

High on energy

FROM PAGE 1
about augmenting the declining gas supply, which has served as the country's lifeline of energy. His speech reflected the fact that the government has not made much progress in the gas sector from last year. He reiterated his last year's vision about strengthening Bapex and its new drilling programmes.

In fact, stating that gas reserve was not unlimited, the finance minister concluded that it might not be possible to give household gas connections in all areas. Instead, he said the government has taken initiatives to reduce the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders for domestic users.

He repeated his last year's vision about importing 500 million cubic feet per day Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from Qatar by December 2012 to keep the existing gas consumers unaffected. The move to import LNG is dependent on setting up an LNG terminal in the Bay of Bengal and a 100-km pipeline. Till now, the authorities could not complete the tender process for the terminal and has not floated the tender for installing the pipeline. Since coming to power,

the government added 1,403 MW electricity till March. Based on this success, it has worked out a plan to produce an additional 7,800 MW power by 2013. Presently, Muhith said, 29 power plants are under construction, and tender for another 31 projects are underway.

Keeping natural gas out of this action plan, the new power plants are all based on coal, diesel, furnace oil or dual fuel and renewable energy. A pre-feasibility study has been carried out for installation of coal-fired plants, and accordingly the government aims at installing such plants after 2014.

Besides, the government will produce 700 to 800 MW additional power by enhancing the capacity of old plants. The minister noted that the use of alternative sources of energy will raise the cost of power generation, which would be met through a combination of subsidy and price adjustment. In other words, power tariff would increase further.

He said steps have been taken to set up 10 to 15 MW solar-based power stations at four different places. A 100-MW offshore windmill power plant will be installed

at Anwara in Chittagong, 40 solar-based irrigation pumps will be set up and more will be installed gradually. Solar bulbs will be installed in some streets of the capital, and this programme will be rolled out to all city corporations.

On energy conservation, the government estimates it has been able to save 250 MW power by distributing 10.5 million compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulbs free of cost in the last fiscal year. And it has taken steps to replace 28 million power guzzling incandescent bulbs with CFL to save energy. As part of this, it encourages bulb factories to produce CFL bulbs gradually.

In addition, the government is set to start a special programme -- energy star labelling programme -- to encourage people to save energy.

Finally, the minister talked about updating the National Energy Policy and preparing the final draft of the Coal Policy. Drafting the Coal Policy has now become a five-year old practice.

In addition, the government has framed the Mines and Mineral Resources Rules (Amendment) 2010.

Solid food

FROM PAGE 1
got nearly three more years of its tenure. They (government) should enhance efficiency in water resource management, providing agriculture extension services and dealing with grain market so that domestic production accelerates."

Former food secretary Abdul Latif Mandal said, "I'm not dead against food import but we should give preference to domestic procurement."

A food market analyst, Latif further said farmers are not gaining much from the government procurement of a small quantity of food in the current fiscal year as "the procurement drives were too late and not targeted to farmers, rather those were lucrative to the middlemen."

He noted that since population growth is gradually outpacing

food production growth, the government is not going to attain self-sufficiency in food by 2013. "But all efforts should be directed towards that goal. Import is not a tangible option."

The finance minister also mentioned that ensuring food security has become a challenging job due to the huge pressure of population and climate change. He stressed changing the food habit.

Time to tighten belt further

FROM PAGE 20
added his small savings and invested all in the share market. And now everything is gone.

Abidur, a private firm employee and the breadwinner of a family of four, have been following the budget speech for the last three years.

He was thinking about the previous years when the government failed to meet his expectation. He is now keen to know what the government would do this time for the millions of middle-class people.

The traffic jam was terrible but he reached home before the budget speech started. He set out way ahead of time fearing the jam.

He already knows from newspapers that this is going to be the biggest budget ever, of Tk 1,63,589 crore, nearly 28 percent bigger than the last one.

Abidur was happy knowing that the minister categorically said he would not keep any provision for "whitening" black money. He was hoping Finance Minister AMA Muhith will do some-

thing for small investors like him who lost everything because of the so-called gamblers.

But he heard nothing. His English-medium school goer son had gone to coaching and their younger daughter was sleeping.

Shahana, his wife, brought him a cup of tea and joined him in front of the telly. She asked whether he heard any initiatives to make investors like him happy.

"Not yet," Abidur made a brief reply before paying his full attention to the TV set again.

"But we hardly see changes," she said.

The minister increases tax for registration of commercial buildings and their space in manifolds, which does not help them.

Abidur quit smoking. So, increasing supplementary duty on cigarettes and tobacco does not matter to them.

They found the minister wants to make everything environment friendly. The words "environment friendly" and "climate change" are very popular these days and everyone

uses them in TV programmes, said Shahana.

