

Load-shedding, water crisis make city life miserable

By Staff Correspondent

Load-shedding, water crisis and scorching heat have made the life of the city dwellers miserable for the last three weeks.

Most areas of the city are experiencing abrupt load-shedding of 15 minutes to few hours everyday. The disruption in electricity supply also affects the water supply system.

According to sources in the Power Development Board (PDB), load-shedding of 200 MW to 300 MW is taking place in the country daily due to short supply of natural gas to the gas-based power stations which generate some 1800 MW power.

Load-shedding under the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) covering Dhaka, Tongi and Narayanganj ranges between 80 MW during the day time and 110 MW during the peak-load hours at night.

Load-shedding is most frequent in the areas of Mirpur, Shaymoli, Mohammadpur, Lalmitia, Green Road, Naya Paltan, Baily Road, Shahjahanpur, Arambag, Fakirapool, Rampura, Azimpur, Palkhana and Jatrabari.

People in many areas are seen 'rationing' water while the temperature in the city rises up to 35 degrees Celsius during the day time.

Water shortage is so acute in Mirpur, Moghbazar, Eskatan, Shahjahanpur, Khilgaon, Bada, Faridabad, Gardar, Jatrabari and other areas that some people have to purchase water from vendors.

Sources in the Dhaka WASA said that there was a daily short fall of at least 50 crore litres of water in the city.

The sources said that there is no immediate solution to the problem as the WASA had no further capacity to increase the supply immediately and meet the rising demand.

The water supply has also been affected by load-shedding. Some pumps in the WASA zonal offices are failing to supply water in time due to load-shedding.

Sources in the DESA said that in many areas power disruption was taking place due to overload. Many of the power transformers have become too old to take extra loads, the sources added.

A PDB official said that the only immediate way to reduce the load-shedding was to ensure 'power management'.

All shops and commercial organisations should shut down their shutters after 7 pm and industries should not operate during the peak hours," he said explaining 'power management'.

There had been a lot of discussion on power management before, but in reality nobody applies it," the official pointed out.

In addition to load-shedding, people's sufferings have been heightened by voltage fluctuation which damages electrical and electronic goods, complained many house owners.



Garments Trade Union Sangha brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting 'repression' on workers. — Star photo

Immunization days on April 16, May 16

About 20 million children under five years will be vaccinated against polio and over 13 million children supplemented with Vitamin A during the National Immunization Days (NIDs) on April 16 and May 16, reports UNB.

Wishing success of the NIDs, Health and Family Welfare Secretary Dr. M. M. Hossain said the country will be able to ensure a healthy and bright future for children, eradicating the crippling polio disease with active participation of the people.

Briefing newsmen yesterday at the office of Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) he said the country will be freed from polio by the year 2000 after completion of three NIDs by next year.

Polio would be eradicated like small pox from the country, he hoped.

Children under-five will be given oral polio vaccine on the first phase on April 16 while a second dose will be provided on May 16.

Vitamin A capsule will also be supplemented to the children aged one to five on May 16, the second day of the immunization programme.

Experts said all children who were previously immunized with the polio vaccine must be vaccinated on the NIDs to protect them further from disability and incurable disease.

Preparation have already been completed for smooth holding of the NIDs as the vaccines have already been sent to various thana centres.

Some 120 lakh centres will be set up across the country to immunize the children on the NIDs while 6 lakh health workers will provide the vaccines.

A total of 7.1 million US dollar will be spent for the NIDs with financial and technical assistances from Japanese government, Rotary International, CDC-Atlanta, UNICEF, SIDA, WHO and USAID.

10 hurt in city incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least ten persons were injured in separate incidents of violence in the city yesterday.

An armed clash between two groups at Manikdi left at least seven persons injured.

Of the injured, an auto-rickshaw driver Mahbubul Haq Babul, 27, and one Jahangir were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with bullet wounds, police and medical sources said.

Several shots were fired and bombs exploded during the clash which lasted about an hour.

In another incident, extortionists fired on a shop assistant Malek, 30, in Khilgaon Bazar area at around noon. Admitted first to the DMCH, he was later shifted to the Orthopedic Hospital, medical sources said.

The gang of about five extortionists also damaged the shop as Malek refused to give them toll.

