buried at his family graveyard after the final janaza.

In a condolence message, President Zillur Rahman expressed his deep shock saying the death of Gaziul Haque is an irreparable loss for the nation.

"He played a significant role in all movements of democracy and peace imbued with the spirit of the War of Liberation," he said.

In a similar message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the demise of "the great patriotic educationist and intellectual" is an irreparable loss to the nation.

PM's Press Secretary Abdul Kalam Azad said Hasina went to Square Hospital to see the deceased as his death news spread. She stood in silence for some time.

The prime minister prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Leader of the opposition and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia in a message said the nation will forever remember the outstanding role of Haque in building the nation's history.

Born on February 13, 1929, in Nishchintpur village of Chagolhaia Thana in Noakhali district, Gaziul Haque chaired the meeting at the Dhaka University premises on February 21, 1952, from which the decision to violate Section 144 was made.

Gaziul Haque, a member of Awami League's advisory council and founding Trustee of Bangabandhu Memorial Trust and its Treasurer, also took part in the mass upsurge of 1969 and anti-autocratic movement in 1990.

Haque, a valiant freedom fighter and a lawyer by profession, was admitted to the hospital on Tuesday morning.

Govt restructuring

FROM PAGE 1
intelligence agencies and formation of a permanent Central Intelligence Coordination Committee (CICC) at highest level."

The committee also recommended "Formation of counter intelligence forces for all intelligence agencies including the Rifles Security Unit (RSU)".

Hasina yesterday said her government is actively considering all recommendations by the national probe committee on the BDR carnage.

The committee among other recommendations has asked to restructure all intelligence agencies to improve their structural conditions, the premier added.

Hasina, also leader of the House, said the RSU is assigned to collect information on BDR's internal security and information on smuggling. There is no mechanism for coordination and exchange of information between RSU and any other national intelligence agencies.

She added ordinary soldiers of BDR collect information at field level and inform the officers. The authorities could not notice information in advance on the mutiny as ordinary RSU soldiers were found involved with the mutiny, Hasina continued.

Failure and dubious role of the intelligence and investigation departments have also been discussed following many tragic events when the nation experienced some major terror attacks in and outside the capital and also some misleading investigations over some major crimes.

Assassination attempt to Sheikh Hasina on August 21, 2004 at the heart of the capital also raised the same questions.

Besides, the role of some intelligence agencies and their officials has also sparked controversy following allegations of torturing political bigwigs in confinement during the caretaker rule.

A number of top tier leaders from ruling Awami League and main opposition BNP also raised their voice in and out of

the House.

She was admitted into the hospital with burn injuries on June 10.

"It was 8pm of June 6. I was talking to Sagor, an employee of a computer shop in Dhaka. We had a relation. As we were conversing at a garden of our village Afzal Hussain whom I called uncle showed up out of nowhere; Sagor immediately slipped out of the garden," Mariam told The Daily Star correspondent just two days before her death.

"I was burning with shame as I used to hold him in high respect as my paternal uncle but on my way back home he made an indecent advance towards me," she continued.

"I tried to resist him but as he was unyielding I threatened to put him in shame in public; then he dragged me into a nearby sugarcane field and tried to strangle me with my scarf," Mariam, a student of class IX at Dolong Mahila Dakhil Madrasa said in a choked voice.

"As I cried out louder some locals rushed to the spot and rescued me from his clutch," she told this correspondent while undergoing treatment at the burn unit.

After the incident Mariam demanded Afzal's punishment and requested her family members to file a case but everyone refused to do so leading her to the decision of committing suicide to bury her shame, said family members.

"I want justice before my death; I know I might die soon; at least I demand the arrest of the criminal before my death," she said just two days before her death.

Her sister-in-law Rehana Begum said, "All family members tried to persuade her not to lodge a case as it would malign our family prestige and status."

In reply she kept mum, said nothing and slipped into her bedroom. She locked the door and poured a bottle of kerosene to burn herself to death, she said.

Dr Samanta Lal Sen, project director of the burn unit, told The Daily Star that the patient came with fifty percent serious burn injuries and it was quite late to get proper treatment.

Mariam's brother, Anwar Hossain, however filed a case against Afzal Hussain under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act on June 10 soon after her suicide attempt.

