

CPB rejects nod for open pit mining at Phulbari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday rejected a report by a committee of experts, formed by the government, which suggested open pit mining of Phulbari coal deposit.

CPB President Mujahidul Islam Selim and General Secretary Syed Abu Zafar said local habitats, markets, religious places, and educational institutions would severely be affected through the extraction method.

"We will get only six percent coal and the country would soon run out of energy," they said in a statement.

Gonotantrik Bam Morcha also said the extraction method was not applicable in Bangladesh's context.

Road crashes kill 8, injure 25

METRO DESK

Eight people were killed and 25 others injured in separate road accidents in Pabna, Netrakona, Panchagarh, Comilla and Shariatpur on Sunday and yesterday.

Our Pabna correspondent reports, a schoolgirl died as a three-wheeler hit her while she was crossing the road in Noldah Bazar of Pabna sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased identified as Rupa Khatun, 6, daughter of Nefaz Sardar, was a student of Noldah Government Primary School.

Meanwhile, Shukurjan Begum, 70, wife of Abed Ali of village Radhanagar in the upazila, was killed when a motorcycle hit her at the village at about 6:30pm on Sunday.

Our Netrakona correspondent reports, a woman was killed instantly as a truck knocked her down on Kendua-Mymensingh road at Sangjana village in Kendua upazila of Netrakona district yesterday morning.

The victim Popi Akther, 30, wife of Sabuj Mia of the village, was pregnant for six months, said Kendua police.

Our Thakurgaon correspondent reports, a bus helper was killed and 25 others were injured as the bus fell into a ditch beside Tentulia-Banglabandha road at Bamonpara village in Tentulia upazila of Panchagarh yesterday.

Tentulia Police Station Officer-in-Charge Manoj Kumer said the bus plunged into the roadside ditch while it was giving side to a truck at about 12:10pm, killing the helper and injuring the 25 others.

Of the injured, 21 were admitted to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital.

UNB from Comilla reports, three motorcyclists were killed when a cattle-laden truck rammed their bike on Comilla-Chandpur road at Chandtara in Laksam upazila early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Sohel Saha, son of Asim Saha of East Laksam, Arun Saha, son of Binod Saha, and Sohag Barman, son of Romni Barman of North Laksam.

In Shariatpur, schoolboy Rabin, 12, son of Fazlul Haque, died as a speeding bus ran him over in Sajonpur area of Vederganj upazila at about 3:00pm on Sunday.



A long tailback of vehicles at Mawa Ferry Terminal yesterday, as only one ghat remains in operation ahead of Eid-ul Azha after three other ghats were either eroded or damaged recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Abused amid

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heard gunshots and saw some BDR men running with firearms.

Panicked, she called her husband, who was not inside Pilkhana then, Munni said, adding that her husband asked them to stay inside the house.

"We did so and began calling some of army officers' wives inside Pilkhana. All of them were anxious....

"Around 10:00am we heard sounds of footsteps on the staircase. A group of jawans arrived and started kicking on the door. They eventually broke in and at gun point asked us to come out with cell phones and with our hands up. They took away the phones so that we could not call anyone."

The BDR jawans dragged them out of their house by pulling their hairs, she said.

At the quarter guard, Munni met wives and children of other army officers. They were freed around 4:00pm on February 26. Munni along with her daughter went to her mother's house that evening.

"After two days we went to see our house and found almost everything destroyed. They [jawans] also took away gold ornaments, money and other valuables," the court heard.

She said she saw sepoy Ziaur Rahman and Ramjan, havilder Nasir and sweepers Abdul Bari Rubel, Babul Hossain, Alamgir Hossain, Mohammad Alam, Emdadul Haque, Manik Chandra, Shafiqul Islam, Rashed Ali Khoka, Kamal Hossain, Aynal Haque, Lavlu Miah, Abdul Kader, Sanu Chandra Das and Rezaul Islam.

During cross examination a defence lawyer told Munni that the family members of officers compelled the jawans to do household work like washing, cleaning and shopping. Still the jawans saved their lives and kept them in safe places.

Munni disagreed with him.

"Did you take any treatment after you had been freed?" the defence lawyer asked. Munni answered in the negative.

The court fixed Wednesday for the next hearing.

The mutiny trial in BDR special courts ended on October 20, with 723 soldiers getting different terms. A total of 5,926 BDR men were given different terms in jail in 57 cases since the trial opened after the mayhem.

ACC to reply

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directly with the Canadian authorities...the attorney general on ACC's behalf is keeping contact with his counterpart there. We are yet to receive any response."

There could be allegations in any big project but those should be investigated properly. And the project's work should continue at the same time for the sake of the country and its people, said the ACC chairman while talking to journalists at his office in the afternoon.

The WB cancelled its \$1.2 billion credit for the project on June 29, saying it had proof of a corruption conspiracy involving Bangladeshi officials, executives of a Canadian firm and some private individuals.

The global lender, however, decided to revive its loan on September 21 after the Bangladesh government agreed to its terms and conditions.

The WB appointed an external panel early this month to assess the conduct of the ACC investigation. The panel recently visited Dhaka and held talks with ACC officials.

The ACC chairman also told journalists that it was unknown why Azam Khan, the driver of Suranjit Sengupta's

sacked APS Omar Faruq Talukder, failed to appear before it in connection with the railwaygate scandal.

He said if necessary, the ACC might quiz Azam at a place convenient for him. "If he [Azam] contacts us, we will consider that."

The ACC asked Azam, who took the lid off corruption over recruitment in the railway, to appear before it on October 21 in connection with the scandal.

