

# Wave of protest in 10 districts against Tipaimukh dam

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Human chains were formed in 10 districts including Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Habiganj and Netrakona yesterday protesting the move for construction of Tipaimukh dam on Barak river in India.

A human chain was held along the bank of the river Surma in Sylhet yesterday afternoon as part of the month-long agitation, organised by the 'Tipaimukh Bandh Protirodh Andolan', a left-leaning forum of political activists, reports our staff correspondent in Sylhet.

The programme was observed at the headquarters of the districts that, feared to be badly hit by the proposed mega project in the Indian state of Manipur.

The protesters in Sylhet staged the programme in front of the Circuit House near Surma River.

The human chain was formed in Balughat area of Sunamganj town also on the Surma bank while in Moulvibazar district town it was staged on Monu River bank.

In Habiganj town, the programme took place on the Khowai River bank.

Convener of the forum Bedananda Bhattacharya, also president of the district Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), chaired a rally in Sylhet while Sylhet District Bar Association president EU Shahidul Islam, former Sylhet pourashava chairman AFM Kamal, International Farakka Committee, USA's general secretary Syed Tipu Sultan, BELA's regional coordinator Shaheda Akhtar, Bapa general secretary Abdul Karim and others spoke.

About a thousand social and political activists and others joined the programme.

The 'Tipaimukh Bandh Protirodh Andolan' started its month long agitation on 4 December. The programme includes staging human chains in districts, view exchange meetings with the professional and social organisations from 13 December to 31 December and rally at Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar followed by procession in the city on the concluding day.

The participants of the human chain in Moulvibazar alleged that despite concerns and anxieties about the Indian attempt to make the dam, the government is yet to take proper measures to resist it, reports our correspondent.

They feared that on completion of Tipaimukh dam Surma, Kushiya, Monu and many other rivers in Sylhet region will die because of decline in water flow. The ground water level in Sylhet region will also go down drastically, they said.

Those who spoke include Dr MA Ahad, president of Moulvibazar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Syed Abu Zafar Ahmed, central joint secretary of CPB, Dewan Abul Khayer Chowdhury, convener of the Sector Commanders' Forum Moulvibazar unit, and Mamunur Rashid Suhel, BSD Moulvibazar district unit member secretary.

In Netrakona, the human chain was formed in front of Central Shaheed Minar in the town.

Several hundred activists of left leaning political parties in the district took part at the human chain followed by a rally, reports our correspondent.

Mostafa Kamal, president of Netrakona district unit CPB, Anisur Rahman Khandakar, general secretary of Netrakona district CPB, among others, spoke at the rally.

The speakers demanded immediate steps to cancel the move for construction of Tipaimukh dam in the Indian state of Manipur.



Tipaimukh Bandh Protirodh Andolon forms a human chain along the Surma River in Sylhet, *below*, on the Monu Bridge in Moulvibazar town yesterday protesting India's decision to construct Tipaimukh dam on the Barak River as the structure would affect flow of downstream rivers Surma and Kushiya in Bangladesh territory.

PHOTO: STAR

## Mother of 4 martyrs wants war criminals punished

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR  
TOPU, Pabna

Rokeya Khatun's four sons and a son-in-law sacrificed their lives in the Liberation War but the family is yet to get any state recognition or assistance during the 40 years of independence.

Sight of the photographs of her martyred sons and son-in-law often bring the woman, now 85, memories of the turbulent days of Liberation War.

She has demanded pun-

revolted and joined the Liberation War, like many of his colleagues.

Inspired, his brothers Mosharaf Hossain Ranju, then a student of masters



Rokeya Khatun



Monsur Hossain Monju



Mostak Hossain Aunju



Mosharaf Hossain Ranju



Mokarram Hossain Mukul

ishment of war criminals while her two living sons expect that the state recognise her as 'mother of martyrs' before it is too late.

After the Pakistan army started massacre of the freedom-loving people of Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) on the night of March 25 in 1971, Rokeya's eldest son Mozammel Hossain, then a captain serving the Pakistan army,

final year, Mostak Hossain Aunju, a first year student of Dhaka University, Mokarram Hossain Mukul, sub assistant engineer of Pabna District Board, Monsur Hossain Monju, accounts officer of Water Development Board, and brother-in-law Eusuf Ali, an officer of the then state bank, also joined the war, said Mozammel's younger brother Mobakkar

Hossain Biju.

Biju and his younger brother Mozaffar Hossain Miju were too young to join the war.

