

No steps yet to ease Sylhet power crisis

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Power outage for hours has become an every day affair in Sylhet region, causing great inconveniences to people.

As in every year, the menace began this year with the beginning of summer. The situation deteriorated in recent weeks.

Small industries and other businesses are the worst sufferers. Even, transmission of programmes from Sylhet centre of Bangladesh Betar is interrupted at timed due to loadshedding, sources there said.

Sometimes the city dwellers in different areas remain without power for four to five hours a day.

The situation is precarious city

suburbs and rural areas. Once gone, nobody knows when power will return.

People in different upazilas also demonstrated demanding smooth supply of electricity, but to no effect.

A high official of Power Development Board here while talking to The Daily Star yesterday said peak hour (5 pm to 11 pm) demand for electricity in four districts of Sylhet division is 170 to 180 megawatt, but only about half of it is supplied from the National Grid.

"We have no alternative to loadshedding and keep areas in dark for hours alternately", the official said seeking anonymity. Power is distributed by the central load dispatch centre and nothing

can de done locally, he said.

"We have nothing to do to improve the situation unless supply from the National Grid is increased, which can not be expected soon", he said.

Besides, supply is interrupted sometimes due to ongoing rehabilitation work in distribution lines at places, he admitted.

Taking advantage of the situation, crimes like theft and mugging has increased in the city, a number of residents alleged while talking to this correspondent

Some residents in city suburbs like Khadimnagar, Tukerbazar Salutikor, Lalabazar, Srirampur, Kuchai, Hetimganj said they even do not get any response from the

'complaint centres'.

The power crisis is more in areas under Palli Bidut Samity (Rural Electrification Board), some people in rural areas said.

President of Golapganj Bazaar Committee at Golapganj upazila headquarters said, whenever power supply goes, no body can say when it will return.

"It has become an every day affair but we do not get any satisfactory answer from Palli Bidyut Samity office", said shopkeeper Anwarul Haque at the market.

But Palli Bidyut officials blame PDB for the crisis because they get power supply from PDB.

14 fishermen missing in Bay untraced

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Fourteen fishermen missing in the Bay since Friday following capsizing of a fishing boat are yet to be traced.

Rescuers on board two trawlers went to the Bay to trace the missing fishermen but they returned Kuakata coast disappointed at about noon yesterday.

Fishing boats Owner wahid filed a general diary with Kuakata police ferry on the day in this connection.

Ill-fated fishing boat FB Fatehpur with 16 fishermen capsized in the Bay about 15 kilometres south of Kuakata beach on Friday while they were fishing in the rough sea.

Two of them were rescued by other fishing boats but the rest 14 could not be traced.

The missing fishermen are Shahid Majhi, 45 Jilil, 35, Babul, 35, Nur Hossain, 40, Jahangi, 32, Abu Zafar, 27, Liton, 25, Milon, 25, Nasir, 22, Shahjalal 35, Nabi Hossain, 40, Khokon, 28, Ansar Ali, 32, and Kabir, 34, all from different villages in Kalapara upazila.

3 killed, 50 hurt in Mymensingh road mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

At least three persons were killed and people 50 injured when a Bhairab bound passenger bus from Mymensingh skidded off the Mymensingh-Kishoreganj highway at Dangri in Nandail upazila yesterday.

Three persons including a child died on the spot. The child was identified as Sabina Yeasmin, 9. Bodies of a woman aged about 30 and a man aged about 35 could not be identified immediately, police said.

Critically injured Ananda, 7, Rashida, 16, Subash, 50, Billal, 20, Sohag, 20, Robina, 12, Kamal, 30 and Rashid were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH). The other injured persons were treated at the local health complex and clinics.

Local MP Khorrom Khan Chowdhury visited the spot soon after the accident and supervised the rescue operation.

Indigenous women demand right to husband's property

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Women representatives from five indigenous communities in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have demanded equal rights in family and husband's property.

