

BAGERHAT POWER PLANT 'Save Sundarbans'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed coal-based thermal power station at Rampal in Bagerhat will jeopardise the biodiversity of the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world, said environment activists yesterday.

They demanded an immediate stop to the land acquisition for the plant and end the intimidation on the locals which is forcing them to abandon their lands over the past few months.

The activists were speaking at a view exchange meeting titled "Endangered Sundarbans: Our Duty" in the city's Photojournalist Association auditorium.

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA), Save the Sundarbans, Centre for Human Rights and Movement and Poribesh Bachao Andolon (PABA) jointly organised the meeting, says a press release.

BAPA Vice President Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmed said a group having vested interest is spreading misinformation to mislead people.

"We can not let our precious Sundarbans be destroyed for some vested quarter's interest," he said calling upon all to come together in raising a movement to save the Sundarbans.

Save the Sundarbans President Abdul Malek Gazi presided over the programme where PABA Chairman Abu Naser Khan and Centre for Human Rights and Movement Secretary General Mojahedul Islam also spoke.

US envoy visits army training instt

BSS, Dhaka

US Ambassador Dan Mozena on Friday visited Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT), according to a press release of ISPR.

A US delegation headed by Lieutenant General Francis Wiercinski, Commanding General, United States Army Pacific Command (USARPAC), accompanied the US Ambassador, the press release said.

Brigadier General Abul Basher Imamuzzaman, Commandant of BIPSOT, received the delegation.

The delegation was taken around to see the indoor and outdoor training facilities of the BIPSOT, a premier military training institute of Bangladesh Armed Forces responsible to train the peacekeepers from home and abroad.

During the visit, the delegation exchanged views on training with commandant of BIPSOT.

Extra-judicial killings have decreased Says human rights body boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman yesterday said extra-judicial killings in the country have decreased recently and the law enforcers have played a big role in this regard.

He said human rights violations and the deterioration of law and order situation is not same thing. Human rights was not limited to political and citizen rights, it also included cultural, social and economic rights, he added.

Dr Mizanur was speaking as the chief guest at a debate competition titled "Human Rights and Good Governance" organised by ATN Bangla at Bashundhara City in the capital in observance of the World Human Rights Day, said a press release.

He said the commission had won two international recognitions in a very short time, which indicated that it had been working independently.

Manarat International University defeated Presidency University in the Parliamentary model debate competition.

Meanwhile, different human rights and citizen rights groups observed the day with a host of programmes.

Jatiya Paribesh Manobadhikar Society organised a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club demanding a separate ministry for human rights.

Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement and Bangladesh Manobadhikar Samonnoy Parishad organised rally and human chain programme in front of the National Museum and Jatiya Press Club respectively with a call for equal rights and respect for everyone.

Manobadhikar O Paribesh Sangbadik Society and Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association also held separate programmes to mark the day.

Free cleft lip, palate surgery in Savar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) arranged a nine-day long cleft lip and palate surgery camp at its premises in Savar to provide free treatment for the poor.

Started on December 5, the camp will end on December 13.

During the camp, around 70 operations for the people with cleft lips are expected to be conducted under the supervision of a nine-member American team led by Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon Dr Edward Zebowitz.

Social Welfare Secretary Ranjit Kumar Biswas yesterday inaugurated the camp, while CRP Founder and Coordinator Dr Valerie A Taylor, among others, attended the function, said a press release.

CRP's speech and Language Therapy (SLT) department is also providing comprehensive treatment during the camp.

Launch social movement to end disparity Speakers urge HR activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights activists yesterday called for a greater social movement to end all forms of discrimination and disparity that are creating a bottleneck towards establishing human rights.

Human rights violations continue to occur everywhere to date though the Universal Human Rights Declaration, adopted over 60 years ago, makes it obligatory for United Nations member states to ensure equal opportunities for all, they said.

The rights defenders must unite to end all discriminatory policies and practices, they said at the inaugural of a three-day human rights fair which began on the playground of Mohsin Hall of Dhaka University yesterday.

The fair was organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) with support from UKAid from the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka.

Non-government organisations (NGO) working at grassroots and activists from home and abroad are attending the fair.

On the sidelines of the fair, an international conference on Dalit rights would be held at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban today and tomorrow.

"We will never end global poverty until we begin to challenge inequality

and discrimination. We must give men and women, girls and boys the same opportunities to flourish," he said.

The awardees are Arifa Begum of Kishoreganj, Sultana Shamimara Begum of Gaibandha, Shamsul Alam of Rajshahi, Rekha Parveen of Narail, Santoshito Chakma of Khagrachhari, Mariam Akhter, ASM Jahangir Alam Sabuj and Tazul Islam of Netrakona, Kalpana Begum of Kurigram and Nasima Akhtar of Faridpur.

Speaking at the inaugural programme, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "Our independence which was achieved 40 years ago is a milestone in establishing human rights but unfortunately we are yet to ensure the basic rights to date."

Around fifty percent of Bangladesh's population is still illiterate while poverty and inequality remain a major concern, he said. "Education for all is a must for an equitable society. We are trying to ensure it."

Lauding the role of individuals and NGOs in defending and promoting human rights, DFID Country Director Gwin Hines said awarding the unsung heroes will encourage them to put in more effort.

Saluting the human rights defenders, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said these people work in silence to promote humanity. "One should never face discrimination because of his or her birth in a certain community. We condemn it."

The awardees said they faced a lot of barriers and threats while working to defend people who had no voice to protest oppression but the recognition they received would inspire them to work more.

Nepalese lawmaker Sita Devi Baudel also spoke at the programme.



Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at the inaugural session of the 4th council of Gono Forum at the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: STAR

Death threat to journo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown miscreants threatened to kill the weekly Tarakananda Editor Belal Ahmed unless he stopped his writings.

Three unknown men stopped Belal on Khilkhet Flyover in the city around 10:30pm on November 28, gave the death threat and demanded Tk 5 lakh. They also threatened to kill his wife and son.

Belal filed a general diary with Khilkhet Police Station on November 30.

A press release signed by Tarakananda Assistant Editor Chowdhury Lutfunnahar said the weekly's members strongly condemn the incident.



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'Social issues to be included in textbooks'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to include lessons in the textbooks to impart knowledge and create awareness on various burning social issues from the next academic session, said National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) Chairman Prof Mohammad Mostafa Kamaluddin yesterday.

He said this at a workshop on imparting life skill-based education, organised by NCTB in collaboration with Unicef at a city hotel.

The NCTB chairman, who chaired the workshop, said they are considering incorporation of timely and critical social issues like HIV/AIDS and sexual harassment with appropriate mental development of the young learners.

Other speakers urged the teachers, guardians and government officials to come forward with a view to building a nation without social instability, injustice, and discrimination with physical and mental development of children.

They said the topics of the secondary education level text books should be set up as per their age and their mental growth so that they can grow up as the citizens with sense of social responsibility and sound mentality.

SM Golam Faruque, additional secretary of education ministry, and Prof Shofiqur Rahman, director of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, also spoke.

UNIVERSITY OF LIBERAL ARTS BANGLADESH

Hs 56, Rd 4A (Satmasjid Road), Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209

Phone: 9661255, 9661301, 01714 161614, 01713 091936

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