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First Hajj flight leaves

The first Hajj flight of Bangladesh Biman carrying 301 pilgrims left Dhaka yesterday afternoon for Jeddah, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina bade farewell to the pilgrims at the Zia International Airport. She also participated in a munajat offered for the safe journey of the pilgrims and their return.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam, who led the munajat, also sought divine blessings for the peace, progress and prosperity of the country and welfare of the people.

The Prime Minister went inside the cabin and talked to the pilgrims and enquired about their welfare.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines this year will carry a total of 16,500 pilgrims, including 9,000 ballotees, to Jeddah in 53 flights. The last flight leaves here on April 11.

Permanent sharing of Teesta waters to be discussed next month

By M Anwarul Haq

Bangladesh and India will discuss a permanent arrangement for sharing the Teesta waters at the meeting of the re-activated Bangladesh-India Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) due to be held in Dhaka in the first week of April, sources concerned said.

Besides reviewing the progress of the Ganges water accord, the JRC meeting will also discuss flood management, problems of cross-border rivers, irrigation and water related issues. India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers, of which accord on only the Ganges was reached in December last.

This would be the 32nd meeting of the JRC, a forum for consultation on water issues between the two countries, constituted in 1972. However, the JRC has remained dormant for a long time and this would be its first meeting in seven years. The last meet was held in June 1990 in Dhaka.

The decision to reactivate the JRC was announced after the official talks between Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart H D Deve Gowda in Dhaka on January 6.

Indian Minister for Water Resources Janeshwar Mishra and his Bangladesh counterpart Abdur Razzak will co-chair the meeting, the exact date of which is expected to be announced by Dhaka and Delhi sometime this week.

The meeting will be attended by permanent members of the JRC from the two sides, water

Businessman 'falls' from 11th floor office, dies

By Staff Correspondent

A businessman died after reportedly falling from his office on the 11th floor of the Scout Bhaban at Kakrail in the city yesterday.

Md Anwar Yusuf, 50, Director of Erba Ltd, was fatally injured when he allegedly fell from a toilet of his office at about 10:45 am. He succumbed to the injuries on way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The reason behind the reported fall and other details could not be known immediately. Police said that an unnatural death case had been filed with Motijheel thana.

BSS adds: Relatives of the deceased alleged that Anwar Yusuf, a leader of Bangladesh Awami League and member of the convening committee of Kushtia district Awami League, might have been killed by miscreants by pushing him out of the bathroom.

Power supply in 37 districts likely to be restored today

Star Report

Power Supply in 37 northern and southern districts of the country may be restored this evening, according to sources in the Power Development Board (PDB).

A team of PDB engineers and officials headed by its chairman is working round the clock in Pabna to restore power supply in the districts, the sources said.

Power supply to the northern and southern districts snapped as two grid towers on the 232 KV East-West Interconnector Power Transmission Line 'mysteriously' collapsed at Malingachha in Pabna district Friday night.

The government is suspecting that 'anti-state elements' might have been involved in the collapse of the towers which weigh no less than 22 tons each, the sources said.

Meanwhile, a four-member committee has been formed to probe the collapse of the towers, an official handout said.

The committee will see whether the collapse of the two towers was an act of sabotage by any individual or group, the handout said.

When the grid towers had collapsed Friday night, the total power supply system in the northern and southern regions had collapsed. Attempts were made to restore the power on temporary basis but those failed.

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Anniversary of Bangabandhu's birth today

By Staff Correspondent

The 77th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be observed in the country today.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, architect of the nation's independence, was born this day in 1920 in Tungipara in Gopalganj.

The government has taken up various programmes to observe the day, which has also been declared this year as National Mourning Day.

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Demirel to visit Bangladesh March 25-27

