Regional dialogue

FROMPAGE 1 Bhashani Hall in the town with joint collaboration of The Daily Star, Prothom Alo and Channel i The meeting lasted for about seven hours with a total of 700 people attending the discussion. Almost 125 people wanted to speak in the discussion but around 90 people were able to do so due to time constraints.

Prominent educationist and former principal of Government M Ali College Sekander Hyat chaired the dialogue titled 'Election 2007: Campaign for honest and competent candidates'.

CPD Executive Director Debapriya Bhattacharya conducted the seven-hour long discussion attended by a large number of local elites including political leaders, lawyers, teachers, development workers, cultural activists, journalists and social workers.

Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam addressed the dialogue on behalf of the organisers while former member of caretaker gov-ernment Hafiz Uddin Khan and Muhammad Zafar Iqbal took part in the discussion as members of Nagorik Committee 2006 formed for preparing a vision paper for Bangladesh 2021.

Criticising the prevailing system of election, the speakers said the Election Commission must go through massive reforms for ensurcountry. They also expressed no-confidence in the present chief of the Election Commission and his

Speaking as special guest, Tangail Press Club President Mirza Mohammad Abdul Momen said constructing roads, bridges and high-rise buildings alone is not

True development means upgradation of people's living standard by providing better health services, education and other amenities, he said.

He underscored the need for generosity and tolerance among the politicians for a stable economic growth in the country.

There are politicians but not enough of statesmanship in the country for which the pro-people upazila system got cancelled, he said, adding that induction of retired bureaucrats, army person-nel and business tycoons destroyed the political culture in the country. He regretted lack of democratic

practice in the political parties.

Special guest Provaty Mutshuddy criticised the government for bringing changes in the women development policy. She said the minority community often becomes subject to repression after a general election.

"We have recurrente an atmosphere where people would not send their offspring abroad for education," she said.

She urged the people to cast vote for honest and educated

The honest and generous people are keeping themselves isolated from politics while bureaucrats and business tycoons are capturing the political powers, Mahbub Muhammad Zafar Igbal

demanded a modern education and urged the younger generation to work for building a country that would fulfil the dreams of the freedom fighters.

"Most of the people in Bangladesh are very honest, dedicated and hard working," he said adding that only a small portion of people in the society are responsible for making the country champion in corruption.

country following the discord between the two major political parties on the question of reforms in the election system, Hafiz Uddin

He demanded right to information for helping the people to choose honest and competent candidates in the general elections. Before the election, people should know in details about a candidate's assets and liabilities and whether he or she is a loan defaulter or a bill defaulter, he said.

Khan pointed out that the candidates' political background and criminal records should also be published before the election.

While preparing the election manifesto, the political parties should take people's opinion, Mahfuz Anam said.

Democracy should not be con-fined only within the political parties and members of parliament, rather, it should reach up to the mass people, he said. Anam expressed the hope that

the honest and competent candidates will get nomination in the next general election and they will push the country towards progress

Demanding preservation of indigenous people's right, indigenous leader Ajoy A Mri said when the political parties remain in the opposition bench they support the causes of indigenous people but they forget the pledges after going

The indigenous people in the district suffered for development of the Eco Park and national garden,

Expressing the hope that such dialogue will create an upsurge in the society and help bring qualitative changes in future, former state minister Abul Ahsan Chowdhury said people should not demand everything from the capital. Rather, everybody should be involved with the development.

An elected candidate should consider himself a representative of all the people of the area, he said. Ahsan suggested formation of a

consultation committee by every political party in each constituency before election for nominating competent candidates. General Secretary of Tangail

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Alamgir Khan Manu proposed election system on the basis of symbol without mentioning the name of candidates. Khondoker Nazimuddin, senior

vice president of district latiya Party, demanded clear declaration from the party concerned about tion without doing politics.

He also demanded solution of water sharing problem with neighbouring India

Muniruzzaman Bulbul, general secretary of Tangail district BNP, disagreed with the view that the society organised dialogue was tarnishing the image of the politicians. He hoped that the civil society initiative for honest and competent candidates would

Religious harmony is prevailing in the country and the minority community is observing their argest festival Durga Puja with much more enthusiasm than before, he said.

He suggested bringing change in the minds of politicians as well as in the political culture.

