

SAVE DHAKA

CIVIC AMENITIES: Part -6

DESA: Old wine in a new bottle!

By Reaz Ahmed and Masud Arif

The power supply situation in the city seems to have improved little even after the emergence of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) in October 1991 because the major factors that impeded any tangible progress in this regard still remain there.

The DESA took over the power distribution network in about 7473 sq km area of greater Dhaka zone.

Unabated pilferage of electricity in the name of so-called system loss, existence of self-billing system, illegal power connections, delay in the disposal of cases in this regard, corrupt practices by a section of DESA employees, metre tampering and age-old power lines — are some of the major impediments.

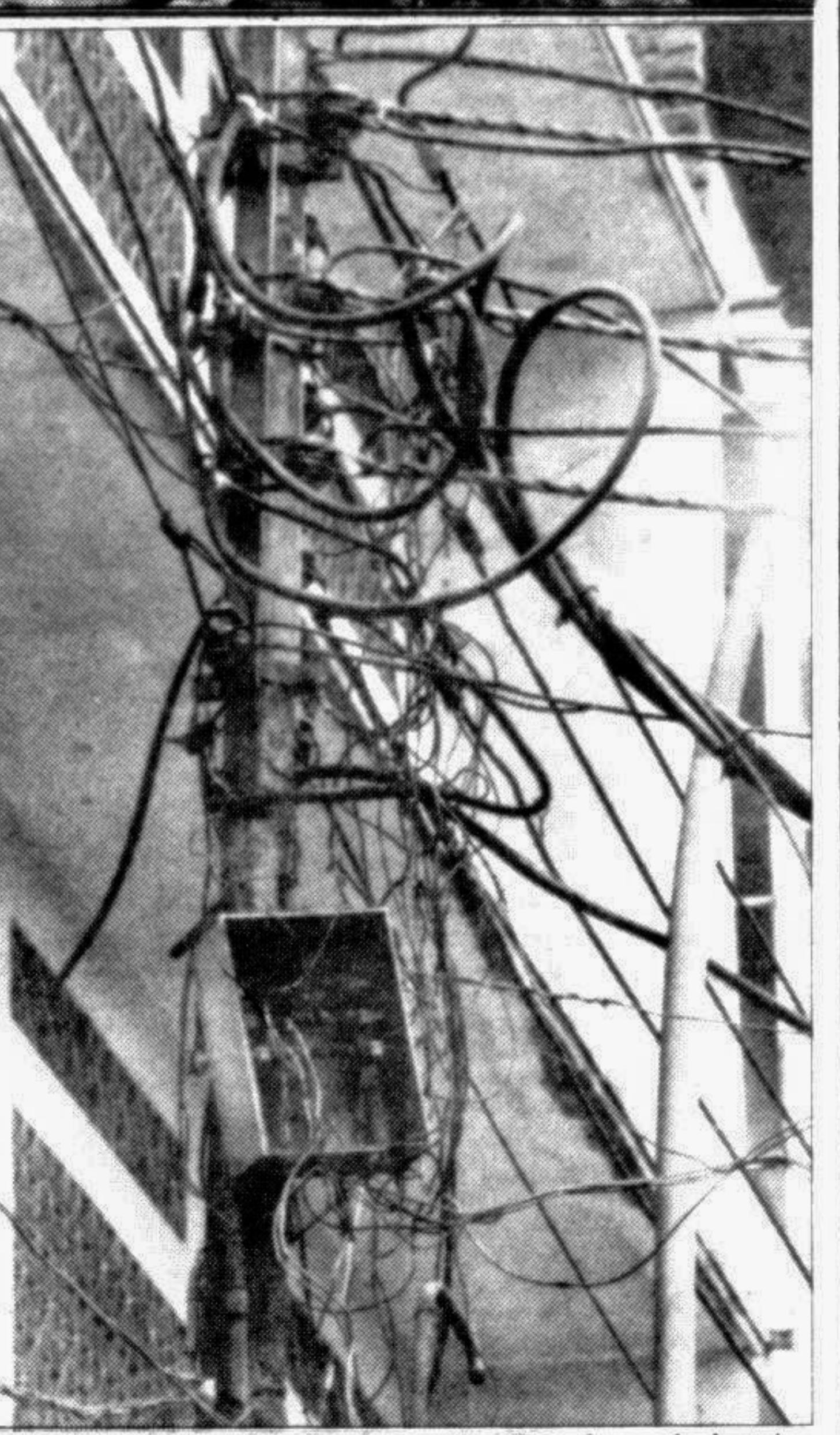
The system loss is presently 30.18 per cent, said a senior official of the DESA. The loss was 38.26 per cent when the DESA took over charge from Power Development Board.

