

# Resist open-pit mining at Fulbari

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion meeting yesterday called for resisting Asia Energy or any other company which will try to conduct open-pit mining at Fulbari in Dinajpur district.

They also urged the government to implement the agreement that it reached with the people of Fulbari during the violent protest one month ago.

The speakers termed the deal between Asia Energy and the government discriminatory and called for its immediate cancellation.

The discussion was organised jointly by Bangladesh Adivasi Odhikar Andolon and Bangladesh Adivasi Forum at the National Press Club auditorium in the city.

Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University chaired the discussion

where Secretary General of Adivasi Forum Sanjeeb Drong was present as main discussant.

Sanjeeb said Asia Energy violated international convention as it did not conduct any prior consultation with the local indigenous and Bengali speaking people.

"Since the independence we have found the same character of all governments. All of them maintained discriminatory attitude towards indigenous people," he added.

Anu Muhammed, secretary general of National Committee for Oil-Gas Power, Mineral Resources and Port Protection, said Fulbari movement was a unique one as all people irrespective of their caste and creed took part in it.

"Now Asia Energy has no option but to leave the country as the local people would not allow them to stay anymore," said Anu Muhammed.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, secretary of the central committee of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said people of Fulbari have become a real hero of the movement.

Prof Mesbah said Fulbari movement was successful as it was a joint movement of indigenous and Bengali speaking people.

Pankaj Bhattacharya, presidium member of Gono Forum, Haider Akbar Khan Rano, politburo member of Workers' Party, Kerina Hasda, a representative of Santal Community, Hiron Mitra Chakma, vice president of Adivasi Student Parishad, and Abdul Mazid Chowdhury of Fulbari also spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, the participants of the discussion observed a one-minute silence to show respect to seven people who sacrificed their lives during the Fulbari movement.



Prof Mesbah Kamal addresses a discussion at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Workers' Party politburo member Haider Akbar Khan Rano and on his right are Gono Forum presidium member Pankaj Bhattacharya, Ajoy Roy and Prof Anu Muhammed.

## Pak president to give proceeds from book sale to charity

AP, United Nations

Pakistani President Gen Pervez Musharraf plans to give the proceeds from the sale of his new book, "In the Line of Fire," to a foundation or charity that promotes either women's causes or poverty alleviation, Pakistan's foreign minister said.

In the book, published Monday, Musharraf says the mastermind of the Sept 11, 2001, US terrorist attacks helped lay the groundwork for the London subway bombings and a plot to strike Heathrow Airport. He also says the United States paid Pakistan millions of dollars in bounties to hand over some of the nearly 700 al-Qaida suspects arrested in Pakistan.

Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri dismissed reports that Musharraf was promoting his book in the United States to make money.

"It is false," he said in an Associated Press interview Wednesday. "The money that will be raised will go to charity, or a foundation that he's looking at an appropriate purpose. He's not sure... it could go to women causes, or it could go to poverty alleviation."



## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions and at a few places over Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are expected at places during the period, Met Office said predicting a nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 34.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 23.3 degree Celsius at Chuadanga.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:47pm today and rises at 5:50am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.5	25.5	81	80
Chittagong	34.4	25.3	73	95
Rajshahi	34.2	24.0	83	94
Khulna	31.0	26.6	76	93
Barisal	32.5	26.4	84	83
Sylhet	34.8	26.0	80	67
Cox's Bazar	32.8	25.5	71	85



Amami League President Sheikh Hasina speaks at the AL presidium meeting at Sudha Sadan in the city yesterday.

## British HC meets Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury yesterday called on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence and exchanged views on the latest development in pre-election politics of the country.

The meeting lasted for nearly two hours from 4:20pm. Matters relating to the arrival of British Chief Secretary to the Treasury Stephen Timms MP here on Saturday also came up for the discussion.

## 400 sacks of looted urea fertiliser recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Police yesterday recovered 400 sacks of urea fertiliser looted from the store of Lutfor Kazi, brother of Kazi Rafiq MP of Sariakandi.