Prof Mirza Mazharul Islam urged the people to launch a social movement for competent candidates. He urged the people to cast vote for those who do not know how to earn black money.

and nepotism social diseases that

Meghnaghat-3 power project | Exports halt

tariff, the CMG tariff would be almost double that of the AES -

need urgent treatment, he said if the top brass of the government remains corruption-free others will

Shamsunnahar Shanti, presi-

The condition of women deteri-

amendments to the government's

women development policy, she said. Shanti also opposed the

nomination of moneyed man and

Among others, Gholam Mohammad Khan, Bonshi Binod

Goswami, Dr Abul Baset, Gopinath

Mojumder, Dr S Hasan, Hosne Ara

Ahmed Baby, Ataur Rahman Khan,

Ataur Rahman Zinnah, Abul

Hossain Mallik, MA Rouf, Al Shahriar, Hazi Rahmat Ali Talukder,

Mofizur Rahman Nuru, Yusuf Ali,

Hafeza Rahman, Hasan Hafizur

Rahman, Mirza Mohammad

Nurunnabi, Naimuddin, Rajesh

Chandra, Ishrat Nadia, Rezina

Akhtar, Shamsad Akhtar Lina, and

Snigdha Sarker participated in the

Patients suffer

They will go for a tougher move-

ment if the authorities do not meet

their demands that included arrest

and punishment of those who beat up two nurses of the hospital on

Wednesday night, organisers of the

ibstention programme said at a

operations scheduled for yesterday

were not done due to the strike. Doctors and nurses hardly

attended patients, and administra-

tive activities at the hospital also

found leaving for other hospitals

(last night) to under go an opera-tion at another hospital or clinic,"

said Abul Kashem, 61, admitted to

the hospital with a fractured leg a week ago. " I was scheduled to be

operated upon yesterday but it was

As per an earlier announced

programme, the demonstrators

gathered at the emergency gate of

the hospital yesterday morning,

brought out a procession on the hospital premises and later held a

rally at the hospital auditorium to

construction of a boundary wall of

the hospital, a permanent police

camp on its premises and removal of the slum adjoining the hospital.

students of Sher e-Bangla Agriculture University Sheat up to staff nurses of emergency wing of

the hospital -- Abu Bakar Siddik and Raisuddin -- for their refusal to

give penicillin injection for a fellow

tudent suffering from rheumatic

fever. The nurses said they could

not give such injection without a

Injured Abu Bakar was stated to

Police were deployed at the

Police are vet to arrest anyone in

hospital to avert any untoward

14 British killed

FROM PAGE 16 it went down in the southern prov-

"The Ministry of Defence is

extremely sorry to have to confirm

that the aircraft lost in Afghanistan

earlier today ... was British, and that the crash led to 14 fatalities," a minis-

He said the dead Britons were 12

British Defence Secretary Des

This is not the time for specula

"I can say, however, at this stage

The crash was Britain's worst

Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel, a

Royal Marine and an army soldier.

Browne called the accident 'dread-

tions, as the operation to secure the

crash site is ongoing," he said in a

all the indications are that this was

a terrible accident and not the result of hostile action," he added.

single loss in Afghanistan and caps

a month in which British forces in

the country have suffered severe

Nato said in a statement the

British plane was supporting the alliance-led International Security

Assistance Force and crashed after

"Enemy action has been dis-

The crash came at a time when

and criminal groups have stepped

up attacks on Afghan and foreign

orces, plunging the country into

its bloodiest period since the Taliban were toppled in late 2001.

oodyguards and a female relative,

declaring a technical problem.

counted at this stage," it said.

tryspokesman said in London.

doctor's prescription.

ince of Kandahar.

ful and shocking'

be in a critical condition.

On Wednesday night, a group of

Their other demands include

done due to the strike."

press their demands.

Many admission seekers were

"I will leave this hospital tonight

came to a halt.

Patients alleged that most of the

work daily for three days.

terrorists for election.

dent of Tangail Mohila Parishad,

demanded increase in the number

of seats for women in parliament.

follow them.

