

Another citizen dies in police custody

Sajedur Rahman Sajid, an official of a pharmaceutical company, was found dead while under police custody. He was arrested three days earlier on May 18 in Gaibandha. The citizens of Gaibandha observed 'Black Day' protesting the murder of Sajid. A judiciary investigation of Rahman's death was demanded along with the arrest of BNP cadres who attacked the earlier Nagorik Committee rally. Rahman was allegedly tortured to death while under the custody of the Gaibandha police. The authorities were strongly criticised for not taking action against the policemen involved in the murder. Sajid's death is an addition to the long list of individuals killed in police custody and like all the other cases, there is little hope that the murderers will be punished.

Freedom of press under attack

With the stoppage of publishing of the Dainik Andolaner Bazar, a popular local daily of Kushtia, freedom of speech and democracy as a whole is under threat in the country. The daily remained out of publication for more than seven days following threats from ruling BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam.

Shahidul, at a meeting in Kushtia Public Library ground on Wednesday, threatened all printing presses in the district of dire consequences if they printed Dainik Andolaner Bazar. No printing presses dared to print the newspaper since then.

The daily stopped publication after Shahidul's cadres attacked Quality Press at Courtpara, the press that printed the daily, on May 30 and snatched the tracing papers required to print the paper.

Local administration did not provide any security for the newspaper despite repeated appeals by the newspaper authorities.

"We constantly appealed to the administration to ensure our security but these were of no avail," Anisuzzaman, executive editor of the daily, told The Daily Star.

"Deputy Commissioner (DC) asked us to file a case against the lawmaker while the superintendent of police (SP) assured us of police patrol but no round-the-clock watch," he added.

Reporters and employees of the daily are scared to move around in the town or go to the office fearing attacks by Shahidul's cadres. Manjur Ehsan Chowdhury, editor of the daily, is now in Dhaka fearing attacks on his life.

Areas in Comilla without electricity for 3 days

Electric supply to Mogoltuli, Ragoja, Gangchur and Chhatipatti areas remained suspended since Saturday following a transformer blast at Mogoltuli. One has to resort to violence and chaos in the streets to have the authorities lend an ear. To make their point, the residents of the areas laid siege to an electricity-distribution office in Comilla town to protest against the blackout in these areas for three consecutive days. Witnesses said the residents of the four areas came to Comilla Power Sales and Distribution Division-2 office in a procession in the morning, laid siege to it and ransacked the room of the executive engineer.

It is a wonder how the people in this country have to suffer due to the lack of some of the basic necessities of survival, namely, running water and electricity. It would not be long before civilisation goes back to the stone age. A few weeks ago, people in Kansat and Shanir Akhra in Demra also went on rampage in separate incidents when they had to suffer untold miseries as their lives came to a virtual standstill because of incessant load shedding in the mainly industry-dependent areas.

