

**Phulbari Coal Field
Exploration
licence of AEC
renewed**

UNB, Dhaka

In an unusual move, the government has renewed the exploration licence of a foreign company for two years to carry out feasibility study at a block in Phulbari Coal Field.

Officials at the Energy and Mineral Resources Division said Australia-based Asia Energy Corporation (AEC) got the renewal on completion of its three-year exploration licence in January this year.

Usually a company doesn't get renewal of exploration licence if it failed to carry out necessary operation during the stipulated time. The AEC got the renewal on special consideration, they said.

The company had sought extension for block G while for block H, it has one more year to conduct exploration. It also seeks mining licence for block B on completion of the exploration work.

In block G, the AEC will now carry out a feasibility study on open pit mining. The open pit method involves cutting and removing the earth materials from above the coal and extracting the coal seams.

"Depth of coal below the surface is the most important factor, which decides whether an open pit or an underground mine will be viable," said leading geologist Prof Badrul Imam.

Meanwhile, Australian High Commissioner in Dhaka Lorraine Barker had discussion about the field when she called on State Minister for Energy AKM Mosarraf Hossain at his Secretariat office yesterday afternoon.



PHOTO: PID

Queen Sofia of Spain called on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Bangladesh can derive benefits from Shapta Kushi dam

Experts tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh can derive benefits from different regional projects like proposed 'Shapta Kushi high dam', experts said at the concluding session of a workshop on 'Sharing of common regional resources' in the city yesterday.

India and Nepal are planning to build the dam jointly on the Shapta Kushi river at Bara Khestra in eastern Nepal, just 107 kilometres away from Thakurgaon.

Underscoring the need for improved regional political relations, the experts from India and Nepal said Bangladesh could also join in the building process of the dam.

Good political relations a must for regional cooperation, they said.

Bangladesh has also the right to derive benefits from the Shapta Kushi high dam project as Himalayan water is a common regional resources, they added.

The construction of the dam will be completed in 15 years. It will store Himalayan water in the rainy season and generate around 4000 Mega Watt (MW) of hydropower every year.

The experts said the rivers in Bangladesh can also receive sufficient water supply in the dry season from the dam.

Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP) organised the workshop under the UNDP's Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP) component. Presided over by Dr. Qazi

Kholiquzzaman Ahmed, the session was attended by Syed Tanveer Haider, secretary of the Environment and Forest ministry, as chief guest. George Varghees from India and Umesh Pasajjuhe from Nepal were also present.