Though the AES paid in cash for 1,395 million kWh of free electricity before its commercial operation started in 2002, the power ministry in its proposal says the Meghnaghat-1 project did not have any such provision, while the CMG will be giving 1,395 million kWh of free electric-

Till date, the government did not float any tender for this power project, yet the power ministry believes that an unsolicited deal with the CMG is justified. Again, the ministry remains totally silent on the fact that the CMG did not furnish its bid bond, whereas in all other power deals, bid bond submission is manda-

The ministry's proposal itself admits that the CMG will not have any equity in the project. The Priyate Sector Power Generation Policy demands the contractor must have a minimum 20 percent stake in the project. The CMG proposes that the project will be financed 100 percent by Stone and Youngberg and Eagle Financial Group, USA, because of CMG's 'Goodwill'. And the ministry upholds such claims.

The ministry's summary highlighted that while established US power company AES took three years to build the Meghnaghat-1 power project, the CMG will be able to do it in two years.

proposed names of 'world famous' contractors for supply, design and engineering work for

The proposal is allowing the CMG to change power plant configuration whereas the government in the past rejected any proposal for changing plant configuration in the unsolicited negotiation with Japanese Marubeni for Meghnaghat- 2 project in 2001 and for Sirajganj 450 MW project bidding. The CMG is proposing three gas turbines instead of wo.

"Since it an unsolicited offer in which CMG did not go through any pre-qualification process, the company should be subject to post-qualification using the same pre-qualification criteria as for Meghnaghat-1 or Meghnaghat-2 bids," says a power project expert.

To show how cheap the CMG's tariff offer is, the ministry has given a comparison table of its tariff with that of the PDB's Fenchuganj 90 MW and Siddhirganj 210 MW plants.

The power expert says this comparison should have taken place with the AES Meghnaghat and Haripur projects, which have similar power generation capacity. Generally, higher capacity implies more economies and lower tariff. The power ministry had pre-

pared the proposal in June but with the change of the state minister concerned, the proposal underwent revision.

State Minister for Power

The BNP-led alliance govern-

ment last year awarded the deal for Meghnaghat-2 plant to local Orion and the UAE-based Belhasa. But these incompetent

money than the CMG. The CMG has been pushing this opaque deal since August 11 2004. At that time, the Power Cell had said the CMG proposal was not following any process and it

lacked a plan.

companies failed to ensure the

project finance even after one

year though Belhasa has more

The CMG is a joint-venture between an Irish company named Cadogan Engineering, and Manning Industries from Texas, USA. Cadogan Consultants Ltd. was formed by a management buy-out of Rendel Palmer & Tritton (Scotland) Ltd. in 1997. Manning Industries is a company based in Texas mainly involved in retrofitting used equipment.

On April 25, last year, the parliamentary standing committee on energy and power ministry had asked the ministry to cancel the shady process with the CMG as it was hurting democratic image of the government, and to float an international tender.

Interestingly, under pressure from the 'alternative centre of power', the standing committee at its next meeting withdrew its stand on this matter. In May, the national commit-

tee for protection of oil and gas resources served a legal notice on the government demanding cancellation of the process of awarding any contract based on unsolicited proposal of the CMG. The government ignored the

5 IMB men

FROM PAGE 1 23, Ziaur Rahman, 25, Abdul Jabbar, 20, of Shahebgram and Manirul Islam of Nandalalpur Biharipara in the upazila.

The law enforcers also seized some jihadi books, audio cassettes, compact disks (CDs) and diaries from their possession. Rab members also held some 14

other people in different raids yesterday, including a PBCP outlaw, an imposter masquerading as Rab member and some Phensidyl

FROM PAGE 1

District administrative officials are yet to implement the pledges they had made on August 30 during the

to formulate the three-member investigation committee even though 72 hours have already passed since the agreement was signed," said Md Mossadeque Hossain Labu, Dinajpur district convener of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port.

tion or ambiguity in implementing the agreement, people will go for another movement, "he said. According to the agreement,

two committee members along with a magistrate will probe the August 26 incident at Phulbari. Another committee comprising

an additional deputy commissioner, an assistant police superintendent and two members of the national committee will investigate the alleged hiding of bodies,

were also supposed to be withdrawn. The cases are yet to be withdrawn, he added.

FROM PAGE 16

The slain outlaws were involved in extortions giving death threats over cellphones. People like high government and non-government officials, doctors, engineers and businessmen, became victims of their silent extortions during the last few months.

