



The Daily Star

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

SECOND EDITION

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXI No. 296

AGRAHAYAN 2, 1428 BS

RABIU SANI 11, 1443 HIRI

16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



MATARBARI COAL-FIRED PLANTS

Nature sacrificed FOR POWER

Despite potential damage to health and environment, one project halfway done with faulty impact assessment study

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

When countries around the world are phasing out coal-based power plants, the Bangladesh government has planned eight such projects in Maheshkhali of Cox's Bazar despite their potential adverse impacts in and around the coastal belt.

Of the eight, Phase-1 of the Matarbari Power Plant is already halfway done, although national and international bodies criticised its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as "lacking clarity" on the pollution scenario.

Officials of Coal Power Generation Company (CPGC), the government-owned entity that is constructing the 1,200-megawatt plant, admitted to The Daily Star that the EIA is indeed faulty.

The eight plants would constitute one of the largest coal-fired power plant clusters within 10 square kilometres anywhere in the world, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), an independent research organisation based in Finland.

No EIA has been done on the rest of the eight plants, which pose pollution risks for beaches, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

Also, there has not been any cumulative EIA on the collective impact of these plants, despite the ecologically sensitive nature of the coastal area that faces current and future climate threats because of global warming.

The Matarbari Phase-1 plant is being jointly funded by the Japan and Bangladesh governments. Japan will arrange Tk 28,939 crore of the estimated cost of about Tk

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



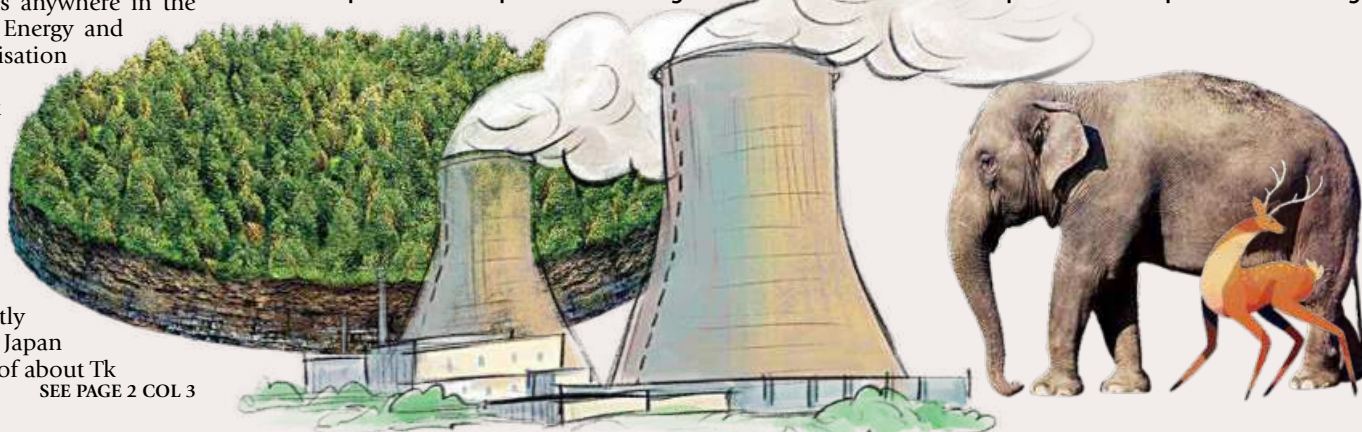
COAL POWER PLANTS KEY IMPACTS

UNDER-THREAT FORESTS

Himchhari, Inani, Medhakochchhopia and Bangabandu Safari Park in Cox's Bazar; Baroidala and Kaptai national parks in Chattogram.

UNDER-THREAT WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES

Hazarikhil, Chunati, Fasiakhali, Dudpuhkuria-Dhopachari and Sangu.



- Five wildlife sanctuaries and six forests likely to face serious consequences
- Over 7 million people likely to be exposed to excessive mercury, sulphur dioxide pollution
- Marine fish stock will be affected due to mercury deposition in coastal water
- Resulting pollution may even reach capital, which is already known globally for its poor air quality
- Thousands projected to develop fatal health conditions related to toxic substance emission

SOURCE: CREA STUDY

COVID TREATMENT DGHS asks doctors to prescribe Molnupiravir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate General of Health Services has instructed all public hospitals to prescribe oral anti-Covid drug Molnupiravir yesterday.

The development comes over a week after the drug administration gave emergency production and usage approval to the world's first oral anti-Covid drug in the local market.

"We have instructed all public hospitals that physicians can use the drug to treat Covid-19 adult patients with mild to moderate symptoms. It cannot be used by patients with severe symptoms," Farid Hossain Mian, director of hospitals and clinics at the DGHS, told The Daily Star last night.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Khaleda has new health complications

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, now under treatment at the Critical Care Unit of Evercare Hospital in the capital, has reportedly developed new health complications.

The 76-year-old former prime minister could not retain protein, and her kidneys were not properly functioning, said family sources and a physician.

Seeking anonymity, a source close to Khaleda's family, also said that her blood sugar level was abnormally high and her blood pressure fluctuating, eventually affecting her heart.