The demands were made at a roundtable on 'Indigenous Women's Rights in Family,' held at a local restaurant here Friday.

It was jointly organised by Kapo Seba Sangha (KSS), a local NGO and Manusher Janno, a project funded by CARE, an international NGO. KSS executive director Sherin Chakma presided over the discussion.

Representatives of Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tanchangya and Lushai communities attended the roundtable. They also demanded a ban on polygamy, a common practice in CHT and introduction of marriage registration.

The workshop also discussed inheritance laws and alimony.

They stressed on strengthening hands of Raja (chief of any circle) and headman courts through amendments to laws.

Among others, the discussion was addressed by senior lawyer Gyanendu Bikash Chakma, Monjulika Chakma, Anjulika Khisa, Nirupa Dewan, Sagorika Roaza, Bithi Tanchangya, Thui Mramu Marma, Swarowati Tripura, Sium Pui Lu Bawm, Baky Lusai and Nirmolendu Tripura.

CPB procession, rally in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Manikganj district unit of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday brought out a procession in the town and held a rally on the Press Club premises as part of the party's month-long programme to press for its 11-point demand.

The demands include reform of electoral and caretaker systems, freeing elections from influence of black money, muscle power and use of religion, steps to check price hike of essentials and protect interests of industrials workers, farmers and farm labourers.

CPB leaders Azharul Islam Arju, Ashra Siddique, Nasir Uddin, Kismot Ali and Abdul Mannan addressed the rally.

Fresh threat haunts Satkhira Ahmadiyyas

Khatme Nabuat holds rally, threatens to capture their mosque on January 1 next year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Over 5000 Ahmadiyyas in Jyotindranagar in Shyamnagar upazila are in panic following a renewed threat by Khatme Nabuat Movement Bangladesh (KNMB) that their mosque at Sundarban Bazar would be captured on January 1 next year unless the government declares them non-Muslims by December 31.

The threat was given by Noor Hossain Nurani, Senior Nayebe-e-Amir of KNMB and central leader of Islami Shashantantra Andolon (ISA) at a public meeting at Kulia

Bazar in Debhata upazila on Tuesday, organised by ISA.

The ISA Debhata unit chief Master Abdul Khaleq chaired the meeting, addressed by, among others, Syed Nesar Uddin Ahmed Babla and Sheikh Mizanur Rahman.

Nurani said supporters of KNMB and ISA will intensify their agitation to compel the government to bow to their demands.

Nurani also accused ruling BNP of flouting their election pledge to take steps to establish Islamic values in society.

He called upon the people to unite to resist the politics of

Jamaat, saying it is the "main enemy of Islam".

The four-party alliance came to power with the support of pro-Islamic forces. The people will reject it (government) in the next parliamentary polls if it continues to shelter Jammam, he said.

"The BNP-Jamaat government is now cheating 14 crore Muslims of Bangladesh by not declaring Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim. Sheltering Ahmadiyyas is acting against Islam", he said.

Other speakers said, the party that will declare Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim will get support of Muslim clerics in the next polls.

Monument for martyred FFs in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A monument to remember martyred freedom fighters in Patuakhali was inaugurated on Friday.

Names of 33 freedom fighters who sacrificed their life for independence of the country have been engraved on the plaque of the monument.

It was opened by Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury at a simple function, attended by freedom fighters, officials, elite of the town and cross-sections of people.

Deputy Commissioner Rafiqul Islam, Superintendent Shafiqul Islam, Patuakhali Muktiyodha Sangsad Convener Mohsin uddin Dulal, among others addresssed the function.

The Public works Department (PWD) built the monument in the Gymnasium area in the town at a cost Tk 11.39 lakh. This is part of a government plan to build monuments to martyred freedom fighters in all the 64 districts.



PHOTO: STAR

The newly constructed monument for martyred freedom fighters in Gymnasium area in Patuakhali town, with names of the valiant sons of the soil engraved on its plaque.

