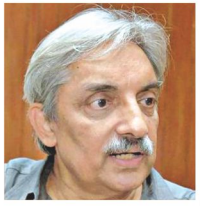


Rampal plant to be disastrous

Says Indian expert

THE HINDU

Environmental activist Bittu Sahgal yesterday expressed concern over the proposed construction of the Rampal thermal power plant near the Sundarbans, saying the project would trigger unavoidable environmental consequences resulting in loss of investment.



Speaking to The Hindu on the sidelines of fourth 'India for Animals' conference, the environmentalist said the Sundarbans is one of the world's largest carbon sinks. To set up a coal-fired thermal plant there would cause loss of investment, as the project would lead to a rise in water temperature, causing convection. Coupled with strong winds, this would create cyclones that would damage the project within the next ten years.

The 1,320-megawatt Rampal super thermal power plant is a joint venture between India and Bangladesh. A report published by UNESCO's World Heritage Centre and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) mentions key concerns related to the project as being: "pollution from coal ash by air, pollution from waste-water and waste ash, increased shipping and dredging, and the cumulative impact of industrial and related development infrastructure."

The report also says the flow of freshwater into the Sundarbans has been drastically reduced, resulting in substantial increases in siltation and salinity that are threatening the overall balance of the ecosystem.

HUMAN-ANIMAL CONFLICT
Sahgal, who is also the founding editor of wildlife and ecology magazine Sanctuary Asia, said, conflicts between humans and animals are because humans have invaded the animals' territory.

"Just because [politicians] want to win elections, there's no point giving away a part of forests to the people, force them to come there and

expect the animal to understand the signboard [meaning it is a human territory]."

He also added that ecological problems caused by humans, who believe they control the environment, cannot be rectified as the remedies don't match the damage. "People think climate change is a disease. It is not a disease, it is a symptom of the disease that environment is giving you, and the disease is over-consumption of our resources."

He said the need of the hour is non-carbon energy, more equitable distribution of resources and 'humility' [towards animals and environment], as we are dependent upon them and not the other way around."

WATER WASTAGE
Wastage of water is aggravating the problem of climate change by 20 per cent, Sahgal said. "We will never solve the problem of climate change if we waste water on industrial farming, chemical farming, mass-produced meat, sugar and rice production. If we keep using it the way we are, it would not only be delusional, it would be criminal."

He added, "By my reckoning, in a decade the death toll by climate change due to water will start and social unrest will start and tribunals will start being held and the decisions being taken by world leaders today that will be like the Nuremberg trials; that you [leaders] knew [what the consequences will be] and you still did it."



People of all ages get down to fish at Burir Badh, an expansive water body, in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila. As the dry season sets in and water level starts to recede, people of Thakurgaon and adjacent districts gather to fish at this location every year in a joyous collective event. PHOTO: QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBYALYAT

A loss in the books, but a win for hope

FROM PAGE 1
asked for by Shaiful, but there would be no 12th overturn of an umpire's decision.

Three deliveries ago England had successfully reviewed a leg-before call against Tajul Islam and Stokes claimed the visitors' ninth wicket. Before that, an assured start from Sabbir, who resumed the day on 59, and a top-edged hook from Tajul that went to the boundary behind the keeper had shaved 10 runs off the 33 that was an every cricket fan's tongue before start of play.

Then it was over, as most feared it would be. A 286-run target on a pitch as difficult as this one was not expected to be chased. It was by all accounts thought to be beyond a side that had only once chased a target over 200, that too against an attack much inferior and on a pitch much friendlier.

But this match was about much more than the statistics show, although they do reveal a lot. It was about a Bangladesh side playing a Test after almost 15 months and an England team that encountered conditions as alien to them as can be imagined. Both sides played their part in the spectacle but even in defeat this Test perhaps means more to Bangladesh.

Coming into this match with three debutants and a pace attack that is not their first choice, they kept pace with England throughout the match. Mehedi Hasan announced himself as a formidable young prospect with a debut five-wicket haul and a disciplined mind that belies his youth.

Sabbir displayed a strength of character not many would have expected from a player often called a limited-overs specialist. Hit on the side of the helmet off his 23rd ball in Test cricket in the first innings, he came back in the second to play an innings that nearly took his team home even after Shakib

Al Hasan had departed with 147 runs on his foot and skipper Mushfiqur Rahim left with 59 runs left.

