

# 'Develop local expertise for coal extraction'

*Oil, gas protection body leaders say in Debiganj*

A CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Leaders of National Oil, Gas, Power, Mineral resources and Port Protection Committee at a meeting yesterday urged extraction of coal from Phulbari coalmine by developing local expertise and ensuring its use for domestic purpose.

Allowing foreign companies for extraction of coal and letting them use it for their benefit will not bring any good for the country, they said at a seminar on "Development of north and maximum utilisation of mineral resources for national interest".

Debiganj upazila unit of Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources and Power Port Protection Committee organized the seminar at Debiganj College auditorium in Panchagarh.

The caretaker government should postpone the decision to extract coal from Phulbari coalmine until development of our domestic organisation with skilled manpower, speakers said at the discussion.

People's consent is a must for extracting coal as implementation of Phulbari coalmine project by

foreign companies will threaten regional environment, they said.

With lowering of water level, huge agricultural land will be made uncultivable.

Destruction of huge natural resources for limited benefit cannot be allowed, they said, adding that there is no example in the whole world of destroying cultivable land for extracting coal.

It is unfortunate that some foreign diplomats and officials of international organisations are advocating and lobbying for allowing multinational companies to extract coal from Phulbari coalmine, said Prof Anu Muhammad.

Exploration for and extraction of coal resources should be done through state-owned bodies, he said.

If Petrobangla and its subsidiary companies can successfully perform their tasks, then why similar state-owned companies would not be successful in doing the same task in the coal sector?" he posed a question.

As per national requirement

## 2 Khulna power units declared abandoned

*To be sold on auction*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A court here yesterday awarded life imprisonment to three persons for their bid to traffic four women and a child to India through Bagha border in 2004.

The convicts are Sher Alam of Bagha, Rajshahi, Abdul Karim and absconding Kohinur Begum, both of Tangail district.

AKM Sirajul Islam, judge of Second Court of Women and Children Repression Prevention pronounced the judgment.

The convicts took the four women and the child of Tangail to Sher Alam's house at Bagha for trafficking to India, said Esmat Ara Begum, public prosecutor (PP) of the court, quoting case documents.

Law enforcers rescued them and arrested two persons on July 18, 2004.

The rescued persons are Nur Jahan, Marium, Nurun Nahar, Lal Banu and her seven-year-old daughter Rahima.

## Cracks on surface widening in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Cracks have appeared in different hillocks, roads and houses in Patanusher and Munshibazar unions in Kamalganj upazila.

Villagers are panicked and worried as neither the administration nor any expert could tell anything about the reason for the cracks, which are widening day by day.

Some villagers in the affected areas presumed that the cracks might be due to pressure of gas or shocks from explosions by US oil company Chevron during its 3D seismic survey in the areas.

An official of Chevron, when contacted, ruled out the possibility. Expert opinion is needed in this regard, he said.

Moulvibazar Deputy Commissioner Md Alkama Siddique, and Kamalganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Hazeria Khutun have visited the areas.

Cracks started to develop in the area on May 24, which are widening. This correspondent during visits in last two days saw wide and long cracks in two hillocks in the compound of Bangladesh Air Force, a house and a road in Chak Kabiraj.



Part of 1200-yard cracks on the surface at Ramchandrapur village in Munshibazar union of Kamalganj upazila in Moulvibazar.

village under Kamalganj upazila. Cracks measuring about 1200 yard in its length was seen at Ramchandrapur village in Munshibazar union of same upazila. The cracks were 4 to 9 inches wide.

The deputy commissioner said, there is no reason to be panicked. He has written to higher authorities to send experts. Kamalganj UNO has also been asked to submit a report, he added.

## 3 held for illegally running pvt universities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police on Tuesday night arrested three persons for illegally running private universities and cheating its teachers and students for last one and a half years in Rajshahi.

The arrestees are Jamilur Rahman Dulal, so-called country director of Oxford Trent University, Rafikul Islam Latto, chairman of Rajshahi Institute of Business and Information Technology and its director Rakibul Islam Rono.

Trouble faced during extraction of coal through underground mining at Barapukuria coalmine is manageable by filling the gap with sand but open pit mining is much more dangerous for people and environment in the area, said Engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, convener of the central committee.

Following requisition from Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, forces from Adabor Police Station in Dhaka arrested Jamilur Rahman Dulal from his another fake organisation -- Bangladesh Medical Institute at Shekhertek. He was taken to Rajshahi yesterday.

Two others were held from their residences in Rajshahi city.

Police said, the swindlers were running the organisations without any approval from University Grants Commission, Ministry of Education, Health Department or any other lawful authority.

They admitted students without registrations, appointed teachers and cheated them by not paying salaries.

A two-month long investigation into the activities of private universities in Rajshahi revealed many alarming facts and the findings were reported to the government authorities concerned, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner M Zillur Rahman said in a press briefing yesterday afternoon.

Allahar Dal militant arrested in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested a militant of banned Islamist outfit Allahar Dal from Shams village under Sundarganj upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, Rab raided the house of Sundarganj upazila leader of Allahar Dal Kutubuddin and arrested him from there.

During interrogation, Kutubuddin confessed to his involvement with the activities of Allahar Dal. He was entrusted with the responsibility of regrouping the militants, he said.

A few days ago, Sundarganj police arrested 13 militants of Allahar Dal from Nansukh village under the upazila.

4 outlaws get life for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A Chuadanga court yesterday sentenced four top cadres of an outlawed Banglar Communist Party (BCP-Laltu) to life imprisonment for killing a farmer in 1999.

District and Sessions Judge Sarker Abul Mansur Ahmed delivered the verdict in presence of three of the four convicts.