In an interview with private TV channel Rtv early this month, Azam said the money was being taken to the residence of the then railway minister Suranjit Sengupta.

"But, I foiled the attempt. Money had been taken [to Suranjit's house] several times before as well," the driversaid.

Azam drove Faruq's microbus into the BGB Pilkhana headquarters on April 9 night, and told the guards that there was bribe money in the vehicle.

Faruq, railway general manager (east) Yusuf Ali Mridha and its Dhaka division security commandant Enamul Huq were also in the microbus.

BGB men detained the four but freed them the next day. The driver had been missingsince then.

What a good feeling!

FROM PAGE 1

we did.

We have no hesitation in saying that other than Sheikh Hasina's government no one else would have done it on the scale, dignity and fanfare that it was ultimately done. We are certain that we reflect the sentiments of the millions of freedom fighters when we say what a good feeling it is to know that we have the courtesy, the sensitivity and the good sense to thank our friends who came to our assistance at the most crucial time of our nation's life. Though late, it has happened and it gives us a feeling that we are part of a civilised world that knows how to be grateful. We repeat, it is a wonderful feeling.

The question naturally comes to mind: why did it take us so long to thank those who helped us gain our freedom? However unpalatable it may sound, the truth is that in the post-1975 period successive governments have played politics with our own freedom struggle, unquestionably the most glorious part of our history. Obviously the murder of Bangabandhu, supreme leader of the freedom struggle, set us on a self-destructive path. Those who killed him had to denigrate him and the movement he led in order to

justify their heinous act.

It must be said that coming to power, first of Khandaker Mustaque, then General Ziaur Rahman and finally of General Ershad, launched us on a deliberate and diabolical process of distorting our liberation war history. None of them ever owned that glorious legacy of our independence struggle - Mustaque because he did not want it, Ershad because he was not a part of it and Ziaur Rahman because he betrayed it.

General Ziaur Rahman's case is the most disappointing. History gave him the opportunity to carve out a place in the hearts of our freedom loving people not only because he was a sector commander and a valiant freedom fighter but also because he had, in Bangabandhu's name, made an announcement of the declaration of independence on the 27th of March, 1971. It was an opportunity that every soldier would die for and every freedom fighter would crave for --- a chance to become part of history in such a unique and glorious manner. But he betrayed that glory and honour by siding with the killers of Bangabandhu by not taking any action against them which his oath as a soldier made obligatory for him. After assuming power he

resurrected the political forces that had openly and criminally opposed our liberation and rehabilitated in politics some of the most infamous and notorious collaborators of that period.

Among his most despicable, shameful and ignominious acts was the passing of the Indemnity Act that made us the only country in the world that gave constitutional protection to self-confessed killers.

This is neither the time nor the place to evaluate Ziaur Rahman's legacy but suffice it to say that history will judge him extremely harshly for restoring to mainstream politics the very forces that helped the Pakistan army to commit genocide on our people.

Today it is perhaps impossible for most people to believe that there was a time in Bangladesh, not so long ago, when we could not even blame the Pakistani army for massacring our people and used the term "Hanadar Bahini" to identify the culprits that killed and maimed our people and our freedom fighters, that Mukti Bahini was not a term that we could use openly and freely and that they were suspect as 'agents subverting our sovereignty'. It was not unusual to be in public places and hear people openly and proudly say, "I

am a razakar".

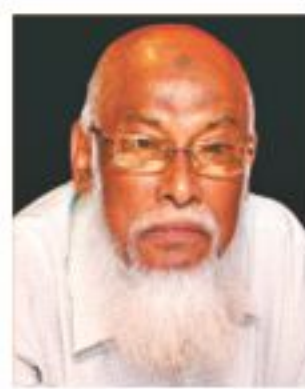
Obviously the claimants to power who created such political environment and those who follow the same political legacy could not be expected to honour foreign friends who helped us in waging war against those who wanted to obliterate our nation.

It was such a wonderful feeling to see them all together. Most of them have greatly advanced in age, some in wheelchairs and many others needing help in moving around. It was obvious that our recognition, though belated, of their timely and crucially needed help pleased them immensely. Most of them never expected this honour and hardly ever hoped to visit the land in whose liberation struggle they played a part. They were very happy to be here and felt a special bond with us and took pride in the progress we made.

Those who were here, we would welcome them in our homes at any time if they were ever to revisit us. But if we were never to see them again, let it be known to all, in every part of the world, that we as a nation, as a people, as a country, as a part of the freedom loving world, will always remember them with humility and gratitude for their most generous and courageous help at the moment of our birth as a free country.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Rafiqul Islam Patwary, social worker and businessman, died

of cardiac arrest at Apollo Hospitals in the capital on October 19. He was 65.

He was buried the next day at his family graveyard in Koraitoli of Chandpur, said a press release.

He left behind his wife and two daughters to mourn his death.

Moti Mohamed Motahar

METRO DESK

Dr Moti Mohamed Motahar, founding president of Friends of Bangladesh, UK, passed away at United Hospital in the capital on October 19. He had been suffering from cancer.

He was buried at his village graveyard in Brahmanbaria.

His qulkhwani will be held today after Asr prayers at House: 32, Road: 18, Sector: 7 in Uttara of the capital.

Relatives and friends have been requested to attend the programme and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



Foreign tourists enjoy a ride in the Buriganga river on Sunday. Usually the water of the river is pitch black with pollution, but during this time of the year the flow of water is greater, making it clearer and less polluted.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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