



POWER CRISIS
Chapainawabganj
BNP lawmaker
warns govt of
public protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP lawmaker from Chapainawabganj Syed Manzur Hossain yesterday apprehended that the people of his constituency may besiege the local DC office demanding uninterrupted electricity supply in the area.

"We have information that people of the area are taking preparations to lay siege to the deputy commissioner's office and this may spark violence," the ruling party lawmaker told parliament in a call attention notice.

However, the notice was not disposed of as the lawmaker was not present in the House.

Referring to the recent police firing on the power-hungry people of Kansat that killed at least nine people, Manzur said farmers in the district are facing an acute power

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Diesel price increase withdrawn

REAZ AHMAD

A day after the government's outright denial of any price hike of petroleum products, its energy adviser yesterday withdrew his decision made on Monday to increase the prices of diesel, petrol and octane by Tk 1 per litre.

Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman yesterday morning swallowed his own words—just 48 hours into making it—that the fuel dealers would be allowed to charge Tk 1 extra per litre petrol to compensate additional transportation cost.

At the meeting with fuel traders and law enforcers yesterday, he decided that the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), not the consumers, should bear the brunt of this extra carrying cost, enabling the pump owners to sell petrol, diesel and octane at previous prices.

The decision of deploying army, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at all oil

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Diesel supply to last for only a month

No fresh deal yet for fund crisis

SHARIER KHAN

Lack of timely action of the government, fund crunches for oil import and dollar crises have led the country to a diesel crisis for the first time, officials sources said.

Though Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) is repeatedly saying there is adequate diesel supply, the country has actually around three lakh tonnes of diesel in its pipeline, with a part in its inventory and the rest being imported.

This fuel can meet only one month's demand if the consumption remains restrained within a daily rate of 10,000 tonnes, sources said.

If the daily demand surges, the

present crisis, which is prevailing in the northern region, will spread across the country by next month, the sources pointed out.

Unlike the previous years, the government has no fresh deal to supply diesel due to fund shortage and it is now frantically looking for a fresh supply bid from the Middle East, they added.

"We believe the supply will be ensured within the next one month. But this kind of situation should not have happened in the first place," quipped an energy ministry source.

The cash-strapped BPC is now all set to get loans from the Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs) and a couple of foreign banks due to the ongoing crisis that

finally drew attention of the Prime Minister's Office. The BPC was unable to get these loans since October-November last year.

The BPC projection for this fiscal year puts the country's demand for diesel at 23 lakh tonnes, kerosene 5.2 lakh tonnes, jet fuel 2.6 lakh tonnes and gasoline 2.95 lakh tonnes. The demand for petroleum, which is almost entirely imported, is rising by 10 percent every year.

The BPC imports oil in two ways -- it imports crude oil, refined petrol, motor spirit, jet fuel, kerosene, and diesel on a semi-yearly basis, and oil in smaller amounts on the basis of emergency needs.

However, due to lack of action

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3 bills passed as opposition walks out

AGENCIES, Dhaka

Parliament last night passed three bills, including one, which extended the time period of the Speedy Trial Act for another two years amid opposition's walkout.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar moved the bills, which were passed by voice vote.

While placing the Private Security Service Bill 2006 in the House, the state minister stated that as per demand of the time, alongside government law-enforcement agencies, few private security agencies have been established.

"Many commercial banks, multinational companies, multi-storied residential buildings and some semi-government organisations are employing private security personnel," he said, adding due to absence of any government rules and regulations, the activities to build a private security system

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Hawa Bhaban 'graft', killing of Bangabandhu fuel JS heat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League yesterday locked horns in parliament with the ruling BNP over dozens of issues ranging from the Bangabandhu killing to alleged corruption by the Hawa Bhaban men, sparking off enormous hit that ended in a House in disorder.

A remark of a BNP lawmaker triggered off the unscheduled debate, in which 17 lawmakers including senior ministers, the opposition leader and her senior colleagues argued and countered.

At the end of the over one-and-a-half hour contention at about 8:15pm, the House turned into a chaos, with members of both the benches raising a hue and cry for about five minutes.

Amid such a situation, Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui, who was in the chair, began other

businesses of the day.

The entire debate was held ignoring the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad and both the sides traded blistering attacks, even personal ones.

Later, the deputy speaker told the House that all unparliamentary statements would be expunged.

Terminating the debate a violation of the rules of procedure, he said, "From today the chair will follow the rules strictly."

The debate began after the Maghrab break, when AL lawmaker Sheikh Selim alleged the recent

nomination for the Ekushey Padak were made on political considerations. The argument soon spread to other issues including the killing of Bangabandhu, its beneficiaries, indemnity to the killers and Ziaur Rahman's alleged involvement in it. One by one, the martial law proclamation in 1975, Baksal formation, proclamation of

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PM not regular in attending JS session

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the House Khaleda Zia has so far attended the parliament proceedings on only four workdays out of 14 of the current session that began on January 23.