An expert of the DESA, however, said that system loss actually meant 'technical loss' caused due to resistance in the lines. The DESA suffers 15 per cent such technical loss, he added.

The rest is actually 'revenue loss' which is also included in the overall system loss. Non-payment of electricity bills by illegal connection holders and avoiding payment of full amount by consumers who enjoy the self-billing facility constitute the 'revenue loss' portion of system loss.

"These are not system losses in the real terms, rather one can call these pilferage. Some 30,000 domestic consumers in the city's posh Gulshan, Bardidhara, Uttara and Dhanmondi areas enjoy self-billing system, which is something unique," said a senior official of the DESA.

Taking advantage of the self-billing, many consumers pay bills much lower than the actual metre reading and after a certain period when the amount becomes big they try



ELECTRIC CONNECTIONS GALORE: Several electric connections have been taken from a single electric pole in Dhanmondi. A number of them are reportedly illegal. The cable box cover is also missing. — Star photo by Enamul Huq

whereas DESA can provide hardly 600 MW per day.

DESA sources said, they get load shedding estimates from the PDB every morning and accordingly they chalk out a plan for the day when and where to shed load.

Load shedding occurred in the whole of May except on two days — May 14 and 15.

"The maximum 144 mw of power was shed on May 7 and in addition to that, PDB shed 115 mw by direct switch off," a DESA source said.

Director (Planning and Development) of the DESA AB Shaha told The Daily Star that if the consumers became more responsive to the government's Load Management Policy, their sufferings would reduce to some extent.

He hoped that with the completion of the third phase of greater Dhaka Power Distribution Project by December this year, the power supply situation would improve considerably.

Nat'l Craft Award introduced

JP, BNP akin: Manju

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday announced the introduction of National Craft Award for the exporters of crafts to promote the sector, reports UNB.

The award will be instituted from this year to give state honour to the best craft exporters every year, in addition to the President Export Trophy.

Begum Zia made the announcement while inaugurating a two-day National Crafts Exhibition-95 organised jointly by the Export Promotion Bureau and Banglachraft at Sonargaon Hotel in the evening.

SAPTA to take off ahead of schedule

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Saifur opposes withdrawal of lock-in period

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lio investments and cautioned against seeking a bubble economy. "You will have a smile for minutes but tears for years, if you want a bubble economy."

Sounding upbeat about the prospects of the economy, the minister emphasised the need for empowering the local investors and noted that foreign investors are needed more in a supportive rather than a substituting role.

Moshed Khan, on the other hand, spoke against the present lock-in provisions for foreign investors. "I would support the lock-in provisions, but not the whole hog," he said. "This kind of lock-in is not the type we can afford nor is it desirable."

He suggested keeping the lock-in provision for big companies which command a large percentage of the market capitalisation of the stock market and withdrawing it for buying shares of small companies coming with new issues.

"Any changes in the capital market is sensitive and we should be very, very careful. Let us not close the door in the name of lock-in," he said.

On privatisation, Khan ob-

served that the role of the regulator and the operator should not be in the same hand to ensure competitiveness in the market place.

