

Headlines:

- **Government awarded Gas Wells Drilling Project to Russia's Gazprom at almost Double the Cost of BAPEX**
- **NBR will not look into MP Candidates' Tax Evasions**
- **No Country can hold 100 per cent Fair Election**
- **Police Van Torched during BNP-Cop Clash at Nayapaltan**

Details:

Government awarded Gas Wells Drilling Project to Russia's Gazprom at almost Double the Cost of BAPEX

The much-talked-about gas discovery at Bhola will turn out to be rather expensive for the nation, as Russia's Gazprom has been given the drilling assignment at almost double the cost of the proposal submitted by the state-run Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Ltd (BAPEX). Sources said the two wells at Shahbazpur East-1 and Bhola (North)—which were awarded to Gazprom—are not being drilled by the Russian company itself. It has simply given it to the US-based Halliburton and ERIELL for carrying out all drilling activities. Interestingly, through seismic surveys, the newly-discovered fields—were detected by BAPEX. The government, however, awarded the drilling of the wells to Gazprom without any cogent reason. (Bangla Tribune -10.11.2018)

We are not surprised at all that a foreign company was preferred to the state-owned local one. This is an usual phenomenon in our political system. There are a number of reasons for such deal. Firstly, corruption – obviously with high value foreign deals the rulers and the officials concerned made more money and it was much easier for them to launder that money to another country. They have the least concern for the money that is being wasted or for the people that are ultimately paying for it. Secondly, pleasing colonial masters – our current rulers are not only mentally colonized by these imperialist countries, but also they actively work as agents to protect the interest of their masters. 'Our nation', 'our people' and all such patriotic jingle are nothing more than political rhetoric to hypnotize people and at the end of the day, they know it very well that under the current system blessings of these foreign masters count the most. Thirdly, visionless leadership – our present rulers-do not have any ideological aspiration to make our nation technologically advanced, economically developed and politically dominating. Due to the lack of such vision, they cannot appreciate long term planning to develop our institutions. An ideological state cannot rely for a long term on foreign companies for a key sector like energy recourses. It must have a plan and program to develop its own experts. Unfortunately, our visionless leaders are busy making their own fortunes at the cost of the nation. These foreign companies often make away without compensating any accident that might happen due to the negligence on their part or if they are found to be in violation of the terms of the contract. Our rulers learnt no lesson from the past incidents, for example Bangladesh is still seeking \$125 million from Niko Resources – a Canadian company responsible for the blowouts at Tengratila gas field in Chhatak, Sunamganj that cost Bangladesh about 1,794 billion cubic feet (bcf) of gas – (<http://www.newsbangladesh.com/english/details/7809>)

A sincere and visionary leadership is required for this nation to put an end to this kind of unfair foreign deal. Under the current capitalist-democratic system, we cannot expect such leadership as the people of Bangladesh do not subscribe to the ideological basis of this system. So, we must get rid of this system and implement a system based on Islamic ideology as it goes with the beliefs, feeling and political aspiration of the people.

NBR will not look into MP Candidates' Tax Evasions

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) chairman has said that they will not look into the tax evasion issue of those who will contest in the 11th general election; action would be taken against candidates who are VAT or tariff evaders after election. He defended the recent report prepared by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) allegation of mass corruption in NBR by mentioning "There is corruption everywhere around the country. To change that, we have to change our social system first. A neutral investigation will also find corruption inside the ACC."

It is common knowledge that MPs and the ruling party politicians of Bangladesh are making white and black money through corruption where violation of TAX and VAT are a common phenomenon.

NBR usually avoids its responsibility to account MPs in curbing tax rules violation, and the statements of NBR chairman once again proved that in democracy laws are not equal for all. The politicians, specifically the MPs, are a privileged segment for whom laws may be exempted. Moreover, despite failure to collect due TAX and VAT from ruling elites, NBR is rather planning to broaden the tax net to transfer their failure to general peoples' neck.

Regarding the statement on corruption everywhere, the statement itself is self-explanatory. The seed of corruption lies in the system itself, and the ruling class and the corruption controlling body itself are strained in corruption. Comparison of wealth statements of MPs, which were submitted to election commission in 2008 and 2014 for general election, revealed atypical growth in the personal income of MPs - average growth of income of MPs was 582%. Indeed, this is the white money, in case of black money the figure is much larger than disclosed white income. The black money is mostly transferred through illegal channels, and parked abroad. Panama and Paradise Papers gave examples of gross looting of politicians and ruling capitalist elites of Bangladesh who get endorsed by other notorious institutions of government like NBR and ACC etc. in their profit-making endeavor in the name of politics.

No Country can hold 100 per cent Fair Election

Election commissioner Kabita Khanam on Friday said that holding 100 per cent fair election is not possible in the country. No country anywhere in the world can hold 100 per cent fair election.

When the entire country has been kept anxious by having to look forward to the so-called exercise of people's voting rights to elect their rulers, one of the most important figure of Bangladeshi democracy, Election commissioner Kabita Khanam, disclosed the real face of secular democracy. Her statement is a vivid example of the fact that under the man-made secular democratic system, free and fair election is an impossibility.

In Muslim lands, fear of Allah has been replaced by secular democracy in which sovereignty lies to the hands of man, and thus there is no prevailing sense of accountability of the rulers in front of the Lord of the universe, Allah (swt). Hence, we see that the mass people, not only in Bangladesh but all across the world, are constantly moving away from the secular rulers due to the people having no confidence in democracy. In America also we saw that the Economist Intelligence Unit recently denoted the country as a "flawed" democracy due to American's diminished political engagement and lost confidence in the democratic process.

In Bangladesh, on one hand, the ruling regimes are making policies that are narrowly targeted to the interests of the few regime-associated elites which is deepening social divisions, and, on the other hand, these secular rulers are coming up with these funny rationale through their election mouthpiece which only proves that fair and free election is an illusion in democracy.

Police Van Torched during BNP-Cop Clash at Nayapaltan

A fierce clash broke out between police and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leaders and activists in front of the party's Nayapaltan central office (in Dhaka) on Wednesday, disrupting traffic in the areas. Around 13 BNP activists and an equal number of members of the police were wounded in the clash, and two police vans were torched. A number of BNP activists were also arrested (Daily Jugantor, 14 November 2018).

Since the birth of Bangladesh, people of the country have remained hostage to the confrontational secular politics. The secular political parties phenomenally have been engaging with their political opponents to establish their dominance on every point of interest. Historically, the police and other law enforcing agencies have always played the role of the musclemen of the ruling elites to secure their interest. During the last 10 years of ruling period of the present Awami League, we have observed such bloody violence in numerous occasions which took hundreds of innocent lives.

The ruling elites, which are always nominated by their colonial masters, have been using the wealth of the people for oppressing them and to secure the interests of their appointing masters and themselves. In a secular political platform, where the powerful forces seek precedence of rights over weaker groups by might, violence gets social acceptance leading people to cruelty.

The absence of absolute value standards in secular democracy provides scope to the perpetrators to justify their heinous acts and to seek its validity. Consequently, peoples' lives are taken and wealth is plundered on a regular basis. Adding this is that the people do not have any effective protection or legal recourse against such violence.