

A Correspondent

Habiganj: Voicing her high hope to produce over 20,000 megawatts of power by 2021, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday inaugurated the much-awaited Bibiyana Gas Field Extension Project and the newly constructed Bibiyana-Dhanua gas distribution transmission line.

Hasina formally opened the projects through unveiling plaques in Nabiganj Bibiyana Gas Field area in the district.

American Oil Company Chevron completed the Bibiyana Gas Field Extension Project to improve the country's overall gas production capacity.

Gas Transmission Company Limited (GTCL), a company of Petrobangla, implemented the Bibiyana-Dhanua Gas Pipeline project spending Tk 1709.77 crore aimed at supplying additional gas to the national grid produced from the Bibiyana Gas Field.

Under the project, a 137-km gas transmission line with a 36-inch diameter has been set up over Habiganj, Kishoreganj, Mymensingh and Gazipur districts, including a 67-km Haor area in Habiganj and Kishoreganj districts. Petrobangla, GTCL and six other companies of Petrobangla bore the total spending.

Initially, around 300 million cubic feet of gas will be supplied through this pipeline a day while the capacity would be gradually raised to maximum 640 million cubic feet every day.

Besides, the department of Energy and Mineral Resources, Petrobangla and GTCL completed the 137-km distribution line through a 67-km long remote and haor areas of Habiganj and Kishoreganj as well as Mymensingh and Gazipur districts.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister also expressed her hope to find oil in the Bay of Bengal.

Briefly describing various steps of her government for the development of the power and energy sector of the country during the present government tenures, she said the BNP-Jamaat government previously did not take any sort of farsighted program and that's why the country was lagging behind in this sector during their tenure.

After assuming office in 2009, Hasina said her government took short-, medium- and long-term programs to build a strong power and energy system in the country.

"The AL government has taken massive development programs to make gas and power available to the common people although production of gas and generation of electricity is very expensive," she added.

In this connection, she mentioned that the capacity of electricity generation has already increased to over 11,700 MW.

On the other hand, the capacity of gas distribution has been increased to 2454 million cubic a day and daily 830 million CFT is being provided from Bibiyana Gas Field only which will now be 1200 million cubic feet per day, she said.

Hasina hoped that the international oil and energy companies, including Chevron, would come to invest in the energy sector in Bangladesh as the country has investment-friendly atmosphere. She mentioned the farsighted steps of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who bought Titas, Habiganj, Koilastila, Rashidpur and Bakhrabad Gas fields from Shell Oil Company at a cost of Tk 1,786 crore on August 9, 1975.

She said these five fields are producing 43 percent of the country's total gas generation.

Referring to the Bangladesh's winning of maritime boundary cases against India and Myanmar,

Hasina said huge opportunities have been created for extracting marine resources, including gas, in the Bay of Bengal as the country's sovereign rights have been established there. Besides, Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration & Production Company Limited (Bapex) has been organisationally strengthened for the purposes while modern drilling rigs and heavy equipment have been procured.

Describing various steps of her government for the development of the energy sector, the Prime Minister said, 706 Kilometers of new transmission line has been constructed in the country while gas network has already been extended to Rajshahi city.

Besides, new gas compressor stations have been set up at Muchhai of Habiganj and Ashuganj of Brahmanbaria which enabling gas distribution to mills and factories with adequate pressure, she said.

PM's Power and Energy Adviser Dr Towfiq-E-Elahi Chowdhury, Parliamentary Standing Committee Chairman on Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry M Tajul Islam, Secretary of the Energy and Mineral Resources Division Md Abu Bakar Siddique, local MP Abdul Munim Chowdhury, President of Chevron Asia Pacific Melody Meyer, President of Chevron Bangladesh Geoff Strong spoke at the programme chaired by State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated Bibiyana Gas Expansion Project, Bibiyana-Dhonua 36-inch high-pressure gas transmission line, connecting road from Dhaka-Sylhet national highway (N2) to Bibiyana Power Plant, and Nabiganj Fire Service and Civil Defense Station.

She also laid the foundation stones of Bibiyana South 400MW combined cycle power plant construction project, Bibiyana Power Plant -03 (North 400 MW), Bijnai Bridge (Rosulpur-Roisganj-Paniunda Road, including 90.1-metre RCC Girder Bridge and Nabiganj Upazila Muktijoddha Complex building.

Later, the Prime Minister visited the Bibiyana Gas Field.