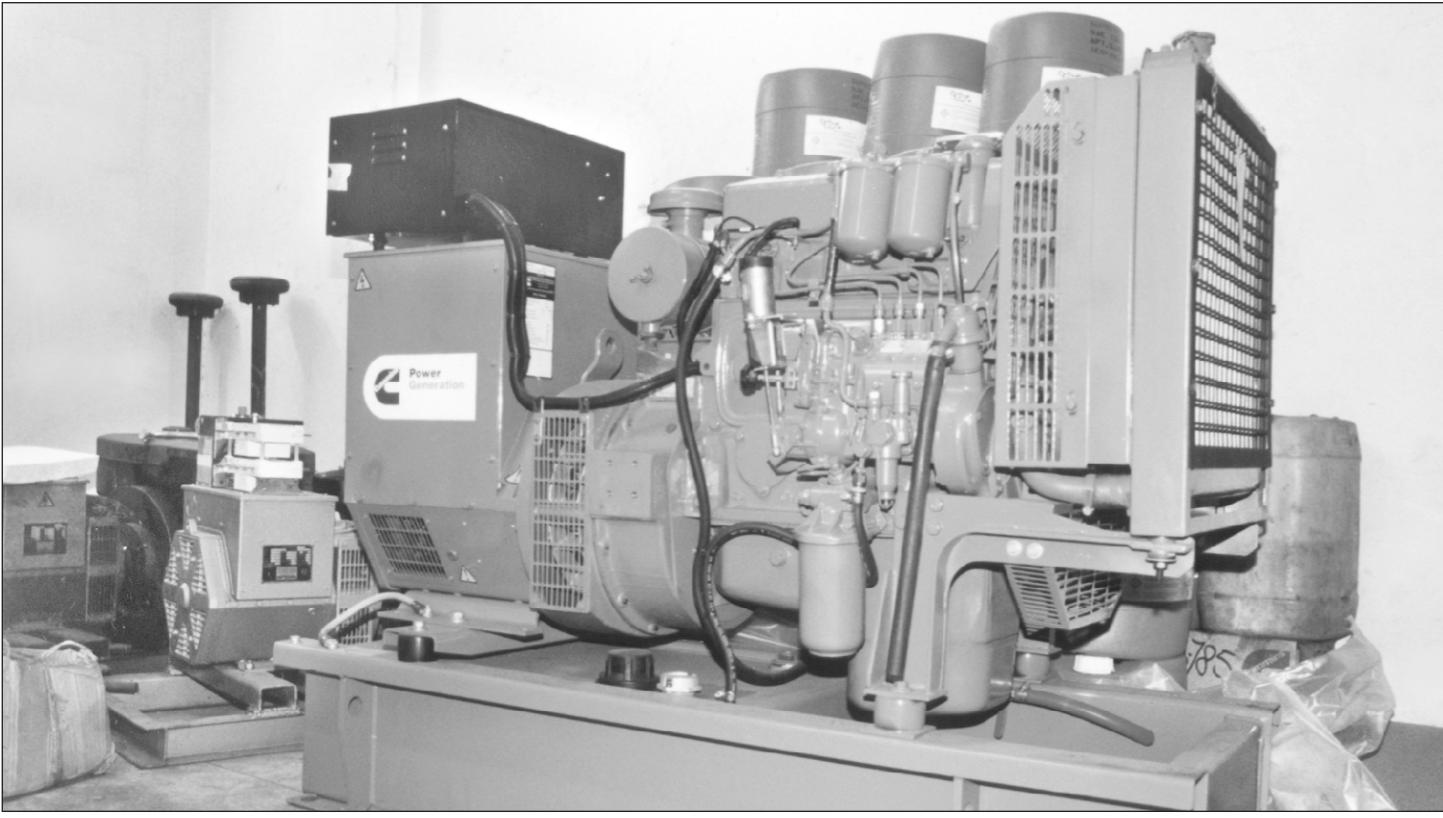


# Can small power plants cut power cuts?



Small power plants could be capable of meeting the power crisis of Dhaka city especially during emergency periods and peak hours.

SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

AVIK SANWAR RAHAMAN

Small power plants could be capable of meeting the power crisis of Dhaka city especially during emergency periods and peak hours. They are installed with all the technical facilities required to supply power to the national grid.

About 31 percent of the total power produced by the Power Development Board and Independent Power Producers is consumed in the areas of DESA and DESC.

"About 50 percent power is used in Dhaka and its outskirts due to the concentration of urbanisation and industries in this area. Therefore the demand of power is higher in Dhaka than in other parts of the country," said an engineer of a generator company.

According to a recent report by Power Cell, about 44 percent of power is consumed in domestic sectors and 43 percent in industrial sectors, 7 percent is used in commercial sectors and 4 percent is used for irrigation,

and the balance 2 percent of the power is used by mosques, churches, schools, madrasas, street lights and pumps.

"The current power crisis in the city could be tackled if the government utilised both the excess power produced by small power plants and their potential power when they lie idle," said Md Mohsin, the managing director of Rahim Energy Ltd.

"So far the government has permitted five companies to install small power plants under the Small Power Policy to utilise the power in their own industry and also to sell to others privately," said a source from Power Cell. The small power plants installed in the outskirts of Dhaka city have a capacity of 60 MW which could be utilised in curbing power shortages in the city. Small power plants have a production capacity ranging from 10MW to 30MW most of which goes unutilised.

Rahim Energy got permission from the government to install a small power plant of 30 MW capacity to meet the require-

ments of its own industry, Rahim Steel Mills, and also to sell the excess power to other private industries.

"The present government at a cabinet meeting has passed the selling rights of excess power for small power plants," said Mohsin.

"We have all the capacity and technology to supply unutilised or excess power to the national grid. But the government is not taking any steps to negotiate with us. Yet they are repeatedly failing to curb the power shortages," stressed Mohsin.

The current power crisis facing city dwellers is actually greater than the power that the small power plants would be able to supply. According to a source of Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA), the city is facing load shedding on an average of 35 to 45 MW of power from 9am to 10pm.

The reality of power shortages, however, is much worse than the statistics. The people of some areas of the city have suffered hours of power shortage. "Yesterday we were out of

power from 4pm to 10pm," said Professor Yunus of Lake Circus.

Due to the power outages, industries, companies, houses, restaurants, hospitals, and others are installing small private generators from .03 MW to 2 MW to get uninterrupted power.

Power outage has become a part and parcel of city life for almost everyone. Successive governments have been trying to curb the extent of load shedding for decades but all have failed due to the ever increasing demand for power over supply.

The Power Cell report shows that average growth of power generation is 7.51 per cent whereas growth of consumption is 8.99 per cent.

"There are more than 50 companies selling power generators throughout the country. Every year 50 MW of power is imported by foreign generators costing the country US\$ 5 million in foreign currency a year," said a power generator businessman.

"And the demand is on the rise," he added.

## Palming a fortune by telling the future

SYED TASHFIN

If you walk past the footbridge at Gulistan, you will notice a number of signs by the roadside with the picture of a palm (of the hand, that is, not the tree). Beneath is a caption in bold, asking passers by to have their palms read at a very cheap price.

Having often wondered how good these street side palmists are in their chosen profession, I decided recently to try my luck with one of them.

I chose a young man who looked to be in his 30s. He examined my palm for sometime and then told me, "I must ask you some questions, to know whether I am getting the right signals about your past, present and future." Curious about these 'signals' he spoke of, I readily agreed to answer his questions.

He asked me to think of three things: the person I love most, my favorite color and my favorite flower. He paused for a while, as if he was listening for something, and then said, "It is your mother whom you have chosen." He was right. I was quite impressed. But then he guessed the color white and the rose. I decided not to spoil the 'reading' at this point, and so I nodded instead of telling him I had picked the color black and the sunflower!

Then came the serious stuff. He informed me that my past had been mostly easy but my future would be more rocky. He also mentioned that I would be going abroad and that I may become famous by the age of twenty-four or thirty. The bad news was that I would not be able to marry the girl I loved. I asked, "What should I do?"

