

International Mountain Day was observed for the first time in the country on December 11 in a befitting manner. The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA) organised the day's program in partnership with FAO, ILO, UNDP, ICIMOD, CHT Associatio-Dhaka and Bangladesh Adventure Club while the Daily Star and Channel i were the media partners.

The Day's program began with a colorful rally. The rally started at 9 am from the proposed site of CHT Complex at Bailey road and ended at CIRDAP premise.

After the rally a seminar on "Mountains: Key to a Sustainable Development" was held at 11 am at the International Conference Centre of CIRDAP. Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, Secretary of ministry of CHT Affairs, chaired the session while Joint Secretary Basudeb Achariya delivered the welcome speech. Dr Ranjit Kumar Biswas, Secretary ,Ministry of Cultural Affairs; Mike Robson, Country Representative of FAO; Prof Syed Manzurul Islam and Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University; anthropologist Prof Prashanta Tripura; and Dr. Pranendu Bikash Chakma VC of Rangamati University for Science and Technology also spoke in the seminar.

A large number of people from the CHT, representatives of local and national NGOs, human rights organizers also participated in the seminar.

Speakers at the seminar called for raising awareness among people about the risks of unplanned development in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region, the most marginalized area of the country. The speakers urged the government to protect the biodiversity of the hills.

On the occasion a three-day Photo Exhibition (From December 11 to 13) on "Mountain and People" was also held at Dhaka Art Centre, Dhanmandi. Special supplement was published in the national and CHT local dailies. The three hill district councils also observed the day separately with elaborate program.