Our correspondent from Rangpur reports: Sadek Hossain alias Pancha Dakat, a listed robber. was killed in "crossfire" during a shootout between Rab and a gang of robbers in Mithapukur upazila of the district. Acting on secret information, a

number of Rab personnel cordoned off a house at the Krishna Mondolpara at about 4:00am, where the robbers were planning to rob a house, a Rab-5 press released

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the robbers opened fire on them to which the Rab responded ensuing a half an hourlong gunfight. After the robbers fled the scene,

Rab personnel found Sadek's body with several bullet injuries. He was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) where the onduty doctor declared him dead.

Rab also recovered a shutter gun and five round of bullets from his possession

A listed criminal, Sadek was released from jail two years ago after serving 10 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for a murder. After that, Sadek, a resident of Nagerhat under Badarganj upazila got involved with different kinds of crimes including cattle lifting and robbery, the press release said.

The stalemate is feared to deepen as

both Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the CFTC remained rigid on their position. Chittagong Port Authority (CPA)

sources said a meeting of the ship-ping ministry, CFTC, BGMEA and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association has been called today at the commerce ministry to settle the matter. But the CFTC in a fax message to

the CPA chairman said they will not participate in the meeting as many of their high officials will not be able to reach Bangladesh before Tuesday. "We cannot sit without the top

officials of our companies, who will not be able to return to Bangladesh before Monday as it will not be possible for them to complete visa procedures due to public holiday on Sunday in Singapore," Jamal Uddin Quader Chowdhury, director of QC Shipping Lines Ltd, said. The meeting was not deferred as

of writing this report at 9:00pm vesterday BGMEA President SM Fazlul

Haque said the feeder vessel owners are holding the garment business hostage and now they are violating He said the BGMEA is expecting a

solution from the proposed meeting of the stakeholders and hoped that the CFTC will comply with the court

Jamal Uddin, however, said the CFTC did not violate the court order. We do not realise the congestion surcharge from the exporters, we realise the money from the Main Line Operator, "he explained.

He said someone should compensate for the congestion at Chittagong Port as "we have to pay a huge amount because our ships ha to wait at the port for five to six additional days.' Meanwhile, the HC following a

petition filed by the BGMEA on Thursday asked the chief executives of five companies--HRC, QC, OEL, Sea Consortium, and ACL-to be present in person and explain by September 17 why action will not be taken against them for violating its Around 1,100 twenty-equivalent-

unit containers usually leave for Singapore through six feeder vessel Operators to reach destinations in through dialogue.

Europe and America

The companies charge \$280-300 for each container for the Dhaka Singapore trip. They recently imposed an additional \$130 for each

container as congestion surcharge. In 2005, the Chittagong Port handled 7,83,352 six-metre-long (20ft) containers, up from 6,88,773 a

Bangladesh's exports rose 21.6 per cent to \$10.53 billion in the year that ended June 30, powered by a record 24 per cent export rise in textiles shipments.

EU sets deadline

FROM PAGE 16 that could ultimately produce

atomicweapons. Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel said after the 25 EU ministers discussed the Iranian issue in Finland on Saturday: "We give Solana two weeks for his clarification

But Solana told reporters: "There's no deadline, whenever we finish ... We are going to start in the coming days and I hope that it will be very short. We don't need many

Other EU ministers said Solana would report back to them in Brussels on September 15 and they had agreed not to take any action against Iran before then.

So far Iran has given no sign it is prepared to meet the international

ommunity's condition for opening negotiations on economic, technogical and political cooperation. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad remained defiant on

aturday and was quoted by the ISNA student news agency as saying: "Our nation is a supporter of peace but it will not retreat an iota from its right to nucleartechnology." Annan was expected to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and Larijani,

who is also the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Annan will press Iran to help shore up the Hezbollah-Israel ceasefire, but diplomats say the talks

will also cover the nuclear confron In Finland, EU ministers declined to talk publicly of sanc-

tions if Tehran did not comply on halting enrichment and stressed their preference for a solution

South Asian pilgrims

FROM PAGE 16 Baghdad on Thursday by suspected

Sunni insurgents left 67 civilians Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki -

whose coalition government is struggling to hold the divided country together -- travelled to the Shia holy city of Najaf to consult the faith's spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani urged Maliki to quickly

gain control of the violence.

