

Rain falls, Sylhet sinks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A rainfall of 151 millimetres from 6:00am to 12:00pm, inundated many areas in Sylhet city yesterday, washing away the tall claims of monsoon preparedness by the city authorities.

Due to the rain, the city came to an abrupt halt, prompting a wave of criticism towards the city corporation's expensive projects. Hundreds of people took to the streets, blocking major roads and demanding swift action against the persistent issue of waterlogging.

As areas like Pathantula, Akhalia, Dargah Mahalla, and many others found themselves submerged within an hour of the rainfall, the consequences of this inundation were felt by people from all strata of life.

Golzar Ahmed, the proprietor of Popy Library, highlighted the damage caused to books worth lakhs due to the flooding.

“Even with mild rainfall, SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Heavy rains between 6:00am and 12:00pm yesterday inundated different areas of Sylhet city, flooding most of its roads, including the one that led to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College. Doctors, students and patients had to walk across the accumulated knee-deep water, while vehicles struggled to move. This photo was taken around 1:30pm in front of the hospital.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Improve quality of life for slum dwellers  
Speakers tell dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A large number of urban residents live in slums, lacking water, healthcare, sanitation, governance, infrastructure, and socialisation, said speakers at an event yesterday.

At the event titled “Redefining Resilience of Cities and its Services,” speakers emphasised the need to enhance the quality of life for slum residents in Bangladesh.

They also projected that by 2030, nearly 45 percent of the population will be living in urban areas. This rapid urbanisation calls for immediate action to address the pressing issues faced by slum dwellers, they said.

Prof Akter Mahmud from Jahangirnagar University's department of urban and regional planning, stressed the need to provide adequate, safe, and affordable housing, along with basic services, to all citizens by 2030.

Salma Begum, a resident of Mirpur section-7 slum, shared her distressing experiences, expressing fears of eviction and fires that constantly plague the slums. She blamed the lack of opportunities

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

SYLHET CITY POLLS

Newly-added areas to be a key factor

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

In 2021, after 19 years of upgrading Sylhet municipality to a city corporation, the city area was expanded from 26.50 to 79.50 square kilometres.

The upcoming Sylhet City Corporation polls on June 21 are expected to be influenced by the inclusion of 133,777 new voters from the extended areas. The mayoral candidates are actively engaging with voters from these areas to secure their votes.

Sylhet municipality was established in 1878 and was upgraded to a city corporation on July 28, 2002. Since then, the city area has remained the same, divided into 27 wards, and four city corporation elections have been held until 2018.

After a lengthy discussion and legal process, four union parishads from Sylhet Sadar upazila and three union parishads from Dakshin Surma upazila were dissolved and incorporated into the city corporation on August 31, 2021.

The newly expanded areas have been divided into 15 additional wards, where city corporation polls

are scheduled to take place for the first time.

Due to the previous existence of union parishads, some areas adjacent to the city experienced unplanned urbanisation, while others remained villages under the union parishad administration. As a result, these areas lack essential urban facilities such as concrete roads, water supply, street lamps, sewerage systems, and waste management.

Additionally, since the dissolution of the union parishads, these areas have faced administrative challenges, despite the establishment of four regional offices by the city corporation in 2021.

The SCC has prepared a development project worth over Tk 4,500 crore for the newly-extended areas, which is currently awaiting approval from the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council.

Having visited several of the newly-included areas, it is evident that the residents have been suffering for decades due to the lack of basic amenities and infrastructure.

Abdur Rahim, a resident of the Baluchar area in the newly-

extended city, said, “Even though this area is adjacent to the city, it is underdeveloped as the union parishad had an insufficient budget for development. After dissolving the union parishad and including this area in the city, we have been facing problems as there remains no one to issue birth or death certificates. Now, with the polls, we believe all our sufferings are coming to an end.”

The enthusiasm surrounding the city polls is particularly intense in these areas, as councillor candidates are working to persuade the voters in their favour.

Furthermore, mayoral candidates are actively participating in various programmes in these areas and assuring the fulfillment of their development demands.

