

Staff reporter

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources, Power and Port will hold a grand rally at Phulbari in Dinajpur on December 27 in protest against the renewed activities of Asia Energy, now renamed as Global Coal Management (GCM).

The National Committee, a pressure group formed by different left-leaning political parties of Bangladesh, will also hold a rally on December 22 in front of the Jaitya Press Club to protest the government's ongoing move to raise power and gas tariffs, construct Rampal power plant near the Sundarbans and lease out gas blocks to foreign companies through new tenders.

Addressing a press conference at CPB office, National Committee member secretary Prof Anu Mohammad announced the new action programs.

Voicing grave concern over the government's role in allowing Asia Energy to resume its activities at Phulbari, he said the local people will never accept such things. "The mass people will resist Asia Energy's any kind of activities at any cost as they did in the past."

He alleged Asia Energy has been using local elite, ruling party MPs and ministers as their lobbyists to launch a campaign in favour of it despite the Prime Minister's stance against open-pit mining.

Anu Mohammad demanded the withdrawal of Asia Energy's Bangladesh operation chief Garry Lye and bring him to justice for his misdeeds against the people of the coal-mine area and also implementation of the agreement signed between the government and local people of Phulbari regarding the coal mine.

He urged people to join the grand rally at Phulbari on December 27.

About the planned rally on December 22 in front of the Jatiya Press Club, Anu Mohammad said the National Committee will organize it as the government has taken a path to serve the interests of foreign power and energy companies in the disguise of rental and quick rental power, setting up Rampal power plant with India to destroy the Sundarbans, lease out gas blocks in the Bay to international oil companies.

The government has also moved to set up Rooppur nuclear power plant without conducting any feasibility study, he alleged.

"These all are the part of the government's move to plunder the state wealth and serve the interests of the private and foreign vested interest groups," said the National Committee leader. "We're now living under a reign of terror and occupation of state wealth," he lamented.

National Committee leaders Syed Zafar Ahmed, Saiful Haque, Moshrefa Mishu, Ruhin Hossain Prince, Bazrul Rashid Firoz, former Power Cell director general BD Rahmatullah were also present at the press conference.