



# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES

COMMITTED TO  
People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XIII No. 282

DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 30, 2003

KARTIK 15, 1410 BS

RAMADAN 3, 1424 HURI

20 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE: Tk 10.00



## Outage knocks country to a standstill

### 21 plants trip one after another, leaving nation without electricity for hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country plunged into one of the worst power outages ever as 21 out of 23 power plants tripped in a series yesterday morning.

Power went out at 9:35am and was partially restored at around 12:30pm. Mymensingh and Sylhet region were however spared of the outage.

The massive loadshedding had its knock-on effects on water supplies, leaving millions of homes dry by noon. Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) in a press release said it is trying to pump out water with 250 generators.

Industrial production screeched to a halt by noon as generators

overheated. Even mobile telephone network faltered.

Functions in offices including the Prime Minister's Office, the parliament secretariat, business houses, banks and electronic media faced severe disruption.

Hospitals suspended scheduled operations, saving energy for emergency surgeries only.

Shopping malls and markets desperately tried to keep businesses open with generators, which also heated up to bring business to a standstill.

By 7:00pm, Power Development Board (PDB) engineers managed to put on grid 1900 MW against a peak

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Life slows to a crawl

STAR REPORT

One of the longest power cuts brought Bangladesh to its knees yesterday, stalling operation at industries, businesses and banks.

Banks, offices and businesses in Dhaka plunged into inaction, giving

way to a 'mood of gossip' that lasted long, making the people with urgent business victims of situation.

"Most banks have gone computer. Although we have back-up generators, they were not ready for operation. It took a long time to put