The court also fined them Tk 10,000 each and they have to suffer 10 years more imprisonment in default.

The convicts -- Tahazzol Hossain, 45, of Tildah, Hasem Ali, 36, Arman, 40, of Srikol in Chuadanga Sadar upazila and Sayeed Hossain of Swarupdah in Mirpur upazila in Kushtia -- are top cadres of BCP. Sayeed has been absconding since the incident.

Accused in at least 20 cases, BCP chief Laltu alias Nuruzzaman is now in Kushtia jail.

BCP cadres demanded Tk 5 lakh to farmer Dekhali Ali of Ukti village in Sadar upazila in Chuadanga and killed him on May 21 in 1999 after he declined to give the money, goes the prosecution.



Mother of Bishreshtha Munshi Abdur Rouf, Mokidunnesa, offering prayers after opening Bishreshtha Munshi Abdur Rouf Library and Memorial Museum at the martyr's birthplace Roufnagar in Modhukhali upazila in Faridpur yesterday. Lt Gen (retd) Mir Shawkat Ali (second from left) and other freedom fighters are also seen in the picture.



PHOTO: STAR

'Indigenous women should be vocal for rights'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Speakers at a discussion in Rajshahi yesterday said indigenous women should raise their voice to ensure their rights.

The government had to step back from implementing the National Women Development Policy following movement against it, they said at a discussion on 'CEDAW and rights of indigenous and minority women' at the auditorium of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Jatiya Adibasi Parishad (JAP), Institute for Environment and Development (IID) and Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) jointly organised the programme.

Constitutional status of the indigenous people is yet to be acknowledged and the condition of aboriginal women is not satisfactory, said Workers' Party politburo member Fazle Hossain Badsha in his speech as the chief guest at the discussion.

He suggested that the aboriginal women get organised to join the mainstream movement for ensuring women's rights.

The government should take steps for implementing the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) as it involves proper initiative from the legal, judicial and administrative level, speakers said at the meeting.

They demanded formation of a commission on the status of women to help the government implement the CEDAW.

JAP President Anil Marandi presided over the discussion where Bangladesh Communist Party Rajshahi unit President Abdul Kalam Azad, Rajshahi Mohila Parishad President Kolpona Roy, Kakonhat municipality Ward Commissioner Morjina Begum, BNPS coordinator Shahzad Sumi, IID Executive Director Numan Ahmed Khan, journalist Mustafizur Rahman Khan, NGO activists SK Laloni, Afzal Hossain addressed, among others.

## SIDR DAMAGE

# Only 78 of 644 km dams being repaired in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Repair of most of the flood control embankments damaged by cyclone Sidr in seven upazilas in Patuakhali district has become uncertain as Water Development Board (WDB) has been allotted only Tk 7.25 crore against local authorities' demand for Tk 110 crore for the work.

With the poor allocation, local authorities started repair work of only Tk 78 km embankment and two sluice gates this year.

"We submitted an emergency proposed plan of Tk 110 crore to the higher authorities concerned immediately after cyclone Sidr for repairing the damaged embankments. But they allotted only Tk 7.25 crore in two instalments," said Patuakhali WDB Executive

Engineer Md Jahir Uddin.

"With the allocation we have taken steps to repair only 78 km out of 645 km damaged embankment and two sluice gates. The repair work is going on in full swing," he said.

Cyclone Sidr on November 15 last year damaged 645 kilometres out of 1,209 kilometres flood control embankment in Patuakhali district, WDB sources said.

Of it, 83 km was damaged totally and the rest 562 km partly.

In seven upazilas in the district, 355 out of 412 sluice gates, 612 inlets, 362 irrigation schemes, 24 closures were also damaged, they added.

"We do not want relief. We demand taking step for repairing embankments so that we can cultivate our land in the upcoming rainy season," said Abdul Kader Howlader, also a farmer.

## Govt firm to achieve food procurement

Rangpur Area Commander says in Nilphamari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 66 Division and Area Commander of Rangpur, Major General Syeed Fatem Ahmed Rumee, yesterday said here the government is determined to make this year's paddy and rice procurement a complete success.

Gen Rumee said this while addressing a view exchange meeting at the conference room of Nilphamari Circuit House as a chief guest at about 11:00 am. The agenda of the meeting was development programme of the district and measures to combat 'monga'.

Nilphamari deputy commissioner (DC) Md Rashidul Hasan

presided the meeting.

He said the government is firm to meet the food procurement target at any cost. He asked the rice mill owners to fully co-operate with the government to make the rice procurement drive successful, otherwise he said the government will take stern action against the non-cooperators. He said that Rangpur agricultural region comprising eight districts is the largest paddy producing unit in the country.

The GOC said three lakh metric tonnes (MT) of Boro was produced in the district this year while the total requirement is 2 lakh metric tonnes.

He said measures are being taken for proper preservation of

procured rice. All government godowns in the region will be repaired and utilized for the purpose.

The general said there are reports that marginal farmers are not getting fair price for Boro paddy. He directed the DC to form a committee to monitor the situation.

"We should not depend on foreign aid to combat a 'monga' famine situation," he said. "We have to solve 'monga' in our own way", he said.

High civil and military officials, business leaders, journalists and representatives of civil society were present at the meeting.

## গ্যাস ট্রান্সমিশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (জিটিসিএল)

(পেট্রোবাল্যার একটি কোম্পানী)

গ্যাস জাতীয় সম্পদ এর অপচয় রোধ করে জাতীয় দায়িত্ব পালন করেন

"শিল্প প্রকৃতিক গ্যাস গ্রহণাত্মক কোম্পানী"

## গ্যারেজ ভাড়া আবশ্যক

