

Move to create mega fund for power

UNB, Dhaka

Power and energy ministry finally made a move yesterday to create a mega fund for development of the country's power-energy sector...

At a meeting, the ministry decided to move for the huge fund under which a gas sector development (GSD) fund will also be created...

The estimation of the whole mega fundraising scheme is yet to be finalised, but the sector needs billions of dollars in investment to meet its demand...

Earlier, he said that the mega fund would be worth Tk 10,000 crore.

About the GSD fund, Energy Secretary Mohammad Mohsin told reporters that the finance ministry has finally given its concurrence for creating the fund.

He mentioned that the GSD fund is going to be formed in line with a pending appeal of Petrobangla with Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) for raising the gas tariffs.

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Last year, the BERC rejected the appeal, attaching some conditions that the appeal could only be considered to raise gas price by 10-15 percent if Petrobangla moved to create a development fund for the sake of energy security.

Another condition tagged by the watchdog body was that the fund must be tax-free and it has to be utilised exclusively for exploration and development works for the gas sector.

Explaining the matter, Mohsin said initially, NBR rejected the Petrobangla-moved proposal for keeping the GSD fund tax-free. But after a negotiation, now finance ministry has given an innovative solution that the tax must be paid. But Petrobangla will get back the payments through a budgetary support.

After the solution, now Petrobangla again moves to BERC to allow it raise the gas prices to create the fund.

He noted that the energy ministry in the current fiscal would try to utilise at least Tk 500 crore from the government's public-private partnership (PPP) fund of Tk 2,500 crore.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina holds a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on the sidelines of the 15th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit at Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt yesterday.

Enrol potential migrant workers to reduce graft by recruiting agencies

JS body asks ministry

RASHIDUL HASAN

The parliamentary standing committee on expatriates' welfare ministry yesterday asked the ministry officials to start registration system and enrol the prospective workers willing to go abroad in a bid to reduce corruption and irregularities of the recruiting agencies.

"People who want to go abroad to manage employment are often cheated by a section recruiting agencies. Therefore, the committee has recommended to start registration system under which prospective workers will be enrolled," Anisul Islam Mahmud, chairman of the committee, told reporters after a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"The manpower recruiting agencies will have to recruit people who are included in the registration and we believe that it will reduce corruption and irregularities of the agencies," he added.

The committee chairman said the registration process has already been started in some upazilas and unions as test cases.

The committee in its meeting asked the expatriate ministry to take steps so that the recruiting agencies cannot exploit people who wish to go to Romania, a newly invented labour market for employment.

"Romania will receive only 8,000 people from the non-European countries, but the manpower recruiting agencies are saying that the country will receive more than 17,000 people from Bangladesh as workers, we

therefore warn all not to be tempted by the recruiting agencies," he added.

The committee also asked the ministry officials to investigate into taking extra money by the agencies from the South Korea-bound Bangladeshi workers.

"The highest amount to go to South Korea may take only Tk one to 1.5 lakh, but the fact is that the recruiting agencies are taking Tk six to seven lakh from the South Korea-bound workers," Anisul Islam said, adding that, "We have asked the ministry officials to investigate the matter."

He said the committee would send letters to the prime minister and the Election Commission requesting them to take steps to enrol non-resident Bangladeshis as voters.

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Experts for creating S Asian climate change network

BSS, Dhaka

Experts yesterday recommended creating a South Asian network to combat challenges of climatic change in the region collectively.

They called upon the governments, universities and research institutions in Saarc countries to start sharing research findings on climate change and work together to face natural disasters.

They also underscored the need for stimulating multidisciplinary research on the burning issues and identifying effective mitigation and adaptation options, including carbon sequestration in different ecosystems.

The experts made the suggestions while talking to BSS after attending a weeklong training programme on 'Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction' that concluded at Dhaka University. A total of 31 resource persons focused on different aspects of climate change in South Asia in the sessions.

"Climate Change Network is a must to combat challenges of climatic changes, related science, data, tools and methodologies in South Asia," said disaster expert Dr Binod Shakia of the Saarc Disaster

Management Centre in New Delhi.

