

Not possible to explore deep-sea anymore

Tawfiq-e-Elahi tells energy security webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deep-sea gas or oil exploration in the country will not be possible anymore, as investors are looking away and the world tries to move away from fossil fuels, Prime Minister's Energy Advisor Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury claimed at a webinar yesterday.

He said this addressing experts who expressed their concern over the ongoing gas crisis, saying that the government is more interested in importing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) instead of exploration.

Bangladesh Energy Society (BES) organised the webinar, titled "Appropriate Fuel Mix for Sustainable Energy Security - Bangladesh Perspective".

Deep-sea exploration is done to find and tap into deposits of oil or gas beneath the sea-bed.

Joining as chief guest, Tawfiq said the country needs investment from foreign oil companies to undertake oil or gas exploration in deep sea.

"But there's a rising concern against fossil fuel around the world, which is why these companies will not want to make such long-term investments," he said, citing that such an exploration will need at least 20 years to see fruit.

"I have contacted them privately, asking whether they'd want to do it if we provided all kinds of incentives, but I didn't get any good response," he added.

Replying to an allegation that gas exploration in the country is stuck in limbo, he said Bangladesh Petroleum



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A vehicle of Dhaka North City Corporation sprays water on Manik Mia Avenue to keep dust pollution in check. Authorities took this measure as the city's air is showing no signs of improving, due to constant construction work and increasing number of vehicles on roads among other factors. This photo was taken yesterday.



TAWFIQ-E-ELAHI CHOWDHURY
PM's energy advisor

The country needs investment from foreign oil companies to undertake oil or gas exploration in deep sea. But there's a rising concern against fossil fuel around the world, which is why these companies will not want to make such long-term investments.

Exploration and Production Company Limited has explored 34 wells in the last five years, and it is also conducting onshore studies down the northern parts of the country.

Speaking at the session, Md Mahub Hossain, secretary of energy and mineral resources division, said the country has a lack of infrastructure and needs big investments in the energy sector.

Dr Mohammad Tamim, dean of Buet's Faculty of Engineering, said there should be an integrated energy and power sector master-plan.

He mentioned that the country has to pay a penalty of Tk 130 crore per month for failing to take power from Payra power plant, all because its infrastructure is not ready yet.

The cost will further escalate when Rampal power plant will come into operation, he opined.

During his keynote presentation, Khondkar Abdus Saleque (Sufi) said, "The country should keep all fuel options open, including coal, nuclear, green, hydro and solar."

He added that an appropriate mix of them to get affordable and reliable energy has been the biggest challenge for the country.

Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) Chairperson Mahbubur Rahman said liquid fuel-based power plants are the costliest power producers, and they comprise 34 percent of the total power generation.

Despite huge efforts, it was not possible for BPDB to stop these power plants, he added.

He also noted that renewable energy, especially solar power, has good potential in the country.

But unless there is an affordable storage system available, it cannot be competitive in the market, he added.

BES president and special envoy of Climate Vulnerable Forum Abul Kalam Azad chaired the event, while former power secretary Monowar Islam conducted it.

'Ploy to plunder public money'

Fakhrul on pension scheme

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday alleged that the government has taken a move to introduce the universal pension scheme for all citizens as part of its new ploy to plunder public money.

Speaking at a rally, party secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir also alleged that the government has hired lobbyists with taxpayers' money to legalise its repressive acts, including enforced disappearance.

As part of BNP's 11-day countrywide programme, its Dhaka north and south city units arranged the rally in front of Jatiya Press Club protesting the growing price hike of daily essentials and utility services.

"I've seen a media report about whether the government will introduce a universal general pension. They're not saying anything clearly about it. But we can realise that they are going to resort to another trick to loot public money," Fakhrul said.

He said the government will take Tk 1,000 from each person per month for up to 60 years. "If any one dies before the age of 60, their money won't be given back... which means this is nothing but a way to loot the people's money."

The BNP leader said the government is unable to take any step to resolve people's problems. "Rather, they're putting people in danger."



As part of BNP's 11-day countrywide programme, its Dhaka north and south city units arranged a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday, protesting the growing price hike of daily essentials and utility services.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Are they above the law?

Drivers often get nabbed while owners go scot-free after road crashes

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Eighteen days have passed since a "faulty" pickup killed six brothers in Chakaria of Cox's Bazar, completely devastating the entire family. And yet, police have not been able to arrest its owner till yesterday, delaying the investigation process.