"His eminence said when the government fails to do its duty in providing security, order and protection for citizens, this could pave the way for other powers to intercept and carry out this mission," Sistani's This is very serious, "he warned.

Sistani was alluding to the rise of Shia militias, such as the Mahdi Army of radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and the Badr Organisation of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), a leading religious party. After the meeting, Maliki said:

'His eminence thinks the state should be powerful and united and this obviously means that all wean ons should be in the hands of the "We are still looking for an oppor-tunity to be able to finish with this

issue," he said, when asked about the Both SCIRI and Sadr are supporters of Maliki's coalition government,

but their unofficial armies are seen by some as a danger to Iraq's stability at a time when the Pentagon is warning that it is close to sectarian war. A quarterly report from the US

Department of Defence painted a sombre picture of a still powerful anti-government insurgency and mounting violence between the bitterly divided Sunni and Shia communities Since its last report, the Pentagon

said, "the core conflict in Iraq changed into a struggle between Sunni and Shia extremists. The report covered the period

between May and the end of July, which was marked by Irag's worst bloodshed since the US-led invasion of March 2003. "The average number of weekly attacks increased 15 percent over the

previous reporting period average. fragi casualties increased by 51 percent compared to the previous quarter," the report said. Iraqi and US officials in Baghdad

say that civilian casualties dropped significantly in August thanks, they say, to a beefed up security plan in the war-torn capital and the increasing competence of Iraqi security forces. Nevertheless, the last few days of

Bagerhat women

FROM PAGE 16 A group of Bangladeshi cancer spe-cialists will provide necessary advice and treatment following the suggestions from the US. The main objective of this pro-

ject is to eradicate all sorts of taboos, fear, maltreatment or social restrictions faced by the rural women across the country," Reza Salim said.

The project will bear all necessary cost of treatment for the poor. Amader Gram Communi-cations has provided necessary technologi-

software and hardware in implementing this online service. A mobile phone helpline to get the services of the project will also be

bloody attacks and clashes with both Sunni insurgents and Shia militias. The Pentagon report said armed

factions from both sides of Iraq's religious divide "are locked in mutually reinforcing cycles of sectarian "Concern about civil war within

the Iraqi civilian population and among some defence analysts has increased in recent months," it The security situation is currently at its most complex state since

the initiation of Operation Iraq Maliki on Saturday also said that he will reshuffle his cabinet. Four

ministers will lose their current jobs, he said, amid speculation that the keyinterior or defence ministry posts could be one of them. Meanwhile, in a sign of the violence gripping Iraq, at least 18 other

people were killed across Iraq on A car bomb exploded in a farmers' market in al-Mashrua, 60km south of

the capital, killing four civilians and wounding 13. Iraqi police also reported that six civilian truck drivers suspected by insurgents of carrying supplies for US forces had been ambushed and

killed north of Samarra. In the restive city of Baquba, north of Baghdad, six people, including three policemen, were shot dead.

Two civilians were killed in another car bombing in Baghdad and police also found two corpses in the town of Kut, south of the capital

Iraq also announced that it had regained control of the infamous Abu Ghraib prison from US authorities and that its cells were now empty.

PM asks FROM PAGE 16

As many as 51 leaders, including presidents and general secretaries of

Noakhali and Laxmipur districts exchanged their views with the party chairperson. Eight MPs of the two districts also met the party chief. They apprised her of organisational activities and party's popu-

larity in their respective areas. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Senior Joint

Secretary General Tarique Rahman, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury and BNP Office Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan were also present at the meeting.

Dealers stop FROM PAGE 16 According to company sources,

industry ministry on August 30 morning sent a circular to the company and to other fertiliser factories asking them to distributeurea fertiliser maintaining the district-wise allocation system However, agriculture ministry on the same day in the afternoon

sent another order asking them to distribute maintaining the upazilawise allocation system. The company allocated 26,000 metric tones of urea for the month of September for distribution in

Brahmanbaria, Sunamgani, Chandpur, Comilla, Kishoreganj and Netrakona districts. Mizanur Rahman, former general secretary of Zila Saar Samity, said all

cal support including computer the 668 dealers have refrained from collecting fertiliser from the factory. If the distribution does not run smoothly, there are possibilities of a fertiliser crisis, he added.

