



Movement now galloping towards final stage: Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said their party's ongoing movement to oust the government is heading towards the final stage at a rapid pace.

Speaking at a discussion, he also said their movement has already gained success as the global community is now advocating for a credible election and the restoration of democracy and the voting rights of people.

"The movement that the people of Bangladesh have started for the last few years to bring back democracy is going towards its final stage at a fast pace," the BNP leader said.

He said, "17 people have already sacrificed their blood on the streets while lakhs of people have been falsely implicated in false cases and many others have been subjected to enforced disappearance and killing,



The people responded to BNP's call for a united movement to restore democracy.

but people have continued their struggle for democracy."

BNP arranged a discussion, book fair and photo exhibition at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) marking the 42nd death anniversary of party founder Ziaur Rahman.

Fakhrul said the country's people have stood up responding to BNP's call for a united movement to restore democracy and people's voting rights.

"All political parties, all organisations, all democratic people must get united and take the movement to its final stage. Let us all unite and move towards our ultimate goal of restoring democracy and democratic state system and protecting the right to vote," he said.

The BNP leader said it is now recognised globally that the elections held in 2014 and 2018 were completely flawed and rigged where people could not express their opinions through ballots. "It is proof of how successful our movement is. The global community is now talking about ensuring a fair election and people's right to franchise."

He said their party wants a credible and neutral election, but it will not be possible to hold such polls if the current Awami League government stays in power.

Fakhrul said the government must step down immediately and dissolve parliament by handing over power to an impartial caretaker government, paving the way for holding a free and fair and free election. "That is the only way to overcome this crisis and save the nation."



An exhausted worker takes a break from heating tar to drink water in Barishal city's Chohota area yesterday. The searing heat over the last few days has made life outdoors difficult in many parts of the country.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

City dwellers swelter amid power cuts

Nasrul Hamid says plants closing is the reason

ASIFUR RAHMAN and SUMON ALI

As the current heatwave gets worse, the country's power shortage shows no signs of improvement.

Due to frequent outages, residents are suffering as the mercury rose to 37 degrees Celsius yesterday in Dhaka. Industries all over the country are facing production losses.

Power cuts have increased alarmingly due to the shutdown of several power plants, said Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources.

"The Payra power plant is going to shut down completely after June 5 due to the coal crisis. One of its units is already out of operation. We are struggling to import fuel for the power plants. We are also having to channel gas from the power sector into the industries," he said, speaking at a programme in Savar.

Talking to The Daily Star, a resident of Mogbazar said people in his area faced outages at least seven times for over five hours on Thursday.

The picture is more or less the same in Dhaka city and its adjacent areas. The rural areas have been facing more cuts for several days now.

The country experienced around 2,247 MW of power shortage against the demand for 14,000 MW early afternoon yesterday, according to data from Power Grid Company of Bangladesh.

The distributing companies said last week that they are shedding load mainly in the daytime. But outages are occurring at night as well.

From midnight to dawn on Saturday (12.00am to 6:00am), the situation was almost the same—load of 2,000 MW to 2,400 MW was shed.

Rubel Mia, a resident of Khilgaon, told The Daily Star yesterday that his family faced cuts twice at night. "The first outage occurred at midnight and the next one at 5:00am. We couldn't sleep the whole night. My baby has skin rashes due to the cuts," he said.

Taffannum, a resident of Shonir Akhra, said there were at least three cuts in her area, and that every time the cuts lasted over an hour.

"My younger brother's second-year examination is going on. But with the cuts are hampering his preparation."

"We had a foreign order for two thousand jerseys, which were supposed to be delivered by today. But we are only halfway through due to frequent power cuts," said Fahim Sajjad, a small garment factory owner in Savar's Fulbaria.

Md Hasibur Rahman, Civil Surgeon of Nilphamari, told The Daily Star that hospitals in the district are getting more patients suffering from diarrhoea. Besides, patients with asthma are facing problems with nebulising.

A private clinic owner of Rangpur said that electricity was available for only eight to nine hours in the last 24 hours.

"In the rural areas, people are getting electricity only for five to six hours a day," he added.

The country's power generation capacity is 23,370 MW. The production was 11,753 MW by day during peak hours yesterday.



Load shedding curtail FBCCI press briefing

It demands uninterrupted electricity supply for industries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The budget reaction press briefing of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) got interrupted twice yesterday by power cuts.