The prime minister is supposed to reply to questions from lawmakers once a week but she was present in only one session of PM's weekly question-hour.

Yesterday, Khaleda did not attend the House forcing the speaker to exclude the PM's question-answer session from the day's business. She was in Pirojpur during the previous week's question-answer session on February 8.

The main opposition Awami League lawmakers raised the matter in the House on Tuesday when LGDR and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan took floor to reply to lawmakers' questions about price hike of fuel.

"This is a matter of regret that

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A policeman about to grab an activist of the Juba Mahila League by the throat for breaking through a police barricade at Paltan during hartal yesterday.

Hartal clashes leave over 100 hurt

STAR REPORT

Clashes between police and pro-hartal activists in the capital and elsewhere during the nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal enforced by the 14-party opposition alliance yesterday left more than 100 injured.

The law enforcers detained 56 people including 12 female opposition activists during the clashes on charge of violent picketing and hurling brickbats at them.

Educational institutions, markets, shops and many private offices remained closed due to the shutdown.

Motorised vehicles mostly stayed off the roads while rickshaws moved as usual in the capital and other major cities. Road communication with the capital remained suspended as inter-district buses did not ply.

About 50 leaders and activists of the Awami League (AL)-led alliance, most of them from the AL,

were injured as police in riot gear charged batons on them at different points in the capital.

The hartal was enforced demanding uninterrupted power supply and reduction of the prices of fertiliser and fuel.

It was also aimed to press for reforms in the caretaker government system and Election Commission, and resignation of the chief election commissioner and two newly appointed controversial election commissioners.

The 6:00am to 6:00pm shutdown coincided with the day of the 'controversial' sixth parliamentary elections in 1996 held amid boycott by major political parties, except the then ruling BNP.

The hartal was part of the 14-party's month-long agitation programmes announced by Leader of the Opposition and AL chief Sheikh Hasina on February 5.

IN THE CAPITAL
Clashes broke out as police

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Near HIV epidemic in high-risk groups

PINAKI ROY

The country risks an onslaught of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection, as its prevalence in a particular group of injecting drug users (IDUs) jumps from 1.4 percent in 1998 to 7.1 percent in 2005, reports a survey.

With some 30,000 IDUs across the country, the situation could be even worse, as the survey could not

sample most of the possible cases, warns the report of the sixth national HIV surveillance.

The study conducted by the Centre for Health and Population Research of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) categorises the IDUs aged between 32 and 38 years in some districts of Dhaka Division as the most vulnerable to the fatal disease and terms

the situation near epidemic.

As the IDUs typically share the same syringe in their groups and often go to sex workers, HIV can very easily be transferred to the sex workers. And from the sex workers, it is easy for the virus to find ways in the general population. Because, the latest behavioural surveillance on HIV found an increase in risk behaviours such as sharing of

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Test & ODI Series



SRILANKA VS BANGLADESH

Approved City Bank Branch List For Selling Tickets

Principal Office :

Dilkusha, Dhaka

Gulshan Branch :

Gulshan, Dhaka

Agrabad Branch :

Agrabad, Chittagong

Khatun Gonj Branch :

Khatun Gonj, Chittagong

Jubilee Road Branch :

Jubilee Road, Chittagong

Pahartali Branch :

Double Mooring, Chittagong

O.R. Nizam Road Branch :

Asian High Way, Chittagong

Bogra Branch :

Raza Bazar, Bogra

Rajshahi Branch :

Rajshahi



Students in English medium face severe textbook crisis

ASHIQRUH RAHMAN

English medium students under the government education boards are facing serious problems due to scarcity of English versions of textbooks.

After visiting a number of bookshops in the capital, it was found that English versions of secondary textbooks are not yet available although one and half months of the academic year has already passed.

Students of the English medium schools under the education board said they have to buy the used textbooks of the previous year at high prices due to the unavailability of newly printed textbooks for the current year.

"If I waited for this year's textbooks, I would have to sit idle for months," said a student of Vigarunnisa Noon School.

Surprisingly, National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) never published any

English version of primary level textbooks for which students as well as teachers have to face great difficulties.

"We have to teach the primary level students with the foreign books due to absence of NCTB textbooks of English version," Shahana Ara Begum, principal of Ideal School and College, said.

The teachers have to give extra labour to teach the students about Bangladesh related matters that are not present in the foreign books, she added.

"Through their own initiatives, our teachers have translated some of the primary level Bangla textbooks into English," Rowena Hossain, principal of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College, said.

If the students do not study NCTB textbooks at the primary level they face problem in following NCTB's secondary level textbooks, she added.

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