

Diesel rationing starts in 16 northern dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) yesterday started diesel rationing for dealers and agents of three oil companies in 16 northern districts.

Dealers and agents close to border areas will get 25 per cent less than earlier supplies and others will get 15 per cent less, BPC sources said.

The impact of rationing could not be measured immediately in Bogra

town yesterday as petrol pump owners said they sold fuel from earlier supplies. It may be felt from today, they added.

Officials at BPC's Regional Control Room (RCR) here said fuel rationing was introduced for dealers and agents of Padma, Jamuna and Meghna oil companies due to increase in demand for irrigation as a near drought situation is prevailing in the ongoing rainy season. Smuggling across the border is also a factor, they said.

The fuel demand for irrigation increased by around 10 lakh liters a day as more than 80,000 diesel-run irrigation pumps are operating in the region now, said BPC officials.

The three oil companies are supplying around 20 lakh liters of diesel a day in 16 northern districts, they added.

On Sunday, 48 lakh litres reached northern districts to replenish supplies in near-empty petrol pumps, they said.

None of the three oil companies

maintain any buffer stock in the northern districts to meet any emergency.

A senior official of Padma Oil company said diesel smuggling is a major factor behind rationing.

A leader of Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners Association however denied the allegation of large scale smuggling. Many filling stations are without diesel for days in bordering districts including Panchagarh, Rajshahi and Joypurhat, he said.



Workers and employees of Siraganj Quami Jute Mill parading streets yesterday to press their eight-point demand.

Jamaat leader arrested with arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police recovered a shutter gun from the shop of a Jamaat-e-Islami leader at Alipur Dhalipara village in Sadar upazila Sunday night.

Police arrested Jamaat leader Kabirul Islam, 22, son of Abdul Gafor.

Police said, acting on a tip off, a team led by Assistant Police Superintendent (ASP) Delwar Hossain Sayeedi raided the shop and recovered the firearm.

A case has been filed with the Sadar thana.

On contact, Sadar thana Officer-in-Charge (OC) Shahjahan confirmed the incident.

Withdraw Bangalees from hill districts

PCJSS memo to PM

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghitya Samity (PCJSS) submitted a memorandum to the prime minister to press their three-point demand including 'withdrawal of Bangalee outsiders from lands of indigenous people.'

The two other demands are an end to 'harassment and filing of cases' against indigenous people and steps to activate the land commission as early as possible.

The memorandum was handed over to Khagrachhari Deputy

Commissioner Humayun Kabir.

It contained signatures of at least 413 indigenous leaders, headman and local elite.

The memorandum alleged that existence of indigenous communities are threatened as Bangalees have grabbed their lands in different areas of the district. It also specified the areas.

"We submitted the memorandum to the prime minister to protect indigenous communities", said PCJSS Information and Publisher Secretary Buddah Kingkor Chakma.

Procure jute, keep mill running

Workers call hartal at Siraganj for today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Siraganj

Several hundred workers and employees of Siraganj Quami Jute Mill brought out a procession in the town yesterday to press for their eight-point demand including procurement of jute to keep the mill running and payment of arrears salaries.

They also called a half-day hartal for today in the town to press three demands.

The processionists paraded main roads of the town and held a rally at the mill gate with Abdul Khalek, president of Kawmi Jute Mill Majdur Union, in the chair.

Speakers there said the mill faces closure for want of jute in the peak jute harvest season due to government's apathy. It is now running far below its capacity.

They alleged that the apathy in jute procurement is part of a government plan to close the mill.

Workers and employees are passing hard days as six month's salaries are yet to be paid, they said and urged the mill authorities to clear payments immediately.

The protesters also urged the people to observe hartal for today (Tuesday) to press their demands.

Road blocked demanding smooth power supply

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Hundreds of people in Dhap area Sunday night blocked the Rangpur-Dinajpur highway for half-an-hour protesting frequent load shedding and demanding uninterrupted electricity supply.

During the protest, several hundred buses, trucks and other vehicles were stranded on the highway creating an unusual traffic jam from 7:30pm to 8pm.

Life has become miserable due to frequent load shedding in the entire district. In many areas, people get electricity only for 5-6 hours a day, locals complained.

Some villages sometimes go without electricity for two or three days, said a Rural Electrification Board (REB) official on condition of anonymity.

He said he sees hardly any chance to improve the situation, as the power supply from the national grid is unusually low.

Rangpur Power Development Board (PDB) executive engineer said the crisis became acute with the rising demand for electricity.

"We did not think that farmers would need electricity for irrigation during monsoon, he said adding we were not prepared for this".

Affluent farmers who irrigate aman fields with power pumps are worried for crisis of electricity. The ongoing drought has aggravated the situation in the entire district.

Transport strike in Dinajpur from today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A section of transport owner and workers in Dinajpur yesterday called an indefinite transport strike from today on all routes in the district, demanding withdraw BRTC buses on 10 routes from Dinajpur.

