

Caretaker reform is a people's demand now

Govt flouted polls pledge in Rangpur, claims JP, putting forward 8-point demand at public meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Jatiya Party leaders has said reform in the caretaker system is a people's demand now and the government has to fulfil it for holding the next general election in a free and fair manner.

The coalition government is unwilling to reform the system to cling to power, JP leaders said at a big public meeting, held at Palichara under Rangpur sadar upzila on Thursday.

They called upon the people to unite to press the caretaker system reform and to realise the eight-point demand of the people of Rangpur.

The eight-point demand put forward at the meeting include gas supply to northern districts and declaration of Rangpur Division.

The meeting was addressed by, among others, JP Presidium member GM Quader MP, JP Joint Secretary Moshir Rahman Ranga MP, Organizing Secretary Sayed Noor Ahmad Tulu, Rangpur JP Joint Secretary Sohrab Hossen and its Sadar upzila president Mostafa. It was presided over by Rangpur sadar upzila secretary Abed Ali.

Quader said the coalition government has failed to run the country and ensure security of people's life and property.

Even life of lawmakers are not safe. Two opposition parliament members were killed during the tenure of the government but their fair trial can not be expected under it. The government should step down immediately in the interest of the people and the country.

He called upon the people to unite to launch tougher agitation to dislodge the coalition government as it has become, what he said, autocratic and anti-people.

He alleged that corruption and crime in the country increased after takeover by the coalition government as the party men are involved in corruption. They are also sheltering criminals, he alleged.

He also called the government a lair. It had promised in parliament to supply gas to northern districts and set up an education board and a university in Rangpur. But no effective step has been taken to fulfil the promises even in three and a half years, he said.

Quader urged the people of

Rangpur to unite on a single platform to realise the eight-point demand.

He claimed that people were better off during the nine years Jatiya Party rule than they are now. Prices of essentials, fertiliser and fuel are higher now than during Jatiya Party tenure, he said.

People want Jatiya Party in power again he said and called upon party workers to prepare for the next election.

Moshir Rahman Ranga MP said, the coalition government has deprived the people of Rangpur by not fulfilling its pledges. There has been virtually no development work in Rangpur under the present government, he said. The people of Rangpur will no longer vote for any party except Jatiya Party, he claimed.

Sayed Noor Ahmad Tulu said, the government has destroyed democratic values by foiling peaceful opposition programmes at different times by using police. This is autocratic.

Sunamganj civic body gives one month deadline to govt 7-point demand includes steps to save Boro in haors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The 'Save Sunamganj', a newly formed civic body, at a rally in the district town has given a one month deadline to the government to fulfil its seven-point demand and warned of tougher agitation for non-compliance.

The demands including immediate steps to save the IRR-Boro crops from possible flood by raising heights of embankments in haors, compensation to the people affected by the Tengratia Gas field blowout, supply of gas to Sunamganj, adequate power supply and improvement of healthcare facilities in all government hospitals in the district.

The forum declared the deadline at a rally, held at the Traffic Point in the district town on Tuesday.

Convener of the forum and Sunamganj Pourashava Chairman Mominul Moujiddin chaired the rally, addressed by former lawmaker Abdul Majid, Poura Commissioner Rafiqul Islam, former ward commissioner Samran Ali, local Union Parishad chairman Yusuf Al Azad and Wahidur Rahman, Sunamganj Advocates Bar Association President Abdur Rahim, Wahidur Rahman Sufian, Abul Kalam Azad, Amirul Islam, Amir Hossain, Abdul Khaleque, Golam Mostafa, Muhibur Rahman, Jashim Uddin Faruque, Mofizul Islam, Nurul Islam Bazlu, Ahmed Nur, Samraj Miah, Aroti

Dhar, Jahanara Khatun, Sujata Rani, lawyer Pir Fazlur Rahman Misbah and Prof. Shah Abu Naser.

They said most of the embankments constructed in the haor areas are of less height, which will flood Boro lands. Those should be raised.

Ruling party Whip Fazlul Haque Aspia will be held responsible for any crop damage this year by flood because allocations made for embankment repair were not adequate, they said.

They also said people will lay a siege to government hospitals and power stations if adequate doctors are now appointed and load shedding not stopped.

The rally followed weeks of view exchange meetings with cross-sections of people by the forum's leaders in different areas of the district.

Former MP Abdul Majid told the rally that Canadian company NICO is yet to pay compensation to those affected by the Tengratia Gas field blowout.

Gas supply to the National Grid will not be allowed if people of Sunamganj do not get gas, he declared.

On the other hand, officials claimed that this year, for the first time, work in protection embankments in haors has been completed in time.

Sunamganj Deputy Commissioner Jafar Siddique told the Daily Star yesterday that the "administration is satisfied as the dam protection work in haors has been completed in time, involving local people's representatives and Water Development Board (WDB) officials".

Project committees were formed with people's representatives while WDB officials supervised the work, he said.

WDB Superintending Engineer in Sylhet GM Shamsur Rahman said construction and reconstruction of embankments in haors were completed weeks ago.

Adequate steps have been taken to protect Boro crops on 2.45 lakh hectares in all the 28 haors this year at a cost of Tk 6.3 crore. A total of 154 project implementation committees were formed for this and there was no allegation of irregularity in the work, he claimed.