The minister read out the long budget speech for hours. Only once he mentioned his logic behind the bigger budget. "The population is growing. So the budget has to be bigger. It will be bigger next year," the minister said.

The budget speech was over.

Shahana said, "In a way this is good... Now you will buy less chocolate for our daughter and her teeth will be better."

Abidur said, "That's not my concern. I am thinking how I'll afford English medium education for my son as prices of books are going to increase."

They then started counting all the items that the government imposed duty on or increased duty.

Supplementary duty increased on energy drinks, fabrics, ready-made garments, fresh or chilled fish, babassu oil, beauty or make-up preparations for skincare, sunscreen, manicure and pedicure preparations, perfumes and toiletries, polishes, creams and

similar preparations for footwear or leather, toilet paper, sanitary towels and tampons, napkins and nappies and similar sanitary articles, domestic fans, four-stroke motorcycles, sunglasses, goggles, furniture, confectionery sugar, and of course chocolate.

That means, prices of those are going to increase, Shahana said thinking she has to stop going to beauty parlours, might have to stop buying lotions and perfumes.

Abidur was secretly hoping to buy a new motorbike after making some money from the share market.

"Better you let go of the idea of buying a motorbike," said Shahana, who can see through her husband.

"Don't worry. I am not going to buy a bike.... Now I won't have any money left," Abidur said.

"You can buy a bike saving money from the raw materials for making LP gas cylinders, LED lamps, rechargeable LED lamps, and solar charged lamps," Shahana teased her husband as duty on those items have been reduced.

No real cheer for climate

FROM PAGE 1
In the proposed budget, no programme was announced to stop discharging excreta into the city's rivers and lakes.

The minister, however, said the government will reduce dependency on ground water and supply more surface water to city dwellers. That implies the government is going for the usual practice of treating industrial waste and excreta-mixed surface water for the city dwellers.

He talked about reducing air pollution but did not mention any initiative or allocate any fund for the

purpose.

Some initiatives, he declared yesterday, like reducing duty and tax on the chemicals used in effluent treatment plant (ETP), making mandatory of using concrete construction materials and concrete mix in public construction and banning exports of bricks are undoubtedly praise worthy.

After taking office, the government took up a huge afforestation programme, a mega river dredging project of Tk 50,000 crore and construction work of the Ganges barrage demanded by environmentalists for a long

time, Muhith said yesterday. Those projects will also continue.

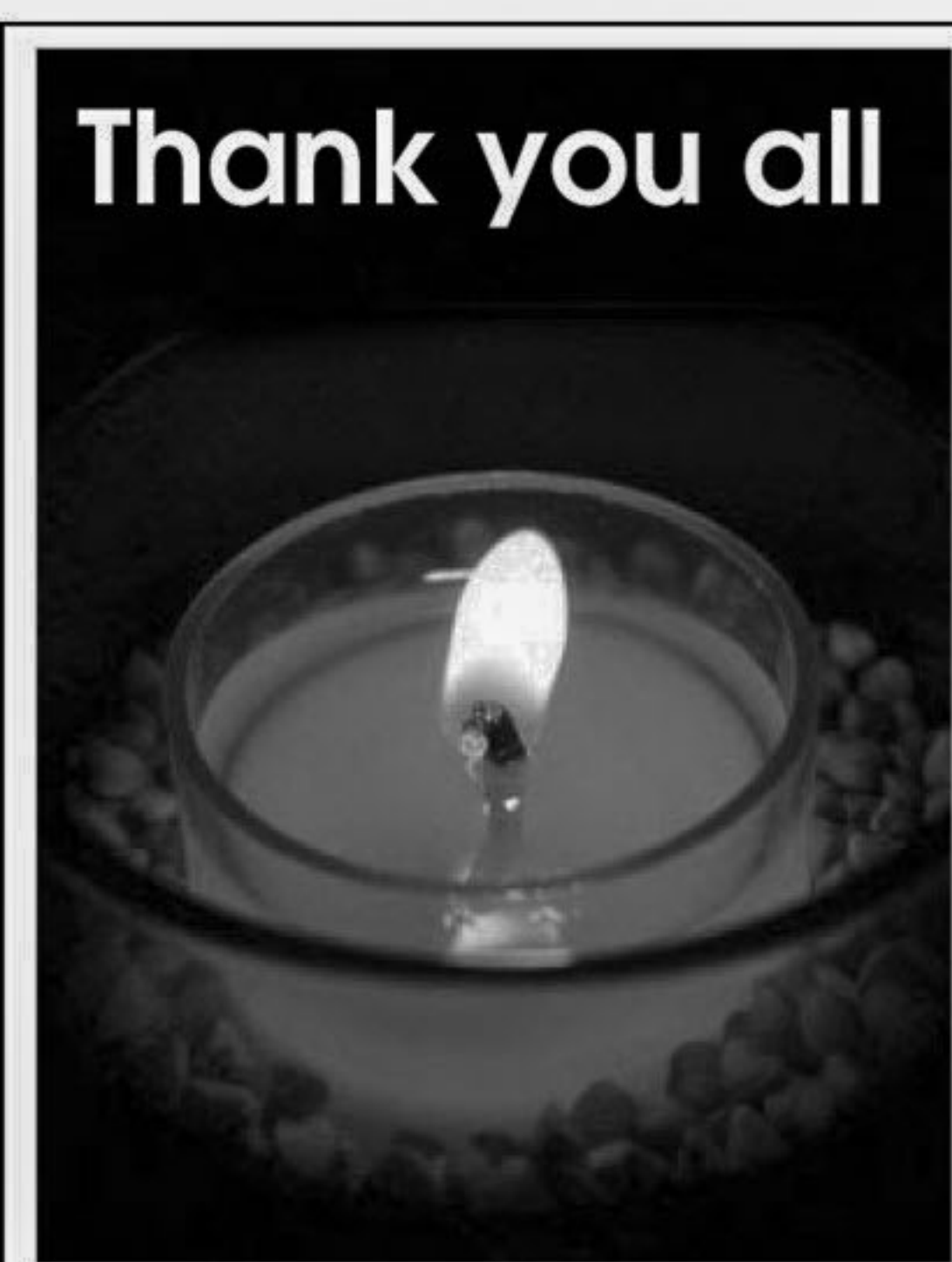
The government will enact Solid Waste Management Rules, 2011, and the Hazardous Waste and Ship Breaking Waste Management Rules, 2011, and amend Bangladesh Environment Preservation (Amendment) Act, 2010 and Bangladesh Environment Court Act.

