

'Govt coal policy should not opt for export'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's coal policy should not opt for coal export and open-mining method, said leaders of National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Ports yesterday.

The leaders, at a press conference, said the proposed coal policy has recommended exporting coal if necessary and at the same time it has proposed extraction of coal according to the country's internal demand.

This statement is contradictory, says a press release. Keeping the possibility of export in the coal policy is unacceptable, they said.

Engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah read out the keynote speech at the press conference held at Mukti Bhaban at Paltan in the city.

He said the coal policy should ensure peoples' one hundred percent ownership of the national resources.

Coal export should be banned, as the resource is limited and not renewable, he said.

The leaders also demanded of the government to build an institution named 'Coal Bangla' to explore and extract coal like the Petrobangla.

Member Secretary of the committee Prof Anu Muhammad, Justice Ghulam Rabbani and columnist and researcher Syed Abul Maksud, among others, were present at the press conference.



BNP holds a protest rally in front of its party office at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

NAT'L SERVICES PROGRAMME 18,283 youths get job

BSS, Dhaka

As many as 18,283 jobless youths were employed temporarily in three districts under the National Services Programme, initiated by the present government, in the last fiscal year.

This was informed at the fourth meeting of the central coordination committee on the National Services Programme yesterday.

The meeting, chaired by State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarkar, reviewed the progress on training and employment of three districts of Kurigram, Barguna and Gopalganj where the programme was introduced as the piloting areas.

The meeting was also apprised that in the first batch, 9,712 youths got job in Kurigram district, 3,967 in Barguna district and 4,614 got job in Gopalganj district. "They were provided job after imparting a three-month training in 10 scheduled modules," an official release says.

In the second batch, the release said the training is being provided to 17,727 unemployed youths of the three districts.

The meeting was informed that initiatives have been undertaken for sending the trained youths abroad with job with the cooperation of the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment and signing of memorandum of understanding (MoU) with BGMEA and BKMEA for providing job to them in non-government organisations.

Youth and Sports Secretary Mahbub Ahmed and Director General of Youth Development Directorate Azizur Rahman were present at the meeting.

Paperboard mill gutted in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A huge quantity of paperboard, waste papers and machineries were gutted in a fire at a paperboard factory in the port city yesterday.

Sources said the fire broke out at 'Chistia Paper Board Mill' opposite to Bangladesh Television Chittagong Centre in the Foy's Lake area around 5:00am.

The blaze spread fast engulfing the seven thousand square-feet tin-shed factory.

Huge quantity of readymade paperboard and waste papers used as raw materials were reduced to ashes while some machinery was also damaged in the fire.

Two workers, who were sleeping inside the factory, were saved as they managed to come out quickly.

Two fire fighting units from Agrabad Fire Station went to the spot and managed to douse the blaze after two hours. Fire service officials suspected that the fire originated from an electric short circuit and the loss was estimated at Tk 5 lakh.

Factory owner Shoeb Ahmad, however, claimed the loss could reach up to Tk 40 lakh.

Govt urges EU to help protect eight export items

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA AND SOHEL PARVEZ

Bangladesh has applied for exclusion or capping on export of eight major products exported by Pakistan to EU so that the country's export to Eurozone remains unhurt if the EU awards the proposed GSP status to Pakistan for gaining duty-free access, said a senior official of Ministry of Commerce yesterday.

The Ministry of Commerce (MoC) has submitted a letter to the European Union office in Dhaka on November 4, asking them either to exclude eight major apparel items from the list of proposed GSP plus status to Pakistan because Bangladesh's export of those eight items will be hampered due to such move, the official said.

Being a member of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Bangladesh enjoys the duty-free facility in EU in rules of origin (RoO) under the EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP).

But, Pakistan, even being a member of the developing countries, has been demanding GSP plus status at least for a few years in EU because the country was damaged by a devastating flood in middle of the year.

"Firstly, we have demanded exclusion of eight products from the list of proposed GSP plus status to Pakistan and if the exclusion is not possible to set a capping or ceiling in export volume of those products so that Pakistan pay duty after a certain quantity," the commerce ministry official said requesting anonymity.

The EU official is scheduled to place the Pakistan's plea for achieving the GSP plus status at

least for two years (2011-2012) to the World Trade Organisation's general council meeting to be held in Geneva November 30, the official said. In the same meeting Bangladesh's plea is also scheduled to be considered, the official said.

The EU has recently withdrawn the GSP plus status from Sri Lanka on the ground of human rights record. Bangladesh's opportunity in export of apparel items has widened to EU for the Eurozone's for relaxing the RoO regulations, which will be effective from January 1 next year.