Dr Binod Shakia said, "The serious problems of soil degradation and desertification are likely to be exacerbated by climate change through accelerated erosion, fertility depletion, salinisation and acidification and that subsistence agriculture, characterised by low productivity and extractive farming, is extremely vulnerable to such climatic change."

He said climate change would increase temperature, decrease availability of fresh water, contribute to the rise in sea level, glacial melting in the Himalayas, increased frequency and intensity of extreme events and shifting of cropping zones in South Asia affecting agriculture and food sector, economy, societies and environment.

The newly appointed four Appellate Division judges took the oath of their offices yesterday.

Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin administered the swearing-in at the judges' lounge of the Supreme Court.

The four judges are Justice Bijan Kumar Das, Justice ABM Khairul Haque, Justice Md Muzammel Hossain and Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha.

Judges of both the Appellate Division and the High Court Division of the Supreme Court were present at the oath-taking ceremony.

Earlier on July 14, President Zillur Rahman appointed the four senior-most judges of the High Court Division as judges of the Appellate Division, raising the number of the apex court judges to eleven.

The president made the appointment as per Article 95 (1) of the constitution.

Earlier on July 9, the president increased the number of posts of judges in the Appellate Division of the SC from 7 to 11 as per Article 94 (2) of the constitution.

Ethical, scientific implementation of clinical research stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Enhancing implementation of clinical research in more ethical and scientific way is very important to address the public health needs in the country, speakers said at a seminar yesterday.

Family Health International (FHI) and ICDDR, B jointly organised the seminar on 'Ethical and scientific implementation of clinical research in Bangladesh' at Sankhata auditorium at the ICDDR, B.

Some 110 researchers and physicians from ICDDR, B and different hospitals participated at the seminar chaired by Alejandro Cravioto, executive director of the ICDDR, B.

They discussed on clinical research opportunities and challenges in Bangladesh, research ethics and good clinical practices, quality of clinical research and informed consent and monitoring of clinical trials.

Prof MR Khan attended the seminar as the chief guest while Dr Stephen Luby, Dr M A Salam, Dr K Zaman, Janet Robinson, director (research) of FHI Asia Pacific Region, Dr M Abul Kalam Azad and Misti McDowell, country director of FHI Bangladesh, spoke.

Efforts on to restore 1972 constitution

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is trying wholeheartedly to restore the constitution of 1972, and for that it is waiting for a positive verdict of the appellate division of the Supreme Court (SC) on the High Court's (HC) verdict on the fifth amendment to the constitution, said Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed at a seminar yesterday.

"The HC verdict declaring the fifth amendment illegal is now pending in the appellate division as BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delware Hossain appealed against the verdict. If the SC verdict goes in our favour then the constitution of 1972 would be restored automatically," he added.

The seminar titled 'Vested property and endowed property: Constitutional and

human rights of the minority people' was organised by Samprity Mancha and Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking as chief guest Shafique said, "There might be some difficulties to restore the constitution of 1972 through parliament and as such we are looking for the SC verdict."

He said the government is firmly committed to try the war criminals in a way which would be accepted internationally.

The minister said the minority people would not have been deprived of their land if the main principles of the liberation war like secularism were not removed from the constitution.

He alleged that the government lawyers do not help the victims properly and for that the grabbers get court's ver-

dict in favour of them. Rabindranath Tribedi, secretary general of the Congress, presented a keynote paper at the seminar.

He suggested the government to form a commission to recover the vested and endowed property.

Eminent economist Prof Abul Barakat said around 50 lakh minority people fell victim to property grabbers in the name of vested or enemy property.

He suggested the government to amend the 'Vested Property (Restoration) Act' after consulting with the victims, researchers, law specialists and human rights organisations.

Hasanul Haque Inu MP, Columnist Syed Abul Maksud and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam also spoke at the seminar.

NEWS IN BRIEF

BSF killing protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Nirjatan Protirodh Society staged a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting the killing of Bangladeshi citizens along Bangladesh-India borders by the Border Security Force (BSF) of India, says a press release.