Meanwhile, at least 800 sacks of fertiliser were looted from the river Jamuna under Islampur of Jamalpur when Milon Enterprise of Roumari, Kurigram, was carrying those by a launch from Jamalpur Fertiliser Company on September 25.

Milon Enterprise filed a case with Islampur Police Station.

## Lancet prioritises reducing maternal deaths

BSS, Dhaka

The Lancet, one of the world's leading medical journals, has published a landmark series of research papers on reducing maternal mortality in developing countries.

According to an ICDDR,B press release here yesterday, the journal in its September 28 issue said this maternal survival series addresses the deaths of pregnant and recently pregnant women; who die from causes related to their pregnancy.

The launching of the series took place in London on September 27, where Dr Richard Horton, editor of the Lancet, and other medical experts spoke.

The papers of the series have revealed that women in the poorest parts of the world are over 1,000 times more likely to die from maternal causes than those in developed countries.

It also highlighted that in most low-income countries households pay far too great a share of the costs of maternal health services, or do not seek care because they cannot afford the costs.

It is estimated that an additional one billion US dollar is needed in 2006 from donors and governments to scale up coverage of maternal health services, which would increase to 6.1 billion US dollar in 2015.

Dr Marge Koblinsky, director of the ICDDR,B Public Health Sciences Division and lead author of a paper of the series, stated that the immediate priority for governments and donors should be to invest in the training, deployment and retention of skilled attendants, especially midwives.

## Army inter-area annual Qirat, Azan contest held

BSS, Dhaka

The prize distribution ceremony of the Inter-Area Qirat and Azan Competition-2006 of Bangladesh Army was held at the Army Central Mosque at Dhaka Cantonment after Juma prayers yesterday.

Six ADA Brigade team won the title obtaining 403 points, while the Jessore Area team became runners-up with 387 points, said a press release.

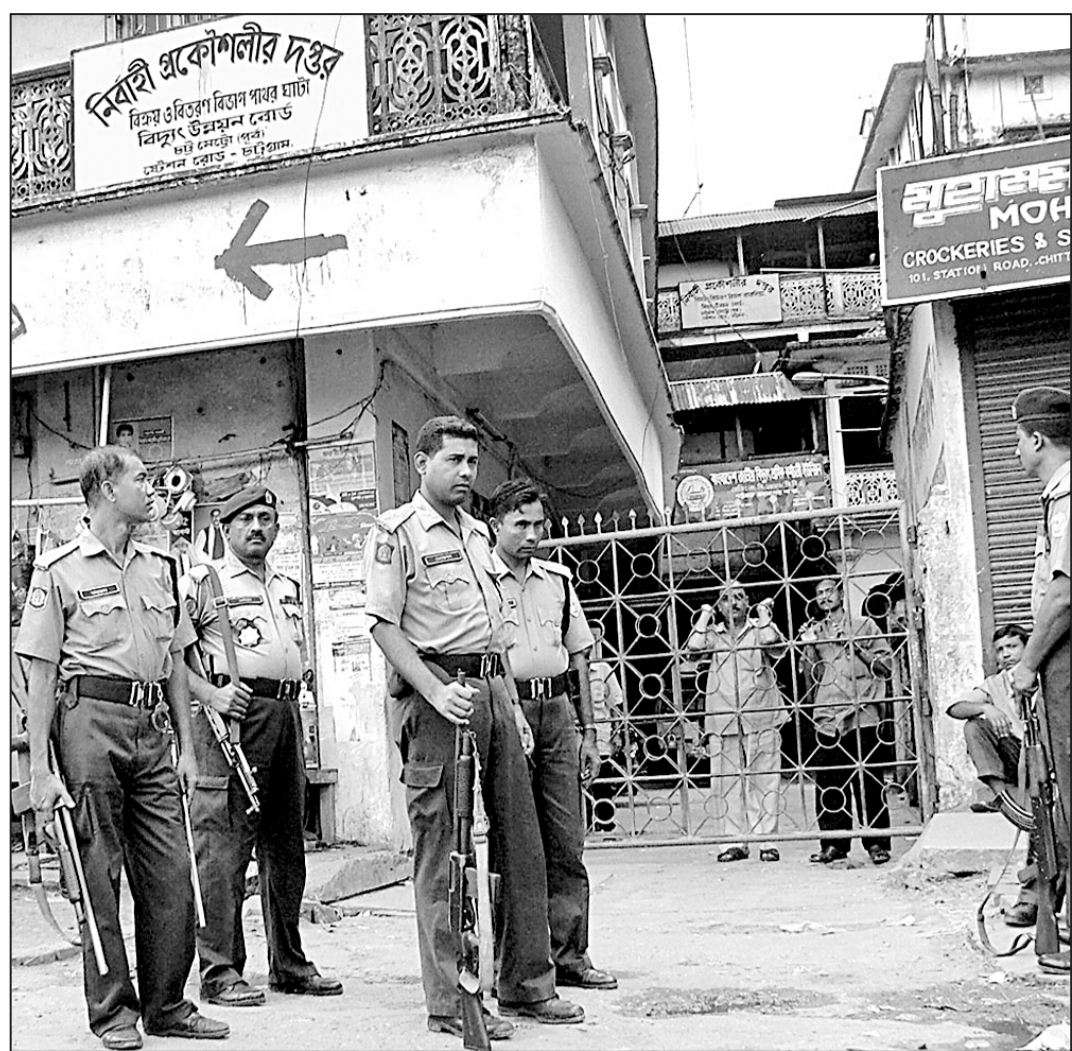
In Qirat competition, Lance Corporal Md. Humam Kabir of 6 ADA Brigade team won the first prize, while Sergeant Md. Imdadul Islam of 14 Independent ADA Brigade team got the second prize.