Contacted, Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, the Awami League mayoral candidate, said, “If I win, I will undertake a 100-year masterplan for the city, with a particular focus on the extended areas for their development.”

Jatiya Party candidate Nazrul Islam Babul said, “The extended parts of the city were previously part of the union parishad, and lack proper roads, water, and many other city facilities. A lot of work needs to be done in these areas, and I will plan accordingly by forming an advisory panel of citizens, including incumbent Mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury.”

The upcoming Sylhet City Corporation polls on June 21 are expected to be influenced by the inclusion of 133,777 new voters from the extended areas.

AL frightened over visa policy  
Alleges Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the Awami League is fearful of the new US visa policy due to their involvement in money laundering.

Fakhrul said, “They (AL leaders) have family and relatives abroad. The visa policy will have consequences for those who intend to rig the upcoming parliamentary elections in Bangladesh.”

He made these remarks while addressing a youth rally titled “Youth Rally for Saving the Country” held in the Kazir Devri area of the port city.

The Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, Swechasebak Dal,



Fakhrul speaking at the rally.

PHOTO: STAR

and Jubo Dal of Chattogram organised the rally, demanding the restoration of youths' voting rights in the election under a neutral government. The rally commenced at 2:00pm and concluded around 5:30pm.

Referring to the development work of the Karnaphuli tunnel in Chattogram, Fakhrul said, “While it is true that it is the first such tunnel in the country, what about the basic needs of the people? Prior to the tunnel, job opportunities for the youth should be ensured, and access to healthcare and living rights must be guaranteed.”

The rally saw the presence of BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, BNP's Vice Chairmen Abdullah Al Noman, and other leaders.

Meanwhile, a chase and counter-chase ensued between activists of Jubo Dal and Chhatra League in College Road area yesterday afternoon, amid escalating tensions in the port city centring the rally.

Polling ends, load shedding begins

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Before the city corporation polls, the electricity situation was comparatively better in Khulna compared to other cities of the country. However, only a day after the election, it started to worsen.

Khulna locals said that they are facing frequent power cuts since Tuesday morning, the day after the polls. Awami League mayoral candidate Talukdar Abdul Khaleque, who won the mayoral race, had requested the government to stop load shedding during the polls time. He had repeatedly expressed

During the election campaign, the power situation was good... we even saw frequent load shedding in other parts of the country through the media. But it started again just after the polls day.

Doly Kundul

A resident of ward-6



his fears that the polls may be adversely affected due to frequent load shedding during the campaign. “People's lives have become miserable due to frequent load shedding. This might negatively impact the polls,” he told reporters during his campaign on June 5.

Later, the power situation was improved in the city.

Officials of the West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited (WZPDCL), a state-owned company in charge of electricity distribution in Khulna and adjacent 21 districts, said

that there was no load shedding in Khulna from June 2 to 12.

“It started from 10:00am on Tuesday, the day after the polls,” according to a document of WZPDCL. The officials said the electricity demand in Khulna city was 160MW around 2:00pm on Tuesday but the supply was 129MW.

Yesterday, the demand was 167MW and the distribution company supplied 144MW of electricity. The total demand for electricity in the southern districts was 691MW at 2:00pm, while they were able to supply

619MW. Locals in Daulatpur and Khalishpur areas of Khulna said they faced load shedding thrice from 10:00am to 6:00pm yesterday.

Doly Kundul, a resident of Pabla Sabujsangha area in ward-6, said, “During the election campaign, the power situation was good... we even saw frequent load shedding in the other parts of the country through media. But it started again just after the polling day.”

“It has become unbearable for my sixth-grader daughter who has to study in the scorching heat for long hours due to the upcoming examinations. It has left her physically weak,” she said.

Abu Hassan, chief engineer of WZPDCL, said, “In contrast to the demand, less electricity is available from the national grid. So we have been left with no other option...”

Kudrat e-Khuda, president of the citizen's platform -- Shujan, said, “No load shedding occurred before the polls. There is enough doubt about the Awami League government's intention and this phenomenon is equivalent to committing fraud with voters.”

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