

PHULBARI Govt urged not to allow open pit coal mining

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Port yesterday called on the government not to allow open pit coal mining in Phulbari, saying that it would lead to environmental disasters in the area.

Such a project would lead to the eviction of 4.7 lakh people from four upazilas and cause the groundwater level to go further down, the committee leaders said at a press conference at Dinaipur Press Club.

The government should also review the draft coal policy and maintain neutrality regarding the Phulbari coalmine issue, they added.

The leaders said that according to the proposal of the Asia Energy, it would extract coal for 30 years through open pit method and export two-thirds of coal.

Extraction of coal through open pit mining would cause massive damage to agriculture and the environment and threaten the livelihoods of local people, they said.

The leaders also said any agree-

ments on open pit mining would go against the interest of the country.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the committee, said the open pit method would cause more damage to ecology than the extent of economic benefit from the coalmine if the draft coal policy is not reviewed.

Open pit method is not suitable for densely populated countries like Bangladesh, he added.

Dr Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah and Prof Samsul Alam also spoke at the press conference.



Ain O Salish Kendra Executive Director Sultana Kamal speaks at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city yesterday. On her left are Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust Executive Director Taslimur Rahman. (Story on page 16)

Bangladesh will always stand by Japan Says foreign adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said Bangladesh would always stand by Japan and offer every support and cooperation so that Japan can play its due role in the international arena.

The foreign adviser said this to the media after holding bilateral talks with Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Kōmura at the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo on Monday evening.

"As Asia grows today, Japan is in a lead role. Bangladesh will always stand by Japan and offer every support and cooperation so that Japan can play its due role in the international arena," Iftekhar said.

Foreign Minister Kōmura was very appreciative of Bangladesh as a 'model of development that includes societal transformations

through indigenous ideas such as micro-credit and non formal education for women'.

During the meeting, they discussed on continued Japanese support to Bangladesh's development including the on-going 30th Loan Agreement Negotiations.

They also addressed the subject of cooperation on such issues as climate change and for the forth coming G-8 Summit to take place in Japan in July this year.

The talks also covered UN Security Council reforms and regional issues in South Asia including the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The adviser addressed an audience at the United Nations University on 'G-8: Putting development back in the Doha Round'. Academics and diplomats largely attended the programme.

'Promotion of HR, good governance a must for democracy'

UNB, Dhaka

Danish Ambassador in Dhaka Einar H Jensen yesterday said the promotion of human rights and good governance is essential for advancement of democracy.

"Denmark's development policy will promote the rights of children and young people and give them the opportunity for democratic influence," he said while distributing certificates and awards among the winners of an essay competition for school students on "How to be a Good Citizen" at the Alliance Francaise.

The envoy said children are considered as a long-term resource in the development process of Danish development cooperation policy.

The obligation in the UN Convention on the Rights of the

Child (UNCRC), he said, is a direct point of departure for Denmark's development efforts.

Ambassador Jensen said assistance to the efforts designed to promote respect for human rights and governance is a central and integrated element of Danish development cooperation policy.

The essay competition was organised by the News Network, a news feature agency, among students of class nine in eight districts with the assistance of the Danish government.

The envoy said the objective of the Danish grant is to facilitate the process to increase the level of awareness of school students on human rights issues, including child rights and women rights, and motivating them for promoting peace and tolerance in the society.

He said school is the appropriate place to teach the children about the challenges they will face in their everyday life. Unfortunately, he said, most of the children are growing up knowing little about their rights as citizens and how the country's laws protect the rights of the people.

Jensen said if the level of understanding of school students regarding human rights could be raised from the early age, there would be a far-reaching positive impact on the society.

Presided over News Network Editor Shahiduzzaman, the function was also addressed, among others, by BSS Chief Editor Zaglul A Chowdhury, International President of Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) Hassan Shahriar and AP Bureau Chief Farid Hossain.

Withdraw income tax on pvt varsities

APUB urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh (APUB) has urged the caretaker government to withdraw income tax imposed on private universities for the greater interest of higher education in the country.

At a roundtable yesterday, the APUB leaders claimed that nowhere in the world including Saarc countries, income tax is imposed on any university.