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

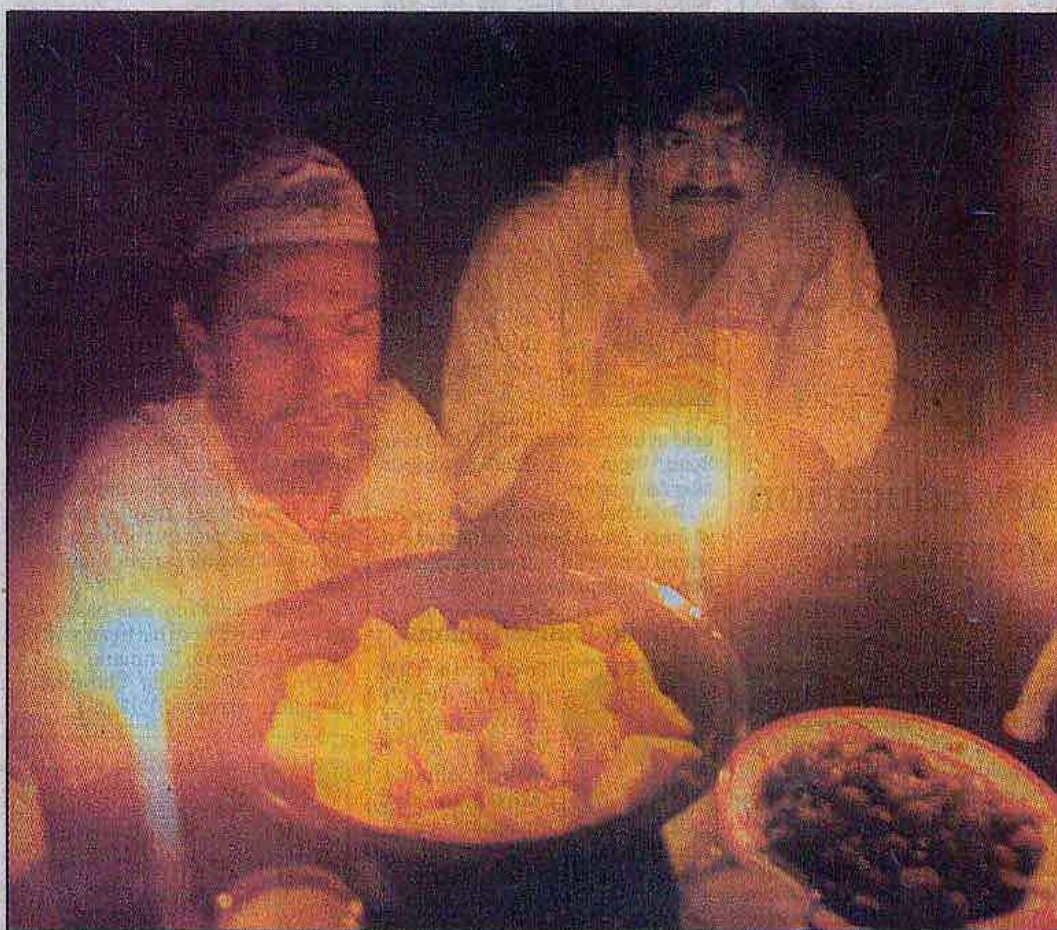


PHOTO: STAR

Breaking fast on the second day of Ramadan by candlelight was the norm at Purana Paltan in Dhaka, as one of the longest spells of power outage slowed life to a crawl yesterday.

## Price pace picks up further

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of essentials continued to rise in the kitchen markets of Dhaka yesterday and traders said they might stabilise two weeks later.

Vegetables, fruits and spices were selling at higher prices than in the days ahead of the fasting month of Ramadan.

"Locally-grown onions are selling at Tk 35 a kg, up from Tk 28 to 30 three days ago," said Alauddin, a trader in Mohammadpur kitchen market.

"I am selling tomatoes at Tk 50 a kg today that I sold at Tk 42 two days ago," said Nasir, another trader of the market.

"It is a completely frustrating situation bred by inaction by the government," said Ataul Hoque, a shopper there.

High prices largely varied from one kitchen market to another despite the commerce ministry moves to bring them down.

"Local onions are selling at Tk 32 a kg today, up from Tk 30 two days ago," said Nurul Hoque, a trader in Hatirpul market.

The prices of all vegetables have soared in the last couple of days, he said.

"Inadequate supply and increase in demands for iftar items have fuelled such a situation and prices won't stabilise until ample supplies pour into the markets," added Nurul Hoque at Hatirpul.

"Prices of bare necessities have hit the poor and the middle class very hard and they cannot buy the minimum," said Jolly Islam, a shopper.

"The government should intervene actively to bring down the prices immediately without showing any lame excuse."

In the kitchen markets of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

## JS body, minister split over spiral

SHAKHAWAT LITON

A parliamentary standing committee chairman and the commerce minister yesterday disagreed on the price upswing of essentials, with the first saying the prices soared high and the latter arguing against it.

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury told a committee meeting the prices of essentials climbed down, but Redwan Ahmed, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee

Ahmed echoed the minister's views but said, "I don't know why prices of essentials go high ahead of Ramadan every year."

The secretary told the meeting that 17,500 tonnes of onion were imported in the last 10 days, while only 7,500 tonnes were imported until October 18.

Khosru told newsmen that onion was available at Tk 20 a kg in his claim of low price -- the point Redwan differed on.

"People don't believe us when I say the prices are coming down," the minister said, urging journalists to reveal the truth.

Expressing dissatisfaction at the ministry's performance, some others on the committee accused the ministry of failing to check the price spiral.

The minister then defended himself; he alone is not responsible. He reasoned out that other ministries, including finance, are responsible as well.

Redwan sided with the minister on the point but said, "Had the commerce ministry taken initiatives earlier, the situation would not have deteriorated."

Both the ministry and the committee decided to discuss the issue at a special meeting on November 5.

The ministry was asked by the parliamentary body to submit a report specifying the cause of the abnormal price hike during Ramadan, which hit people, especially of the low-income bracket.

The committee at its two-hour meeting also discussed the export and import policy and structure of the Export Promotion Bureau.