The SEC Chairman noted that upto March this fiscal, 16 companies were listed in the stock market with a market capitalisation of Tk 2.7 billion, which is a 200 per cent increase over that in 1993-94, when 12 companies were listed with a market capitalisation of Tk 1.2 billion.

He said that a detailed guideline for "full and fair" disclosure procedures for the listed companies are going to be formulated soon.

The DCCI President, in his welcome address, suggested keeping the lock-in provisions in abeyance for a period of at least two years. "The lock-in and gain tax measures had a discouraging effect in the expansion of the capital market which should be resolved without further loss of time," he said.

Maksud Khan called for preparing a master plan for privatisation, involving both the public and private sectors, to make the privatisation drive a success.

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Cancel voting right of 'war criminals': Nirmul

By Staff Correspondent

Some 85 founder members of the Ekattarer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee and 18 member of its advisory council yesterday demanded cancellation of the voting right of the "war criminals" and of those using religion in politics.

In a joint statement, they urged the ruling and the opposition parties to include the trial of war criminals and banning the religion-based communal politics in their election manifestos.

They also called for enacting to prevent the 'war criminals' from taking part in the coming elections.

In reply to a query on the recent joining of the BNP by several JP MPs, Manju said this might be because of local political and election factors. Those who are joining other parties might have thought that they would not get the JP's nominations for the coming elections.

Asked if the JP was planning to form an election alliance with the BNP, Manju said there would not be any electoral alliance with any political party.

He went on to add that the conflict between the BNP and the JP is like "a conflict within a family. Here it is a clash of personalities — who will uphold the politics."

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personalities — who will uphold the politics."

He listed Bangladesh's attraction as: having a strong corporate culture, a well-developed banking system, international accounting system, simplified tax regime for stock market investment, simplified settlement procedures, attractive share price to earning ratios, low market capitalisation to GDP ratio and good return in previous years.

He went on to list the distractions as: the recent SEC decisions to restrict foreign investment, amplified reports of labour unrest, forthcoming

privatisation of state-owned entities as the most important avenue to develop the capital market of Bangladesh. Large issues would increase the supply of shares in the market and long-term investments could really boost the stock market, he said.

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Serbs free 108 UN peacekeepers

NOVI SAD, Yugoslavia, June 7: Bosnia's rebel Serbs released 108 peacekeepers early Wednesday, and Serbia's president said he thought the nearly 150 remaining UN hostages would be freed within days, reports AP.

Two buses carrying the freed hostages crossed the Bosnian border into Serbia shortly after 1 am (2300 GMT Tuesday). They then headed to Novi Sad, a town about 50 kilometers (30 miles) north of the Serbian and Yugoslav capital Belgrade.

Serbia's security chief, Jovica Stanic, who negotiated the release for two days, said he hoped all the hostages "will be released very soon."

Shrimp

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eries Minister, welcomed the BFFEA's decisions, saying the association had identified the problems at the right time.

Noman said the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday okayed a Taka 37.80 crore fisheries development project for the Noakhali region, to be completed by the year 2001.

The next budget would allocate adequate funds for development of infrastructure and hatcheries and a sum of Taka 18 crore would be spent from the next Annual Development Programme (ADP) for setting up 20 service centres where the quality of shrimp would be ensured, the Fisheries Minister said.

The minister said, formation of a shrimp development board would be announced by next month, hopefully. He said, earnings from shrimp exports were only Taka 491 crore in 1990-91, whereas the amount climbed to Taka 1,100 during the first 11 months of the current fiscal.

In his address, Fisheries Secretary Mofazzal Karim said EU, the single largest importer of Bangladeshi shrimps, has threatened that it would stop buying from Bangladesh from next year unless good quality is guaranteed.

An inspection team from the EU, after visiting some shrimp processing factories in Bangladesh in February, had remarked that the factory environment was unhygienic and the water used for washing shrimp was not chlorine free, Karim said.