The roundtable titled 'Withdrawal of income tax imposed on non-govt universities and private universities ordinance (Proposed)' was organised by APUB at the National Press Club in the city.

"Imposing income tax on private universities is a regressive step which will discourage expansion of higher education in the country," said Prof M Alimullah Mian, vice-chancellor and founder of International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT), while presenting a keynote paper.

MA Kashem, chairman of APUB, said the imposition of income tax on private universities is discriminatory as private medical colleges, dental colleges and engineering universities are exempted from paying taxes.

Abul Quasem Haider, founder chairman of Eastern University, said the government should withdraw income tax from private universities as these are established and operated solely for education and not for profit.

APUB leaders also alleged that some rules in the proposed private university ordinance would change the basic structure of private universities.

"We will welcome further amendment of Private University Act 1992. There is no need to enact a new act for operating the private universities," said Jalaluddin Ahmed, president of East West University.

National Professor Nurul Islam said the government should withdraw the proposed Private University Ordinance 2007.



1st Saarc poetry evening held in city

The first Saarc poetry evening was held at the National Museum auditorium in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Meghdut Abrid Sangshad in collaboration with Unesco Bangladesh Office organised the poetry evening.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Choudhury attended the event as the chief guest while Foreign Secretary Touhid Hossain and Unesco Resident Representative to Bangladesh Malama Meleisea were present as the special guest.

The chief guest in her speech highlighted the richness of South Asian culture and praised the initiative taken by Meghdut in promoting a bond of cultural understanding among the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) member states.

Poet Asad Chowdhury, Prof Niranjana Adhikari, Mijarul Quayes, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Maldives Rafiqul Islam, Bhashwar Bannerji, Mahidul Islam, Dr Rashid Hyder, Mosud Mannan, Saumitra Dev, Razu Ahmed Mamun, Farhad Hossain, Jemi Daizy Marak, Trijina Changma and Sajid Akhand from Bangladesh, and Feroz Shah Shariyar, second secretary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Sonam Tshering of embassy of Bhutan, Ajit Gupte of high commission of India, Ramesh Prasad Khanal, CDA a.i. and Krisu Chhetri, attache of embassy of Nepal, Aamir Shouket, first secretary of embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and Jayashantha Peiris of Sri Lanka performed in the event.

Major reshuffle in police admin

UNB, Dhaka

In a major reshuffle in the police administration, the caretaker government yesterday transferred 18 superintendents of police (SPs).

According to a home ministry circular, SP of Magura Mohammad Muslim, commandant of PSTS of Betbunia in Rangamati Md Abdur Rahman Khan and SP of Sherpur Krishna Pada Roy have been transferred to Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Dhaka as special supers (SS), while former Deputy Commissioner (DC) of DMP Md Abdul Alim Mahmud, SP of Joypurhat Md Shafiqul Islam, commandant of Mohalchhari in Khagrachhari Md Humayun Kabir and DC of KMP Md Abdul Jalil Mondal have been transferred to the Police Headquarters as assistant inspectors general (AIGs).

Besides, SP of Noakhali Md Mushfequr Rahman has been

transferred to Rajbari while SP of Lalmonirhat Md Jamshed Ali transferred to Muktagachha in Mymensingh as commandant of the 7th APBN, Special SS of CID in Dhaka Md Akkas Uddin Bhuiyan made DC of DMP and DC of KMP AKM Masudul Alam transferred to Joypurhat as SP.

SP of Highway Police (West) Sheikh Mohammad Maruf Hasan has been transferred to Manikganj. Attached Additional DIG of Rajshahi Range Md Abul Kalam Azad transferred to Mohalchhari in Khagrachhari as commanding officer of the 1st APBN, commandant of the 9th APBN in Dhaka Md Jahangir Hossain Matubbar transferred to Jhenidah as SP, SP of Manikganj Intiaj Ahmed transferred to Comilla, DC of DMP Md Qayumuzzaman Khan made SP of Khagrachhari and commandant of RRF in Sylhet Md Ali Hossain Fakir has been transferred to Magura as SP.

20 hurt in Benapole clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between two groups of smugglers at bordering Putkhal village yesterday evening.

The clash occurred when a group of the smugglers tried to snatch away the smuggled goods from another group.

Local people said a gang of smuggler led by Kamrul smuggled some goods into Bangladesh from India yesterday evening. But another group snatched it away.

