



Former chief adviser to a caretaker government Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman speaks at the Asia Regional Dhaka Site Event 2007 on 'ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest' at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Formulate coal policy after feasibility study

Experts urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a roundtable yesterday urged the caretaker government to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on the coal resources of the country and then formulate a coal policy as part of a national energy policy.

They also demanded formulation of a long-term energy plan in the light of coal policy that would reflect national interest.

The roundtable was organised by the Citizens' Commission on Oil-Gas and Coal of Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) at Biam auditorium in the city.

Speaking at the programme former chief of Planning Commission Rafidul Islam Khan said the government should not formulate coal policy hastily.

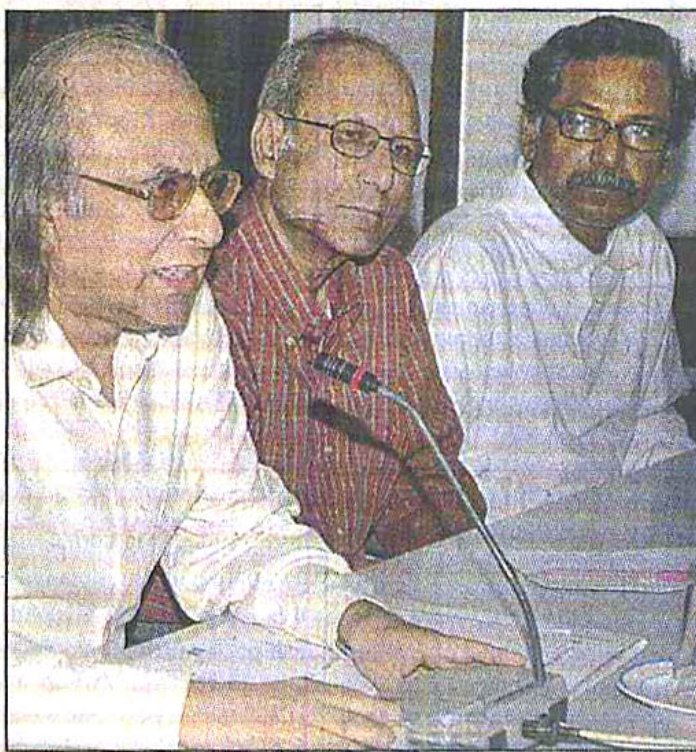
"The government should conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on the coal resources and then formulate a coal policy as part of the national energy policy," he added.

Rafidul proposed for the formation of Coal Board for conducting the feasibility study.

Prof Anu Muhammad of Jahangirnagar University said it is unfortunate that some advisers are advocating for some foreign companies which were ousted in the face of people's protest.

"We do not support keeping the mineral resources unused. But these resources should be used for the welfare of the common people who are the owner of the resources," he said.

"We oppose open-pit mining in the country as the process would have fatal consequences on the



BEA President Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad addresses a roundtable at the Biam auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left are Rafidul Islam Khan and Prof Anu Muhammad.

surrounding areas," said Anu Muhammad.

BEA President Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad urged the caretaker government not to approve the proposed coal policy if it goes against the interest of the country.

Arguing for exploration and extraction of coal resources through state-owned bodies, Prof Hossain Mansur, former Petrobangla Chairman, said, "If

Petrobangla and its subsidiary companies can successfully perform its tasks, then why other state-owned companies would not be successful in doing the same in the coal sector?"

Prof Shamsul Alam of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology and General Secretary of Uttaranchal Unnayan Committee Minhaz Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

\$173m USAID projects over next 5 years in health sector

UNB, Dhaka

USAID Assistant Administrator Kent Hill visited some USAID funded health projects Smiling Sun Health Clinic in Tongi, Social Marketing Company (SMC) oraline factory and BlueStar Pharmacy in Bhaluka.

Hill is on a three-day visit to Bangladesh to review USAID's health programmes in the region.

During his visit, Hill toured the USAID supported SMC oral rehydration salt factory and observed first hand making of oral rehydration salts that have proved to be the remedy for dehydration.

While visiting Smiling Sun Health Clinic, he interacted with the doctors and patients and reviewed the clinic's unique approach to replicating its programme around the country.

He appreciated the quality and range of services the clinic offers to nearly two million mostly poor Bangladeshis who visit the clinic every month.

Hill also visited the USAID supported SMC Blue Star Pharmacy and learned about the different methods of family planning the SMC provides to its large customer base.