In Azan Competition, Sainik Md. Abul Khair of Log Area team became first, while Sainik Md. Babul Hossain of 6 ADA Brigade team got the second prize.

The top two prize winners recited verses from the Holy Quran and rendered Azan respectively on the occasion.

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Moeen U Ahmed attended the function as the chief guest and listened to the Qirat and Azan of the competitors. Later, General Moeen distributed the prizes among the winners.

Among others, Principal Staff Officers of Army Headquarters, Local Army Officers, a large number of sainik and other musallies (devotees) were present.



Police have been deployed at Reazuddin Bazar electricity office in the port city yesterday following public outburst in different areas in the country caused by continuous power outage.

# Redesign curriculum to modernise madrasa edn

Academicians say at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academicians at a seminar in the city yesterday said curriculum and syllabus of the Alia madrasa and Qawami madrasa must be thoroughly redesigned in a bid to modernise the madrasa education system.

Opposing the recognition of Dawara degree of Qawami madrasa as equivalent to master's degree in Islamic Studies or Arabic Literature and Fazil-Kamil as equivalent to Bachelor and Master's degree, they also said this move was taken only in political consideration on the eve of the election, not for making the education system standard.

A number of madrasa students are being deprived from their basic knowledge and some religion-based parties are using madrasa education to realise their interests, said the academicians.

Shikha Andolon Mancha organised the seminar on 'Recognition of Qawami madrasa and awarding Fazil and Kamil degrees as equivalent of graduate and postgraduate degrees' at

the Business Studies auditorium of Dhaka University.

Prof Ajoy Roy, president of the Mancha, said students of madrasa could not get job as their syllabus is outdated.

"Every education has two sides. One is to gather knowledge and another is to market skill, which will help the learners to earn money. Without modernising the curriculum, the plight of the madrasa students would not end only by giving recognition," he said.

Prof Zafar Iqbal said modern education could not be imparted if their traditional curriculum remains and madrasa students could not join the mainstream of education only through recognition.

Robaet Ferdous, associate professor of Mass Communication and Journalism department of Dhaka University, said students from poor family are receiving education in madrasa and the government should take effective measures to modernise the curriculum.

"But without changing the syllabus, the government should

not have recognised Qawami madrasa education," he said.

Prof Shahidul Islam, Prof Muntasir Mamun and Shaheen Reza Nur also spoke on the occasion.

