

Loadshedding, Why?

PRIME Minister's personal intercession, voluble assurances of barge-mounted projects and promised short-circuiting of plant approvals notwithstanding, the daily power generation shortage in the country shows no sign of improving from the 250 megawatt we have known it to be.

The loadshedding which comes these days without notice nevertheless carries an obligation for the PDB to let the public know the reasons for it and exactly how long it might last.

Our suspicion is that the power authorities somehow think that so long as they maintain steady electric supply to the VIP areas they can wash their hands of their obligations towards the rest of the citizenry.

Isn't it a fact though, that under some pressing circumstances like when the World Cup Cricket or other major events are staged power failures are scrupulously averted by special measures for fear of public wrath?

So, let's urge the power sector people once again to better their poor maintenance records and stem the system losses which are but reflective of endemic mismanagement and corruption.

IT Opportunities

OVER the last couple of years or so, potential of the IT sector has been a much-belaboured issue, both at the policy-planners' and the end-users' levels. More or less, there has been a consensus that the country must explore the possibilities the information technology presents for phenomenal economic growth.

Revolutionary advancement in information technology over the last years, especially introduction of the internet, has brought the countries closer than ever before. Information has become the key exponent of the global market.

The scenario must change. To make sure it does, we must decide whether we really want to make our presence felt in the global IT market.

Think of the Students

DISMISSAL of Dr Imam Uddin, an associate professor at the Orthopedic Department, University of Science and Technology in Chittagong (USTC) gave rise to a chain of inauspicious events.

The fact that a professor has been dismissed may have derogatory implication. But while the resignation of his colleagues may speak of solidarity, it also speaks of their lack of concern for the students, whose future is, without any doubt, their responsibility.

US Rejects the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Finally, the accidents that have taken place in recent weeks in nuclear power plants in Japan and Korea, among others, have heightened fears about the safety of nuclear experiments and arsenals.

ON Wednesday the Republican-controlled US Senate voted to defeat the landmark Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Frantic efforts to win the vote, including a flurry of last-minute campaigning by President Clinton and other military and civilian leaders and letters from the heads of state of Britain, France, and Germany urging the Senate to ratify the treaty failed after Democratic Senators said that they would not make any more concessions to a small group of conservative Republican Senators intent on defeating the treaty.

The defeat of the CTBT is particularly significant given the fact that the last major international treaty that was voted down by the US Congress was the Versailles Treaty in

1920. The latest action in the US Senate would mean that the treaty would never come into force as US ratification is a legal requirement.

The CTBT is one of the most complex treaties ever agreed upon by the international community. It sets out nuclear disarmament as a principle but diplomatically avoids the politics of the issue.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the CTBT in September, 1996. But the treaty cannot come into force until 44 individually named countries ratify it in their own legislation.



Connecting the Dots Dr. A. R. Chowdhury

America's closest European allies - Britain, France and Germany - have ratified the treaty and warned publicly that US failure to follow suit would send a dangerous signal that Washington is not serious about arms control.

Generals Smother Democracy in Pakistan, Again

In an era when democracies are flourishing in countries hitherto known as undemocratic or regimented societies, the developments in Pakistan have come as a severe jolt, for it only reverses the trend. Pakistan's new rulers will demonstrate wisdom by arranging immediate governance by civilians instead of seeking to prolong their grip on power on the pretext of 'saving the nation from ruination or providing an efficient and honest administration'.

THE army take-over in Pakistan and the subsequent declaration of state of emergency do not quite come as a total surprise for those who are aware of the role of the military in the country's politics and have watched the development over the last two or three months.

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The Pakistan scene as it stands now is not a bolt from the blue but many thought it could have been avoided. After the state department in the United States on September 20 had warned against an army take-over, general belief was that the military might not step in, even though the Sharif government had appeared on a slippery ground for several factors.

TO quote a saying emblazoned in the Ingall Hall in the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA), 'it is not what happens to you that matters but how you behave while it is happening' (paraphrasing of it would be 'it is not the exit that matters but the manner of it').

Number '32' Sir, at present, the '32' telephone subscribers are facing serious problems in receiving international calls and other problems like cross-connection, wrong number, no dial tone, limited access to modern telecommunications etc.

MATTERS AROUND US

Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury

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Inevitable Power Play

Anybody who supports a takeover by the Army is not in his (or her) right mind. Pakistan has many external and internal threats that the Armed Forces have to confront, involvement in the governance mode will have debilitating effect on their efficiency and in the performance of their primary mission of defending the integrity and sovereignty of the nation.

AS I SEE IT Ikram Sehgal writes from Karachi

overhauling the system besides running the day-to-day affairs of government. Before any elections are held the electoral system has to be reformed by bringing in 'run-off' elections to ensure a majority vote and also 'proportional representation' to ensure that both 'women' and 'minorities' can have a say in governance.

Problems and solutions Sir, Dhaka's three acute and main problems and solutions thereof are as follows for pragmatic and concrete action by the authorities concerned: 1) Road traffic jam.

test ban treaty would undercut US status as a world leader, with far-reaching effects. It is likely that other nations would interpret the US action as a rejection of a more peaceful future. It then becomes likely that some nations may again test a nuclear weapon, setting off a dangerous political and military chain reaction.

Third, it would undermine global efforts to rein in India and Pakistan's dangerous nuclear arms competition. Military and political pressure would build in these two countries to conduct additional nuclear testing. Further testing by either country would accelerate their nuclear arms race thereby increasing uncertainty in the entire region.

Second, failure by the US to honour its commitment to the

Two democratically elected prime ministers a Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz sharif a were accused of massive corruption and most Pakistanis believed it. Undoubtedly, politicians' quest for democracy when their acts contribute to public commotion. They were not alert about this aspect despite warnings.

But all said and done, military cannot rule the roost. Nothing has happened in Pakistan that can necessitate dismissal of elected government and suspension of the constitution. It is only normal that the army regime will now hurl abuses and bring corruption and other charges against the politicians particularly those were in power till they toppled the government.

care as Martial Law or monitoring a caretaker government. A few days do not make a difference when the entire existence of the nation is at stake, also there was a constitutional lacuna here that he has to live with.

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The lack of political will was not discussed in much depth, and there was hardly any criticism of the state of affairs inside and outside the DCC. In the ward where I reside, the positive presence of my (or the Mayor's?) municipal commissioner is not evident from judging by the chaos all around (to grieve list was ventilated earlier in the press; all complaints have a common denominator). Most of the problems are not due to absence of rules and regulations, but the

To the Editor...

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DCC antics Sir, The recent meeting between the PM and the Mayor and his municipal commissioners to find practical solutions to the day to day problems of the city appears to be a sham

Match sticks Sir, It refers to the letter on 'barborised match sticks' (DS Sep 30). I do not know about 'barborised' sticks, but I read a long time ago that borax is added to the head mixture to stop the glue from glowing after striking the match. The lighter stick, to minimise fire hazard.