If the education systems are Terming corruption, terrorism reformed and updated, the country will come out from all the major

New EC rebuts claims

yesterday ran reports where it was alleged that Hasan Mansur in his capacity as the secretary of post and telecommunications ministry was involved in a controversial IT deal worth Tk 50 crore with a Chinese company.
Serving as the telecommunica-

formed the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) regarding a vendorsponsored overseas trip, the reports said. went abroad purely on an official assignment and in the

tions secretary a few months ago,

he was also found to have misin-

public interest. Nothing else was related to it." he said adding that a minister or a secretary alone cannot win a deal for a company. Mansur, who was appointed as

the election commissioner on last Thursday, is likely to take oath today. He said he was not informed about his appointment beforehand. The government did not consult me before and I only came to know about it from the newspa-

pers on Friday," Mansur added Asked about the prevailing situation in the Election Commission (EC), the new entrant to the dommission said, "Let me join first. I will try to address myself to the problems if any exists there." I have taken the assignment as

a challenge. The Election Commission is doing everything for the conduct of free and fair elections and I will only contribute ALLEGATIONS AGAINST HIM According to newspaper reports, Mansur allegedly gave wrong information to the PMO regarding Mansur allegedly

while serving as the telecommuni-He visited Spain and China to attend the '3GSM World Congress 2006' from February 13 to 15, 2006. His office had misrepresented the

a vendor-sponsored overseas trip

The 3GSM World Congress was held exclusively in Barcelona,

Spain from February 13 to 15 while in the official order for Mansur's trip China was falsely showed as the second venue of the event and he was granted five extra days (February 10 to 17). Chinese telecoms contractor

wise, the news reports said. The planning ministry's Central Procurement Technical Unit

As the telecoms secretary,

Of the deals, one was a \$3.5-million contract for installing an optical fibre transmission between Dhaka and Raishahi and the other was a \$3.6-million deal to

proved of the undue favours that Mansur had taken from Huawei The telecoms ministry, however, ignored the objections and kept working towards having the deals approved for Huawei.

FROM PAGE 16

to the cattle market in Patgram upazila for sale On contact, 19 Battalion

Commander of Bangladesh Rifles Lt Col Shafayet confirmed the incident and said they would call for a flag meeting today to protest against the incident.

It was, however, not clear why BSF closed the corridor.

Huawei Technologies had borne the entire cost of his visit including airfare, board and lodging and daily allowances. All this was an irregular practice for a public servant as one shall not use his public position for personal gains, financial or other-

(CPTU) had officially identified the visit as a 'clear conflict of interest' as the telecoms ministry was processing two multimillion-dollar bids of Huawei at that time. the Taliban and other insurgent Mansur fronted the procurement

About 2,000 people, most of them militants but also including civilians, Afghan forces, aid workers and more han 90 foreign soldiers, have been supplyVoIP platform to the BTTB. dlled in violence this year. The CPTU had strongly disap-Suspected Taliban fighters vesterday assassinated a senior Afghan police officer, his three

leaving only the woman's three-month-old baby alive. They were definitely Taliban. The Cabinet Purchase No one can carry out such a cow-ardly ambush except the Taliban," Committee on August 21 okayed the deal and sent those to the PMO said Sayed Agha Saqib, the police for the prime minister's nod. chief of the south-western prov-

> Britain has faced unexpectedly fierce resistance from Taliban fighters since sending the first large foreign force to Helmand this year as part of an expanding Nato peacebiggest ever ground operation.

Suspected Taliban also assassi-

nated a district police chief in

neighbouring Nimroz province, killing three of his bodyguards.

Three attackers were also killed,

Anwarul Kabir Talukder told The Daily Star that he would not It notes that the CMG has recommend any deal that goes against the interest of the coun-

Experts against deal Because it will not have much contribution to our economy," said Professor Anu Muhammad in his

keynote presentation. Coalmines must be developed for energy security, and that is why the contract with Asia Energy Corporation (AEC) must be cancelled, he said, adding that under the contract AEC have 100 percent ownership and more than 90 percent of the coal will be exported.