## Obituary

BSS, Dhaka

Asha Lata Saha, mother of Senior Reporter of the daily New Age Bivash Chandra Saha passed away due to old age complications at her Jamalpur residence on September 27 at the age of 78, a Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) press release said yesterday.

Asha Lata Saha is survived by three sons, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

DRU President M Shafiqul Karim Sabu and General Secretary Shahed Chowdhury in a joint statement condoled the death of Asha Lata Saha.

They prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

## 'None can be made CG chief if past political affiliation considered'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Energy Advisor Mahmudur Rahman yesterday said none could be made the chief of caretaker government if his affiliation with any political organisation during student life is considered.

He was speaking as chief guest at a discussion meeting titled 'Constitutional process and the present political perspective' organised by the Chittagong unit of Bangladesh Sammilita Peshajibee Parishad at a local community centre in the morning.

Mahmudur Rahman, also the central president of Bangladesh Sammilita Peshajibee Parishad, claimed that chief of the last caretaker government Justice Latifur Rahman was an Awami League and one of his closest relatives was an AL lawmaker, while Shafiqur Rahman, a top leader of Janater Mancha, was made an election commissioner before the last AL government handed over power to caretaker government.

Similarly, Justice Habibur Rahman, chief of the first caretaker government, was also a leading personality of communist party, he said.

But political affiliation of none was considered before their appointment, he added.

The energy advisor said the AL made General Harun as the chief of army staff superseding many officers while it chose Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed as the president, but it could not help the AL win the election.

Central Secretary General of the parishad Prof Dr AZM Zahid Hossain was the principal speaker at the meeting chaired by parishad's Chittagong unit President Prof Dr ANM Munir Ahmad Chowdhury.

Dr Zahid said professional people during any transitional period or crisis of the country played a significant role to protect the country's independence, sovereignty and democracy alongside their professional duties.

The discussion was also participated by Reazul Islam, Dr Feruz Mahmud Iqbal, Advocate Kabir Chowdhury, Zahidul Karim Kachi, Dr Khurshid Jamil Chowdhury, Md Ershad Ullah, Engineer Kazi Fazlul Karim, MA Safa Chowdhury, Dr Md Nurun Nabi, Advocate SM Sirajul Alam, Shakhawat Hossain Majnu and Prof Nasrul Kader.

## 4 college teachers assaulted by Shibir men

UNB, Satkhira

Four college teachers were assaulted by the Shibir men on the Satkhira City College Campus Thursday.

College Principal Emdadul Haque said Islamic Chhatra Shibir activists assaulted four teachers - Abdul Wadud of Islamic History Department, Abdul Jalil of Chemistry Department and Abdul Aziz and Belal Hossain of Islamic Studies --when the teachers tried to desist them from bringing out a procession on the campus during the college hours.

The college authorities banned student politics on the campus in 2005.

# Hosaf rejoinder and our reply

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government to the Bangladesh government, with 15 years repayment, including 3 years grace period," it added.

After "threadbare" negotiation, a contract was signed between the CMC-led consortium and Petrobangla. "There is no question that CMC and Hosaf had drained out the money, rather CMC injected huge amounts of money to Bangladesh for the development of this project," it said.

"Hosaf is not at all responsible for the contractual obligation between CMC and its Chinese consortium and Petrobangla and Hosaf never interfered, nor participated, during the commercial negotiation. So the question of influence of Hosaf does not arise."

Within the last one year, two foreign companies sent proposal to the energy ministry to take over the right of the Barapukuria coalmine. Following this, the CMC and Hosaf submitted their proposal very recently.

"CMC's proposal is more favourable than the last two proposals and CMC will never go against the interest of Bangladesh at any time," it added.

The CMC also participated in the "international" tender of the PDB to set up two units of 125 megawatt power plant in Barapukuria mine site. The CMC-led consortium became the lowest bidder with an offer of \$233 million and follow-up negotiations reduced the price to \$220 million. In this regard, the influence of Hosaf again does not arise to increase the price.

"The total purchase process was done during the Awami League period, so there is absolutely no scope for any BNP lawmaker to influence this project," Hosaf said.

