

NUCLEAR POWER PLANT Deal on spent fuel management drafted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Russia have approved the draft agreement on spent fuel management for the Rooppur nuclear power plant.

On March 15, a Russian delegation comprising Nikolay Spassky, deputy CEO of State Atomic Energy Corporation ROSATOM and Alexey Ferapontov, deputy head of the Federal Environmental, Industrial and Nuclear Supervision Service of Russia (Rostekhnadzor) and their Bangladesh counterpart initialled the draft while the Russian delegation was on a two-day visit to Dhaka.

The delegation discussed various issues related to the construction of the power plant with their Bangladesh counterpart and both the sides agreed to prepare the final documents for formal signing at the earliest, said a press release.

Alexander Ignatov, Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh, also joined the sessions.

Both the sides reached a consensus following a detailed negotiation during the discussion, especially on the preparation of the intergovernmental agreement on spent fuel management for the Rooppur NPP.

The other issues discussed were schedule of events related to completion of the preparatory phase contracts and the beginning of the main phase of the construction of the power plant.

Both the sides came to a general understanding that the key task in the upcoming period will be to ensure the "first concrete" pouring at the power unit 1 of the Rooppur NPP within the stipulated time frame.

They also formed a special working group in order to ensure current cooperation involving regulators from both the countries -- Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) and ASE group of companies.

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WHY DID THE BIKERS CROSS THE ROAD?

In a display of utter disregard to the safety of other road users, two bikers help each other topple the median fencing on a road near the New Market in the capital's Azimpur area recently. In recent times, roads in the country have been plagued by violation of traffic rules including jaywalking.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Housing scheme for Dhaka city poor a must

Urban planners tell conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urban planners yesterday underlined the need for a planned housing scheme for Dhaka city's low-income people and slum dwellers.

Without including these people in the national housing policy, the government cannot build a developed city, they observed while discussing at a national conference.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) organised the programme titled "Making an inclusive city: securing the right to shelter and livelihood" at Brac Centre Inn in the capital.

Architect and urban planner Salma A Shafi said, "The government must ensure housing facilities for 40 percent low-income people in the city."

It needs to settle the slum dwellers through the planned housing projects, Salma said.

Architect Mubasshar Hussain alleged that the Bhashantek rehabilitation housing project undertaken by the government for the low-income group got mired in irregularities, mismanagement and corruption.

"I designed and drew the Bhashantek rehabilitation housing project. But concerned minister and officials' illegal intervention made this project fail," he said.

Mentioning severe irregularities in the allocation of the government land, Mubasshar also demanded that the government should allocate its land among the slum dwellers and low-income people.

Nogor Doridro Bostibashi Unnyon Sangstha General

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A properly-functioning judiciary can reduce corruption, crime

Chief Justice SK Sinha tells programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corruption and crimes will be significantly reduced, if the judiciary can exercise its power properly as per the constitution and laws, said Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha yesterday.

The chief justice was addressing the inaugural ceremony of online application registration system of Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC) in the seminar hall of Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) in the capital.

Ensuring justice for each crime is the major prerequisite to maintain law and order, he said, "If any criminal escapes trial, they may commit crimes again."

Besides, those, who are deprived of justice, can commit crimes affecting the law and order, he said.

About the relations between the judiciary and the executive, Sinha said the perception -- judiciary a rival of the administration -- is completely wrong.

"The judiciary has never been a rival of the administration and government."

The absence of good relations between the judiciary and the executive affects the government, Sinha viewed.

In some cases, the government is given wrong information about the judiciary, he said.

Sinha said, as the chief justice, he hopes that the government and administration would realise the present situation prevailing between the government and the judiciary.

"Come forward so that no more misunderstanding will arise in the future," he said.

It is usual that a political government will do activities politically, he said.

But the boundary of functions for both a political government and the judiciary are clearly marked, he said, adding that the judiciary will interfere whenever a political government's activities will be unconstitutional.

About backlog of cases, he said

around 3 million ones are pending in courts across the country.

Delay in promotion, posting and transfer of district judges and other judicial officers are among the major reasons for such backlog, said the chief justice.

Over 307 posts ranging from judicial magistrate to district judges are lying vacant, he said.

BJSC Chairman Justice Hasan Foez Siddique chaired the programme, which was addressed, among others, by Appellate Division's Justice Abdul Wahhab Miah, JATI Director General Justice Khondker Musa Khaled, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, BJSC Secretary Paresh Chandra Sharma and UNDP Country Director Sudipto Mukerjee.

Meanwhile, following the inauguration of the registration system, candidates for the posts of assistant judge will be able to file application and see the exam results online.

Rising militancy pretext for defence pact

Claim BNP leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two BNP leaders yesterday alleged that incidents of militant activities have increased against a backdrop of India's pressure on Bangladesh for a defence treaty.

They also said the ruling Awami League is using the militancy issue as a political instrument for clinging on to power and for petty political gains.

The two leaders of the BNP -- Amir Khashru Mahmud Chowdhury, standing committee member, and Rizvi Ahmed, senior joint secretary general -- made the remarks in separate programmes in the capital yesterday.

"Questions spring to people's mind over rising militant activities in the country prior to the prime minister's [Sheikh Hasina] scheduled visit to India [on April 7]," Khashru said at a discussion in the capital's Photo Journalist Association auditorium.

He also said people have no faith in the government's action aimed at curbing militancy. People also doubt about the authenticity of such militant activities.

"Don't take the militancy issue lightly. National unity is a must to curb militancy. Credibility of the government is also a big factor. It would not be possible to curb militancy ignoring the views of opposition political parties."

Instead of paying heed to Khaleda Zia's call to forge unity for curbing militancy, "this illegal government" is using the militancy card as a political tool for attaining legitimacy, Khashru alleged. At a human chain programme in front of

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Duta concerned over recent violence at dorms

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) yesterday expressed deep concern over the recent incidents of violence at the university dormitories centring seat allotment.

"We noticed students, teachers and journalists were harassed by some unruly students recently," Duta said in a press release signed by its President Prof Dr ASM Maksud Kamal and General Secretary Prof Dr Md Rahamat Ullah.

Besides, a tense situation is prevailing at the residential halls, it also said urging the concerned authorities to ensure congenial atmosphere on the campus.

On Tuesday, some Bangladesh Chattra League (BCL) activists went on a rampage for around four

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Law enforcers inspect the trunk of a vehicle at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong yesterday. Security has been beefed up at all airports and prisons across the country following a "suicide blast" at a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) barrack in the capital's Ashkona on Friday.

PHOTO: STAR



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Mystery shrouds death of Rajshahi hotel staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Mystery shrouds the death of a hotel staff who was discovered dead inside a room of the hotel in Rajshahi city yesterday morning.

Sirajul Islam, 40, of Tanore upazila, had been working at Hotel Al Hasib in the city's Gonokpara area as a caretaker for the last 17 years.

He was suffocated to death, and there was a stab injury to the right side of his neck, said Sohrawardy Hossain, an assistant commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP).

Other hotel staff found his blood stained body at the room no. 403 at 9:30am, and informed police, he said, adding that police recovered the body and sent it to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

The boarder who was allotted the room on Thursday remained unidentified as two pages of the hotel's register book that contained his name among others were found missing, said police and hotel staff.

The five-room hotel is housed on the third floor of a five-storey building. The ground floor is rented out to some shops, the next two floors to a bank, and the owner

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