Hasan, Sobhan hold talks Reorganisation of SAARC Sectt discussed

Foreign Secretary Feroq Sobhan and SAARC Secretary General Naem U Hasan here yesterday discussed the question of strengthening SAARC Secretariat to adequately deal with intensified action programme of the association for its second decade, reports UNB.

The powers and functions of the Secretary General were discussed so as to enable him to exercise greater responsibility in discharging his duties in days ahead.

The SAARC Secretary General, who arrived in the city on Friday, on family, on familiarisation tour held official talks with the Foreign Secretary, on all aspects of regional cooperation under SAARC and its future programmes.

Hasan, a career diplomat from Pakistan, assumed the office of the chief executive of the SAARC Secretariat on January 1, 1996.

Briefing newsmen on the contents of the 90-minute talks, Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Tariq Karim said that the meeting discussed preparations to hold the next summit of the seven-nation forum in Male, the capital city of the Maldives.

Karim, who aided the Foreign Secretary at the talks, told newsmen that it also reviewed the progress of the implementation of the decision and proposals of the Council of Ministers' meeting in New Delhi in last December.

The meeting held at the office of the Foreign Secretary, focused on various programmes on poverty alleviation, including decisions of the senior officials.

Earlier Hasan called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban when he lauded Bangladesh's contribution to the development of the forum.

Lot of initiatives have been taken for poverty alleviation and involving private sectors, including chambers of commerce and industry, for greater economic cooperation among the member states, said the chief executive of the seven-nation forum.

Welcoming the visiting SAARC Secretary General, the President said it was Bangladesh which first mooted the idea of regional cooperation for socio-economic development, as existed in other regions of the world.

Meanwhile, Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman laid emphasis on the improvement of trade and commerce among the SAARC countries.

Trade and Commerce is the best means for fraternity and cooperation," he said, talking to the visiting SAARC Secretary who paid a courtesy call on the Chief Adviser at his office yesterday morning.

Edn officers asked to strengthen supervision

Adviser of the caretaker government Prof M Shamsul Huq yesterday instructed education officers to strengthen the supervision of educational institutions so that they could be alert and discharge their duties with sincerity, reports UNB.

Prof Huq, Adviser for Education, Youth and Sports and Cultural Affairs ministries, said academic supervision, curriculum management as well as teacher training would be enforced to improve the quality of education.

Arms recovered, 8 held in city

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested eight persons and recovered arms and ammunition in separate raids in the city yesterday.

Mirpur police recovered two pipeguns, 30 bullets and two machettes in a raid at a slum in Kalyanpur area early yesterday.

The arrested were identified as Faruk, 24, Zakir Hossain, 18, Nazrul Islam, 17, Belal, 26, and Milon, 18, police said.

In another raid at north Mugdapara, police arrested Nurul Islam, 22, and Sumon, 16, and seized one pipegun, bullets and daggers.

Dhanmondi police recovered a pipegun from the roof top of a school building at Rayer Bazar at around 2:30 am yesterday.

During raids at Lalbagh, Fakirapool, Sutrapur, Rupnagar and Mohammodpur areas, police recovered two pipe guns, one cut rifle, huge ammunition and cocktails.

One Faruk, 20, was also arrested during the raid at Raj Narayan Dhar Lane in Lalbagh area at about 2:15 am, police added.

Greenpeace experts caution against dangers of chlorine wastes

People of the Third World countries, including Bangladesh, should beware of the dangers of chlorine waste and products which, in the form of organochlorine, move up to the food chain, reports UNB.

Human bodies serve as the final magnet for organochlorine pollution in the environment, said an expert group of Greenpeace, a global environmental watchdog, at a day-long workshop in Dhaka yesterday.

Children receive the highest dose of organochlorine as these chemicals are passed from one generation to the next through the placenta and breastmilk, informed the workshop organised by a voluntary organisation, Training Task Group (TTG).

Visiting Greenpeace activists - Dr Paul Connet, Allen Connet, Julie Heman and Annie Leonard - conducted the workshop. The group, which arrived in the capital on Friday night, will conduct another couple of workshops here.

Cautioning the participants, the experts told the workshop that all organochlorine so far studied - and many have yet to be identified or evaluated - have been found to cause at least one of a wide range of health problems often at very low doses.