**OUR REPLY**

By its own statement, Hosaf admits that it has spearheaded the supplier's credit deal for the coalmine. Instead of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) that knocks at the doors of donors or financiers to find funds for projects, Hosaf "found"

Bangladesh the "soft" loan that went against Bangladesh's interest from the beginning.

The minimum grace period of any "soft loan" is 10 years. Therefore, a three-year grace period for a massive project, which was supposed to be completed in 2001, is not at all soft.

Again, in case of other supplier's credit schemes, even with China, repayments do not start before completion of a project which can typically take three to four years to complete. In case of Barapukuria, the repayment was supposed to begin in 1998 when the Awami League (AL) government stopped it initially, until Hosaf formed an ally with Sahco to lobby in the AL political territory. By this means, Hosaf succeeded in starting the repayment for a project that was not only far from completion but had landed in a deep mess following internal flooding of the mine in 1998 due to faulty designs.

Soft loans also do not demand a down payment. In case of the Barapukuria loan, the government made 10 per cent payment worth Tk 88 crore before the project began. With this amount in hand, the CMC started the job.

Till now the CMC has taken Tk 600 crore in down payment (against an original project cost outlined at Tk 887 crore), yet the mine could not start full production in 2006, five years behind the schedule. Not only did it fail to deliver the mine as promised, its faulty designs officially reduced the mine's annual production target of 1.1 million ton coal to 7,00,000 tons.

Meanwhile, CMC's redesigning of the mine has increased the project cost to Tk 1,600 crore. Thanks to the lobbying of Hosaf, the government even approved this cost increase which nearly doubled the coal production cost. Then how did CMC deliver the mine? What kind of money did it pump into Bangladesh?

According to the World Bank, it is estimated that up to 40 per cent of project budget under supplier's

credit is used for bribing officials and political lobbies.

There was no "threadbare" negotiation between Petrobangla and CMC. According to the original negotiators, CMC negotiated through interpreters and it did not fare well. But there were political directives to reach agreement and Petrobangla obliged.

With the mining project landing in a mess in 1998, the AL government stopped the coal-fired power project till 2000. With Sahco in the team of lobbyists, Hosaf succeeded in convincing the AL government that there is no option for Bangladesh but to go for the power project, which was set to consume 80 per cent of the mine's coal production. The AL government approved the flawed and ever-losing power project in July 2001, leaving the signing of the agreement to the next government.

It was the BNP-led alliance government that initially suspended the scheme, like many other faulty and corruption-plagued schemes taken by the previous AL government. The power agreement was not made effective till April 2002. Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman himself said he was not convinced about this project because the same CMC--which was developing the coalmine--was refusing to give 30-year coal supply guarantee to the power plant project. The guarantee has not been provided till date.

As per World Bank analysis of 2002, the capital cost of the Barapukuria plant's per unit power was \$973 per kW against \$500 of the AES Haripur, \$538 of Siddhirganj, and \$330 of Chandpur power projects.

If economic analysis served the basis of both the coalmine and power projects, there would have been no reason for the government to undertake these schemes.



### Seminar

Institute of Hazrat Mohammad (Saw) organises a seminar on legal right of visually impaired. Venue: Conference hall, Hotel Lake Shore. Time: 4:00pm.

### Award giving ceremony

The award giving ceremony of Banglalink-Saptahik 2000 Eid Fashion Contest 2006 will be held. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre. Time: 6:45pm.

### Memorial meeting

A memorial meeting will be held in memory of artist Nitun Kundu. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

### Roundtable

Bangladesh Labour Party will organise a roundtable on 'Free and fair election and necessary reforms to institutionalise democracy'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:30am.

### Discussion

National Girl Child Advocacy Forum will hold a discussion commemorating the National Girl Child Day 2006. Venue: Shishu Academy. Time: 3:00pm.

### Prize giving ceremony

Prize giving ceremony of Agora 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Raffle Draw will be held. Venue: Agora, Magbazar. Time: 11:00am.

### Lecture

Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises National Professor Atwar Hussain Lecture 2006. Venue: Society seminar room. Time: 4:30pm.