On Sunday, at least 20 passengers and some BRTC bus staff were injured as private transport workers vandalised a BRTC bus on at Phoolbari in the district.

In last few days, several clashes took place between BRTC workers and private transport workers, who are demanding withdrawal of BRTC buses in northern districts. BRTC workers are also being threatened, they claimed.

During past several days, the workers are threatening BRTC staffs. They said private transport workers are barricading plying of BRTC buses in different routes in the region.

When contacted, general secretary of Dinajpur Transport Owner Association Md. Nazrul Islam Selu said they will continue their strike until BRTC buses are withdrawn.

UPDF accused of kidnapping 4 PCP men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

At least four members of Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP), student front of Parabatya Chattagram Janasanghaty Samity (PCJSS), were abducted allegedly by the activists of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) yesterday.

The abducted persons are Michael Chakma, 18, Sawpan Chakma, 18, Prasanta Bikash Chakma, 19, and Yous Bikash Chakma, 19.

PCP president Popen Tripura said the UPDF activists abducted four active members of his organisation in retaliation for a clash at Khagrachhari Government College on Sunday. He said the UPDF men raided different areas in Sadar upazila from Sunday midnight till yesterday morning before abducting them. Previously the UPDF men used to threaten PCP activists to establish supremacy on the college campus. He urged the administration to arrest the culprits.

However, the UPDF coordinator Samari Chakma refuted the allegations saying his men were not involved in the abduction. PCP is playing a dirty game alleging abduction, he said.

On Sunday, a freshers' reception was foiled at Khagrachhari Government College due to clash of two student wings of UPDF and PCJSS.

BNP leader kills rival in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A ruling BNP leader allegedly killed his rival near Rangpur Judge Court yesterday morning.

Mostaque was stabbed to death by former joint secretary of town BNP, Azad Bosunia, witnesses said.

They said, Mostaque picked up Azad from the court premises at around 11 am, took him to a mess about 100 yards away where he stabbed him indiscriminately. Mostaque left the scene by a Suzuki motor cycle immediately after the incident.

Mostaque was rushed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) where he died after a few minutes.

Pappu, who accompanied Mostaque to court said, Azad threatened the victim of dire consequences because of his objection to an 'illicit' relationship of the 'killer' with a woman at Guptapara.



Dinajpur district Jubo Mahila League observed a token hunger strike in front of press club demanding proper investigation into the August 21 massacre at Sheikh Hasina's public meeting in Dhaka in 2004 and punishment to the killers.

Now Nasir Biswas claims himself the 'fittest' man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Industrialist Nasir Uddin Biswas yesterday said BNP will give him ticket to contest from Kushtia-1 constituency in the coming election 'as party highups are not happy with the incumbent lawmaker'.

Nasir is one of the 11 BNP leaders in Kushtia who, in a joint statement at a press conference on Friday, declared that all of them would seek nomination for Kushtia-1 (Daulatpur) but would work together for the party nominee, whoever he might be.

Yesterday, Nasir at a press conference claimed that he was the 'fittest' candidate.

Asked about Friday's announcement at a joint press conference, he said he had planned it (Friday's press conference) and it was supposed to be held at Nasir Uddin Biswas auditorium at Allar Darga in Daulatpur. "But lawmaker of the constituency Reza Ahmed Bachhu Mollah hijacked his programme and it was shifted to Daulatpur Shilpakala Academy".

"I could not express myself on the day. So I have arranged another programme to inform you (journalists) what I want," Nasir told

a questioner.

Although he does not hold any important post in Kushtia district BNP, Nasir claimed that he enjoys support of majority of the district leaders including its president and secretary.

Nasir alleged that the present lawmaker from the constituency is not actually a politician. He capitalised on the political clout of his father Ahsan-Ul-Haq Mollah, a former minister. Mollah was elected from the area four times.

Nasir gave an account of his contributions for education and healthcare service in the area and questioned, "What contribution has been made by the present lawmaker or his family?"

"They only built their fortune by utilising BNP".

Nasir also blamed Bachchu Mollah for deterioration in law and order in the upazila.

Nasir, chairman of Nasir Group of Industries, also sought BNP nomination from the constituency

in 2001 parliamentary election and 2004 by-election but was not given.

BNP leaders present at Friday's press conference were incumbent lawmaker Reza Ahmed Bachhu Mollah, Nasir Uddin Biswas, Daulatpur upazila BNP secretary Shahid Sarkar Mongol, assistant secretary Akbar Ali, vice-presidents Ruhul Kuddus, Mojibur Rahman and Rezaul Haq, joint secretary Golam Mustafa, publicity secretary Zohurul Karim, Kushtia district BNP vice-president Altaf Hossain, Ramzan Ali, and Air Force officer Kamal Hossain.

Friday's press conference was marked by a brawl when Bachchu Mollah said he was the 'fittest' man to get the nomination.

When contacted yesterday, Bachchu Mollah said a group of people who are not well wishers of the party are creating a chaos. They are agents of Awami League, he said.

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