Total Tk 1,400 crore was allocated for Climate Change Trust Fund in last two budgets. Of the amount, Tk 719.61 crore has so far been utilised for 60 projects.

For FY 2011-12, Tk 700 crore has been allocated for the fund, the minister said.

With the climate change fund, the government has set a target of making block gardens in 16,088 hectares of land and strip forests covering 3,530 kilometres of land. It also aims to distribute 34.33 lakh plants.

But the protection of the country's endangered wildlife and threatened biodiversity remains ignored in the proposed budget which only talks about amending the controversial Wildlife Protection Act, 2010.



Thank you all

We'd like to express our gratitude to the following organizations and persons for their help & support after the tragic death of our director Late Palaniappan Murugappa Chettiar on 23rd May, 2011 in a car accident. We thank you so much for your help & greatly appreciate the assistance you have provided us. Your effort is truly appreciated....

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Reporting Arrangement

The position reports to the designated National Staff and/or National Staff

Selection Criteria

Specific criteria include

- a bachelor's degree or equivalent professional and/or academic qualifications
- suitability to undertake the responsibilities mentioned above at the required level
- at least 5 years of relevant experience; related experience in international agencies will be preferred
- good writing and speaking skills in English language are essential

proven ability to undertake background research and analysis on difficult but well-defined tasks, collect and organized required data and information, apply appropriate computer skills in analyzing and developing the data, and prepare notes, papers and sections of reports

good analytical thinking with ability to make simple causal link (A causes B), pro-and-con lists and analyses to reach a decision; and sets priorities for tasks in order of importance

ability to establish and maintain productive contacts with appropriate officials of host government, donor agencies and executing agencies; good inter-personal and communication skills are desirable

ability to work with individuals from different cultural/national backgrounds

good computer skills with sound knowledge of common word-processing, spreadsheets and graphics software used in ADB

familiarity with local financial institutions and languages

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Reporting Arrangement

The position reports to the designated International Staff and/or National Staff

Selection Criteria

Specific criteria include

- bachelor's degree
- suitability to undertake the responsibilities mentioned above at the required level
- at least 5 years of relevant experience and a sound understanding of procedures and practices related to project administration; related experience in international agencies will be preferred
- good writing and speaking skills in English language are essential
- proven ability to undertake background research and analysis on difficult but well-defined tasks, collect and organize required data and information, apply appropriate computer skills in analyzing and developing the data, and prepare notes, papers and sections of reports
- good analytical thinking with ability to make simple causal links (A causes B), pro-and-con lists and analyses to reach a decision; sets priorities for tasks in order of importance
- ability to establish and maintain productive contacts with appropriate government officials of host government, donor agencies and executing agencies
- good interpersonal and communication skills and ability to work with individuals from different cultural/national backgrounds
- good computer skills with sound knowledge of common word-processing, spreadsheets and graphics software and database management
- familiarity with local languages and institutions

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