On the occasion, the Society formed a human chain. Society President Farida Moni, Executive Director Rezaul Kabir Reza, Adviser Journalist Abu Saleh Akon, Vice Chairman Nilufar Nahar, Gazi Md Milon and Riazul Islam were present at the programme.

PDB snaps 3,628 connections

BSS, Dhaka

The Power Development Board (PDB) snapped 3,628 illegal electricity connections during the last 15 days in its six distribution zones.

The special task force of the state-run power distributing agency launched a 15-day illegal line snapping programme across the country from July 1, PDB officials told BSS yesterday.

They said 1,592 lines have been snapped in Chittagong zone, 874 lines in Mymensingh zone, 320 lines in Rangpur zone, 366 lines in Rajshahi zone and 235 lines in Comilla zone.

Rape of housewife condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad expressed concern over the incident of gang rape of a housewife in Nilphamari.

The victim, wife of an army man, was raped by eight youths in Sayedpur municipality area on Tuesday night. Later, she was admitted to hospital in a critical condition.

In a statement yesterday, Mahila Parishad strongly condemned the incident and demanded immediate arrest of and punishment to the persons responsible and security for her and her family.

Discussion on HIV/AIDS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Population Council Bangladesh organised a conference with a view to sharing its activities and to discuss the role of the media to prevent spreading of HIV/AIDS and other population related issues at its office in the city yesterday.

Dr Ubaidur Rob, country director of Population Council Bangladesh, chaired the conference, while Daine Rubino, media and communication specialists, Office of Public Information, Population Council, New York, was the special guest.

Presentations were made at the conference on different on-going projects of the council that include Voucher Scheme to Improve Maternal Health, Building and Strengthening the Technical and Institutional Capacities of Government, NGOs and Implementing partners, HIV Prevention Strategies for Vulnerable Young People in Bangladesh and Pay-for-Performance (P4P) Scheme to Improve Maternal Health Services in Bangladesh.

BCU leader's death condoled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Dhaka Committee President Abdul Kader and General Secretary Ahsan Habib Labu expressed shock at the death of Suman Mahmud, assistant general secretary of Dhaka city unit of Chhatra Union, says a press release.

They also conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

In separate statement, CPB Mirpur unit President Siddique Ahmed, and General Secretary Sajedul Haq Rubel also expressed shock at this death.

64 schools

FROM PAGE 16

Shaikupa upazila has 44 secondary schools and 13 of them don't have headmasters.

In Harinakundo upazila, four of 25 schools, in Moheshpur upazila 15 of 70 schools, in Kotchandpur upazila two of 22 schools, and in Kaliganj upazila nine of 40 schools have the posts of headmaster vacant.

School insiders say teachers are reluctant to abide by the rules and regulations in absence of the headmasters and are getting involved in different conflicts as assistant headmasters are working as acting headmasters.

Academic as well as administrative activities in these schools are severely being hampered. As the assistant headmasters are performing additional duties, five or six classes scheduled for each of them are daily being skipped.

Students are being deprived of these classes as other teachers are reluctant to take those, said Abdus Samad, acting

headmaster of Roghunathpur Secondary School in Kaliganj.

Isahaq, senior teacher of Naldanga Bhusan Pilot Secondary School, said the situation arises as there are no hard and fast rules in the government.

He said those who are senior teachers do not have minimum two second divisions as they passed the degrees in late 1970s. During that time it was very 'difficult' to obtain first and second divisions, he claims.

Against this backdrop, the government should consider the appointment system in non-government institutions, he added.

Contacted, District Education Officer Atahar Rahman said most of the institutions have no managing committees to take steps to solve the problems.

Besides, the acting headmasters are reluctant to run the process of appointing headmasters as they want to remain in the posts, he added.

WEATHER TODAY

Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at most places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely to occur at places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions, Met Office said.

It said the day temperature may rise 1-2 degrees Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:48pm today and rises at 6:21am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sayedpur and lowest 24.8 degrees Celsius at Chittagong and Cox's Bazar.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 5 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.