

Long march against Tipai dam begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nirbhik, an environmental organisation, started a long march yesterday from Dhaka to Jakiganj in Sylhet to create public opinion against the Indian move to construct Tipaimukh dam on the cross-border river Barak.

Leaders and activists of Nirbhik started the road march from Muktangan at 9:00am which will end at Amalshid of Jakiganj after passing through Chittagong Road, Kanchpur, Vulta of Ropganj, Gausiya, Baburhat, Narsingdi, Raipura, Ashuganj, Bhairab, Brahmanbaria, Madhabpur Srimangal, Sherpur, Sylhet Surma, Kadamtali and Etimganj Bazar.

Led by Nirbhik Chief Coordinator ATM Kamal, the long march is being participated, among others, by Md Shahjalal, Nur Mohammad,

Amir Hossain Kamal and Md Ilias.

During the long march they will hold street rallies at different places and meet with different social, cultural and environmental organisations to make people aware of the disastrous effects of the proposed dam.

Earlier at a rally at Muktangan, the speakers said even the Indian citizens have taken stand against the dam as the people of Manipur, Mizoram and Assam will be seriously affected, and the water flow of Barak and other rivers will be reduced to 17354 cusec.

Besides, a large area adjoining the dam will be submerged and 1320 indigenous families will be evicted, they said.

The Indian government

has also a plan to build an irrigation barrage at Fulartole to withdraw a huge amount of

water from Barak during the winter season for agriculture, they added.

As a result, different water bodies and branches of different rivers will be deprived of water and the desertification process will start in the areas.

Besides, the salt water from the sea will penetrate into the country damaging the soil and agriculture.

During the lean season, greater Sylhet, Comilla and part of Mymensingh will become dry and waterless while during the rainy season these areas will be flooded, they said.

The speakers demanded

cancellation of all activities related to the construction of Tipaimukh dam and barrage at Fulartale, and refrain from constructing any dam on the cross boundary rivers without any consultation between the two countries.

Tension after BSF firings in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Tension is mounting between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at Dinajpur border as BSF opened fire on Bangladesh territory on Thursday.

However, no casualties were reported during the BSF firing. Lt Col Quamrul Islam of Phulbari 40 Battalion under Dinajpur confirmed.

According to sources, BSF of 69 Bashantipur camp fired at least three rounds of bullet without any provocation toward Tazpur village of Dinajpur at 4:30am yesterday.

Following the firing villagers of Tazpur fled from their houses.

BSF of Shamjha camp again fired at least five rounds of bullet targeting Amtali village under Chirirbandar upazila of Dinajpur at 6:20am yesterday forcing the villagers to move to safer places.

After the incidents, BDR

officials of Phulbari 40 Battalion lodged protest with BSF but urged BDR jawans to show restraint to keep border calm.

Ctg trader robbed of Tk 2 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Armed miscreants in the guise of Rab personnel snatched Tk 2 lakh and two cell phone sets from a businessman and his friend here in the port city on Thursday.

Police said a gang of miscreants on a microbus intercepted a CNG-run auto rickshaw carrying businessman Ismael Hossain and his friend near Green View residential area at around 11:30am and forcibly took its two passengers to their microbus.

Quoting the victims, police said the miscreants were carrying pistols, walkie-talkie and handcuffs and identified themselves as Rab members.

The miscreants threw the two off the microbus while it reached under the Fakirhat bridge after snatching the bag which contained the money and two cellphones sets.

Ismail, proprietor of Ifi Enterprise of Olonker Shopping Complex, drew the money from Halishahar branch of Brac Bank.

A case was filed with Pahartali Police Station.

One killed in Habiganj road accident

UNB, Habiganj

A man was killed and 10 others were injured as a bus ploughed through a departmental shop at Debpara bazar in Nabiganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as MAbdus Samed, 38.

Police said the Dhaka-bound bus from Sylhet crashed into the shop at about 9:30am, killing Samed on the spot and injuring 10 others.

As the news spread, angry mob blocked the road, disrupting vehicular movement for three hours on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway.

Later, the barricade was withdrawn following the assurance from the administration that legal action would be taken against the persons responsible.



PHOTO: STAR

Fine art students draw paintings on the road in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the city yesterday demanding steps to remove the graves of those who opposed the liberation war from the Sangsad Bhaban area.

Call to start trial of war criminals soon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee President Shahriar Kabir yesterday said it is the demand of the mass people that war criminals be brought to book immediately and similar measures should be taken against those who distorted the history of the liberation war.

Jamaat leaders launched a movement against Indian move to construct Tipaimukh dam just to divert the people's attention from their trial of war crimes, he said, adding that the present government has taken initiative for the trial for war criminals under a special tribunal.

Shahriar said this at a meeting organised by Gaibandha unit of Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, a committee to exterminate the killers and collaborators of 1971, at Gaibandha Public Library Hall.

Tipaimukh

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It also said there are 136 species of fish in the Barak and the Manipur government has to take initiatives to preserve 40 species of fish, including Hilsa, the national fish of Bangladesh.

Asked about the reports, water resources expert of Bangladesh Ainun Nishat said the impact of a dam goes much beyond what is apparent. It will have environmental, social, economic, seismic and hydrological impacts on vast areas of Bangladesh, he told The Daily Star, adding that it is not known if the Indian impact assessments included all these issues.