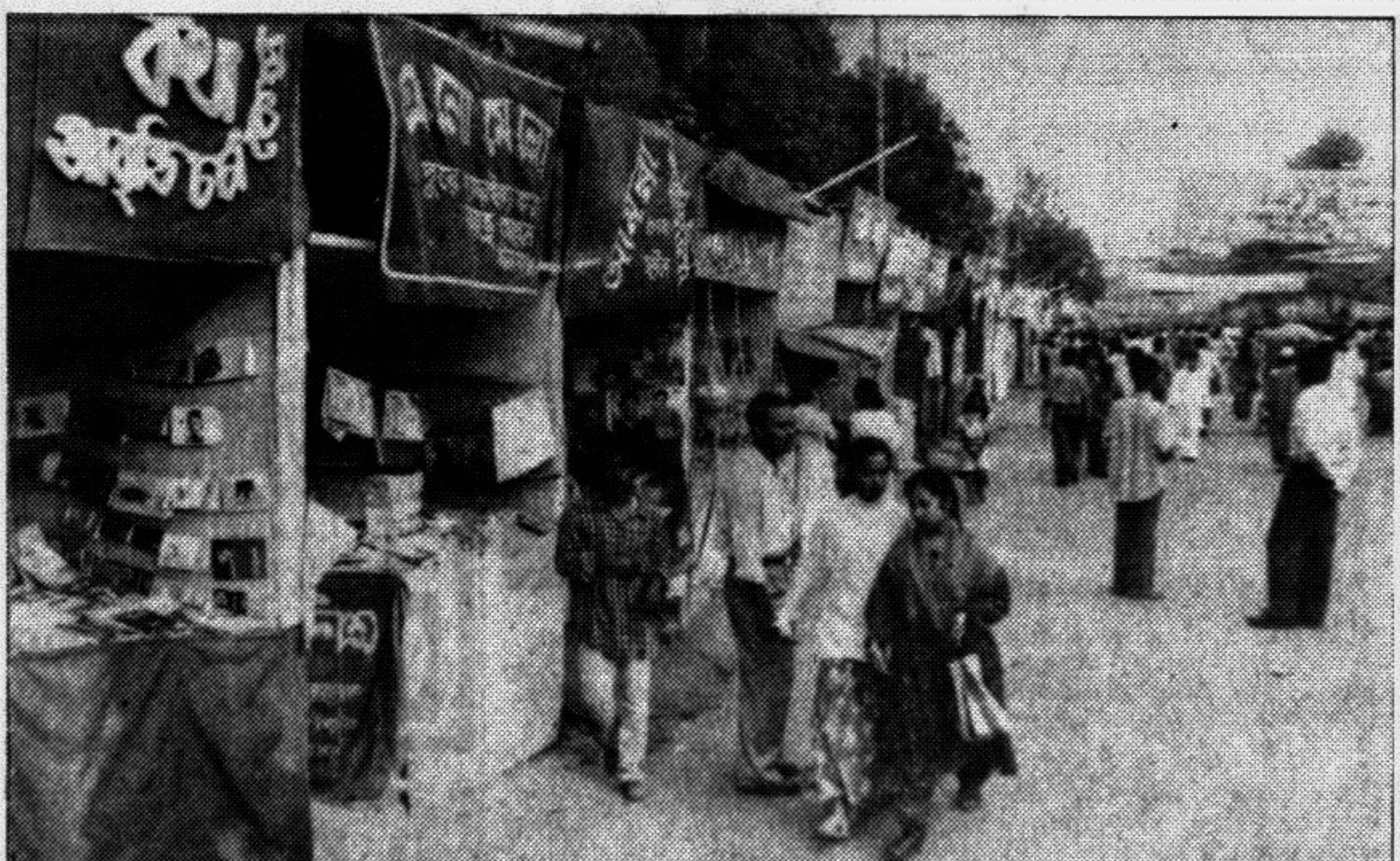
President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey will visit Bangladesh March 25-27 at the invitation of President Shahabuddin Ahmed, said an official announcement yesterday, reports UNB.

Demirel will attend the silver jubilee celebration of Bangladesh's independence on March 26.

During his visit official talks will be held to discuss and review the bilateral issues and regional and international matters of common concern.

President Demirel, who will be accompanied by a 120-member delegation comprising ministers, senior officials and business personalities, will also visit Chittagong.

He will leave Bangladesh on March 27.



The Amar Ekushey Book Fair being held at the Bangla Academy premises ends today. — Star photo

Tk 5.5cr books sold, fair ends today

By Staff Correspondent

Publishers and sellers at the Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela at the Bangla Academy premises did a 'moderate business' by selling books worth about Tk 5.50 crore.

A total of more than 400 book stalls were set up at the fair which opened on February 18 and ends today. Some 100 publishers set up the stalls to sell 500 new books.

The total sale should not be less than Tk 5.50 crore considering the big stalls sold books worth Tk 5,000 and small ones Tk 3,000 a day, said officials of the Bangla Academy. The figure was supported by Milan Nath, Secretary General of the Book Fair Committee.

Anupam Publisher owned by Nath sold books worth about Tk two lakh. Other publishers like

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Abnormal power failure due to sabotage: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged a vested quarter was carrying out sabotage to disrupt normal public life and urged the people to be on the alert against such acts, reports UNB.

"We are trying to find out what is happening where," she said with particular reference to an abnormal power failure that hit hard life, and businesses across the country.

Addressing a discussion meeting at the Institution of Engineers the Prime Minister made an appeal to the people to exercise austerity in using power and water before having a permanent solution of the present crisis.

She said the previous government claimed that it had spent Tk 7,900 crore in the power sector. If so, where that money had gone, why the people are suffering from power crisis.

