

KHAGRACHHARI POWER SUPPLY PROJECT

Poles installed 5 yrs ago, when will cables come?

KAFIL MAHMUD, Khagrachhari

Around 10,000 people of Baltali, Khamarpara, Larmapara, Paltanjoypara and Charachhara villages in Sadar upazila of the district are suffering for want of electricity supply as the Power Development Board (PDB) project for installation of power supply cables and transformer has remained suspended for five years.

In 2007, PDB started a project to bring the area under power supply but the project, scheduled to complete in 2010, remained stopped after setting up of electricity pillars within one year, said sources at the Khagrachhari office of PDB.

"We have to do our necessary work by lighting kerosene lamps at night. We are also suffering a lot to collect drinking water as there are only a few deep tube-wells in the hill area while power-run water pumps cannot be set up due to lack of electricity supply," said Sucarna Rowaza of Larmapara village.

"We find it difficult to study with scanty light of



PHOTO: STAR

The Power Development Board under a project to supply electricity to five Khagrachhari villages in 2007 installed the poles but failed to put cables and transformers in the last five years.

kerosene lamp. In summer season we suffer much as we cannot use electric fan," said Nomita Chakma, a student of class six of Khamarpara village.

Ratan Tripura, a farmer of Paltanjoypara said they cannot use any power-run tools for cultivation.

"Socio-economic development of the area is badly hampered due to lack of power supply. After setting up of electricity poles, the project work has remained pending as the transformer and cables were not installed due to the negligence of PDB officials concerned," said Sanjib Tripura, member of ward No 4 of Parachhara Union Parishad.

"We approached the PDB office concerned several times but got only lip service," he said.

Asked about the matter, Executive Engineer of Khagrachhari PDB Atikram Chakma did not say anything specific about the cause of the postponement of the project work for unusually long period.

He just said, "It will complete soon."

2 held on rape charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Two youths were held in the town on Sunday on charge of violating a 15-year-old girl.

Ashish Kumar, sub inspector of Kawnia police station and investigation officer (IO) of the case, said that the girl was one of the helps at a local hotel.

On the fateful night, when she was going to nearby Beltala area with her maternal cousin, a gang waylaid them. They took the girl forcibly to a lonely place near Kirtankhola River and gang-raped her.

As her cousin raised a huge and cry, locals rushed in and caught two of the three youths from the spot.

Later they took Shafayet Islam Rubel, 22, son of Mushtak Ahmed and Hasibul Hasan, 20, son of Shahjahan Mia to the local ward councilor who handed them over to Kawnia police.

Police sent the victim to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) for medical test. She lodged a case yesterday, accusing three people with Kawnia police station.

Masked gang stabs college principal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

A college teacher was seriously injured as a gang of masked criminals stabbed him at Khamarpara village in Sreepur upazila yesterday morning.

The injured, Nirmal Saha of the village, is principal of Sreepur Degree College.

Nirmal said that a gang of 6/7 attacked him with sharp weapons near his home at around 8:00am when he was on the way to the district town.

The injured was then rushed to the upazila health complex, said locals.

As the news spread, students brought out a procession on college campus, demanding punishment to the criminals.

A few students, who were disqualified for the next HSC examinations, might have launched the attack, said the principal.

He further said that recent selection of teachers' representatives (TR) that disappointed some locals also could be the reason behind the attack.



PHOTO: STAR

The vice chancellor-backed teachers, students and employees of Begum Rokeya University form a human chain in front of Rangpur Press Club yesterday demanding steps to oust the anti-VC teachers, students and employees from the university for creating 'chaos' on the campus.

BCL factions at BM College dorm clash

8 hurt, 11 rooms vandalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League, student front of ruling Awami League, clashed at Barisal Govt Brojo Mohon College hostel on Sunday night and yesterday morning, leaving at least eight injured and 11 rooms vandalised.

Among the injured, Azad of fourth year Economics, Rana of second year Political Science, Munna of third year

Bangla, Azmal of third year Management and Riaz of third year History departments were admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Several students said that BCL activists at Sergeant Fazlul Huq Hall at the college were split into two factions, one led by Faisal Ahmed Munna and the other by Zubayer Alam.

According to Billal Hossain, hall superintendent,

the clashes followed an altercation over the quality of food at the dining hall.

Azmal, one of the injured students, said that hall dining was managed by the fourth year students. When a few students criticised the low quality food, they beat them up and damaged windows, doors and furniture of their rooms.

To retaliate, another group launched attack in the morning, Azmal further said.

Contempt plea against SQ Chy's

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The lawyer filed the petition against the backdrop of an alleged Skype conversation between the tribunal's former chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq and expatriate legal expert Ahmed Ziauddin.

