killed three people and injured many more who were returning home from participating in a peaceful protest march against Asia Energy, a London-based multinational corporation, there to do the mining. The donor behind the project is Asian Development Bank (ADB).

However, in the face of growing protests against the project, reportedly ADB did not consider the Phulbari project at its June 2008 board meeting, saying that it will not be funding it in the short term. This is indeed a great victory for the protesters. But we must be vigilant -- what does "not in the short term" mean? What will ADB decide in the long term? Will other donors be sought or step in?

The profit-driven, export-oriented, open-pit coal mining project with a 30-year life, will displace an estimated 130,000 people, disrupt 500,000 people, and destroy 650 square kilometers of highly fertile multi-crop land. It will deplete groundwater -- expediting desertification, pollute soil, water and air, and ruin the rich bio-diversity evolved over centuries.

Rejected by a growing number of countries around the world, the nuclear industry is turning to unsuspecting or energy starved and desperate developing countries.

The coal export facilities to be constructed will also cause extensive damage to the Sundarbans, the largest cluster of mangrove forests in the world, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a natural barrier against cyclones.

The list of predictable and multi-faceted negative impacts from the proposed Phulbari coal mining project grows longer, far outweighing its pittance of a dubious and short-term benefit promised to Bangladesh. Good sense and credibility of just governance from the national administration are urgently being called upon.

Lately, there's also a renewed push for the construction of a nuclear power plant. It is promoted as the solution to climate change and scarcity of other non-renewable resources. But the promoters carefully avoid mentioning the devastating economic, environmental and political consequences associated with it, such as the intensive use of fossil fuels for the nuclear power generation process (which belies that nuclear energy does not contribute to climate change), uranium depletion, radioactive contamination during uranium mining, tilling, processing, and power production, high water consumption, waste storage, disposal, decommissioning, risks of accidents, terrorist attacks on nuclear power plants, nuclear weapons proliferation, and out-of-control costs.[13] Add to that Bangladesh's topography and dense population, increasing the risk many more times.

Rejected by a growing number of countries around the world as a dead-end technology, and a false propaganda as an environmentally preferable technology, the nuclear industry is turning to unsuspecting or energy starved and desperate developing countries.

It's aggressively imposing itself on the developing countries who are hostages both to the ideology and political-economic control of the developed countries and are well-equipped with corruptible channels, but are poorly equipped with the interdisciplinary education, scientific knowledge, technological resources, legal institutions, environmental regulatory frameworks, and skills to critically evaluate the imposition of the technology. It's a modern version of "techno-colonialism." Bangladesh does not need to fall victim to that.

In short, while the demand for energy is multiplying in Bangladesh, a growing scarcity of firewood and cooking gas, rising costs, an inadequate and unreliable electric supply, environmental destruction and pollution have reached a crisis which is impossible to solve by relying on non-renewables or manipulating the power supply. Fortunately, Bangladesh has an alternative -- practically untapped!