They have played ducks and drakes with public money in the name of generating power, said Hasina alleging that a group had indulged in the acts of sabotage to enhance sufferings of the people.

The Prime Minister said her party had introduced government of national consensus and invited all to join the government.

"We want cooperation from all but the acts of sabotage are going on."

"They have indulged in the acts of sabotage being frustrated after losing power," Sheikh Hasina said, without naming her opponents.

Referring to the recent terrorist acts at Dhaka University, the Prime Minister said when the government was trying hard to eradicate terrorism, a situation had been created to disrupt peace on the campus.

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BNP programmes to celebrate Independence Day

Main opposition BNP has drawn up week-long programmes to celebrate the independence day on March 26, reports UNB.

The programmes were finalised at a party meeting yesterday with Mir Shawkat Ali in the chair.

Party Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia will attend the inaugural function to be organised by city BNP at Ramna Green on March 20.

March 21 — Jatiyatobadi Muktiyoddha Dal will organise a discussion on 'independence movement and liberation war.'

March 22 — Zia Parishad will hold a seminar on 'proclamation of independence and Shaheed Zia.'

March 23 — Jatiyatobadi Jubo Dal will organise a discussion on 'independence and today's Bangladesh.'

March 24 — Jatiyatobadi Sechchhabak Dal will hold discussion on 'democracy killing day.'

March 25 — Jatiyatobadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha

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Emeka Anyaku due Mar 20

Commonwealth Secretary General Emeka Anyaku will arrive in Dhaka on March 20 on a three-day visit, Foreign Ministry sources said, reports BSS.

During his visit, he will call on the President and the Prime Minister. He is also expected to meet the foreign minister, the Speaker and the Finance Minister.

The Commonwealth Secretary General will also visit some rural projects of the country.

Question paper leakage: 2 held Tk 2.5 lakh award announced for information

By Staff Correspondent

The five education boards in the country have announced an award money of Tk 250,000 for 'definitive information' regarding leakage of SSC question papers, a highly placed source in the ministry of education told The Daily Star yesterday.

The education boards will contribute equally to pool the amount.

Any person having any information regarding leakage of question paper may contact either the police or the officials of the boards, the source said.

Education Secretary Abdullah Haroon Pasha, talking to The Daily Star, reaffirmed yesterday that all the remaining examinations would be held as per the schedule.

He, however, said that the date of the postponed English second paper examination was yet to be finalised. Regarding the reported leakage of Mathematics question paper, he said that the authorities concerned were yet to confirm the allegations.

The ministry of education held a meeting with senior officials of all the five education boards yesterday.

Two persons have so far been arrested, one from Uzirpur under Barisal district and the other from Uttara in Dhaka city in connection with the leakage of question papers, police sources said.

UNB quoting Lalbagh police said Shahjahan, a private tutor, was arrested Friday night from Uttara following a case filed with Lalbagh thana by the

DU to close all unauthorised entrances, issue spl ID cards

By DU Correspondent

All unauthorised passages through which armed outsiders enter the Dhaka University campus will be permanently closed.

Besides, all the students of the university will be given laminated identity cards so that the outsiders could not collect false identity cards.

These decisions were taken at an emergency meeting of the Dhaka University Syndicate held yesterday with Vice Chancellor Prof Abul Kalam Azad Chowdhury in the chair.

Restrictions will be imposed on the public buses, trucks and other vehicles playing through the university areas.

The Syndicate members will meet the Home Minister and the Education Minister to discuss how the police could be effectively used on the campus.

Meanwhile, two new members have been included in the committee formed to investigate the recent incident in which one student was killed and several others were injured. They are: Prof ATM Zahurul Haq and Prof Dr Khondkar Bazul Haq.

A meeting of the Dhaka University Parishad held yesterday with the Vice Chancellor was in the chair.

The leaders of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) the Bangladesh Chhatra Union, the Bangladesh Chhatra Maitri, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (JSD) and the Samajtantrik Chhatra Oikya attended the meeting.

The Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) did not attend.

The meeting decided that

Bhaberpara Mouza renamed Mujibnagar Mouza

The government has decided to rename the Bhaberpara Mouza in Meherpur district Mujibnagar Mouza, reports UNB.

The formal announcement in this regard will be given at a rally when the 'Sikha Chirantan' will reach there on Wednesday.

BNP demonstration Wednesday

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will demonstrate in the city on Wednesday protesting the government's alleged move to give India a corridor in the name of transit, import of electricity from that country and forming a sub regional grouping, reports UNB.

It will bring out a procession and hold a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club at 3:30 pm on the day.

Housewife beaten to death in N' ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Mar 16: A housewife was reportedly beaten to death by her husband at Fatulla here last night, said police.