Leaders of the ruling BNP at a joint meeting yesterday expressed

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Recovering classified amounts Sonali Bank to hold hearings with top loan defaulters

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

For the first time, a leading nationalised commercial bank -- Sonali Bank -- has decided to hold hearings with top loan defaulters to find ways to recover stuck-up loans.

The bank initially intends to hear the cases of the top 50 private sector defaulters who possess Tk 1,135 crore or 32 percent of the bank's default loans.

The full bank board will hear the complex cases while a committee led by the bank's chairman will hear the cases with small amounts. This committee will also include the managing director and a board member.

The next board meeting will chalk out the details of the nature of the hearings.

The default loans of Sonali Bank stood at Tk 5,665 crore till June. The

leading 50 private and public sector defaulters owe the bank Tk 1,610 crore.

Sonali has 19 public sector defaulters who owe the bank Tk 474 crore. Sixteen percent of its default loans worth Tk 799 crore are possessed by the top 20 defaulters.

Among its top 10 defaulters, the food ministry holds the biggest chunk of outstanding loans of Tk 283 crore of which Tk 110 crore in default loans. Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation seconds the list with Tk 145 crore in outstanding loans -- Tk 143 crore in classified status.

Deshma Shoe Industries, a private company, holds the third position with Tk 60 crore in classified loans. The other defaulters are : Dhaka Vegetable Oil Industry owned by former FBCCI vice-president Mohammad Ali (Tk 50 crore in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## BB GOVERNOR SIEGE Hunt on for unruly CBA leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police are on hunt for six Bangladesh Bank union leaders who put the central bank governor under siege during a demonstration Tuesday.

Police teams raided different areas in search of the leaders, but they could not find them.

Earlier, the Prime Minister's Office yesterday asked the Bangladesh Bank (BB) to take stringent actions against any unruly activities of staffs and officials led by trade unions.

It also instructed intelligence departments to gather information about the persons involved in creating a dangerous atmosphere at the central bank that is eventually tainting image of the government, sources said.

Some intelligence officials visited the central bank yesterday to probe Tuesday's incident in which some 300 employees and promotee officers led by Collective Bargaining

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

### Notice

The Daily Star continues to publish the list of plot allottees in Rajuk's Purbachal project. Find today's list on pages 17, 18, 19 and 20.

## Judge's 'bail fix' President asks CJ to probe allegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday directed the chief justice (CJ) to form the Supreme Judicial Council, for the first time, to probe the allegation of misconduct against an additional judge of the High Court.

The president sent the reference file to the law ministry upon receiving an advice from the prime minister.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed told the press that the ministry

would forward the president's directive to Chief Justice KM Hasan today. The chief justice will then constitute the council with two most senior judges of the Supreme Court he heads.

According to the constitution, if the council, after making the inquiry, reports to the president that in its opinion the judge has ceased to be capable of properly performing the functions of his office or has

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Tourists take charge

RABEED IMAM from Chittagong

An unbroken 103-run fifth wicket stand between former captain Nasser Hussain and all-rounder Rizki Clarke helped England recover from some middle-order jitters on the first day of the second and final Test against Bangladesh at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

The pair came together after England lost four wickets for ten runs. By close, the visitors were 237 for four with Clarke on 53 and Hussain 47.

Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud won his second consecutive toss and invited England to bat first.

But the tourists, who are one-up in the two Test series, made the most of the splendid weather after rain, which was ominously threatening the other day, stayed away from the bustling port city.

After surviving some initial nip and zip in the early overs, where the home pace bowlers bowled without any luck, England went to lunch on

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Integrated plan to save Buriganga announced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Buriganga Protection Taskforce resolved at a meeting yesterday to undertake an integrated action plan to demarcate and retain the riverbank following the eviction of encroachers.

The meeting, with Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain in the chair, agreed in principle to construct a protection wall and earthen walkway and to initiate tough legal

action against encroachers to save the lifeline of the capital city.