The skipper himself was immense in this match. He formulated the strategy that has suddenly made Bangladesh look like a side that can win Test matches. He executed that strategy to near perfection. He thought on his feet on the field, and set imaginative fields throughout the Test, giving his strength the best chance of picking up 20 wickets -- which Bangladesh did for only the ninth time in 94 Tests. As importantly, his keeping was nearly flawless and at times brilliant, such as the take to dismiss Moeen Ali in the first innings.

Along with Taimur Iqbal in the first innings and Sabbir in the second, Mushfiqur's batting generally known to be good strokeplayers but not great grafters in tough situations. It does not get much tougher than the eight wicket put out by Sabbir for the 87th run on Sunday.

At the end of the match, there were two differences between the teams that brought about the narrow result. The reverse swing that Stokes and Broad exploited to such ruthless effect was missing, a among Bangladesh's pacers and had those home batsmen not experienced in international cricket all at sea, but that could be offset by Bangladesh's superior spin attack and their better batting against spin. The most crucial difference however was circumstantial -- Bangladesh's 45-run first-innings deficit which came about when they lost five wickets for 27 runs on the third morning after Shakib Al Hasan's suicidal swipe.

So hopes and heads should be held high as they start preparing for the second Test in Mirpur starting on Friday.

same apprehension.

The Rampal plant would require a daily supply of 12,000 tonnes of coal. On an average, 1.5 such ships will ply through the Sundarbans carrying the coal and wakes of these ships may affect the unique forest of the world. The other new industries would also require cargo ships in the river daily.

The Mongla port gets to see a maximum of 100 ships a day. Industrialisation of this area, triggered by the presence of the Rampal plant would gradually increase the number of ships. The government has not done anything so far to prevent these industries from going into operation.

There has not been any environmental assessment of these activities. In addition to protecting the southwestern region from cyclone, the Sundarbans generates services worth US \$273 to \$714 million per year, says IUCN.

Who cares about Sundarbans?

FROM PAGE 1
Environmentalists are concerned about various aspects of the Rampal project. Its risks include emission, pollution of the river, chemical contamination of the Sundarbans, transportation of coal by small ships to the coal power plant's site from the Bay of Bengal through the Sundarbans and many more. Environmentalists question the environmental impact assessment (EIA) for this project while the government keeps on defending the project saying it would not affect the Sundarbans.

The Rampal project at least has an EIA--questionable or not. And while the government appears to be adamant on implementing the project, it at least responds to public outcry.

But nobody seems to be concerned about these upcoming industries. When in operation, the industries may not release coal pollutants, but they

would release chemicals and wastes into the rivers. They would need ships sailing through the Sundarbans. Thousands of people would have to stream in to work there and then, eventually, to settle around the area.

Over the years, since its first survey in British India, the Sundarbans has shrunk to about one-fourth of its first recorded size to encroachers. At the beginning of the British rule, the forest was spread over 43,252 square kilometers. When the British left India, it had shrunk to 37,813 square kilometers. Today, because of human encroachment, the one and only such place on the planet has shrunk to a mere 10,000 square kilometers -- 600 square kilometers in Bangladesh and 4000 square kilometers in India. With the industries making inroads, further encroachment and loss of area to dead mangroves is a real danger. An IUCN report has expressed the

same apprehension.

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A signboard by the Pasur river claiming this site presumably for an industry. PHOTO: ANANTA YUSUF

Arms dealer Business with a vision

FROM PAGE 1
said a "goat trader" rented the house from its own owner Shahin, an army personnel, a couple of months ago to run his business from there.

The police official said the "goat trader" then used to store firearms there and run his arms smuggling business under cover of trading of goats.

He said acting on a tip-off that some smugglers stored firearms in the house, the Detective Branch of police kept a close watch on the house for the last three days. But police did not find anybody entering the house.

The SP added that around 1:30pm yesterday, the DB police, led by him, went to the house, broke the locks of the house door and entered the house.

Police then found a sack there and recovered 22 pistols, 45 magazines and 136 bullets from it. Police also seized 29 goats from the house.

The police official also claimed that the firearms were smuggled in from India and stored in the house to send those to Dhaka.

Police also detained two people, including a woman, from the area for interrogating them.

They are Hakeya Begum, step-mother of Shahin, and his cousin Shakil Ahmed.

The SP, however, did not disclose the name of the goat trader for the sake of investigation.

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The factory now recycles 93,000 cubic metres of used PET bottles which would otherwise be dumped into the environment, and helps to save 15,300 tonnes of greenhouse gases every year.

The country's PET industry was fully dependent on imported PET resins until the BPCIL provided bottle makers with the option of sourcing PET resins locally, thus helping the country save foreign currency.

