
Plan to conduct study on open pit coal mining in Bangladesh

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The Daily Star reported that Bangladesh energy ministry has initiated a move to carry out a study on social and environmental impact of coal mining particularly of open pit mining.

Mr Mohammad Mohsin energy secretary of Bangladesh said that “We have already moved for the study in compliance with the prime minister's directive. We're hopeful of completing the study by next month.”

The energy ministry on September 16th 2009 made a presentation before Mr Sheikh Hasina PM of Bangladesh on a draft coal policy. The draft suggested open pit mining as a better option for extracting coal from different coalfields across the country including the Phulbari Coal Mine.

An official said that after the presentation, the prime minister had directed the ministry to conduct a study to determine the social and environmental impact of open pit mining. Petrobangla was asked to appoint an expert to conduct the study. It is now under process.

Framing the coal policy has been a long pending issue that evoked debate on determining the method for extracting coal from the mines. Bangladesh has 7 coalmines with estimated total reserves of 2.5 billion tonnes.

A section of experts argued in favour of underground mining as it has very little social and environmental impacts. Others recommended open pit mining as it ensures about 85% output.

British company Asia Energy had signed an agreement with the government for extracting coals at Phulbari through open pit method, which was strongly opposed by the locals arguing it will leave an adverse impact on their livelihood.

(Sourced from the Daily Star)

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