"We will initiate an integrated project in coordination with the BIWTA, the Department of Environment, the Department of Public Works, the Ministry of Land, the Ministry of Water Resources and Rajuk to protect the riverbanks," Akbar said at the meeting.

"Evict the encroachers completely and hand over the land to WAPDA (Water and Power

Development Authority) to build an embankment," the minister further directed.

"We intend to take all possible measures to protect the Buriganga," he told reporters on emerging from the meeting.

Environmental activist and taskforce member Prof. Abdullah Abu Sayeed proposed the construction of a three-metre high protection wall along the banks to thwart

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## CAUTIONARY NOTICE

Under instructions from our Client, Societe des Produits Nestlé S.A. of Vevey, Switzerland we hereby make it known to all, whom it may concern, that our Client's famous and well-known mark MAGGI® is registered in Bangladesh in respect of "foodstuffs having a base of rice, of flour or of cereals, also in the form of ready-made dishes, sauces, aromatizing or seasoning products for food" besides other products and they use the mark in a distinctive manner, as depicted below:



This trademark constitutes an invaluable asset of Nestlé and is closely associated with the company's name and prestige and guarantees the high quality of its products in Bangladesh and in the world.

Our Client hereby caution manufacturers, traders, wholesalers and/or retailers against manufacture, sale and/or offer for sale of goods bearing any mark, which is an infringement / Pass-off, of the mark shown above or is deceptively or confusingly similar thereto.

Our Client also hereby caution printers of trademark labels, block makers, dye and stencil makers, embossers and engravers against any printings, stenciling, embossing and/or engraving of labels, which comprise or include a trade mark, which is or which can amount to infringement or pass off of our trademark shown above, or which is deceptively or confusingly similar to our trademark in relation to the aforementioned goods.

Our Client, themselves and through their Licensee in Bangladesh, Nestlé Bangladesh Limited have initiated and are in the process of initiating legal action against suspected parties, who are infringing our Client's rights and in such process deceiving the public through the sale of spurious goods. Our Client also request the co-operation of the trade and the public, in the larger interest, to bring to our notice or that of our Client's notice, any instance of unlawful activity by way of infringement or passing off, so that appropriate legal action may be initiated by our Client.

Our Client is also the owners of the Copyright and the label of the aforementioned trademark MAGGI and they thereby enjoy the exclusive right to use such labels in any material form. The use of any label, which is a colourable imitation of, or a substantial reproduction of the aforementioned copyright, without the permission, consent or license from our client, will amount to infringement of Copyright which is an offence and punishable with imprisonment and fine.

It is therefore, brought to the notice of the trade and the public that the aforementioned Trademark and label are the property of our Client exclusively. Members of the trade and the public are hereby warned that our Client will have no hesitation, whatsoever, in bringing legal proceedings (Civil as well as Criminal) against anyone found to be violating the rights of our Client in respect of the aforesaid trademark.

Any enquiry regarding the aforesaid may be addressed to the office of

Rokanuddin Mahmud and Associates  
Barristers and Advocates  
Walsow Tower (1st Floor)  
21-23, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue  
Ramna, Dhaka

## মার্কেটাইল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড Mercantile Bank Ltd.

61, Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh  
Phone: 9559333, Fax: 9561213, Tlx: 642509 MBLID BJ  
E-mail: mbl@bol-online.com, Website: www.mblbd.com

### Heartiest Gratitude

Mercantile Bank Limited announces with great pleasure that the Public Issue of Shares of the Bank which was closed on 22nd October, 2003 received tremendous public support and has been over subscribed. The Board of Directors and Management take this opportunity to express their heartiest gratitude to the investors for their overwhelming support and confidence reposed on the Bank. The Board of Directors and Management also acknowledge with gratitude co-operation extended to the Bank by:

- Bangladesh Bank • Securities & Exchange Commission
- Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd. • Chittagong Stock Exchange Ltd.
- Underwriters • Bankers to the issue • Manager to the Issue