Earlier, the BFFEA members told the newsmen that 80 containers loaded with some 1,360 tons of shrimp were stranded at Mongla port for the past 10 days and the export schedules were going away due to unprecedent congestion at Chittagong port.

"We represent the same politics, practically, we have no differences. The only difference we have is one of presentation of our politics, and both the parties are aspiring for power," he said.

He hoped that with the completion of the third phase of greater Dhaka Power Distribution Project by December this year, the power supply situation would improve considerably.

Hartal observed at N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, June 7: A half-day hartal was observed in Narayanganj town today to protest the killing of two AL activists. Afzal Hussain and Murad Hussain were killed by unknown assailants on June 5.

Normal life was paralysed as all modes of transport off the roads. Most shops and business organisations were closed.

At least 100 cocktails were exploded in different parts of the town. One policeman was injured. Road communication with Narayanganj remained cut off while train services were normal.

AL memo

From Page 1

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Phool Banu

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Later, four days after the Eid, Rahima was informed that her daughter was alive and remained confined at a brothel in Jamalpur town. On February 26, with the help of her mother, police recovered Phool Banu from the brothel and sent her to jail custody.

The madam of the brothel, Selina Begum, told police that a rickshaw puller had sold Phool Banu to her for Tk 3000.

Finally, Phool Banu was released on bail on Monday.

While releasing her, magistrate Mostaq Ahmed directed the police to find out the actual identity of body of the girl buried earlier.

The Midnight File

UN pullout from Bosnia will be disaster: Perry

WASHINGTON, June 7: Pulling United Nations peacekeepers out of Bosnia would lead to "humanitarian disaster," Defense Secretary William Perry told Congress Tuesday. A leading Republican called for massive US intervention if UN forces are endangered. With 1,500 US soldiers en route to a base near Bosnia, Perry and Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, described in detail how those forces might be used if the United Nations peacekeepers face a crisis and request evacuation, reports AP.

Hasina at city rally

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shad and his Jatiya Party in a bid to cling to power, ignoring public agitation against it, she alleged.

Referring to the BNP's recent offer for dialogue, Hasina said they always called for dialogue but forgot it when appointed the Chief Election Commissioner unilaterally. How could they realise the need for talks as they were busy conspiring to rig the polls? she asked.

Repeating her allegation that the BNP men earned Taka 400 crore from the recent fertiliser scandal, the AL president said the country would face a food shortage next year and the following years would bear the impact of the crisis.

Accusing the present government of failing to realise the due share of the Ganges waters from India, Hasina reiterated that if voted to power, her party would ensure the country's due share of the waters.

Cellular phones

From Page 1

national newspaper following the expiry of Hutchison's exclusive operation rights for years.

Hutchison Telecom had obtained the right to operate a cellular or mobile telephone system in the country from a company called Bangladesh Telecom Limited (BTL).

BTL got the licence on July 25, 1989, to operate cellular telephones, paging, rivering and radio trunking system in Bangladesh for 20 years, including a five-year monopoly right.

The monopoly period having expired on July 25, 1994, the T&T Board floated international tenders inviting more firms to operate cellular radio telephone system.

Thirty-two local and foreign firms submitted tenders but the T&T Board could not dispose of them due to an injunction given by the court.

Revised MOU

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Women and Children's affairs, he added.

All sides agreed to initiate an all out effort to create a sufficiently large fund for the proposed rehabilitation programme with a large contribution from the BGMEA, the source noted.

A BGMEA source said that the Association's negotiating team led by Redwan Ahmed would be able to sign the revised MOU if it is formulated within the ambit of the resolutions passed at its extra-ordinary general meeting on May 17.

At that meeting, the BGMEA members rejected the earlier draft MOU and unilaterally announced the total elimination of child labour from the garment sector by October 31 next. This prompted negotiations for a revised MOU and the present round of talks. Wednesday's meeting was the third in the

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