



13 power units
didn't operate
yesterday

By Staff Correspondent

Thirteen power generation units out of 58 in the 19 power plants in the country could not operate yesterday, causing a loadshedding of 164 MW.

PDB sources attributed this to 'technical reasons.' "Many of the power units are old and cannot operate continuously. We have to maintain a scheduled shutdown of those units," one source explained.

The units which remained shut yesterday are Ashuganj gas turbine-2, Fenchuganj gas turbine-1 and 2, Shiddhuganj-4, Haripur gas turbine-2, Khulna barge mounted-1, Shajibazar-1, Ghorashal-6, Kaptai-1, Ashuganj CCP and Ashuganj-5, Shikalbaba and Baghabari-5 unit.

Loadshedding on the day was 73 MW in DESA area, 24 MW in Chittagong region, 23 MW in Khulna region, 22 MW in Rajshahi region, 10 MW in Comilla, six MW in Mymensingh and six MW in Sylhet regions, the sources said.

In the capital, many areas under Dhondhoni experienced frequent power disruption because of a leakage in an underground cable line. Repair of the cable line, closed since Friday morning, was going on, DESA sources said.

Paribagh, Rajabazar, Purana Paltan and some parts of Old Dhaka also experienced severe loadshedding.

The worst victims of frequent power disruption were students appearing at the Degree examinations and annual examinations in schools, colleges and other educational institutions.

Nasu Mian murder
Pre-planned act
to put blame
on BNP, says
Bhuiyan

By Staff Correspondent

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said the government has continued filing "false" cases against party men and harassment on them in a bid to tarnish image of the leaders and activists and destroy BNP.

He said the Awami League government since assuming office has filed unspecified number of "false" cases against leaders and activists of BNP and its different front organisations apart from killing over 300 activists.

Addressing a press conference at BNP central office yesterday afternoon, he said the government again filed a "false" case against 28 leaders, including party's joint secretary general and Juba Dal president Mirza Abbas on charge of setting ablaze a truck and burning its driver Nasu Mian alive and injuring two helpers during hartal hours on November 25 at Shahjahanpur.

Another victim of the fire burn succumbed to his injuries today.

Bhuiyan said the case is aimed at destroying the image of BNP and harass its leaders.

"I categorically want to say that no BNP activist was involved in the incident as no BNP leader or activist was present on the spot. It was a pre-planned act of the government and the ruling party to put the blame on BNP."

The BNP secretary general said the party had withdrawn its pickets on that day and was

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Disintegration

Column: Perspectives by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

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Business

DSE set to carry out mock Y2K trading in mid-Dec

ASEAN free market targets one-fifth of planet

DSE, CSE price quotations Pages 6, 7 & 8

Prayer Timings

November 29		
Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
5-15	5-45	
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-42	4-00
Maghrib	5-20	5-25
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

achieves two-thirds majority.

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Gas supply to western region starts tomorrow



The 20-feet-high 'Shikha Projilon' erected on the Sirajganj town protection embankment to mark gas supply to the western region. — Star photo

Star Report

Supply of natural gas to the country's western region starts tomorrow, opening up a new horizon of economic activities in the area.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the gas supply at a function at Sirajganj.

Gas will be supplied through the 217 crore taka newly installed 55 km gas pipeline, starting from Elenga in Tangail and crossing the Bangabandhu Bridge. The system includes a 24-inch diameter pipeline from Elenga to Bangabandhu bridge, a 30-inch pipeline from Bangabandhu bridge to Nalika and a 20 inch pipeline from Nalika to Baghabari.

With supply of gas, a new company, Western Region Gas Company Ltd (WESGAS) will also start functioning formally, official sources said.

Due to lack of standby demand for domestic and industrial consumption and absence of other infrastructure in the

region, a maximum of 50 million cubic feet of gas per day (mmcf) would be transmitted through this system within a year or so, the sources said.

But the demand is likely to increase to 200 mmcf within a few years, they said. Total gas consumption in the country is about 900 mmcf now.

The government has plans and proposals for setting up of large scale power plants in Kushtia- Iswardi region to export power. Therefore, the demand will rise drastically in future, they added.