The problems include genetic mutations, disruption of hormones, suppression of the immune system, birth defects and impaired childhood development, reproductive dysfunction and infertility, cancer and nerve damage, the Greenpeace experts said.

Recently researchers have shown that even chlorine used to kill microbes in drinking water will react with natural organic material to cause higher levels of bladder and colon cancer in studied populations.

They also said building hazardous waste, municipal waste and medical waste incinerators, which burn chlorine wastes and products, will increase health risk from the formation of organochlorine by-products.

In addition, they said, the huge amounts of money invested in such expensive technologies will also act as a disincentive for industry to develop and market clean alternative products to reduce the toxicity and volume of wastes.

They said the wastes of the chlorine industry, including chlorinated solvents, pesticides and polyvinyl chloride plastic production are some of the most hazardous and complex chemical compounds to treat and breakdown since they are not only very toxic but can be highly persistent and they bio-accumulate.

Bangladesh's people, even the government, are rarely aware about the impact of incinerators and chlorine wastes. Incinerators which burn chlorine wastes and product create dioxins and other chlorine by-products that are even more dangerous than the intentionally produced chemicals, they said.

The experts commented that some of the most hazardous by-products are hexachlorobenzene and the feared dioxins and furans. Most dioxins are chlorinated and can only be created in association with chlorine.

They said burning chlorinated wastes, even in high temperature incinerators, is one of the main sources of dioxin, which is one of the most deadly substances known.

But, they said, the developing countries rapidly destroy their wastes by burning as they are not conscious about the harm of environment and their health safety.

The Greenpeace and many other organizations agree that no level of dioxin is safe and actions should be taken to eliminate dioxin immediately, they said.

The developing countries need to know from industrialized societies which have realized the dangers of chlorine and are now talking of actions against incinerators and chlorine wastes.

These 'dirty' technologies must not be shifted to Asia and it must be decreased by banning chlorine compounds, phase out the majority of chlorinated solvents like Sweden has done, they said.



Economist Anisur Rahman speaking at a seminar on 'The Impact of Vested Property Act' in the city yesterday. On his right are Barrister Amir-ul-Islam and Kamal Lohani, and Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder on his left. — Star photo

Grindlays Bank to introduce new technology

By Staff Correspondent

The country's oldest international bank, ANZ Grindlays Bank, is going to introduce new technology based banking for efficient customer service and product delivery by this calendar year.

The new system would enable us to improve customer services in the front office and enhance distribution flexibility by providing a platform to support electronic banking initiatives," said Alister Maitland, executive director international of ANZ Grindlays Bank in a city hotel yesterday.

He said that the new system would enable its customers to transact from any branch and to transfer funds from one branch to another within the country.

The new system would also provide a common hardware and software platform across all countries and facilitate a 'one Bank' image, he said.

"After introduction of the new technology, information would be available on-line, allowing customer enquiries to be answered from any branch in each country."

The Grindlays executive said that liberalisation and globalisation has resulted in substantial market growth and emergence of new opportunities in the banking sector in Bangladesh and that the sector as a whole, is performing well.

The removal of entry barriers has resulted in increased competition from various international banks and new private banks providing high quality service with support of state of the art technology," said Maitland.

The briefing was also attended by Achut Bommakanti, chief general manager international, Mehli Mistri, general manager, South Asia, and local general manager Frank Gamble.

Established in 1905, the ANZ Grindlays Bank, which provides business and retail banking services, has nine branches and four cash offices in Dhaka, Chittagong, Narayanganj and Khulna.

Of the total lending of about Tk 620 crore, the investment portfolio of the bank includes retail (22 per cent), trading and trade finance (10 per cent), machinery financing (14 per cent), and industrial working capital financing (54 per cent).

The Midnight Mile

Israel imposes naval blockade on Beirut

BEIRUT, Apr 13: Israeli gunboats imposed a naval blockade on Beirut today as military aircraft and artillery pounded south Lebanon on the third day of an onslaught against Shi'ite Muslim militants, security sources said, reports AP.

17 hurt as rivals clash in Jessore

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Apr 13: Seventeen people were injured, five of them seriously in an armed clash between two rival groups at Jahangirpur under Shinghajhully union of Chowgacha thana today.

Four of the seriously injured Rezaul Haq, 34, his wife Sufia, 28, their daughter Runa, 4 and Majid, 20, were admitted to the Jessore General Hospital while Yakub, 24, was referred to the Khulna 250-bed hospital in a critical condition. The rest were admitted to Chowgacha Thana Health Complex.