Capt Mozammel, also the commanding officer of Sector 7, survived with bullet injuries that he sustained in a front fight with the Pakistan occupation army while five others borrowed martyrdom in the Liberation War, family members said.

Mozammel died on November 29, 2002.

"Our brothers Ranju and Aunju were martyred in a front fight on December 8. Hearing the news, Mukul, Monju and Eusuf rushed to their Madhubag residence in Dhaka on December 12," Biju told this correspondent.

"The same day, local collaborators of the Pak army caught them from there and took them to an unidentified place. The three never returned," he said.

"Five members of our family sacrificed their lives during the Liberation War but our family is yet to get proper recognition for it," said Miju, the youngest son of Rokeya Khatun.

"Shortly after the independence, our retired schoolteacher father also died and our family underwent much hardship. We have not got any government assistance during the last 40 years," he said.

"I feel proud that my sons sacrificed their lives for the country's independence. Now I want to see punishment of war criminals because they were responsible for killing of my sons as well as hundreds of thousands others," Rokeya said.

## SET AFIRE ALLEGEDLY BY HUSBAND

### Mariam gives in, fighting for life for five days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

A newly-wed woman, who was set on fire allegedly by her husband, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) early yesterday after fighting for life for five days.

Mariam Akter, 20, daughter of Giasuddin of Betrahati village in Kishoreganj Sadar upazila succumbed to her injuries at the burn unit of DMCH around 3:00am, hospital sources said.

Abu Bakkar, 27, son of Abdul Quddus of the village, married his cousin Mariam, 25 days ago due to pressure from a local arbitration.

After the marriage, Bakkar and his family members started to torture Mariam on and often over trifling issues.

At one stage, she was forced to return to

her parents house.

On December 7, Abu Bakkar, his brothers Kashem and Shahid and friends Kanchan, Mamun, Lalon and Kalam allegedly set fire to Mariam after pouring kerosene on her when she come out of her room to respond to the call of nature at night. At that time, she was at her father's house at Betrahati village.

Hearing her scream, family members and neighbours rushed to the spot, doused the fire and admitted her to Kishoreganj Sadar Adhunik Hospital from where she was shifted to the DMCH.

Two-thirds of her body was burnt by the fire, hospital sources said.

Mariam's father filed a case on the day of the incident.

## SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

### One killed in wall collapse

UNB, Chandpur

A day labourer was killed and three others were injured in a wall collapse at Ghoshpara in Sadar upazila Sunday afternoon. The dead was identified as Kader Sheikh, 40, of Govindia village in the upazila. The injured are Anwar Dhali, 40, Shahidullah Gazi, 40, and Khalil Khan, 50. Locals said the four were working on a road at around 4:00pm. Suddenly, the roadside wall collapsed on the labourers, leaving them seriously injured. They were taken to Chandpur General Hospital where Kader succumbed to his injuries soon after admission.

### Man commits 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A man allegedly committed suicide at Mridhapara in Jamalpur town early yesterday. Locals said Mofazzal Hossain, 25, son of Dulal Miah, committed suicide following an altercation with his family members over a trivial matter. Mofazzal's wife Nupur Begum said she had an altercation with her husband earlier on the day. He committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling of their house at around 3:00am.

### Transport strike in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Sirajganj Bus and Rickshaw-van Workers' unions will enforce an indefinite transport strike in the district from today demanding ban on Bhotbhotis (locally made three-wheelers) plying the roads. Ansar Ali, general secretary of Sirajganj Motor Workers' Union and Shahjahan Ali, president of district Rickshaw-van Workers' Union said they had repeatedly urged the district administration to impose a ban on Bhotbhotis on the highway, but to no effect.

### BSF returns cattle trader's body

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Border Security Force (BSF) of India yesterday returned the body of a Bangladeshi cattle trader who was shot dead by them on November 16. The victim, Md Baten Ahmed, 24, son of Khairul Basher of Shakhati area in Jessore district, was killed by the BSF men of Angrali camp while he was returning home through Putkahali Border at around 11:00pm. The Indian border guards took away the body. Following a flag meeting at Benapole check post BGB camp, BSF handed over the body to its Bangladesh counterpart.



PHOTO: COURTESY DEW

William Hanna, head of the delegation of European Commission, delivering his speech in the Meet the Producers of Development Wheel (DEW) at Char Bangalia in Haluaghat of Mymensingh on Sunday. DEW is implementing Sustainable Livelihoods for Poor Producers (SLIPP) Project in Mymensingh and Netrakona. The project is supported by European Commission (EU) and co-funded by the Traidcraft Exchange.

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