

Staff Reporter

The government should make a sound national policy to use the country's marine resources for national interest, a meeting was told on Saturday.

The views exchange meeting, titled "Sea Port, Barapukuria and the Sundarbans", was organised by the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port at Mukti Bhavan in the city.

Speakers at the meeting said any effort to use the resources against the interest the people will be resisted.

Member secretary of the committee economist Prof Anu Muhammad said, "All resources including marine resources and sea ports have to be used for the interest of the people."

Although Awami League and BNP differ on many issues, their stand is common in their bid to give away the offshore oil and gas blocks to the foreigners, he said.

Concerning the extraction of marine resources, Anu Muhammad said the environmental aspects must be considered first.

Immediate steps should be taken to assess the quantity of the marine resources within the maritime boundary of the country as well as to protect those, he said.

He also complained that instead of implementing the Phulbari Accord of 2006, which was signed between the government and the people of Phulbari, the government is pursuing a plot to conduct open pit mining at Barapukuria in the upazila.

Oil-Gas Committee convener engineer Sheikh Shahid Ullah welcomed the settlement of the sea boundary disputes with India and Myanmar.

Noting that the Sundarbans is being destroyed in various ways, he said a campaign is needed to save the mangrove forests.