Stand-off over JCD committee heightens tension at RU Police deployed

RU CORRESPONDENT

Tension is running high on the Rajshahi University campus following the stand-off and wrangling between two rival factions of Jatiyatabadi Chhtra Dal (JCD) over formation of the new Rajshahi JCD convening committee.

The university authorities yesterday deployed a large number of armed policemen on the campus to avert any clash between the JCD factions.

One faction comprising presidents, general secretaries and other leaders of JCD units in different RU halls claims that many of the persons in the 61-member convening committee are non-students. They are businessmen, criminals and cadres loyal to other parties.

They alleged that there are at least 20 non-students, businessmen, service holders and criminals in the new committee, but no representative from JCD hall units.

Its convenor Nuruzzman Likhon is a 'controversial person' having links with Islami Chhatra Shibir. Naming some persons, they said Durul Huda, Masud Parvej, Saiful Islam, Haider, Anser Ali and Martin included in the committee not students and JCD activists.

They threatened to resist holding of JCD hall unit conferences and also the upcoming council on the campus if Nuruzzman Likhon is not dropped and names of dedicated party workers are included in seven days.

They said they will start tougher agitation including hunger strike if their demands are not met. The other faction refutes the allegation.

In the last three days, the rival factions held several press conferences, accusing each other and making showdowns on the campus.

Tension mounted on the campus as the other faction at a press conference claimed that the convening committee includes "senior and dedicated leaders".

When contacted, Nuruzzman Likhon, refuted the allegation and said that they (the rival faction) have no rights to hold press conference opposing the committee. Sources said, clashes may erupt any moment on the campus.

We'll go to JS if consensus reached on reforms

Jalil tells Mymensingh public meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

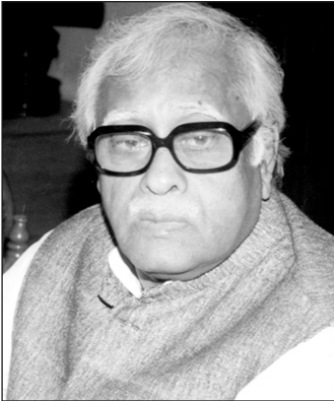
Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil has said talks on electoral and caretaker reforms should be held outside parliament.

"Once a consensus is reached, we will go to parliament to amend laws", he said addressing a public meeting held at the Town Hall ground on Friday. It was organised by the 14-party alliance here.

The AL leader said reforms in the electoral and caretaker systems are vital for holding the next general election in a free and fair manner. AL proposals will make all elections in future free and fair and consolidate democracy in the country.

Abdul Jalil urged opposition parties to intensify agitation to compel the government to accept the reform proposals.

Presided over by Mymensingh AL President Principal Motiur Rahman, the meeting was



Abdul Jalil

addressed by, among others, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu, Gono Forum Presidium member Jahirul Islam, Diip Barua of Sammyabadi Dal, Ganotantri Party President Azizul Islam Khan, Abdul Matin Sarker

MP and local alliance leaders Mainuddin Khan Badal, Shafiqur Rahman, Abdul Mannan, Karim Sikder, Asim Kumar Ukil, Rashida Mohiuddin, A A S Kamal Hossain, Prof Atikur Rahman, Ziauddin Ahmed, Advocate Giasuddin, Dr Sujit Kumar Barman and Advocate Sadik Hossain.

Menon criticised the Chief Election Commission (CEC) for starting a "drama by inviting too many political parties to discuss voter list, bypassing the reform proposals.

"He has played in the hands of BNP", Menon said.

Inu said people will resist all attempts if the government wants to hold the next parliamentary election without reforms in the electoral and caretaker systems.

Diip Barua said BNP wants to cling to power by using anti-liberation forces and hatching conspiracy. Their motive will be foiled, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Former students of Rajshahi University Physics Department formed a human chain in Rajshahai city on Friday appealing for help for treatment of Md Zakaria, a student of the department suffering from cancer.