In the petition the defence counsel asked the tribunal to clarify its independence beyond any doubt and state whether any of its members was privy to the alleged Skype conversation or have been in contact with Ziauddin.

However, the counsel in another petition on January 3 prayed [not pressed] to withdraw the petition after the tribunal rejected three retrial petitions of war crimes accused Jamaat-e-Islami leaders.

Tribunal-1 Chairman ATM Fazle Kabir mentioned three points before delivering the order.

He said Fakhru in his petition neither mentioned under which provision of law he had sought such clarification from the judges nor from what authority he had asked such explanation from the sitting judges of the country's apex court.

The tribunal chairman observed that the defence counsel had filed the petition with a 'malafide' intention to damage the image of the tribunal judges.

Justice Kabir also said whom the judges communicate is completely part of their personal lives.

"He [Fakhru] deliberately submitted the petition to interfere in the proceedings of the tribunal," concluded the tribunal chief.

SQ CHOWDHURY'S ADJOURNMENT PRAYER REJECTED

The three-member tribunal yesterday also heard submission of both the defence and

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam on removal of prosecutor Zead Al Malum.

Earlier yesterday, BNP lawmaker SQ Chowdhury's counsel filed a petition to adjourn the hearing of their petition on removal of Malum until disposal of a show-cause notice issued against Ahmed Ziauddin by the Tribunal-2.

But the tribunal rejected the petition as it 'found no ground for adjournment' in the defence petition and asked them to begin their submission on the petition for the prosecutor's removal.

The Tribunal-2 on January 3 issued the show-cause notice against Ziauddin to explain why legal proceeding would not be initiated against him for "obstructing fair process" of cases pending with it.

The Tribunal-2 the same day also asked Ziauddin to submit his explanation through the Bangladesh Mission in Belgium within 30 days from the date of receiving a copy of the order.

War crimes accused Ghulam Azam's counsel also filed a similar petition against Malum.

The counsels for both Ghulam Azam and SQ Chowdhury spent about two hours in submitting their prayers.

Quoting the alleged Skype conversation, the defence claimed they would not get justice if Malum remained the prosecutor.

Countering their submission the top state law officer said Ghulam Azam would be tried according to the charges and evidence and there are some pieces of evidence to prove his role during the Liberation War in 1971.

"Can Malum create these

documents?" he asked.

Talking to the former Tribunal-1 chairman or Ziauddin has nothing to do with the case, he added.

Mahbubey Alam however said the tribunal could restrain Malum from taking part in the trial proceeding if his conduct does not appear befitting.

The AG alleged the defence are filing such petitions to waste time of the tribunal.

Alam will place his submission against SQ Chowdhury's application. SQ Chowdhury, facing 23 charges for crimes against humanity committed during the war, was produced before the tribunal.

SURANJIT'S SHOW-CAUSE NOTICE

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday fixed January 22 for hearing a show-cause notice it had issued against ruling Awami League leader Suranjit Sengupta for his "imaginary comment" on the date of verdicts in the cases pending with it.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan with members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Judge M Shahinur Islam fixed the date after Suranjit, a minister without portfolio, gave his written reply through his lawyer.

Suranjit's lawyer Abdul Baset Majumder submitted his reply and sought time for preparation.

Earlier on December 24, the tribunal on its own motion issued the show-cause notice following a report published in a Bangla daily and asked him to give his reply within January 2. The tribunal extended the time until yesterday following a time petition on January 2.

Suranjit was quoted in the report as saying, "Verdict of 14 identified war criminals has already been finalised. Trial of these 14 war criminals would be completed anytime within 2013."

MOLLAH'S ARGUMENT CONTINUES

The defence of Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah yesterday continued placing the closing arguments before the tribunal for the fifth day.

For around three hours, defence counsel Abdus Sobhan Tarafder placed arguments on five charges framed against the Jamaat assistant secretary general.

The tribunal indicted Quader Mollah with six charges of crimes against humanity committed during the war.

Sobhan tried to discredit the prosecution evidence citing testimonies of the prosecution witnesses including an investigation officer. Showing "contradiction" in their testimonies, he argued that the prosecution evidence should not be counted as "credible".

The tribunal asked the defence to complete their arguments within 12:00pm today and asked the prosecution to place their reply after that.

The tribunal would fix a date for delivering its verdict after arguments of both the prosecution and the defence are placed.

Meanwhile, Abdur Razzaq, chief of the defence of Jamaat leaders, yesterday placed his submission on a petition filed to call for all the statements of victims' family members of the Liberation War kept at the Mirpur Jalladkhana Museum.

The tribunal will dispose of the matter with observation but did not fix any date.

12 killed in road crashes

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Eight passengers of the fertiliser-laden truck -- all of them day labourers -- died on the spot while three sustained severe injuries as the fertiliser bags crushed them.