He acknowledged the organisations for helping the SMC-affected people by setting up medical camps and working around the clock to produce extra numbers of oral rehydration salts.

As part of USAID's effort to improve the overall health condition of the Bangladeshi people, USAID will provide US\$173 million over the next five years to fund programmes supporting maternal and child health, family planning, tuberculosis eradication and HIV/AIDS mitigation under the health and population agreement with the government of Bangladesh.

Prof Latifa Akand, Prof Hosne Ara get Rokeya Padak

UNB, Dhaka

Prof Latifa Akand and Prof Dr Hosne Ara Begum have been awarded Begum Rokeya Padak-2007 for their outstanding contribution to socio-economic development of women folk.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will distribute the award at a ceremony at Osmany Memorial auditorium today, an official release said.

Migration changes land tenancy pattern in rural areas

BSS, Dhaka

Both internal and international migration spur land tenancy in the rural areas as higher incidence of land purchase is evident in areas, which have higher concentration of migration.

A recent study by Bangladesh Development Study said that in rural areas, the sale of land was 1.3 percent of the owned land, compared to 1.7 percent in 1987-88 and land purchase, which was reported at 2 percent in 1999-2000.

It said higher incidence of land purchase than its sale indicates the contribution of migration to the transactions in the land market.

By purchasing rural land, the urban settlers and overseas immigrants become the absentee landowners and get their land cultivated by the resident relatives under tenancy arrangement.

The study also pointed out that 21 percent of the migrant households were moderately poor prior to overseas migration by the respondents. In the post-migration period the proportion of such households slashed down dramatically to 7 percent.

In the rural area it was found that the extent of poverty was much lower around 30 percent for households having migrant members than non-migrant households around 60 percent.

In addition the flow of remittances also improved the living standard of the recipients and helped in improving the income distribution in favour of the poorer and the less skilled workers.

Contribution of remittances to households' income hovers at around 20 percent, which has increased significantly by about 8.1 percent per year during 1988-2000 when per capita income grew at 3.2 percent.

Moreover, decline of poverty is most rapid in Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions indicating important role of remittances in poverty alleviation as these divisions have highest concentration of migrants.

Continuous flow of remittances might have reduced severity of poverty in these districts. Between 10 and 19 percent of remittances is used to repay loans, one major source of funding the migration process.



PHOTO: STAR

Equity and Justice Working Group (EJWG) and Coast Trust stage a demonstration in front of the Jatiya Sangsad in the city yesterday demanding compensation from the developed countries for losses due to global climate change.

Gain confidence of patients

President urges surgeons

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday urged the surgeons to take appropriate measures to gain confidence of patients to prevent them from flying abroad for treatment.

"... a good number of Bangladeshi patients fly abroad for treatment and spend a huge amount of foreign currency every year, which is not at all desirable for a developing country like ours," he said.

The president was addressing the 10th International Surgical Congress at Hotel Sonargaon as chief guest. Health Adviser Major General (Retd) ASM Matir Rahman attended the programme as special guest.

He thanked Society of Surgeons of Bangladesh for organising such a congress and expressed his confidence that it would open up a new horizon to exchange newer ideas through different scientific deliberations among the participants. "And thus they will be mutually benefited," he added.

The president termed the roles of surgeons and physicians as of paramount importance in serving humanity.

Iajuddin said people seek the services of surgeons at the critical juncture of time when a person sits between life and death.

"Therefore, the services of the physicians are unmatched in terms of its merit and importance to save the valuable lives of patients," he added.

He also called upon the surgeons to discharge their duties with utmost sincerity and dedication, as their services are not only a sheer profession but also a noble mission to serve the mankind.

The president urged the surgeons to provide desired healthcare services, especially for the have-nots section, who cannot afford cost of the treatment, in the region.

He stressed the need for research exchange programme on medical education as it can play a significant role in promoting and boosting modern knowledge and development of medical science in this region.

"I hope this congress will put a step forward in making this a reality," he said.

President praises scouts

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday praised Bangladeshi scouts for their services to humanity, particularly their relief activities in cyclone-hit coastal districts.

The president's appreciation came when a nine-member delegation of scouts, led by Chief National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts M Fazlur Rahman, apprised him of scouts' activities at Bangabhaban.