"Along with her ageing-associated complications, she is now showing other new symptoms. Her condition is not good," the source said.

Asked, Khaleda's personal physician AZM Zahid Hossain said, "She requires CCU services. So, you understand her physical condition. Any person with sound health cannot be admitted to CCU."

"A medical board is meticulously, keenly and seriously observing her situation."

He also said that the BNP chairperson needs better treatment and should be sent abroad immediately.

Khaleda was admitted to the hospital on Saturday night

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5



FIREARMS SMUGGLING

Syndicate eyeing polls, Rohingya camps

Claims CTTC after arresting four suspects

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A transnational syndicate has been smuggling arms into Bangladesh from India and Myanmar for about four years. Its target group is criminals who would use arms in polls violence and Rohingya camps, say law enforcers.

Alongside the old smuggling routes, the syndicate started using some new ones. Law enforcers came to know about it in 2018.

At least three authorised arms dealers are leading the syndicate, and some people from ethnic minority communities are working as carriers. The ethnic minority people hold national identity cards of both Bangladesh and India, said the Arms Enforcement team of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit.

The team claimed to have learnt this after interrogating four people who were arrested in the capital late last month.

Among the arrestees is an authorised arms dealer.

Ahamedul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of CTTC unit, said the syndicate mainly used Shibganj of

ILLEGAL ARMS ROUTE

COMING FROM
India's Bihar, Malda, Jainta, Tripura,
Myanmar's Maungdaw

ENTERING THROUGH
Bangladesh's Shibganj, Benapole,
Tamabil, Borkol, Naikkyangchhari

Chapainawabganj and Benapole of Jashore to smuggle arms from India previously.

As security was beefed up in those points, the syndicate changed routes and started smuggling arms through Borkol of Rangamati and Tamabil of Sylhet points, he told The Daily Star.

"Most of these arms were made in Bihar. The consignment is then sent to Tripura. We found that some of the arms were made in a factory in Myanmar and those were smuggled into Rangamati from Maungdaw of Myanmar," said the official.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

ALLEGATION OF KISHORE'S TORTURE

PBI sees no evidence

Cartoonist says the agency asked him only about personal matters for the probe

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

There is no definite evidence that one or more people picked up cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore from home and tortured him physically and mentally in May last year, according to a police probe.

Kishore's allegations of torture against 16-17 unnamed individuals in plainclothes were not primarily proved, reads the probe report submitted to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka on October 17 this year.

The cartoonist filed the case on March 10 stating that he was picked up from his residence around 5:45pm on May 2 last year and tortured until May 4 and that he found himself in a Rab office on May 5.

After investigating Kishore's case for over six months, Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of police at PBI, submitted the report to the court. A hearing on the report will be held on November 24.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Bangladesh, India to host 2031 ODI WC

AGENCIES

Bangladesh and India will host ICC Men's ODI World Cup in 2031 as the host nations for every major ICC men's limited-overs event between 2024 and 2031 were confirmed by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Australia, Bangladesh, England, Ireland, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Scotland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies and Zimbabwe have all been named as hosts, while the United States and Namibia are set to stage an ICC event for the first time.

The 2031 ODI World Cup will be Bangladesh's fourth global event after the South Asian nation solely hosted the first edition of ICC Champions Trophy (formerly known as ICC Knockout Tournament) in 1998, co-hosted the ODI World Cup with India and Sri Lanka in 2011 and solely hosted the 2014 T20 World Cup.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Residents of Karail slum wait in long queues at the vaccination centre at Pallibandhu Ershad Bidyalaya in the capital's Mohakhali to get inoculated against Covid-19 yesterday, the first day of a campaign to inoculate slum dwellers aged 18 and above.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

COVID VACCINATION Don't need NID anymore

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

People who do not have national identity cards can get Covid-19 vaccines from community clinics and other temporary centres showing any other identification papers, like birth certificate or passport.

Not only that, rural people can receive their jabs with identification certificates issued by local UP chairmen or members and people are already getting jabbed this way.

The NID is mandatory for vaccine registration through Surokkha apps, a standard protocol that many people in rural areas find difficult to comply with for various reasons.

The government has recently relaxed the rules to ramp up the inoculation drive and attain the goal of vaccinating 80 percent of the population by April next year.

"We want to scale up the vaccination campaign. Many people have been facing difficulties registering with the Surokkha apps. So, we have decided that eligible people can go to the designated vaccination centres with whatever identification cards they have to be jabbed," Md Shamsul Haque, line director of DGHS and member secretary of Covid-19 vaccine deployment committee, told The Daily Star.

He said birth certificate or passport or certificate issued by local UP chairmen or members would be considered valid identification document for those who don't have NID cards.

"A recipient will get a temporary vaccine card for that," said the DGHS official, adding, "To get vaccine certificates, they will have to follow the standard registration process protocol after obtaining NID cards."

The official added that those who don't have NID cards won't be vaccinated in regular centres across the country.

"They will get their jabs at community clinics across the country and also in temporary centres," he said.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1