Of the injured Yunus Ali, 24, Shahadat, 35, and Tahazzat Hossain, 30, were injured critically. 10 others were rushed to different hospitals and clinics.



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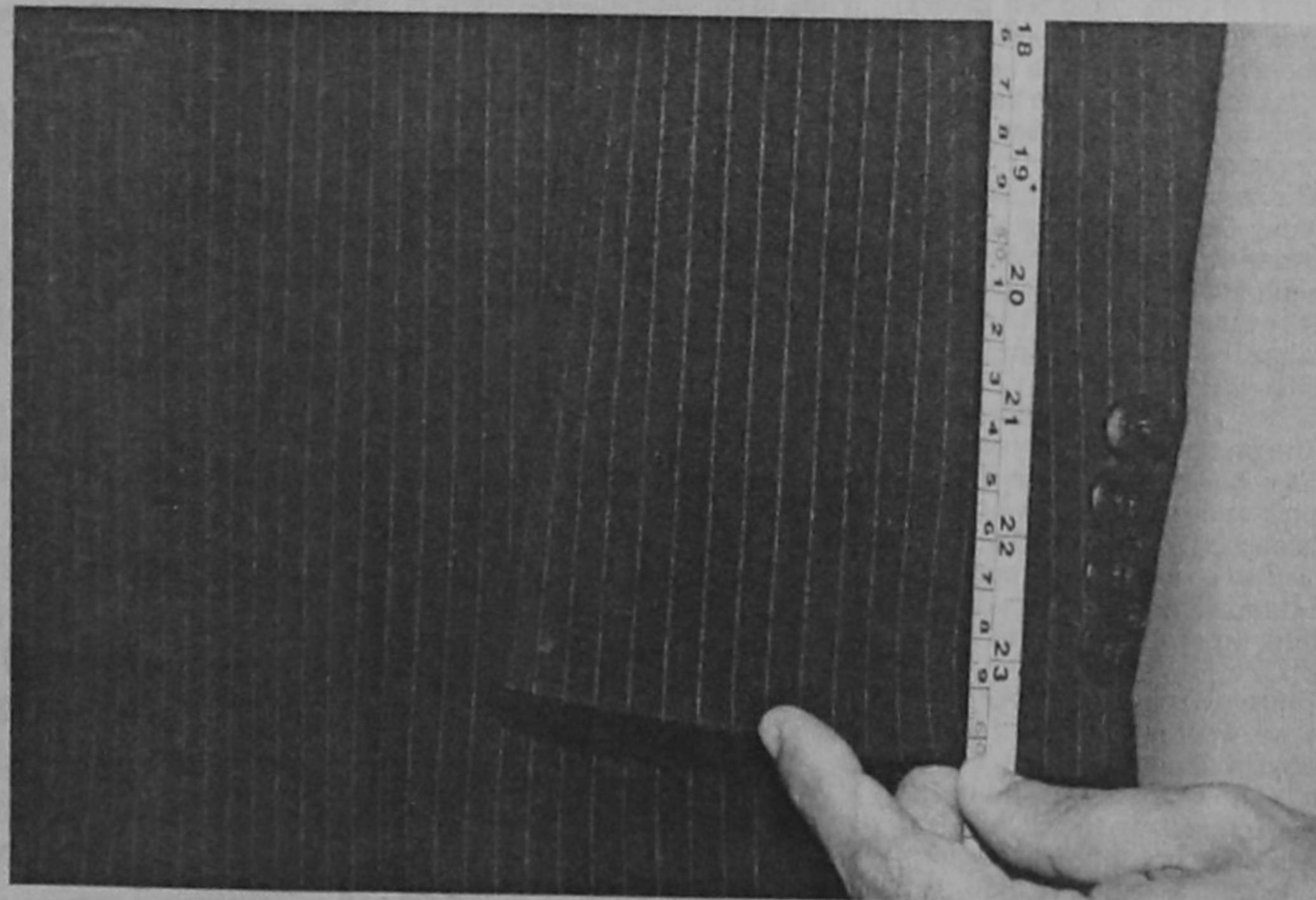
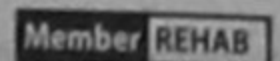
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