Later, the president gave Silver Awards and certificates to Eric Khoo, president of Asia Pacific Region (APR) Scouts Foundation Management Committee, Malaysia and Mohammad Ali Khalid, vice-chairman, APR Scouts Committee for their devoted services in scouting in Malaysia and Asia Pacific Region.

The awards were given on the eve of International Centenary COMDECA to be inaugurated in Cox's Bazar today.

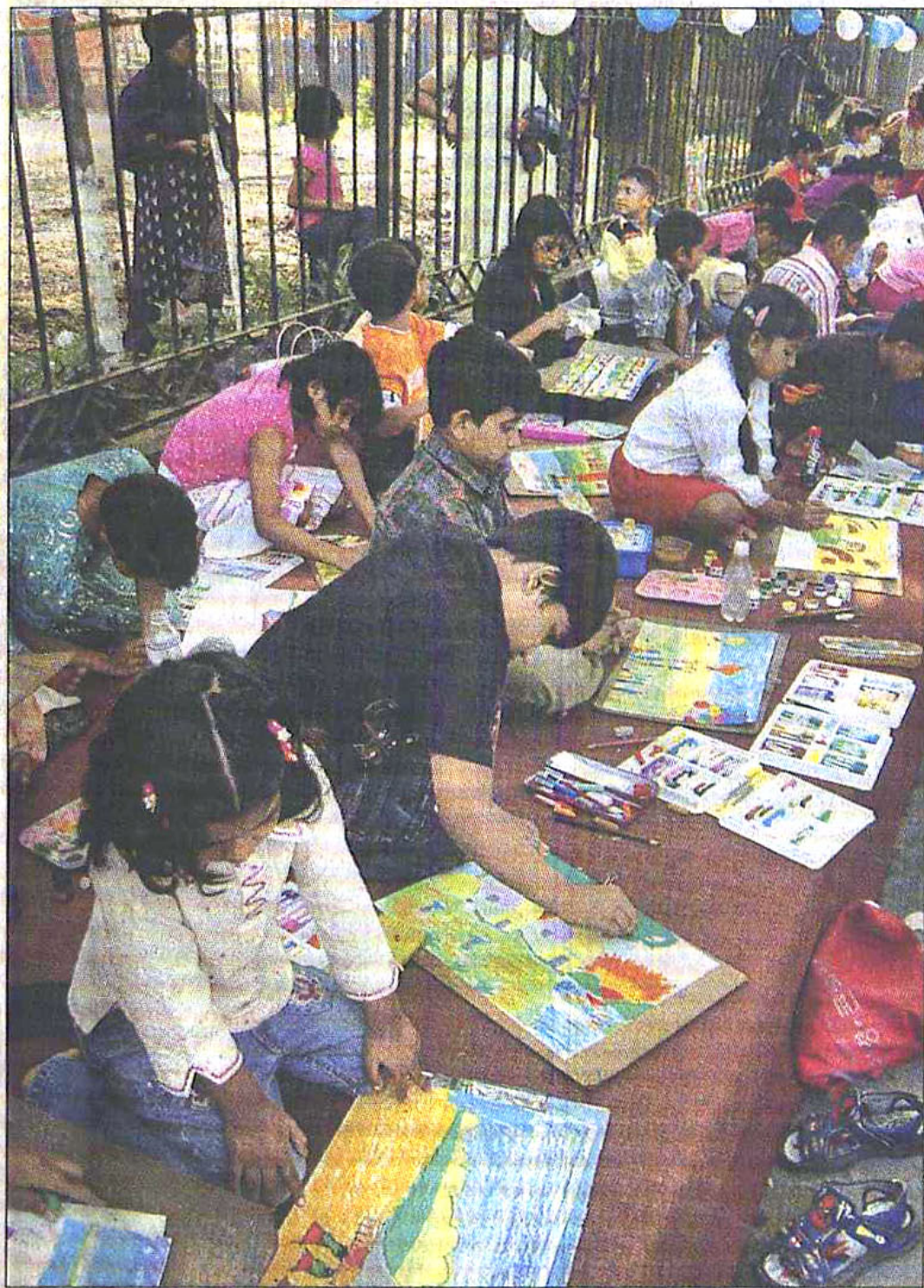


PHOTO: STAR

Children drawing pictures at a painting competition at Shishu Academy in the city yesterday. Jamuna Bank organised the competition on the occasion of the Victory Day.

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