



Montek throws spanner in Shahi's extension

Dipayan Mazumdar & Associates, January 24, 2007

URL: <http://www.pr9.net/society/government/5026january.html>

Montek Singh Ahluwalia puts a road block to power secretary R V Shahi to get a year's extension

PR9.NET January 24, 2007 - New Delhi, India: The hectic lobbying by the power secretary R V Shahi to get a year's extension hit road block with Planning Commission vice-chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia urging Prime Minister against it on the ground that Shahi has been favouring industrialist houses.

Shahi's move suffered a set back following a meeting between the Plan panel deputy chief and Singh on Saturday. Ahluwalia was invited to attend an informal meeting of the Prime Minister's energy coordination committee here on Saturday where the issue of Shahi's extension came up while members were reviewing the progress made on the power ministry's flagship programme accelerated power development programme.

Shahi's name figured as he was the architect of the program, which was aimed at tackling huge losses in the country's power sector. Shahi had mooted the idea of this program, which was accepted by the government.

However, a task force headed by former power secretary Abraham in its report recommended total revamp of the program saying it has not been able to handle the problem. As some members referred to Shahi's eagerness to get an extension, Ahluwalia while intervening in the discussion urged the Prime Minister not to grant extension to the officials who owe allegiance to business houses.

During his tenure as power secretary particularly after the privatization of power sector, Shahi has been charged giving undue favours to some private power majors. Whether or not he gets an extension will be cleared in few days. After what Montek told the Prime Minister, Shahi is unlikely to get it, "said a senior official in the Prime Minister's Office.

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