Again he paused, before replying gravely, "I have the solution. I will pick a stone for you, which will cost you some money but it will help you overcome all obstacles to marry her."

This was what I had been expecting all along and so I asked, "How much would this stone be

and what would I have to do with it?"

He was prompt to answer this time: "The stone will cost around Tk 540, and all you have to do is place it under your pillow before you go to sleep at night. Before sleeping, recite some suras and

their fortune telling skills.

But how do such practices become so successful? Why do people put so much faith in these people?

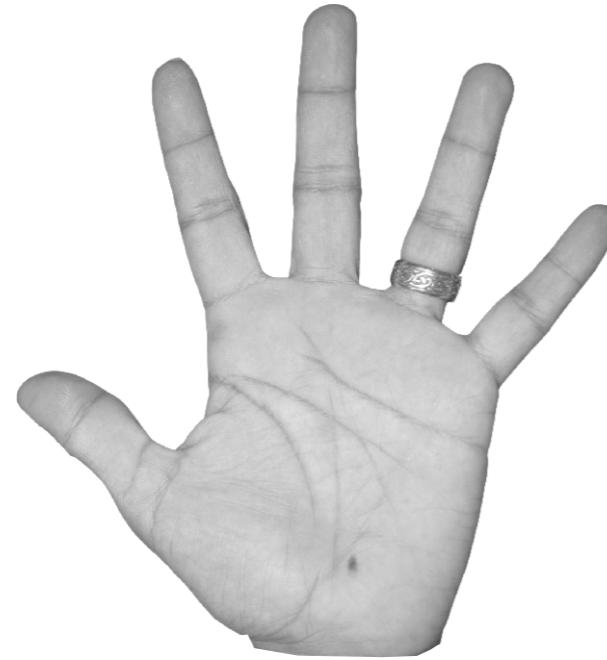
According to Manoranjan Das, a researcher in the occult, who is especially interested in palmistry, those who do fall victim to such frauds simply are ignorant of some basic facts about the art of palmistry. Palmistry, an ancient art, is primarily a system of interpretation to predict behaviour and meaning.

In fact, it is quite falsely associated with fortune-telling, as any authentic palmist will readily tell you. The lines of the hand are interpreted according to certain rules laid down in the past by ancient masters who were renowned for their astute powers of observation and memory. But these lines do not predict your future.

"Due to ignorance, and faith in the occult, the public are easily duped by such fraudsters. And they are even ready to buy the 'stones' so as to acquire extra luck or overcome the common problems in life," says Das.

"Palmistry, has very little to do with your future and it is all about observations. Most city dwellers do not even know the elementary detail that the lines and curves on the palm are subject to change within an interval of three months. So your future more or less depends on you and your activities in the present and the past, rather than on expensive stones."

However, those of you who still believe in the occult should not be too hard on yourselves. Fortune-telling and its followers are by no means confined to our small corner of the world. Palmistry, crystal-ball gazing, tarot cards, runes, I ching and even more occult and obscure forms of fortune-telling have come in and out of fashion over the centuries on every continent. And something tells me this will not be changing any time soon in the future!



all your obstacles will fade away."

I paid the Tk 30 for the 'reading' and promised to return the next day to buy the stone from him. Needless to say, I did not go back.

But unfortunately, there are many people who do. Dhaka certainly has its fair share of such roadside palmists and other fraudulent fortunetellers. Some have even managed to earn enough, preying on the public's superstitions, to open up shops. If you enter one, you will see the walls adorned with 'certificates' authenticating

## Traffic police get a 'facelift'

The World Bank recently responded to a request of the Dhaka Transport Coordination Board and allocated Tk 3 crore to equip Dhaka Metropolitan Traffic Police with better transport facilities, which they also hope will help to discipline city traffic.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to give a facelift to the Dhaka Metropolitan Traffic Police with better transport facilities, which they also hope will be a bid to discipline city traffic.

Besides motorbikes, the vehicles will be only used for the roads that are already free of Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) and will be NMT-free in the future.