In Baghabari, there are two power plants, which are run with imported fuel now. Gas supply to that area will give these plants an option to use cheaper local natural gas and save valuable foreign currency.

One of those, a 71 MW plant owned by the Power Development Board (PDB), will be converted into a gas-based one, the sources said.

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Probe into corruption charge JS body to ask DCC chief engineer to show cause

By Reaz Ahmad

A parliamentary sub-committee investigating corruption and fraud in an environmental project will ask DCC's chief engineer to explain his mysterious absence from Sunday's crucial meeting.

Shamsul Haque Bhuiyan's absence irked all five members of the sub-committee, which was formed on September 28. It should have submitted its final report on the Tk 146 crore project to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Estimate a month ago.

"We'll serve him (the DCC official) with show cause notice. We're surprised he would remain absent from Sunday's meeting," said MP ASM Feroj.

Other members attending the sub-committee meeting yesterday expressed deep anguish over the unexpected absence of Bhuiyan, former pro-

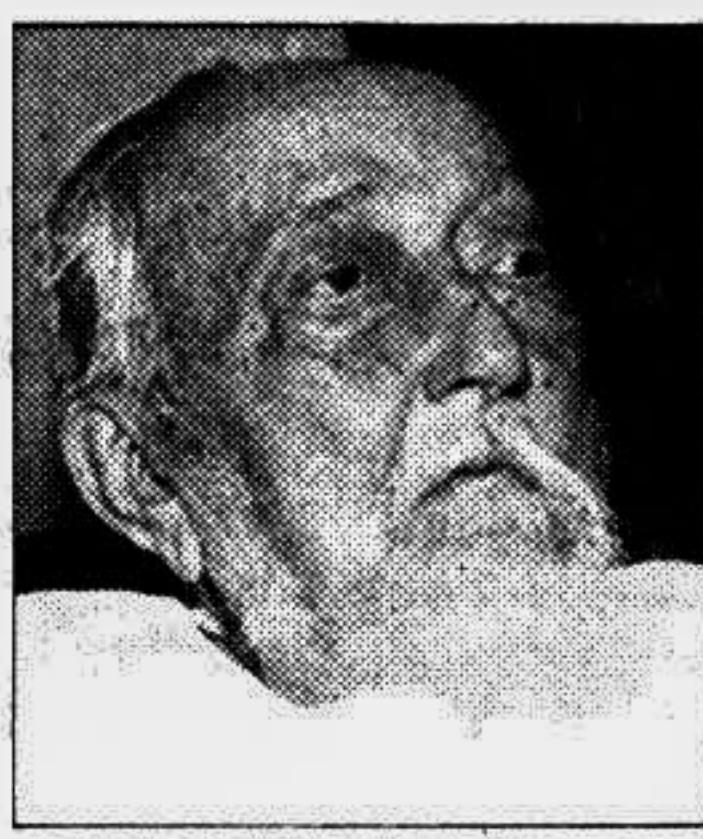
ject director of the DCC's World Bank funded Environment Development Project.

It's not the first time DCC officials haven't co-operated with the investigation. In spite of repeated letters from the sub-committee asking for all relevant files and documents of the project, sources said the DCC has submitted only a few of those papers.

After reviewing those handful papers, the committee detected a number of errors in the project's bill payments. However, the project management authorities did not take any administrative actions when they detected the various gross flaws in project works," said the source.

The sub-committee warned officials to submit all papers and files related to the project by Dec. 11 at the latest. "We'll visit all the project

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Prof Razzak
passes away

By staff correspondent

National Professor Abdur Razzak passed away yesterday afternoon at the Ibrahim Memorial Hospital (BIRDHEM). He was 86.

Doctors said Prof Razzak died of respiratory failure. He was on artificial respiration at the intensive care unit since hospitalisation on October 13.

His body was taken to the hospital mortuary at 2pm.

With severe respiratory problem Prof Razzak was first admitted to a city clinic on October 11. He was later shifted to

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Razzak passed away yesterday afternoon at the Ibrahim

Memorial Hospital (BIRDHEM). He was 86.

Started in 1988, the environmental project's goals included the development of Islambagh, Shaheednagar, Ralsupur and Dholakhal. The project also wanted to purchase garbage trucks for the DCC and repair its central workshop.