Officer-in-Charge of Chhatmohor police station, Syed Shahid Alam, told The Daily Star yesterday, "I talked to Mariam at the Thana Health Complex on the day of incident. She said that she demanded justice from local people and as she did not get it she tried to commit suicide."

"We conducted several raids in the area to arrest Afzal. He has been on the run," he added.

Strong allegations were rife that the intelligence agencies and investigation departments were highly politically motivated during the five-year tenure of BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government.

Many farical probes into the major terror incidents including the August 21 grenade attack, assassination of former finance minister Kibria are the evidence of wrong and politicised probe.

Some former officials of Criminal Investigation Department are already facing charges of misleading probe.

Most recent arrests and statements of the arrested ex-NSI officials stunned the nation as the chilling information about the role of intelligence officials with the arms smuggling came under the spotlight.

parliament against "torture" by the intelligence officials in the name of interrogation.

Former commerce minister and AL General Secretary Abdul Jail, who was in prison for one and a half years during the caretaker rule, in January alleged in parliament of excruciating torture on him by DGF after 1/11 changeover. He also called for a parliamentary probe into that matter.

Jail demanded that those responsible be meted out exemplary punishment. He also said operations of the intelligence agency be restricted to the armed forces so that the people are not subject to their "torture" anymore.

Besides torture, politicisation of the agencies or use of intelligence agencies for the ruling party's political propose were also among other highly discussed issues as there were many allegations in this regard.

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Violated

FROM PAGE 1
of those who hold sway over the society.

Mariam, daughter of Abdul Hanif and Amena Khatun, who hailed from Chhatmohor of Pabna died after she fought for life for seven days at the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

She was admitted into the hospital with burn injuries on June 10.

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"We conducted several raids in the area to arrest Afzal. He has been on the run," he added.

Ex-PSC member Prof Mahfuzur sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent former Public Service Commission (PSC) member Prof Mahfuzur Rahman to jail after he surrendered and sought bail in a graft case in which he was earlier sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment.

Judge AK Roy of the Special Judge's Court-10 passed the order rejecting Mahfuzur's bail prayers when he along with his lawyers appeared before the court and sought bail.

Moving the bail petition, Mahfuzur's lawyer Rezaul Rahman told the court that his client was earlier convicted in his absence and now he has appeared before the court and sought bail, as he would file an appeal with the higher court.

On the other hand, Special Prosecutor Khurshid Alam Khan opposed it saying that the trial court has no jurisdiction to grant bail to any person convicted in a graft case.

After the hearing, the judge rejected the bail petition and ordered to send Mahfuzur to jail.

4 big structures

FROM PAGE 16
Hai said Khabir also sought two days from authorities that ended yesterday.

The drive in Shitalakhya is to continue today for the ninth day.

Our Narayanganj correspondent adds: The structures demolished yesterday include a salt factory, a jute processing factory belonging to M Wahab and Sons, Brikampur Salt factory and Popular Jute Mill at Nitaiganjin Narayanganj.

Locals expressed jubilation over demolition of the Brikampur Salt factory, as it occupied a part of the river where common people used to bathe and wash clothes.

A few labourers were seen engaged in knocking down parts of the six-storey building owned by Khabir Uddin.

Nazimuddin (30), coordinator of workers, received injury during the demolition yesterday. He was first rushed to Narayanganj Victoria Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The authorities engaged 150 labourers, two tugboats and two trawlers for yesterday's drive. Senior Deputy Director Md Abu Zafar Havalader was also present.

The authorities with logistics at their disposal were unable to remove any of the heavily built retaining walls and foundations of the buildings built illegally on the river.

This creates scopes for the encroachers to come back again with makeshift structures, sources pointed out.

Akhtar Hamid

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around 5:00pm.

"Instead of Mohadevpur, we will take him (Hamid) to Dhaka after a brief exchange of pleasantries with the party leaders and lawyers," said Hamid's daughter Faria Tajin Siddiki.

Talking to The Daily Star over phone Faria, also a lawyer, termed the seditious case and other accusations against Hamid 'farical', which are intended to harass him, a leader of the opposition.

Hamid's lawyers submitted his bail petition on 1 June and the court deferred the date over various reasons including public prosecutor's illness.

