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Anti-coal protesters start new hunger strike demanding end to two projects

GOVERNMENT HOUSE PROTEST SUPPOSED TO CONTINUE UNTIL OFFICIALS CAPITULATE AND CANCEL PLANS

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TWO GROUPS of protesters started a hunger strike yesterday, with activists saying they would not eat until the government permanently cancels coal-fired power plants in the South.

Thirty-three activists from Save Andaman from Coal and the Network of Songkhla-Pattani Residents Against Coal-Fired Power Plants began the hunger strike in front of the UN headquarters in Bangkok, demanding the government permanently cancel the proposed Krabi and Thepa projects

Prasitchai Nu-nuan, a prominent hunger striker, said protesters had pledged to fight coal-fired power plant projects by putting their lives on the line and would sit at UN headquarters subsisting only on water in an act reflecting the "highest level of civil disobedience".

The group began in 2012 their public opposition to the coal-fired plants.

In subsequent years, the groups "have tried every campaign tactic to urge the government not to build harmful coal-fired power plants in Krabi and Songkhla's Thepa district, but the government never really listened to us", Prasitchai said. "We have

no choice but to sacrifice our lives to protect our beloved home."

He said he was sure that others would join the hunger strike and would not stop until the government complied with the groups' demands.

The groups also appealed to the international community to pay attention to Thailand's plans to construct

new coal-fired power plants, as burning coal created environmental impacts on a global scale by intensifying climate change.

In July 2015, Prasitchai and another Krabi coal-fired power plant protester, Akradej Chakjinda, staged a hunger strike in front of the Tourism and Sports Ministry to demand the

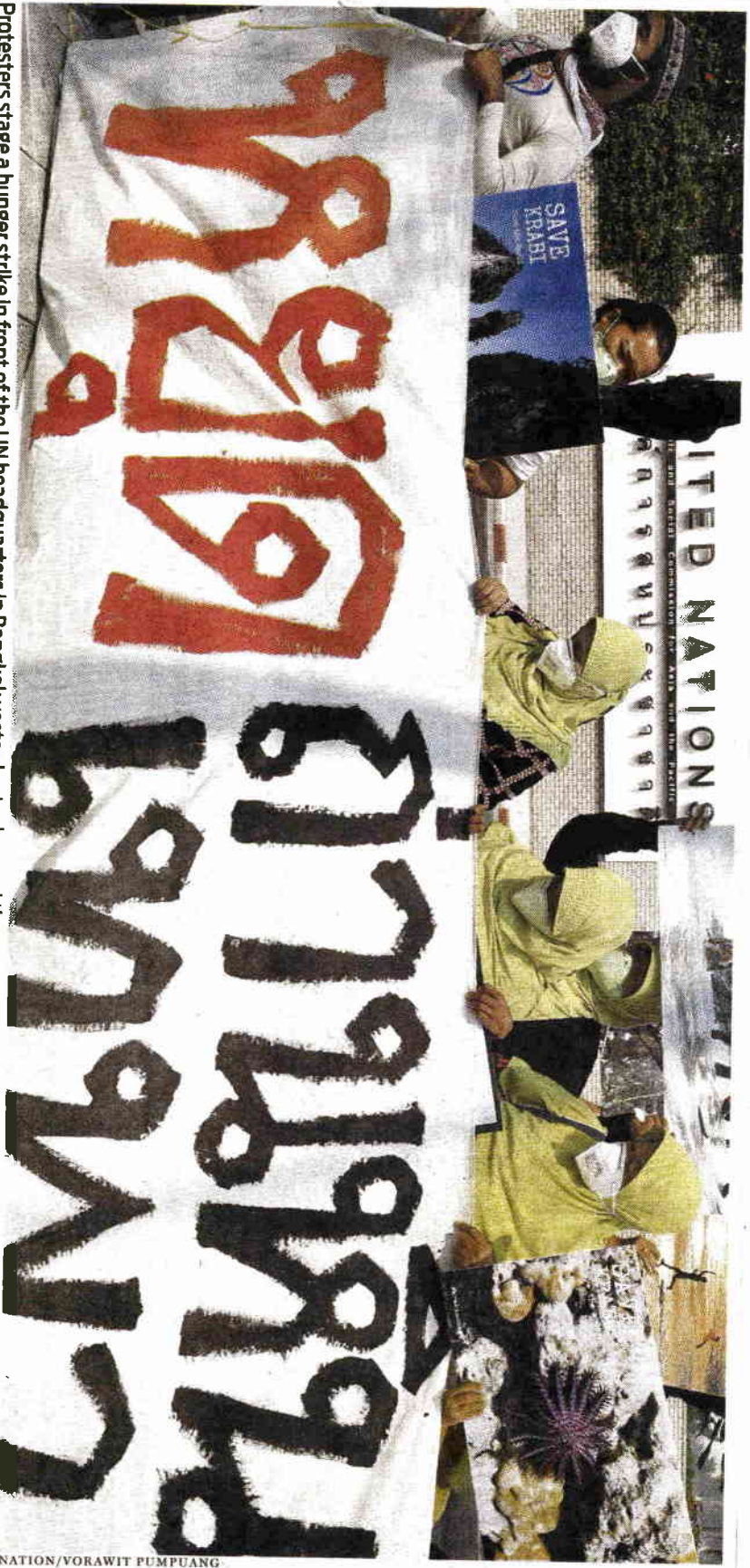
government stop the Krabi coal-fired plant.

They ended the hunger strike on the 14th day after Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha agreed to form a three-party joint committee to determine the fate of the project.

However, discussions between the Energy Ministry, National Legislative

Assembly, academics and local people on the joint committee failed to end the conflict, leading to another big protest against the Krabi plant in Bangkok in October 2016.

The conflict has continued as the groups have tried other approaches to persuade the government to stop plans to produce power by burning coal.



Protesters stage a hunger strike in front of the UN headquarters in Bangkok yesterday to demand the revocation of coal-fired power plant projects in the South and raise the issue with the international community.

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