A case filed over the February 8 road crash on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway had been transferred to Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) from Highway Police.

But, the owner of the pickup, which has no updated papers for the last three years, could not be arrested. And so, police's efforts are being questioned.

This is nothing new, however. Arrests or other punitive actions against vehicle owners are rare, even if the vehicles are found without valid papers, including fitness clearance.

In many cases, police only arrest the drivers, following protests or huge media outcry, and keep them in jail to face trial proceedings, road safety activists said. For example, an Anabil Paribahan bus killed SSC examinee Mainuddin Islam in the capital's Rampura on November 29 last year.

Locals nabbed the bus driver and beat him up. While the driver was receiving treatment at a hospital, police showed him arrested. He is still in jail. Later, it was found that the bus had no route permit and updated tax token, a clear violation of traffic rules. No action has been taken against the owner so far, Rampura police confirmed.

"Transport owners are powerful, as many of them are involved with the ruling party. So, the government is reluctant to take action against them," Road Safety Foundation Executive Director Saidur Rahman said yesterday.

In the case of the Chakaria incident, Rab arrested the pickup driver, who did not even have a valid licence, three days after the crash. He is currently in jail.

OWNER IDENTIFIED, NOT ARRESTED YET
Validity of all three important documents -- fitness

CHAKARIA ROAD CRASH

- Owner of pickup still not arrested
- Rab, however, nabbed driver
- Vehicle's papers expired 3yrs ago

THE SCENARIO

- Arrests, other punitive actions against vehicle owners rare
- In many cases, police only arrest drivers, after protests, media outcry
- Drivers kept in jail to face trial proceedings

clearance, route permit and tax token -- expired around three years ago, but the pickup was still in operation.

The vehicle was registered with Chattogram BRTA office in 2016 against a private bank. The tax identification number of a prominent company, which sells such vehicles, was used.

As per the documents, validity of the fitness clearance and tax token expired in May 2018, and the route permit expired in May 2019.

OC Safayet Hossain of Chakaria's Malumghat Highway Police Station, which seized the vehicle, yesterday said they have identified the owner: Mahmudul Karim of the upazila. Asked why they could not arrest him even after 18 days, he said the case was transferred to PBI some days after the incident, so they are not looking into it.

Contacted, Cox's Bazar PBI Inspector Enamul Haque Chowdhury, investigation officer of the case, said the owner fled the area after the incident, and they are trying their best to arrest him. Asked when they will submit the probe report, he said it is not possible to say that before arresting the owner. Police will seek remand for

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Poetry books most-published, novels sell best

DIPAN NANDY

The first 12 days of the fair have seen the publication of 1,361 new books till yesterday. As always, poetry books are at the forefront. As of yesterday, 394 poetry books have been published in the fair.

Novels come in second -- 216. However, despite losing out to poetry in terms of publications, this category has left everyone behind in terms of sales. Publishers told The Daily Star that the readers are always more attracted to novels, and this year has seen no exception.

They said novels by Humayun Ahmed, Imdadul Haque Milon, Anisul Haque, Harishankar Jaldas, Shahaduzzaman and Sadat Hossain top the list. Apart from them, readers are also interested in works by Showkat Ali, Hasan Azizul Huq, Selina Hossain, Syed Manjurul Islam, Moinul Ahsan Saber, Prashant Mridha, Hamim Kamrul Haque, Swakrto Noman, Hamim Kamal and more.

Mazharul Islam, chief executive of Anya



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Prakash, particularly marked Sadat Hossain's new novel "Priyotomo Osukh She" as a top-seller.

While this year's Boi Mela is in full swing, there's some uncertainty regarding whether the 14-day fair will go on for longer.

Until now, the fair is slated to continue till February 28. However, after the prime minister expressed her interest in running it for a month, publishers have been looking forward to a decision. That decision is set to arrive today, according to sources.

No place for rogue cops

Says DMP chief marking its 47th anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam yesterday said a war is being waged against cops who engage in corruption.

He made the remark while speaking on the occasion of the 47th founding anniversary of DMP at Rajarbagh Police Lines.

Shafiqul also said that they're taking action against police personnel who engage in misconduct while dealing with people.

The DMP boss also claimed that no money is being transacted over promotion and posting of police members. "I can challenge and say that no one can say that any money has been transacted over the promotion and posting of police recruits," he said.

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PRAYER
TIMING
FEB 27



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5-15	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30
Jamaat	5-50	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION