

March to Dhaka on November 24

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 plant because of its proximity to the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a Unesco World Heritage Site.

The project poses significant social and environmental risks, according to Bank Track, a Netherlands-based coalition of organisations "targeting the operations and investments of private sector banks and their effect on people and the planet."

In an analysis, Bank Track said serious deficiencies in project design, planning and implementation render the project non-compliant with the minimum social and environmental standards and the International Finance Corporation's (IFC's) performance standards.

Green activists are concerned that the plant would cause its environmental degradation from increased ship traffic, dredging, and air and water pollution.

Coal-fired thermal power plants belch toxic gases that could impact wildlife and human health and forest quality in the neighbourhood, leading the country's many environmentalists to continue their call to scrap the plant.

The Rampal plant is located about 14 kilometres off the Sundarbans and is estimated to burn 4.72 million tonnes of imported coal a year.

The national committee's leaflets, circulated at the sit-in yesterday, claimed coal burnt annually for the plant will produce around 8 lakh tonnes of ashes and other toxic substances.

Besides, coal-laden vessels will frequently operate through the Sundarbans daily. All these things will endanger the ecological diversity of the mangrove forest.

However, senior officials from both Bangladesh and India have contended that the coal plants will have little or no impact on the forest, saying they will use the latest technology to mitigate pollution and are following stringent environmental guidelines, Bangladeshi laws and international

standards.

At the sit-in, Prof Anu Muhammad said no expert, except for the hired ones, will agree that the plant will not damage the Sundarbans.

The committee will hold rallies and conventions at different divisional cities and district headquarters throughout the next three months while question-and-answer sessions will be held at universities, he said.

It will soon stage a rally in front of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and will submit an open letter to the Indian prime minister, expressing its concern over the project.

The committee is communicating with Indian rights and environmental activists, who are expected to hold a similar demonstration in front of the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi and submit an open letter to the prime minister of Bangladesh over the same issue.

Efforts are on to hold the two programmes on the two sides on the same date, said the organisers.

Besides, there will be mass signature campaigns in rural areas to create public awareness about the project.

The committee will also hold meetings and rallies across the country marking one decade of Phulbari uprising on August 26.

Three men were shot dead and over 200 people injured on August 26, 2006 when law enforcers opened fire at a demonstration against an open-pit mining project at Phulbari in Dinajpur.

Addressing yesterday's sit-in, Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury said the common people must be made aware of the adverse effect of the Rampal project and they should be incorporated with the movement.

"The Sundarbans helps us in many ways. It protects us from natural calamities, storms ... now a monster is out to eat up the forest."

This monster is capitalism, said the eminent educationalist and author. Communist Party of Bangladesh

(CPB) President Mujahidul Islam Selim said, "Our movement is not against electricity generation. Our movement is to protect the Sundarbans."

Convener of the committee, engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, and many other rights activists and politicians spoke at the protest programme.

Over a dozen political and socio-cultural organisations, including Sarbopran Sangskritik Shakti, Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (Shujan), Gonosonghoti Andolon and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) joined the sit-in.

Cultural activists staged drama and rendered songs. Protesters marching in processions came to the venue, carrying banners and placards and chanting slogans against the Rampal project.

Meanwhile, Chittagong chapter of the national committee also held a protest programme at the city's Studio Theatre to press home the same demand, reports our correspondent.

Earlier, the national committee held two long marches -- one from Dhaka to Khulna in March this year and another from Dhaka to Rampal in September 2013 -- protesting the project.

After the two long marches and different other programmes, the anti-Rampal plant movement has got momentum, said engineer Kallol Mustafa, a member of the national committee and an activist.

And yesterday's sit-in has made the movement more vibrant, he told this newspaper, adding, "People from outside the capital have joined this programme or expressed solidarity."

"As Dhaka is the centre of making decisions regarding the plant, there should be a large-scale programme here involving people from every corner of the country."

"Public opinion on the government decision to build the power plant will be reflected through the Dhaka march programme."

Four die in train-pickup collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least four people, including two siblings, were killed and four more injured in a collision between a train and a pickup in Kaunia upazila of Rangpur last night, said police.

The dead are Hafiz Uddin, 25, and Abu Bakkar, 27, sons of Kafil Uddin; Mukul Mia, 26, son of Sirajul Islam; and Azizar Rahman, 27, son of Khoka Mia; of Menajbazaar of Rangpur.

Witnesses said the pickup, which was carrying cows, was heading towards Kaunia from Haragachh in the district.

The accident happened when Dhaka-bound Rangpur Express hit the van at an unmanned level crossing around 9:40pm, leaving four people dead on the spot. Seven cows were also killed.

The injured were rescued and taken to Kaunia Upazila complex. They were later moved to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

Tahmid sent to jail

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unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police in the forwarding report submitted to the court.

Seeing Tahmid's release on bail, a defence lawyer, however, told the court that police took him on remand in two phases "but could not unearth anything as he was not involved in the incident."

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Delwar Hossain passed an order sending Tahmid to jail.

On August 3, Tahmid, a Canadian university student, and Hasnat Karim, a former private university teacher in Bangladesh, were detained on suspicion of their link with the July 1 terror attack.

They were shown arrested under section-54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Having both of them in custody for questioning for eight days, police on August 13, implicated Hasnat in the terror attack.

Police, however, chose to continue interrogating Tahmid under section-54 and took him on a fresh remand for six days.

Hasnat, the lone arrestee in the case linked with the murders of 20 hostages and two policemen in the attack, has been taken on another eight-day remand.

He may be produced before the court on Monday after the completion of his remand period, police said.

On July 1, five militants stormed Holey Artisan Bakery in the capital's Gulshan and held diners hostage at gunpoint.

They murdered nine Italians, seven Japanese, two Bangladeshis, one Indian and one Bangladesh-born US citizen hours before a military operation the next morning killed the terrorists and one café chef ending the siege.

Hasnat and Tahmid were among the survivors.

Tahmid went to the restaurant with two female students of a private university.

Hasnat was there with his wife and two children for celebrating the birthday of one of his daughters, family members said.

Some newspapers have recently published photographs, in which Hasnat and Tahmid are seen with one of the attackers, apparently Rohan Imtiaz, on the rooftop of the bakery.

In the photographs "collected from unknown sources", Tahmid is seen holding a firearm.

Imam, 13 RU students

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holding a secret meeting inside the mosque and they were using the mosque as an office for their activities, creating inconvenience for common students," said Iftekhar Alam, an assistant commissioner of RMP.

One of the arrestees is Sanaulah, 50, imam of the hall mosque. The rest are students of the hall.

They are: Abdul Haque Manik, Shariful Islam, Mehedi Hasan, Anarul Haque, Mostak, Abdus Sobur, Sajid, Fahad Alam, Abul Khair, Yusuf Ali, Sirajul Islam, Lokman Hossain Siraji and Raihan Hossain.

Police had been keeping a watch over the activities of the arrestees for the last few days. After getting permission from the university authorities,

law enforcers raided the hall around 3:00pm. The raid continued until 5:30pm, said Iftekhar.

The arrestees were taken to Motihar Police Station for interrogation, said Humayun Kabir, officer-in-charge of the police station.

RU Pro-VC Prof Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan told The Daily Star that police alerted the university authorities about radical activities in the hall. "The raid was conducted following the police investigation," he said.

"The arrestees were involved in anti-state activities inside the mosque," he claimed.

RU Proctor Mujibul Haque Azad said there were allegations of spreading radical ideologies against many of the arrestees.

Man dies

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from the neighbourhood as witness while leaving the place.

When Nurunnabi was taken to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, doctors declared him dead, police sources said.

His wife Arjina said her husband was innocent and there was no case against him.

"We were processing papers to go to Saudi Arabia and decided to leave the country at the end of September," she said.

ABM Zahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Rangpur Sadar Police Station, said Nurunnabi died of cardiac arrest after he saw the policemen. He was an accused in a bike lifting case and police raided the house on specific information, the OC added.

Meanwhile, villagers surrounded policemen when they went back to the area to drop off the elderly woman. The law enforcers were let go after local people were assured of an investigation into the incident.

Floating guava

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More than 100 trawlers with tourists, including students from different schools, colleges and universities, reach the market on Fridays alone.

"I heard about the guavas and the floating market and was fascinated to see the natural beauty of the place, acres of land with guava trees ...," said Arnab, a tourist from Dhaka who works at a radio station.

"But there is no residential hotels or restaurants here ... we wanted to stay for a few days."

Shuvrajit, a tea stall owner, said, "As road links have been established, the place is becoming more and more crowded and my sale has increased five times."

One of the farmers said, "We are getting fair prices from the visitors and they are getting fresh fruits from here."

Abu Saleh, who went there with a group of tourists from Dhaka, said, "I forget everything else when I entered the beautiful canals through the guava orchards. I try to come here every year."

Sadia Mou from Dhaka said, "I enjoyed not only the scenic beauty of this place but also the journey on a luxurious lunch

during a moonlit night."

Wahiduzzaman, chairman of the marketing department at Barisal University, said, "Tourists are now looking for new kinds of places -- either natural or artificial. That's why the floating market has become one of the best attractions."

"Many business opportunities will be created if some tourists' facilities are established there as the law and order is good in the district."

Sheikh Abu Bakar, deputy director of the district agriculture office, said, "We are going to construct a fruits landing station on the canal very soon with all modern facilities for the farmers, buyers and visitors."

July and August is the season for guavas and hog plums and that's when most visitors and buyers gather there, he added.

Md Mizanul Haque Chowdhury, deputy commissioner of Jhalakathi, said, "I have talked with Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation for developing the areas by setting up some modern facilities for the tourists."

A proposal would be sent very soon to the higher authorities to that end, he added.

Two die

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He, however, went over a pile of mud on the road, left there by workers of utility service workers. This caused the car, which was at speed, to fly across the street and ram pedestrian Kohinur Alam, 35, a security guard, on the opposite side.

Kohinur died in hospital, he added.

The OC quoting locals said Mahim then got out of the car with his hands together, requesting forgiveness.

Locals, however, gave him a beating and handed him over to the police.

Sanvi Rahman Emon, a security guard who was injured in the incident, told The Daily Star that he was on duty with Kohinur. "Suddenly, I heard a loud sound and saw a car moving towards them from the other side of the road. Within seconds, the car hit us, crossing the road," he said.

Kohinur died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around noon, he said.

The OC said when they asked about the driver's licence, Mahim told them that he had lost it during the scuffle with locals at the scene.

He will be produced before a court today, the OC added.

Munni Begum, wife of Kohinur Alam, filed a case in this connection with Banani Police Station, police said.

US cuts

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Paris-based Doctors Without Borders (MSF) on Thursday accused the coalition of "indiscriminate bombings" and said it had lost confidence in the alliance's ability to prevent fatal attacks on its premises.

MSF decided to withdraw staff from six Yemen hospitals after 19 people died in an air strike Monday on an MSF-supported hospital in Yemen's rebel-held northern province of Hajjah.

That was the fourth and deadliest attack yet on an MSF facility during the war, the charity said.

US State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau expressed deep concern after reports of the hospital strike.

A coalition investigative team is conducting "independent" probes into the hospital strike and an air raid two days earlier on a Quranic school which MSF said killed 10 children.

McConaughy said the US cooperation with Saudi Arabia mostly involves "imagery that allows them to better assess the situation on the ground, and then advice and assistance."

He said intelligence is still being provided to the Saudis.

Babul's job

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president who would make the decision about the SP's job.

In his letter to the home ministry, Babul stated that he fell into uncertainty with his two kids following the murder of his wife Mahmuda Khanam Mitu on June 5.

"When I was passing the toughest time of my life, I was compelled to sign my resignation letter on June 24," he said, but did not say who forced him to do that.

Claiming himself to be an honest police officer, Babul said the job was the only resort for the survival of his two children.

On June 5, three assailants stabbed and shot Mitu to death after she had left her OR Nizam Road house on foot around 6:35am to put her son on a school bus at GEC Intersection in Chittagong.

Babul was picked up from his father-in-law's house at Meradia in the capital on June 24 and was interrogated for 15 hours at the Detective Branch office on Minto Road.

He had to sign the resignation letter then as he was left with two options -- either face trial for his alleged link with his wife's murder or resign, police sources said at the time.

AUG 21: THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID



"The grisly grenade attack was aimed at diverting the people's attention from the government's success that made them worried about their future."

Then prime minister **Khaleda Zia** said on September 2 at the BNP's founding anniversary programme, making an oblique reference to the AL as being responsible for the attack.



"Only the enemies of the nation can launch such a barbaric attack."

Then President **Jajuddin Ahmed** said in a statement after the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally.



"The government has given utmost priority to uncovering the mystery of the August 21 grenade attack and identifying the perpetrators. The government, for the first time in the history of the country, has announced a bounty of Tk 1 crore for providing information about the perpetrators."

Then state minister for home **Lutfozzaman Babar**, now facing trial in connection with the grenade attack, said in parliament on September 15, 2004, during a discussion on the attack.

"The confessional statement Joj Miah made during the BNP government rule was true. The supplementary charge sheets submitted recently are politically motivated."



BNP Joint Secretary General **Ruhul Kabir Rizvi** said this at a press briefing on August 21, 2011, protesting the supplementary charge sheet in the grenade attack case which alleged the involvement of Tarique Rahman and government machinery in the attack plot.



"The grenade attack was an attack on Bangladesh's sovereignty and independence, but the Awami League is unwilling to cooperate with the government in carrying out the investigation."

Then law minister **Moudud Ahmed** told a rally on August 30, 2004.



"This is a barbaric and unfortunate incident. Those who have done it ... are not human beings ... They are enemies of democracy, enemies of the country and enemies of the people."

Then BNP secretary general and LGRD minister **Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan** said in a statement following the attack.



"They are experts in bombing. Why are they pointing the finger at the BNP?"

Then water resources minister Maj (retd) **Hafizuddin Ahmed** said in parliament on September 15, 2004.



"The Awami League and Sheikh Hasina have benefited the most [from the grenade attack]. The wave of sympathy for Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League [following the attack] made her think that she had already gone to power."

BNP MP **Mashiur Rahman** said in parliament on September 15, 2004.

"They [AL] want to go to power by staging the bomb drama and by fooling the people. Their conspiracy has completely been foiled due to the competent leadership of the prime minister [Khaleda Zia]."

BNP lawmaker **Shahidul Islam** said in parliament on September 15, 2004.



"The BNP is being blamed for the grenade attack, as the [AL] government wants to protect the actual culprits."

Mirza Fakhruul Islam Alamgir, then acting secretary general said at a discussion on August 21, 2011.



"The [AL] government is out to undermine the BNP by shifting the blame on to it for the August 21 grenade attack."

Nazrul Islam Khan, a standing committee member of the BNP, said on August 25, 2012. August 25, 2012.



"The judicial inquiry commission is probing the August 21 grenade attack. Many more national and international probe agencies came to investigate. After all these, the government has nothing to do."

KM Obaidur Rahman, then a member of the BNP standing committee, said in parliament on September 15, 2004.