

Development and disaster cannot go together: Medha



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From Our Correspondent

GUWAHATI: Development in any form must ensure the well being of the people of all section. But what the Government does these days only to safeguard the interest of the multi national companies. A strong movement is neccessary to stop these style of exploitation in the name of development.

These are more or less of what Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)-pioneer Medha Patkar says at a function at Gauhati University on Sunday.

She expressed grave concern over the environment of Assam saying the scenario is at stake due to unilateral action by the Government for construction of big dams and industrialization like steps for seismic survey on the Brahmaputra riverbed without hearing what the people of the region say. It can also create conflict in this region.

She charges the country's plan panel with violating the Constitution by ignoring the voice of the North East.

She referred a report by the North-East Social Research Centre which has it that as many as 19 lakh people were displaced due to big development projects in the state since Independence and says big

projects are not for the people of the areas concerned, but in the interest of multinational companies.

She further demands the abolition of the Land Acquisition Act which only deprives the common people. She also resented the initiatives for Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

Mr Patkar says the panel's deputy chairman Dr Montek Singh Aluwaliah has not been caring even an iota of what the people in the grass root level say while he is taking up steps to build big river dams in various parts of the country, including the North-east.

In his inaugural address, Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University, Dr Amarjyoti Choudhury says the university will play its necessary role to find an appropriate technology to keep the environment clean and green.

He stresses the need of a flawless technology to tap the rich water resources of the region to generate about 4,000 MW power.

Notably, People's Movement for Lower Subansiri Brahmaputra Valley (MLSBV) is opposed to the NHPC's Lower Subansiri Hydro Power Project saying its implementation will affect the people, both in downstream in Asom and upstream in Arunachal Pradesh.

Organized by the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti of Asom, the objective of the two-day function is to provide a common platform to the various grassroots political movements in the North-east involving issues like land rights, displacement of people due to dams and seismic survey in Brahmaputra riverbed, and integrate these movements with all India movements on similar issues.

editor

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