According to reports, BNP activists from Goribpur, equipped with arms, bombs and lethal weapons suddenly attacked the house of local Awami League leader Rezaul Haque. They beat him and all his family members mercilessly, opened fire and exploded bombs. They looted all his property, damaged the house, door and furniture.

Programmes to observe birth anniversaries of Tagore, Nazrul

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs at a meeting yesterday drawn up elaborate programmes to observe the birth anniversaries of poet Rabindranath Tagore and National poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, reports BSS.

National level programmes will be held on Baishakh 25 and 26 in Dhaka, Shelaidaha, Shahjapur and Patisar in observance of the 135th birth anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore while similar programmes will be held on Jaishtha 11 and 12 in Dhaka, Trishal, Comilla and Daulatpur in observance of the 97th birth anniversary of poet Nazrul Islam.

500 phone lines in city out of order

Some 500 telephone lines in the city's Farmgate area went out of order due to fault in underground cables, reports UNB.

The underground cables were affected following road digging by Alcatel near the Ananda Cinema Hall for development works.

Telephone and Telegraph Board engineers have already started working to repair the telephone lines and those under the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Exchange are expected to be functioning within April 15, said a T&T press release.

CPI (M) denies infiltration of Bangladeshis

NEW DELHI, Apr 13: The Communist Party of India (M) has refuted the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) allegation of infiltration of Bangladeshis and their inclusion in the voters' list, reports BSS.

The Calcutta-based daily 'Aajkal' quoted state's spokesman of CPI (M) Biswas as saying on Wednesday that BJP's allegation was aimed at spreading a venom of communalism for political gains.

Describing the allegation as baseless, Biswas said it is not supported by any documentary evidence.

Hasina protests attack on Hasan Imam

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday protested the attack on film artist and Nirmul Committee leader Syed Hasan Imam by 'the armed hoodlums of BNP', reports UNB.

In a press statement, she demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the attackers.

Hasina said BNP, being ousted from power in the face of a mass movement, has become imbalanced and is trying to create a reign of terror in the country.

3 parties

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arms recovery drive immediately and to take drastic action against illegal arms holders irrespective of their party affiliations.

There will be no free and fair election unless the arms recovery drive is successful, the meeting feared.

The meeting urged the Election Commission to include in the voters' list those left out earlier and also Bangladeshis staying abroad.

It noted that the government was taking no measures against what it called, the corrupt ministers and MPs of the Begum Zia government.

AL, JP and Jamaat leaders observed that if no actions were taken against those who amassed 'black money' by misusing power and through corrupt practices, the 'black money' might influence the coming elections.

They also demanded cancellation of all political appointments including those of chairmen of various banks made during the BNP rule.

Code of conduct

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fresh list before the elections.

He said 'some (political parties) have raised serious objections to the present voters' list' but, he asked, 'is it tenable to make a fresh one within the time-frame?'

'At present we are rectifying the electoral roll as far as possible but with the constitutional obligation to hold the elections within 90 days, it is impossible to undertake a comprehensive work for fresh electoral roll,' Abu Hena stressed. He added that he had discussed the matter with Adviser for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Ishaq Ahmed.

The CEC added, without elaborating, that he had already fixed a date to announce the election schedule. The schedule would be announced as soon as the 10-day period for ratification of the electoral roll was over, he hinted.

'After the announcement of the election schedule, there won't be any scope for people in the field-level to rectify their electoral roll, they would have to apply to the EC to get enlisted,' he said.

Talking about the elections, the CEC said 'that he would have to take into consideration the weather as well as other practical factors and keep some time in hand within the 90-day time-frame after the elections are held.'

About the appointment of election commissioners, he said that he had already requested the government to give him 'qualified and efficient people as election commissioners'.

From the very beginning, Abu Hena said, his priority was to set his house (EC) clean to restore its image.

'If necessary, some people will have to make sacrifice, however efficient, expert or 'indispensable' they are.'

'I have been trying to identify my job in this time constraint. I have taken oath to uphold the Constitution. I will do so. If I fail, I will tell the nation why I have failed,' the CEC said.