The generator of the FBCCI building was also not working when power outage occurred for the second time.

As a result, the apex trade body had to end the meeting fast without taking several questions from journalists.

Interestingly, the FBCCI in its budget proposals placed earlier had recommended providing industrial sector with uninterrupted electricity.

The government proposed allocation of Tk 34,819 crore for the energy sector in the national budget for 2023-24 fiscal year.

In yesterday's event of around 80 minutes, which was cut short for load shedding, the Federation

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MITU MURDER CASE Fugitive held in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday sent a charge-sheeted accused in a case filed over the murder of Mahmuda Akhtar Mitu, wife of Babul Akhtar, former superintendent of police.

Police Bureau of Investigation arrested accused Khairul Islam Kalu from the port city's Akbar Shah area on Friday night, after seven years of the killing.

Kalu used to work as a security guard there, said Naima Sultana, superintendent of police (PBI metro unit).

He was handed over to Rangunia Police Station after his arrest, she added.

Mahbub Milki, officer-in-charge of Rangunia Police Station, said there were two warrants against Kalu with Pachlaish Police Station and Rangunia Police Station.

On March 13, the court framed charges against six people, including Babul, in the Mitu murder case.

The other accused are Kamrul Islam Musa, Ehteshamul Haque Bhola alias Haniful Haque, Motaleb Mia Wasim, Anwar Hossain, Khairul Islam Kalu and Shahjahan Mia.

Bhola is now on bail and absconding since Musa's murder.

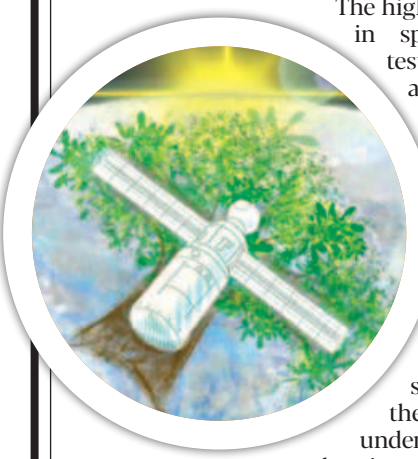
Along with Musa, Kalu and others shot and

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Japan to launch satellite made of wood

INDEPENDENT ONLINE

A satellite made of wood could be launched into space in 2024.



The high durability of wood in space was recently tested and confirmed at the International Space Station (ISS) by an international group of scientists led by those from Kyoto University.

Their experiments showed wood samples tested at the ISS for durability underwent minimal deterioration and maintained

good stability.

Preliminary inspection, including strength tests and crystal structural analyses, of the wood samples was also done once they were brought back to Earth from the ISS by Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata.

Despite extreme conditions in space, including temperature changes and exposure to intense cosmic rays and dangerous solar particles for 10 months, tests found no changes in the samples, such as cracking, warping, peeling or surface damage, according to a recent Kyoto University statement.

The retrieved wood specimens were tested and showed no deformation after space exposure and also did not undergo any mass change before and

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Children cross the Lebukhali Bharani canal in Patuakhali's Dumki upazila by a boat to go to their school as the iron bridge, which collapsed about three years ago after being hit by a sand-laden boat, remains unrepaired. The local LGED office is designing a new bridge, but the schoolchildren don't know when their suffering will end. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

Army man killed after pipe falls from SCC building

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An army personnel was killed after a steel pipe fell on him from an under-construction building of Sylhet City Corporation yesterday afternoon.

Lance Corporal Delowar Hossain was at the City Super Market adjacent to the building. He was a member of the 17 Infantry Division of the Bangladesh Army, said Sylhet City Corporation Public Relations Officer Abdul Alim Shah.

Delowar hailed from Raipur village of Rangni upazila in Meherpur.

Nine people involved in the construction work were detained by police, said Sudip Das, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

Police and eyewitnesses said a piece of a steel pipe fell from the under-construction building and landed on the head of the army personnel who was shopping at the market under the open sky around 2:00pm.

Doctors declared him dead when he was rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, a seven-member probe body, led by SCC Chief Engineer Nur Azizur Rahman, has been formed by the SCC and it was ordered to file a report within 72 hours, said Alim.

SCC Mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury said, "I am shocked by this incident ... We will take legal action against those responsible after getting the report."

Jamal and Co, a construction company, was responsible for the construction work of the building's 11 and 12th floors.