"After this bail order, there are no legal means to keep Akhter Hamid in prison," said defence lawyer AZM Rafiqul Alam.

He added Akhtar also got bails in all other three cases - two on charge of cheating and one of abduction.

Under Special Powers Act (SPA) Naogaon police arrested Hamid at his house in Mohadevpur upazila on March 22 on charge of cheating and he was put into two-months' detention.

"The detention against him under the SPA was termed illegal by the high court," said Hamid's lawyer.

On instructions of the home ministry, Ilyas Fakir, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohadevpur Police Station filed the seditious case against Hamid 46 days after his arrest.

Fakir alleged that Hamid predicted the fall of Awami League-led government following the BDR mutiny. The allegation added that Hamid also threatened Fakir of serious consequences.

Opposition protests

FROM PAGE 16
"stolen" their votes in Friday's poll.

Iranian state television broadcast brief footage of the rally.

Grappling with the biggest wave of public anger in three decades of Islamic rule, Iran lashed out at enemy "plots," hauling in foreign ambassadors and rounding up scores of reformists.

The foreign ministry called in Swiss ambassador Livia Leu Agosti, who represents US interests in Iran amid a three-decade-old rupture in relations, to protest against what it called "interfering remarks" by US officials, state television reported.

US President Barack Obama had voiced "deep concerns" about the aftermath of last Friday's election although he added: "It is not productive, given the history of US-Iranian relations, to be seen as meddling."

His spokesman Robert Gibbs insisted: "The president will continue to express those concerns and ensure that we are not meddling."

The Iranian authorities threatened legal action against websites which publish material that "creates tensions" and issued a new warning to the foreign media, already facing tight restrictions on their work.

The media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said a dozen Iranian journalists and bloggers have been arrested and many others have gone into hiding.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said he would consider a partial recount after the opposition held mass protests over what it charges was blatant rigging of the election that gave Ahmadinejad another four-year term.

In defiance of an official ban, Mousavi himself called for marches and a day of mourning on Thursday for protesters slain in the post-election clashes.

And he repeated his demand, for the results of what he branded a "shameful fraud" to be annulled and a new vote called, in a statement on his movement's website.

At least seven people have been killed and many more wounded in clashes, with protests reported not only in Tehran but also other major cities after an election that has exposed deep divisions in the oil-rich nation.

Ahmadinejad remained defiant, saying his landslide victory in Friday's vote showed faith in his government of "honesty and service to the people."

Khamenei, who has the final say on all matters of state, said he was asking the Guardians Council, a 12-member body made up of jurists and clerics, to examine the complaints of irregularities.

The council said it had invited Ahmadinejad's three challengers to set out their grievances on Saturday.

Supporters of

LPG price

FROM PAGE 1
Commission (BERC) Chairman Golam Rahman told The Daily Star last night.

The LPG price drop is the second time in three months. In March the government had reduced the price to Tk 850 from Tk 1,000 in March.

The last caretaker government increased the price of per cylinder LPG to Tk 1,000 from Tk 600 in June 2008.

Sources said LPG sale of the government's Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Limited (RPGCL) dropped significantly with increased price since private companies were selling at Tk 600 to Tk 700 per cylinder.

RPGCL had to waste LPG worth Tk 20 lakh a day due to poor sale and lack of preservation facilities that compelled BPC to submit the recommendation last week, sources added.

The BERC chairman said they had directed the BPC to adopt modern market policy to compete with the private companies. The BPC enjoys only 20 to 25 percent of the LPG market share, he added.

The government has also decided to use tags of price and quantity on cylinders. The BERC has directed BPC to take measures in this regard within three months.

There are allegations that the dealers oftentimes sell LPG cylinders at more than its original price, as there is no price or quantity tag on the cylinders.

Ahmadinejad and Mousavi had staged rival rallies on Tuesday, each calling out hundreds of thousands of people on to the streets of Tehran, state media said.

Foreign media were banned from covering the demonstrations under tough new restrictions aimed at keeping them off the streets, but Iranian newspapers published pictures.

The authorities have warned they will nip in the bud any "velvet revolution" and have rounded up scores of people in Tehran and other cities, including prominent reformists close to former president Mohammad Khatami.