On information, police came in and recovered the bodies from the scene.

Of the deceased, seven were identified as Ekramul Hossain, 30, Shahin Mia, 28, Abdul Wahid, 50, and Babul Mia, 34, of Rangpur; Shahinur Islam, 25, of Nilphamari; and

Sada Miah, 40, and Saiful Islam, 55, of Gaibandha. The body unidentified has been kept in Gazipur Sadar Hospital morgue.

The injured were rushed to Tongi Government Hospital in Gazipur and National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation in the capital.

Police seized the truck, but the driver escaped. The bodies were handed over to the relatives of the deceased.

were killed and 10 others injured in a collision between a bus and a truck at Kalihati upazila of Tangail yesterday afternoon, reports our district correspondent.

The victims are Mohammad Suruzzaman, 60, Goni Miah, 45, Shukur Ali, 50, and Mohammad Habibullah, 32. Habibullah, who hailed from Magura, was an army soldier at Jamuna Cantonment.

Helalul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bangabandhu

Bridge East Police Station, said the accident occurred around 2:30pm, when a bus from Tangail collided head-on with a sand-laden truck on Bangabandhu Bridge approach road.

The hit left two passengers dead on the spot and 12 others of both the vehicles injured.

Two of the injured, both passengers of the bus, died on their way to Tangail General Hospital. Four of the injured were admitted to the hospital.

Stayed on street, ignored JS

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extreme negligence to parliament. The opposition lawmakers have attended the House sessions only for 54 out of 336 working days, mainly to save their membership.

Over the last four years, BNP has enforced 17 hartals to mount pressure on the government to realise its demands, including that for bringing back the caretaker government system and against the eviction of Khaleda from a house in Dhaka cantonment. In November 2010, the BNP chairperson was made to leave the cantonment house upon a court order.

BNP's last hartal on January 6 was enforced protesting the recent fuel price hike.

The party's organisational secretary M Ilias Ali went missing from the capital in April 2012 which made its senior and mid-level leaders a bit shaky. After the incident, the party high command asked these leaders not to move alone.

Meanwhile, BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman, who is now in London, has been made another supreme leader [besides his mother Khaleda] of the party and everyone in BNP believes that Tarique will lead the

country when the party assumes power.

According to party leaders, the reorganisation activities within the party and the chairperson's countrywide visit including road marches helped BNP gain strength and made the party men, especially those who were in trouble during the last military-backed caretaker government, morally stronger.

In 2009, BNP observed its organisational year and held councils in most of the districts. The process was completed by holding the national council in December 8 that year. The council elected Tarique Rahman the senior vice chairman and bestowed the power of making any decision for the party upon Khaleda.

In 2010 and 2011, the party tried to expand its political alliance. During the time, Khaleda conducted a massive anti-government campaign across the country. She visited more than 20 districts and led road marches towards Sylhet, Chapainawabganj, Khulna and Chittagong which gave the party activities a boost.

The loggerheads with the government over the restoration of caretaker government provision came as a blessing for the BNP. Party high command decided to

utilise the opportunity as much as possible to gain public support.

The government on June 2011 had scrapped the provision from the constitution. Soon after, BNP announced that they would not participate in the parliamentary election if it is not overseen by a caretaker government.

Subsequently, Khaleda launched a massive campaign for the restoration of the provision and formed the 18-party alliance.

BNP, in fact, got back its rhythm on March 12, 2012 by making its "Let's Go to Dhaka" programme a success despite government obstructions. It gave the party men something to look forward to.

The party was in dilemma over the war crimes trials, even its leaders kept mum when the government had initiated the process. Its key ally Jamaat-e-Islami tried to pursue the BNP leadership to oppose the BNP high command initially did not take stance against the trials considering public sentiment. However, they have recently changed policy and begun to oppose the trials of Jamaat leaders.

In her roadside rallies on December 26, BNP Chairperson Khaleda said,

"We will find out the real war criminals in Awami League, and bring them under trial."

She had also tried to convince people that the trial was nothing but an attempt to destroy the opposition, by showing a photo of a meeting between Jamaat and Awami League leaders in the 90's.

Khaleda's India visit was a much-talked-about issue in politics. She visited the country from October 28 to November 3, 2012 on an invitation by the Indian government.

Those, who have followed BNP's India policy under Khaleda's leadership, while the party was in power and also in the opposition, were quite surprised by what she had said during her seven-day India visit.

Her comments that Bangladesh would never allow anti-India insurgents to operate in its soil gave birth to discussions in the political arena. Many people believe that her policy-shift regarding India was dedicated to winning the next polls.

While the government steps into the last year of its tenure, BNP is planning to make its ongoing movement tougher to make sure that the restoration of the caretaker government system is restored.