"We started a trial run at the end of last year and had a formal commercial launch in July this year with a monthly production of a modest 100 tonnes of PET resins," said Khadem Mahmud, the BPCIL managing director.

"We took the production to 250 tonnes this October and are eyeing to take it to 400 tonnes a month," he told The Daily Star.

Khadem Mahmud, who holds degrees in electrical engineering from Washington University and Texas A&M University, said the state-of-the-art factory of the BPCIL is provided with 350 tonnes of used PET bottles a month through sourcing hubs at Hazaribagh and Basabo in the capital and 57 suppliers from across the country.

"After spending 17 years in the USA and working in several Silicon Valley firms for 11 years, I came back home in 2005 and then served in senior level positions in some companies here. As the idea occurred to me after the BPCIL as a news report in 2011, I founded the BPCIL in 2012," recalled Khadem Mahmud.

The BPCIL has received equity and debt financing from foreign and local prominent investors such as US venture capital firm DEFTA Partners, NFM

Energy Singapore Pte Ltd, IDCOL and Trust Bank Ltd.

Before purchasing land for his factory, he visited Germany, Austria and Italy in 2012 to learn about PET recycling technologies and also to source machines.

UN troops, C Africa protesters face off

AFP, Bangui
UN troops fired warning shots yesterday as angry protesters marched through the Central African Republic capital, Bangui, demanding that "passive" UN peacekeepers be sent home for failing to do their job.

Shops and banks in several Bangui districts remained shut as irate residents threw up roadblocks in response to an upsurge of militia violence across the country in recent weeks.

Angered by the flare-up, a coalition of one-city groups had called for a civil day strike in the city of one million to press demands for a pull-out of the UN's 12,000-strong MINUSCA force.

As the protesters marched on MINUSCA headquarters at midday, peacekeepers fired warning shots into the air to hold them back, witnesses told AFP.

CAR has been in chaos since early 2013 when longtime president Francois Bozize a Christian, was ousted by a mainly Muslim Seleka rebel group -- triggering revenge attacks and a spiral of atrocities in which thousands were slaughtered.

"By staying home the population will show its support towards civil society demands for MINUSCA's withdrawal and its outrage over the killings that are taking place across almost all of the country," said the civil society coalition's coordinator Gervais Lakosso.

Govt raises allowances

AWARDED FOR GALLANTRY/INJURED WAR HEROES/FAMILY PREVALING ALLOWANCE NEW ALLOWANCE (Effective from January 2016)

AWARDED FOR GALLANTRY/INJURED WAR HEROES/FAMILY	PREVALING ALLOWANCE	NEW ALLOWANCE (Effective from January 2016)
● Bir Sreshtha	Tk 12,000	Tk 30,000
● Bir Uttam	Tk 10,000	Tk 25,000
● Bir Bikram	Tk 8,000	Tk 20,000
● Bir Pratik	Tk 6,000	Tk 15,000
● Martyr	Tk 15,000	Tk 30,000
● Family of injured freedom fighter	Tk 15,000	Tk 25,000
● Family of Bir Sreshtha	Tk 28,000	Tk 35,000
● Injured freedom fighter 'A' category	Tk 30,000	Tk 45,000
● Injured freedom fighter 'B' category	Tk 20,000	Tk 35,000
● Injured freedom fighter 'C' category	Tk 16,000	Tk 30,000
● Injured freedom fighter 'D' category	Tk 9,700	Tk 25,000

FROM PAGE 1
There are seven Bir Sreshtha, 68 Bir Uttam, 175 Bir Bikram and 426 Bir Pratik gallantry award winners.

The number of families of martyrs receiving allowance is 25,000 while the number of war-wounded (now dead) freedom fighters' families is 303 and families of Bir Sreshtha are seven.

The cabinet approved another proposal to enhance the financial power of the ministry and division, allowing them to use a fund of Tk 100 crore, instead of the present Tk 50 crore, when they approve development and non-development projects.

The cost of consultancy services has also been raised to Tk 30 crore for development projects and Tk 20 crore for projects under the non-development budget.

The cabinet adopted an honorary resolution expressing deep shock at the death of Thai King Bhumibol Adulayadej and Deputy Commissioner of Chapainawabjanj Zahidul Islam.

Another resolution was adopted thanking Rezwana Siddiq Tulip and Rupa Haq, two Bangladesh origin British citizens, for becoming ministers in the shadow cabinet of the UK Labour Party.