The government borrowed money for the project at 12.5 per cent interest.

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National security linked more to internal factors Unplanned defence investment decried

By Staff Correspondent

Political and social instability threaten national security more than external factors, but without a well-defined national defence policy, the country can't combat either, speakers concluded at a seminar Sunday.

Organised by the Centre for Strategic and Peace Studies, "The National Security of Bangladesh and its Armed Forces" seminar attracted politicians, army officials, retired civil and military bureaucrats, journalists, academics and businessmen eager to discuss a topic once considered taboo.

Matiur Rahman, editor of the daily Prothom Alo, presented a paper titled "A Citizen's Thoughts on the Armed Forces and Defence Policy of

Bangladesh."

Rahman argued successive governments have tried to use the army for their selfish ends, since it was still the most organised force in the country.

However, these governments also spent huge sums to modernise and strengthen the armed forces without a concrete plan.

In "The National Security of Bangladesh and its Armed Forces," Brigadier M Abdul Hafiz (retd.), argued the threats facing Bangladesh could be multidimensional, originating from within and beyond the nation's borders.

Maj. Gen. K M Shafiqullah (retd.), chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on defence, said aggression

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Malaysia goes to polls today

the Prime Minister will hold a press conference and there will be some celebrations, a thanksgiving ceremony and cutting of the cake," Yaakub Mohamed, the Front's executive secretary, told reporters.

For the first time the National Front is facing direct challenges in nearly all constituencies from a united opposition alliance, the Alternative Front.

The opposition Alternative Front alliance wants to break the two-thirds majority enjoyed by the National Front for three decades.

Lim Kit Siang, leader of the Democratic Action Party (DAP), a key component of the Alternative Front, charged that Mahathir's coalition had used "fear and scare" advertising on the largely state-controlled media to gain votes and urged people to probe the funding of the campaign which he said ran into millions of dollars.

Lim called this general election the "dirtiest" in the nation's 42-year history and accused Mahathir's coalition of planning all along to make it so

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About 70 per cent patients do not get drugs required for heart surgeries and investigations at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) in the city.

"With the supply of drugs we get from the government, the requirement of only 30 per cent of the patients can be met. The supply lasts hardly three months of a year," said Prof M A Zaman, Director of the NICVD, popularly known as Suhrawardy Hospital.

"If we are to provide drugs free of cost only to patients undergoing open-heart surgeries alone, we require at least Tk 2.5 crore annually. But we don't get enough supply (from central medical store depot - CMSD)."

He told this correspondent, "We wrote to the health ministry to increase the allocation of drugs to meet the increasing requirement, but it is yet to be

done."

A cardiologist pointed out

that this is the only hospital in the country where heart (cardiac) surgeries and costly cardiac investigations are done.

But, he said, compared to the needs of drugs here, the supply is too insignificant.

About 500 heart surgeries and over 3000 cardiac investigations were done at the hospital last year and the number is rising every year, official statistics showed.

In an investigation by The Daily Star, it was found that almost 80 per cent of the patients could not afford the costly drugs. On an average, a patient undergoing open-heart surgery requires drugs worth at least Tk 14,000.

Treatment of patients at the NICVD includes catheterisation, coronary angiogram, ballooning, stent implantation and balloon valvuloplasty.

Prof Zaman said the hospital

gives preference to providing life saving drugs to patients.

"For this, we have set up a Patient Welfare Fund to buy emergency drugs."

Drugs required for each of these cost Tk 1000 to 5000.

In cardiac surgery, NICVD offers coronary bypass, open heart and close heart surgeries, valve replacement and congenital heart disease operations.

The cost of drugs required for each of these range from Tk 8,000 to 16,000.

Resident surgeon of the 160-bed hospital Golam Kabir said,

"Drug shortage is a major problem. Many patients have to wait until they can manage drugs on their own."

Even life saving drugs

needed in coronary care unit

and intensive care units are also in short supply, hospital sources said.

Prof Zaman said the hospital

gives preference to providing life saving drugs to patients.

"For this, we have set up a Patient Welfare Fund to buy emergency drugs."

The body was sent to Mitford

Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Earlier, Motijheel police

filed a case against Mirza Abbas

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