According to police, one Abul Kalam of Pagla under Fatulla thana beat up his wife, Feroza Begum, yesterday following an altercation over some money. Feroza, mother of two children, died on the spot, police said.

A case was lodged with Fatulla thana.

12 Bangladeshis among 37 held in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, Mar 16: Malaysian authorities arrested 37 foreigners, including a Colombian believed to be the owner of a restaurant in a crackdown on illegal immigrants, reports said on Saturday, reports AFP.

During checks at a restaurant near here late Friday, enforcement personnel detained 19 foreigners — 12 Bangladeshis, three Myanmar citizens, three Pakistanis and a Colombian — Bernama news agency reported.

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Business

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Steps to identify 'culprits' involved

Press Note

A Press-Note issued last night said the government had taken following steps to deal with the situation arising out of the question paper leakage:

An enquiry Committee formed by Chittagong Deputy Commissioner to identify the people involved in leaking question of English second paper (objective) before scheduled time at a centre under Chittagong Education Board.

Dhaka Education Board also constituted a three-member probe body to inquire into the question leakage.

Education Ministry has advised all deputy commissioners

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Trinidad Test India 219/2 at lunch

Sports Reporter

India were 219 for two lunch on the third day of the second Test against West Indies at the Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad, according to Star Sports monitored in Dhaka last night.

Ctg port workers continue strike despite agreement

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 16: Stalemate at the Chittagong port caused by the port workers' strike continued today despite an agreement between port authority and CBA leaders last night, official sources said.

As per agreement the port workers were supposed to return to their duties after 10 pm last night.

But the workers declined to resume cargo handling operations until the removal of private equipment from the port jetties, the sources added.

A private organisation, QC Shipping, after taking prior permission from the authorities, took two forklifts inside

the port at 2 pm yesterday that prompted the collective bargaining agent (CBA) of port workers to go for a wildcat strike, port officials said.

The port authority held a meeting with CBA leaders last night. The meeting decided to postpone the strike as well as the order issued for using private equipment until the holding of an open meeting in the presence of the minister for port and shipping.

But the port workers later demanded the removal of the private equipment from the port premises. As a result, cargo handling could not be resumed, officials said.

Meanwhile, the port authority at noon today held another round of meeting with CBA leaders to end the impasse. But it ended inconclusively.

Port sources said the owner of the shipping agency was asked by the authorities to remove the equipment from port premises. But the owner of the shipping agency declined to remove the equipment leading to the stalemate.

Due to the ongoing stalemate, around 30 vessels both at the port jetties and outer anchorage remain stranded, the port sources said.

বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারে মিতব্যয়ী হোন

- গ্যাস সরবরাহ কম থাকায় চাহিদানুযায়ী বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদন করা যাচ্ছে না। ফলে লোডশেডিং করতে হচ্ছে।
- লোডশেডিং কমানোর লক্ষ্যে ঔষধের দোকান, খাবার দোকান, কাঁচাবাজার ব্যতীত সকল মার্কেট ও বাণিজ্যিক প্রতিষ্ঠান সন্ধ্যা ৭টার পর বন্ধ রাখুন।
- সরকার ঘোষিত উৎসবের দিন ব্যতীত সব ধরনের আলোকসজ্জা বন্ধ রাখুন।
- সান্দ্যকালীন পিক আওয়ারে পানির পাম্প, সেচ পাম্প, ইঞ্জি, হিটার এবং ওয়েল্ডিং বন্ধ রাখুন।
- সেচ পাম্পে রাত ১১টা থেকে সকাল ৬টা পর্যন্ত বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহ নিশ্চিত করা হয়েছে।
- এক শিফট ও দুই শিফট চালু শিল্প কারখানা সন্ধ্যা ৬টা থেকে রাত ১১টা পর্যন্ত বন্ধ রাখুন।
- বৃহৎ শিল্প কারখানার সাপ্তাহিক ছুটির দিন সপ্তাহের অন্য দিনে পুনঃনির্ধারণ করে বিদ্যুৎ ঘাটতি মোকাবেলায় সহযোগিতা করুন।
- প্রয়োজনের অতিরিক্ত বাতি, ফ্যান, এয়ারকুলার বন্ধ রেখে বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারে মিতব্যয়ী হোন।
- অবৈধ বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারকারীদের জন্য লোডশেডিং বেড়ে যায়। এদের বিরুদ্ধে সামাজিক প্রতিরোধ গড়ে তুলুন।
- গ্যাস সরবরাহ বৃদ্ধির জন্য সরকার পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেছে। আগামী এপ্রিলের শেষ নাগাদ গ্যাস সরবরাহ বাড়বে। ফলে লোডশেডিং কমবে।

বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড ঢাকা বিদ্যুৎ বিতরণ কর্তৃপক্ষ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড

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