Even if the reports included all these aspects, they did not cover the Bangladesh side, said Nishat, also country representative of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

First of all Bangladesh should now get all details of the dam project and negotiate for a joint impact assessment by professionals of India and Bangladesh.

The professionals and the parliamentary delegation going to India must consult experts of various fields, he suggested.

Environment expert Atiq Rahman suggested that the impact assessment of Tipaimukh project should be done either by international experts or jointly by experts of India and Bangladesh.

"After getting all the data of the project, we can surely assess the impact separately but why should India accept that," he said, adding that the ideal thing is to have the assessment done by a joint group of experts.

"First we must see what the water flow would be in various seasons if the dam is constructed," said Atiq, executive director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies.

Bangladesh is a highly populated country, he said, adding that the issue of climate change is also of high importance that must be looked into.

Bangladesh Economic Association's Prof QK Ahmad said it is a good sign that the Indian prime minister told the Bangladesh prime minister that India would not do anything that harms its relation with Bangladesh.

A joint assessment is a must after detailed information is gathered on the project, he said.

However, if the barrage is constructed at Fulartale, we must be very cautious about it," he said.

"The memorial places of the liberation war and mass killings should be identified and preserved for our future generation," the noted journalist said.

He said former president Ziaur Rahman annihilated the images of the historic place of the war by setting up a children's park where war criminals and Pakistani occupation forces surrendered on December 16, 1971.

No nations in the world had made their supreme sacrifices other than the Bangladeshis for

independence. So, the glorious liberation war and the martyrs should be paid highest respect, Shahriar mentioned.

"I was arrested by the then four-party alliance government on charge of anti-state activities, but I never compromised for the withdrawal of the false case," said the president of the committee.

"We demanded restoration of the constitution of 1972. It is a good news that the grand alliance government has committed to developing the

country with the image of the liberation war," he further said.

Presided over by Convener of the committee Moktadur Rahman Mithu, the meeting was also addressed by Gaibandha Muktijoddha Sangsad Commander Mahmudul Huq Shahjada, CPB Gaibandha Secretary Mihir Ghosh, advocates Ahsanul Karim Lachu and Sirajul Islam Babu, Alamgir Kabir Badal, GM Chowdhury Mithu and Aminuzzaman Rinku.



PHOTO: STAR

Nirbhik, an environmental organisation, begins a long march towards Sylhet from Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting the Indian move to build the Tipaimukh dam.

PM to declare Rangpur a division soon

Says Rawshan

BSS, Rangpur

Presidium Member of Jatiya Party (JP) Rawshan Ershad has said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will come here very soon for a formal declaration of Rangpur Division.

Rawshan, who is also a lawmaker, said the present grand alliance government is very much sincere and committed to ensuring the overall development of Rangpur for changing the fate and fortune of the people and ensuring rapid advancement of the region.

She said this while addressing a freshers' reception of Rangpur Carmichael Collegiate School and College (BCCSC) as the chief guest. Principal of the RCCSC Abdul Wahed Mian presided over the function.

Convener of district unit of Awami League Abul Mansur Ahmed, former lawmaker and President of Rangpur district unit of JP Moshir Rahman Ranga, Principal of Rangpur Carmichael College Prof M Abdul Wadud and Principal of Rangpur Collectorate School and College Prof Ishahaque Ali also spoke on the occasion as special guests.

Rawshan Ershad urged the students to devote themselves to studies for acquiring knowledge to become worthy citizens of the country.

DALIT GIRL VIOLATED IN JESSORE Punishment to rapists demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Human rights (HR) activists yesterday demanded immediate arrest and punishment to the culprits who violated a teenage girl of the Dalit community in Jessore on July 5.

Some local culprits violated the Dalit girl by picking her up from a religious programme at Dakatiya village under Sadar upazila in the district.

The rights activists placed the demand at a human chain in front of the National Museum in the city.

Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM) organised the programme where different rights organisations, including Bangladesh Dalit Human Rights and Dalit Nari Forum.

Protesting the incident, speakers at the human chain expressed their grave concern and demanded that culprits be arrested and punished immediately.

They also demanded that social security to the victim be ensured, those who have been threatening the victim and her family be punished, security to Dalit woman be ensured and the anti-sexual harassment directive by the High Court be followed at all workplaces.

Chief Executive of Nagorik Uddog Jakir Hossain, also an

adviser to BDERM, HR activists B Shalomon, Mukul Sikder, Bibhuto Roy, Dalit leader Master Kanai Lal spoke at the programme with Dalit Nari Forum Coordinator Moni Rani Das in the chair.

They demanded immediate steps to save the victim and her family members from the repeated threats to them by the culprits.

The speakers alleged that the culprits still remain untraced by the police.

Abducted youth found dead in Morelganj

UNB, Bagerhat

The body of a young man was found in Daskhali canal in Morelganj on Thursday, three days after his abduction.

Police recovered the body of Alam Khandaker, 28, a ferry motorcyclist, of Dakkhin-Purbo Bhandaria village in Pirojpur district.

Police said one Shamim Sheikh of Daskhali village abducted Alam and took him to in Morelganj from Bhandaria on Monday.

Local people saw the body in the canal on Thursday night and informed the police.

However, the law enforcers could not arrest the kidnapper and recover the motorcycle.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM) forms a human chain in front of the National Museum in the city yesterday, demanding immediate arrest and punishment to the culprits who violated a teenage girl of the Dalit community in Jessore on July 5.

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