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BERC chairman blasts Petrobangla

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Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) Chairman Syed Yusuf Hossain yesterday blasted Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) for not sending a responsible official at a technical meeting on finalising gas development fund policy and thereby hindering its finalisation. While speaking at the conference, the BERC chairman said, "Petrobangla is not cooperating with us as it should be doing. They are not paying due respect to the commission.

It seems it has a strong base somewhere which is not a sign of good governance."

The government in November 2008 decided to raise a fund for the development of gas sector. A Tk 800 crore fund was raised from the additional revenue generated from 10 to 15 percent increase in the price of gas at consumer level.

BERC, which has the mandate to regulate gas, electricity and petroleum products for the whole of Bangladesh, held a meeting on this issue on October 31, seeking opinions of the stakeholders in gas sector. At the meeting, it instructed Petrobangla to finalise a policy on the utilisation of the fund.

Yesterday's meeting was scheduled to finalise the policy.

Yusuf was angered yesterday when the lone Petrobangla representative at the meeting Deputy General Manager (Accounts) Tofael Ahmed said this was his first meeting and he did not know anything about the past meetings on the policy.

Yousuf was asking for Petrobangla's opinion on the policy and said, "We sent letter to the higher authorities of Petrobangla, asking if they could attend the meeting.

"If they could not, then they could have sent a letter, send a fax or even contact me over the phone."

BERC decided to give two days time to Petrobangla to give their opinions in finalising the policy.

"You are giving a wrong signal. If you say that Petrobangla was not consulted before finalising of the policy then it would be unfair," said Yusuf, pointing to the Petrobangla official.

He said, "Anyone can attend the meeting no matter how junior he is but he or she should also be authorised to offer opinions."

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