He said, "A question has been ruised that App. will go to me inter national court where Bangladesh might have to compensate the company. But according to Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman, no mining contract was signed. So, there should not be any question of AECgoing to the court.

The Jahangirnagar University professor suggested increasing local expertise for extraction of coal by local experts and not by foreign companies. "But regrettably, suggested by the World Bank our successive governments have been downsizing national companies like Bapex, allowing multinational companies into our gas and coal

There were no accidents like Magurchhara or Tengratila when local companies went for mining, meaning that they are more competent than many foreign companies, he said.

Professor of Economics Anu Muhammad, also member secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Port, alleged that AEC wanted to convince the people of Phulbaria with bribes, but failed to realise that the common people of this country are

not as corrupt as the politicians. Dhaka University Professor Abu Ahmed said an African country, Chad, is demanding 60 percent royalty, while Bolivia has totally nationalised the mineral resources sector. "So, why should Bangladesh get only six percent royalty?" he

He also raised a question regarding why there was not any tender for leasing out the Phulbari coalmine before any contract. Foreign energy companies are exploiting Bangladesh through production sharing contracts (PSCs) where they say that Bangladesh will get a percentage of gas or so only after cost recovery. But costs are never recovered for

Prof Abu Ahmed, also an economist, suggested that the government should appreciate movements like the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Port, as it can identify the loopholes in contracts through such movements. Professor Shamsul Alam of Chittagong University of

Engineering and Technology

demanded trial of Energy Adviser

Mahmudur Rahman and former

state minister for energy and min-

eral resources Mosharraf Hossain

saying they lied to the people about

gas and coalmine contracts. Asia Energy also committed a crime by its attempt to bribe local residents, politicians and the local administration, he said terming the deal with AEC 'illegal and discriminatory'. Asia Energy should therefore be driven away from the country, he said.

Justice Golam Rabbani said AEC will not be successful if it goes to the international court as the deal was not done legally. "There can be legal fights only when a contract is

signed legally." Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim said all must be alert so that the success in Phulbari cannot be hijacked by vested quarters. "The peoples' victory that we saw in Phulbari and Kansat can be turned

into a mass revolution," he said.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)

President Hasanul Huq Inu appre-

hended that the present alliance government made secret financial transactions with Asia Energy for the deal. The Khaleda-Nizami government has been in favour of exporting gas and coal, he said adding, "Khaleda Zia knows how these transactions have been made,

made without the prime minister's A national consensus should be there on export of mineral resources, he said, adding that these should not be exported for temporary profit.

because such major deals are not

Amirul Islam Bablu, a local leader from Phulbari, said a stronger movement will be launched in Phulbari if the government does not implement the agreements that it made with the National Committee to Protect Oil. Gas. Mineral Resources, Electricity and Committee Convenor Sheikh

Shahidul Islam, Workers Party leader Haider Akbar Khan Rono, journalist Syed Abul Maksud, DU Professor Akmal Hossain, CPB leader Ruhin Hossain Prince, Channel i Chief News Editor Shah Alamgir, Professor Salimullah Khan, and National Adivasi Parishad General Secretary Rabindranath Soren also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Shaptahik 2000 Acting Editor

Golam Mortoza.

in the country. He said a vested quarter com-

ernment's firm stance on implementing the pledges it made to Phulbari people, he said, "The alliance government works for the land and the people and it will not allow any anti-people activities."

Natun Probhat, a local newspaper largely influenced by the mayor, on Thursday quoting Minu said local Awami League played a role behind the Phulbari incident. "Local AL lawmaker Mustafizur

Black day

negotiations.
"They [administration] are yet

"If they notice any prograstina-

Cases filed against the protesters after the August 26 incident

3 killed

Minu business from Bangladesh and no

open-pit mining would be allowed

pared the low key Phulbari issue with the Kansat incident in Chapainawabganj and tried to damage the image of the government. "Provoking violence instead of solving problems bears signs of their ill intentions, "he added. Reassuring people of the gov-

The mayor avoided answering when asked why the government allowed Asia Energy to go this far in implementing open-pit mining while the government now terms it 'anti-people'

Rahman from behind the scenes provoked people towards violence instead of asking them to remain calm," the newspaper quoted Minu as saying.