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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE
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NITUN KUNDU REMEMBERED

Today is the 7th death anniversary of the cultural figure and war hero

PAGE 9

IT 'HITS LIKE A FIST'

Julia Gillard, ex-Australian PM, reveals pain over losing power

PAGE 8

RAMPAL POWER PLANT

Govt goes ahead, greens worried

Selection of builders by March next year

SHARIER KHAN

The government is set to hire a consultant for the massive coal power plant in Rampal, close to the Sundarbans, despite environmentalists' concern about the project's site selection and its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report.

"We have floated a tender to appoint the consultant which is expected to be done by December. By March, we plan to award the power plant building job to an Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor through an open tender," said an official of the India-Bangladesh joint venture company that is implementing the scheme.

The joint venture company is expected to cover 70 percent of the \$ 1.5 billion project cost from loans.

The official claimed that environmentalists and civil society groups were criticising the project EIA without going through its final version.

The Centre for Environment and Geographic Information Services (Cegis) had prepared the report having consulted all including the project's critics to the Rampal locals, he said, adding that the Department of Environment (DoE) had approved the report early August.

Located 14-kilometre northwest of the Sundarbans and four kilometres from the declared ecologically critical area (ECA), the Rampal site was selected based on recommendations by the Cegis upon an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) of two sites - Rampal and Labanchhara in Khulna.

Critics say the Cegis prepared the report just to fulfil the government's wish. They think Labanchhara is a better location as it is situated 33km off the forest.

The Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) earlier this year gave the government a set of concerns that included selection of Rampal as the project site and the poor environmental track record of National Thermal Power Company (NTPC) of India.

Bela said the Indian environment ministry had taken note of NTPC's extremely poor compliance with environment norms. This was relevant to the selection of a site that is eco-sensitive.

It added even though the site was located 4km from the ecologically critical area of the Sundarbans, there had been insufficient studies on the possible impacts.

"Since NTPC is involved in this project, it is pertinent to note that under India's EIA Manual on TPP (thermal power plant) the location should be at least 25km from the outermost periphery of the ecologically sensitive areas. Here the site is only 4km away from the Sundarbans," said Bela.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Land development is on at the site of Rampal power plant in Bagerhat. Inset, map shows the distance between the Sundarbans and the power plant site.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Sangsad to observe Int'l Democracy Day today

BNP won't join

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Jatiya Sangsad will hold a discussion today to observe the International Day of Democracy amid a boycott by BNP-led opposition lawmakers.

This year's theme Strengthening Voices of Democracy "aims to shine a spotlight on the importance of people's voices, both expressed directly and through their elected representatives, in today's political, economic, social, developmental, environmental and technological debates."

The ability of people to raise their voices and decide how they are governed lies at the heart of democracy, says the United Nations about the theme on its website.

But the growing political standoff in Bangladesh over an election-time government continues to raise fears of violence and insecurity among people.

The ruling Awami League and its archrival BNP remain rigid on their stances, dimming the prospects of finding a solution to the crisis.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

FERTILISER PRICING Traders at odds with govt

Distribution crisis looming

REAZ AHMAD

A disagreement over the pricing of fertiliser has put the traders and the government at odds.

People in the farm sector fear if the issue is not resolved soon enough, farmers would take the brunt of a possible distribution disruption during the peak Aman season.

Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA) has threatened to go on strike after next Saturday if the government does not resolve the pricing issue by then.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

US, Russia strike key Syria deal

Reveal plan to wipe out Syria's chemical weapons by mid-2014

AFP, Geneva

The United States and Russia yesterday agreed on an ambitious plan to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons by the middle of next year.

In a landmark deal thrashed out in talks spanning three days, the two powers gave Syrian President Bashar al-Assad a week to hand over details of his regime's stockpile.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said Assad's regime must also provide "immediate and unfettered" access to inspectors from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Bangladeshis lead in climate adaptation

Finds survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A BBC survey across seven Asian countries finds 84 percent of Bangladeshi respondents are feeling the impact of climate change on their household income.

Almost one-third of the respondents are

experiencing extreme weather events, changing livelihoods, and migrating to cities for work and struggling to cope.

However, people here are better at adapting to climate change than those in the other countries surveyed.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Hasina sees national, int'l conspiracies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said there may be conspiracies against the ruling Awami League both in the national and international arenas since many people are not happy at the present government's massive development activities during its tenure.

"Many people may not have liked so much development within such a short time. Even, many in the international arena may not want Bangladesh's progress. Now, they may hatch conspiracy," she said.

Hasina, also president of the AL, made the remarks in her welcome address at a view-exchange meeting with the grassroots leaders of the party's nine organisational districts at the Gonobhaban yesterday.

Mentioning a series of development activities of her government, Hasina said if voted to power, she would build a prosperous Bangladesh by 2021.

Turning to the BNP and its associates, she said they use Islam in politics but the AL serves Islam. "We will set up highly-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Dutch-Bangla Bank

Turn your aspirations into achievements with Dutch-Bangla Bank's **Tk. 102 crore Annual scholarship**

The list of **4057 recipients** of the Dutch-Bangla Bank **Tk. 102 crore Annual Scholarship Programme** who passed S.S.C/Equivalent Examination in 2013 will be published in the following newspaper and website:

Newspaper	Date
Daily Nayadiganta	15, 16 & 17 September, 2013

Website: www.dutchbanglabank.com/scholarship

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