High officials from Dhaka visited the areas last week and expressed satisfaction over the work done, he claimed.

The SE said heights of the embankments have been raised by 16 to 22 feet, which is enough to save crops from early floods.



Santal and Minopuri women presenting Bhaha and Sharol dances at Laldighi school ground in Kakhonhat under Godagari upazila in Rajshahi on Thursday welcoming the rainy season.

A welcome to rains

Indigenous people demand laws to protect culture

ABU KALAM, back from Kakhonhat

Rajshahi: Indigenous people at a gathering at Kakhonhat in Godagari upazila have demanded enactment of laws to protect their language and traditional culture.

The demands were made at a day-long cultural programme, held at Laldighi Para school ground on Thursday, marking Bhaha and Sharol festivals, welcoming the rainy season.

The programme was organised by Adivasi Sangskritik Unnayan Sangstha (ASUS).

A large number of indigenous people including Santal and Monipuri men and women from northern districts joined the programmes.

The days programme began offer worship of Bhaha and Sharol idols, followed by a big colorful procession.

The processionists paraded different roads in Kakhonhat, chanting various slogans and carrying banners and fastoons highlighting their demands.

At the meeting, Rajshahi district president of National Adivasi Parishad Bimal Chandra Sarker read out a resolution containing the demands, which were approved by the indigenous people.

Indigenous leader Haram Baneshar Saran presided over the meeting.

Godagari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Hawlader Zakir Hossain was

present as chief guest while Kakhonhat municipality chairman Abdul Majid, Rishicul Union Parishad Chairman Zahangir Alam Sarker, Godagari municipality commissioner, Godagari Press Club President Nazrul Islam and ASUS Executive Director Rajkumar Shaw were special guests.

The speakers said the indigenous people have a distinctive culture and heritage, but those are fading away due to lack of government patronisation and "aggressive" attitude of local Bangalees.

Their rights are often violated.

They demanded return of their lands grabbed allegedly by Bangalees and steps to ensure their right to education.

The colorful cultural function after the meeting included Shantal and Minopuri dances welcoming the rainy season, drama and songs.

Noran Kiskue, a Shantal dancer told this correspondent that without Bhaha and Sharol Puja, indigenous people can not arrange marriage and other festivals.

Godagari UNO later distributed prize among best performer.

7x3

Fake Rab member nabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A fake Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) member was arrested in Saidpur on Wednesday.

Harun-ur-Rashid, 26, hailing from village Babu Para in

Jhenidah was arrested from Saidpur Police Station (PS) while seeking police help in nabbing 'listed criminals' and in investigation of major crimes in the town.

On suspicion, police tactfully kept him sitting inside the police station and contacted the higher authorities promptly. After being confirmed about his fake identity, police arrested him instantaneously.

A case was filed with Saidpur PS on Friday. He was sent to jail after massive interrogation.



Nilphamari Deputy Commissioner Rabindra Nath Roy Chowdhury on Thursday handed over a condolence letter of the Cabinet Division to Sirajunnahar Lovely, widow of Private Abdus Salam who was killed in Congo recently while discharging duty as a member of the UN Peacekeeping Force.

Hectic campaign by Mir Nasir, Mohiuddin

BNP leader says alliance partners may be allowed to contest in 5 ward commissioner seats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

THE Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) mayoral election campaign gains momentum as the polls draw nearer.

BNP candidate Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin met Chittagong unit executives of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) conference room, addressed several meetings at Dewanhat and Dhaniapara and attended a workers' rally in Kalurghat Industrial Area on Thursday. He addressed a seminar organised by vegetables' exporters at Zila Parishad auditorium and exchanged views with the leaders of Jalalabad, Panchlaish and Anderkilla wards.

Awami League (AL) candidate A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury addressed a rover scouts' moot at the outer stadium on the day. He also attended a human

chain formed demanding a hanging bridge on the Karnaphuli and addressed a meeting at Boxirhat ward.

BNP faces a great challenge in distribution of posts for ward commissioners among the alliance partners, political observers here believe.

Out of the 41 wards, BNP's major alliance partner Jamaat-e-Islami have been pressing for 15 posts, BJP for seven posts and Islami Oikya Jote for three posts.

"Such claims are totally absurd as no decision was taken in this regard as yet," said a BNP leader.

He said the three partners are likely to get five seats, considering the proportion of seats in the Jatiya Sangsad (JS).

On the other hand, AL has nothing to worry since the party leadership has decided not to entertain any ward commissioner candidate having a controversial record.

"We won't nominate any candidate with bad track record and who were accused of criminal activities previously, according to city AL leader Khorshed Alam.

The party has already black-listed five such candidates. They are CMP listed 'top criminal' and ward commissioner Mamunur Rashid Mamun (now in Kolkata), ward commissioner Hajee Nurul Haque (now on bail), ward commissioner Mohammad Hossain (prime accused in Railway Sramik Dal leader Mohammad Shafi Murder Case (now on bail), ward commissioner Md Aslam (now on bail) and ward commissioner Md Shahidullah (now in jail).

They won't get nomination this time, sources said adding policymakers are examining the bio-data of other aspirants.

6x3