Baishakh

today at 7:30 in the morning. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs will hold seminar and cultural function in celebration of the Bangla New Year today at the Nazrul Institute at 6:30 pm. Professor Muhammad Shamsul Huq, Adviser in charge of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, will be the chief guest.

The Bulbul Lalitkala Academy has organised a dance drama today at 6:30 in the morning near the Dhanmondi Lake (near Road No 8 bridge).

The Shishu Academy will stage a cultural function at its auditorium at 9 am.

The Institution of Engineers will hold a 'prabhati' function at its premises at 8 am. The 'Hindoi' Music Academy has organised a cultural function at 6:30 in the morning at the Ramna Park (northern side of the lake).

The Nagar Sangskrtik Goshti will hold a drawing competition for the children below 12 years at 'Nagar Bhaban' of City Corporation at 9:30 am.

Today, the main attraction of Pahela Baishakh for city dwellers will be three colourful processions - students of the Fine Arts Institute will bring out a procession from the Institute premises, the Committee for Observance of the Silver Jubilee of the Liberation War and Independence, from the Bahadur Shah Park and the Joy Bangla Sangskrtik Okya Jote procession from Bahadur Shah Park - all beginning at 8 am.

A three-day 'Lok Utsab' or folk festival will begin at the Bangla Academy at 7:30 am today.

A street drama will be staged at 3 pm at the TSC intersection.

A week-long Baishakhi Mela, organised by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), will begin at 4:15 pm at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

UNB adds: Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will speak at a discussion meeting organised by Swadhinata Rajat Joyanti Uddjapan Parishad at Ramna at 5 pm today.

Hanif concerned

Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif yesterday expressed his deep concern over the conspiracy being hatched to take action against the officials and employees of the republic for expressing their solidarity at the 'Janatar Mancha,' reports BSS.

In a statement Mohammad Hanif made it clear that the 'Janatar Mancha' which was erected for forcing the resignation of the 'illegal government' was never a political dais. 'There is no question about its neutrality as it was set up by the first elected mayor of the Dhaka city to unite citizens from all walks of life to achieve the right cause of the people.'

4 killed

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An unidentified person aged about 30 fatally injured in another road accident at Joar Sahara bus stand Friday morning died at the DMCH yesterday afternoon, hospital sources said.

AL team

From Page 1

tion of the Election Commission, civil and police administration, and inclusion of eligible voters in the electoral roll through a simplified process.

The delegation led by AL President member Abdus Samad Azad, urged the Chief Adviser to strengthen the on-going illegal arms recovery drive and ensure neutrality of the state-run radio and television.

Other members of the delegation were: Abdul Mannan, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofael Ahmed and SAMS Kibria.

500 join BNP

BNP standing committee member Mirza Golam Hafiz described the common man and toiling masses as the life-line of the national economy and regretted that they were the worst sufferers during the 'so-called' non-cooperation movement, reports BSS.

He was addressing a meeting held in front of the BNP central office here marking the joining of over 500 shopowners, employees and hawkers of Baitul Mukarram shopping complex led by Al Amin Bhapari Chhunu and General Secretary Mollah Shohrab Hossain Qudus to the BNP.

Police admin

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particular station will also be taken into account.

Administrative changes are being made with the primary objective of restoring law and order. Besides, restoring the confidence of the people in general and political parties in particular in a 'non-partisan' law enforcing agency is aimed at through the changes, the official noted.

Some major political parties alleged politicisation of the administration during BNP rule and demanded recasting it.

শুভ উদ্বোধন

বাংলা নববর্ষ উপলক্ষে সম্মানিত গ্রাহক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীকে ইরান বাংলাদেশ কমার্শিয়াল কোঃ লিঃ জানাচ্ছে অন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা। আজ ১৪ই এপ্রিল আমাদের প্রদর্শনী কেন্দ্রের শুভ উদ্বোধনে আপনারদের আমন্ত্রণ জানাচ্ছি। আমাদের উপহার সদ্য ইরান থেকে আমদানীকৃত মনোরম ডিজাইনের আসবাবপত্র, ঝাড়বাতি, কার্পেট, পর্দা, বিভিন্ন ধরনের প্রসাধন সামগ্রী, চকলেট, বিস্কুট, মধু এবং হস্তশিল্প।

আজই আসুন এবং বেছে নিন আপনার পছন্দমত সামগ্রী।

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