The biggest change is that single-stage processing (manufactured from fabric) will be allowed in many cases, instead of only two-stage processing (manufactured from yarn).

It means most apparel items from all LDCs will get duty-free access, no matter where the raw materials originate.

While speaking on export opportunities for new RoO regulations, Saiful Islam, president of Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI) said any possible move to provide Pakistan duty free access to EU would hurt competitiveness of Bangladesh products in Europe.

Pakistan has sought duty free access to Europe for 64 items including eight products that are exported from Bangladesh to Eurozone, he said at a programme at The Westin Dhaka, where visiting German State Secretary of Federal Office Martin Biesel delivered speech.

Islam said Bangladesh products, including main export earners and biggest job provider ready made garments and knitwear, leather goods and footwear

get duty free benefits from Europe as an LDC.

Of the products, Pakistan has a comparative advantage in clothing and textiles due to its advantage in growing cotton.

"It took us years to get market access and develop business relations. At this time, if Pakistan gets the opportunity, our competitive advantage will erode," said Islam, also managing director of Picard Bangladesh, a leading leather goods exporter.

Islam urged the EU states to consider Bangladesh's plea in awarding the GSP plus status to Pakistan to help the country maintain growth, create jobs and cut poverty.

In a statement Algirdas Semeta, the European Commissioner for Taxation, Customs, Anti-Fraud and Audit said: "By updating the EU's rules of origin, we will help to ensure that developing countries really benefit from the trade preferences on offer to them, and that the world's poorest don't lose out due to unnecessary complexities in our systems."

"Bangladesh's exporters have been really looking forward to this change," said Andrew Barnard, the head of the political, trade & information section of the EU Delegation to Bangladesh. "Under the EU's 'Everything But Arms' scheme, Bangladesh already enjoys quota-free duty-free access to the EU market for most of its exports. But from January it will be easier for them to make much greater use of imported inputs."

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Constitution reprint likely next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would reprint the constitution of the country next month, restoring the four fundamental state principles of the original constitution, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said yesterday.

The four principles are -- secularism, Bangalee nationalism, socialism and democracy.

The Ministry of Law is now scrutinising the constitution to reprint it in light of the Supreme Court and High Court judgements on the fifth amendment to the constitution, said the law minister at a press briefing in his secretariat office.

The HC had cancelled the fifth amendment and the SC upheld the verdict with some modifications and observations, said the minister.

He said the draft of the constitution would be sent to Bangladesh Government (BG) Press for printing in the first week of December.

Late president Ziaur Rahman had made the fifth amendment to the constitution replacing the first three principles "secularism, Bangalee nationalism and socialism" with "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah, Bangladeshi nationalism and socialism in terms of economic and social justice".

He had only kept "democracy" as one of the fundamental principles as it was in the original constitution.

Besides the matter of reprinting the constitution, Shafique Ahmed also told the reporters that he would talk to Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haq about setting up separate secretariat for the judiciary to make the transfer, promotion and appointment of lower court judges easier.

Replying to a query, the law minister said the Speedy Trial Tribunal Act requires amendment to extend the trial period of the BDR carnage case, as it may take more time to completed than within 135 days of the charge framing.

MIGRANT WORKERS' SUFFERINGS JS body asks Biman officials to appear before it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday invited Biman Bangladesh, immigration department, Bangladesh Bank and other organisations concerned to appear before the committee's next meeting to reduce harassment and misery of the country's migrant workers and control hundi business.

The parliamentary standing committee on the expatriate welfare and overseas employment ministry also asked the ministry officials to verify passports issued by Bangladesh Embassy in Saudi Arabia so that Rohingya or people from other countries cannot take Bangladeshi passports.

"Migrant workers who are sending billions of foreign exchange every year suffer harassment and misery while coming home and going abroad from airports. We have invited Bangladesh Bank, Baira and other agencies concerned to discuss how to reduce their sufferings," Anisul Islam Mahmud told

reporters after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Mahmud, chief of the parliamentary watchdog, said they will also discuss on how to reduce migration costs of workers and control hundi trade in the meeting.

He told the meeting that migration costs in our country is very high compared to neighbouring countries. The committee asked the ministry and Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) to work on it.

The meeting is likely to be held in the next month, parliament secretariat sources said.

The committee also asked to ministry to continue efforts so that Malaysia announces Bangladesh as its source country regarding import of workers.

The meeting was informed that about 100 to 200 illegal Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia are getting legal permission everyday to work there.



Chief of Army Staff General Md Abdul Mubeen delivering speech at commanders conference of armoured corps held at conference room of Armoured Corps Centre and School (ACC&S) complex at Bogra Cantonment yesterday.

Army chief visits armour fair

BSS, Dhaka

An Armour Fair has been arranged at Armoured Corps Centre and School (ACC&S) at Bogra Cantonment on the occasion of the 4th Armoured Corps Reunion, National Standard Award and Annual Commanding Officers Conference-2010.

Chief of Army Staff General Md Abdul Mubeen visited the fair yesterday as the chief guest. During the visit, he went round different stalls at the fair, an ISPR press release said.

Earlier, the Army Chief visited the Quarter Guard of ACC&S. Besides, Gen Mubeen delivered his speech at the conference of Armoured Corps at Conference room.

General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 11 Infantry Division and Bogra area commander, colonel commander, GOC ARTDOC and high military officials were present at that time, the release added.

Anti-corruption debate on Dec 9

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Shadow Parliamentary Debate competition will be held on December 9 marking the International Anti Corruption Day.

Graduate and post-graduate students have been invited to participate in the debate competition on the topic of "Impact of Corruption on the Environment," said a press release.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) jointly are arranging the event, said a press release. Interested debaters have been requested to submit applications to the TIB office in Dhaka by November 30.

Two criminals held after shoot out with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two alleged criminals received bullet injuries in a shoot out with Rapid Action Battalion-2 (Rab-2) personnel in front of Agargaon Taltola Government Colony under Kafrul Police Station in the city on Tuesday night.

The injured Amid Khan alias Tito, 32, and Md Abdur Razzak, 34, were admitted to National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation (NITOR).

Rab-2 Assistant Superintendent of Police Shafiq Farwar told The Daily Star that Rab-2 set up a temporary check post at Taltola area on 11:00pm Tuesday.

When Rab-2 personnel motioned a motorcycle with two people to stop at around 11:30pm, the riders ignored the signal. The riders opened fire when Rab personnel gave chase, forcing them to retaliate, he said.

During the exchange of several rounds of bullets, both men were hit on the leg. The two men were arrested with two pipe guns and two rounds of bullets, said Shafiqul.

DHAKA TODAY

Award giving ceremony
Social Development Voluntary Association and Prativa Bikash will hold an award giving ceremony, venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Time: 5:00pm.

Exhibition
Transparency International Bangladesh will arrange an exhibition. Venue: TSC, Dhaka University, Time: 6:30pm.

Dialogue
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) will arrange an international dialogue. Venue: Sheraton Hotel, Time: 9:00am.

Exposition
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA) will arrange an exposition on apparel and textile entitled 'Batexpo'. Venue: Bangladesh International Conference Centre, Time: 11:00am.

Seminar
Public Health Foundation of Bangladesh will organise a seminar. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 11:00am.

Roundtable
Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha will organise a roundtable. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 3:00pm.

Discussion
All-Party Parliamentary Group will arrange a discussion. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 10:30am.

Rally
Karmojibi Nari will arrange a rally. Venue: Mukhtangan, Time: 3:00pm.

Meeting
Youth in Action on Climate will arrange a meeting. Venue: Senate building, Dhaka University, Time: 10:30pm.

55,000 pry students to get scholarship

BSS, Dhaka

Some 55,000 students would get scholarship this year according to the merit based on the results of the ongoing primary terminal examinations.

Primary and Mass Education Minister M Afzarul Amin yesterday said this while visiting different centres of Primary Education Terminal and Ebtedayee Examinations in the city.

The minister visited Rampura Ekramunnessa High School, Satarkul High School, Siraj Mia Memorial and Beraid Muslim High School.

After the visit, the minister told the guardians that the examination papers would be evaluated on the basis of merit.

This competitive examination will help improve the quality of education across the country, he said.

The minister expressed his satisfaction over the high attendance rate of the examinees as well as proper management and environment of the examination centres.

The examination began across the country on Tuesday and a total of 24,88,108 students are appearing this year. Among them, 21,57,015 are general students and 3,31,133 are madrasa students.

The examinations will continue until November 29 and the results of the exams will be published in December while the students will be provided with primary pass certificates the same month.

Prof Bari made Ctg veterinary university VC

A CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Prof AS Mahfuzul Bari of Bangladesh Agricultural University has been appointed as the vice chancellor of the Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU) yesterday.

President Zillur Rahman, the chancellor of CVASU, appointed him as the VC of the university, said CVASU Treasurer Chowdhury Mohammad Alauddin.

Alauddin said the newly appointed VC was scheduled to join his office today.

Before the appointment Prof Bari was the director of the BAU veterinary clinic.

Professor Bari born in Tangail in 1957 and passed SSC in 1972, HSC in 1974.

He joined the BAU as lecturer on October 17 in 1982.