"At present, 150 traffic sergeants have no motorbikes and have to deal with the heavy traffic of the city manually. These motorbikes will undoubtedly enhance their efficiency and ensure better traffic management," said Abdul Jalil.

However, some months ago, the Daily Star reported that the existing motorbikes of the traffic sergeants were not functioning properly and frequently stalled on the road during their duties due to poor quality of the bikes. In an

ups and therefore cannot provide expected services to the commuters. After the purchase of pick-ups and other vehicles, they will be capable of moving fast and solving the perennial traffic problems of the city," said Abdul Jalil.

The DUTP will invite tender notices very soon and will complete the entire process and hand over the motorbikes to the personnel within the stipulated time," said Senior Superintendent of Police (SP) Abdul Jalil at the DTCB.

"Now the traffic inspectors do not have pick-

ups and therefore cannot provide expected services to the commuters. After the purchase of pick-ups and other vehicles, they will be capable of moving fast and solving the perennial traffic problems of the city," said Abdul Jalil.

The 120 motorbikes purchased last year for the traffic sergeants were bought from a Chinese company and did not comply with the standards.

Moreover, following the report, the DUTP formed an investigation committee and also found that the motorbikes have 'certain defects'.

The DUTP this time is going to follow the national shopping policy so that the purchase of the effective motorbikes for the traffic personnel is ensured.

Meanwhile, the DUTP has already invited for installing 59 automatic signalisation at different installations. "On the successful installation, the World Bank has assured us to provide Close Circuit TV camera to maintain the traffic of major intersections of the city. Like other cities of the world, the traffic control of the city will then be maintained automatically."



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Complaints (Rural Electrification Board, Dhaka)- 8916424-8

**Gas**  
Titas Gas Exchange (Emergency)- 9563667-8  
Kawnbazar- 8112135-42  
Mirpur- 8014132-3  
Mohammadpur- 9117215, 9113903  
Mohakhal- 9884741, 9885922, 8824993  
Motijheel- 9667612

**WASA**  
WASA (PABX)- 8117829-31  
Mirpur- 9000519  
Mohammadpur- 8120192  
Fakirapool- 9115343  
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Postagola- 7410771  
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Mirpur 10 Circle- 9002269, 9001055  
Mirpur TVG Complex- 9001189

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Kool 0171826731  
**Black Cab**  
Cab Ex 9358401  
Cab One 7113282-3  
Nihon 8624741-2  
Orion 9347277  
Anudip 8125285 and 8127611  
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Union 8130485  
Kool 0171826731  
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Palki 0171052500  
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Jatri 0171540074  
Nipun 9572277  
R-Cab 8914782  
Star Cab 9571919  
Shihab 018202477 & 018228675  
Cab One 7113282-3  
KGN 8620011

**Bus No. Route**  
1 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12  
2 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2  
3 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhal-Airport-Azampur  
4 Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi  
5 Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur  
6 A Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2  
6 B Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2  
6 C Motijheel Shapla chattar Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2  
7 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2  
8 Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoli  
9 Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12  
10 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biwa Road-Tongi Bridge  
11 Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhal-Tongi Bridge  
11/A Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge  
12 Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammedpur  
13 Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur  
14 Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12  
15 Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12  
24 Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhal-Airport-Uttara-Bipole

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Chittagong Road  
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Sadarghat  
Sayedabad  
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Motijheel  
Signboard (Chittagong Road)  
Chittagong Road  
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**TRAIN TIMING**  
Subarna Express Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm Reaches Chittagong at 10:15 pm  
Mahanagar Prabhati Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am Reaches Chittagong at 2:55 pm  
Mahanagar Godhuli Leaves Dhaka at 3:05 pm Reaches Chittagong at 9:11 pm  
Torna Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm Reaches Chittagong at 7:05 am  
Parabat Express Leaves Dhaka at 6:30 am Reaches Sylhet at 2:30 pm  
Joyantika Express Leaves Dhaka at 12:30 pm Reaches Sylhet at 9:20 pm  
Upaban Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:30 pm Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am  
Tista Express Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am Reaches Bahadurabad at 1:05 pm  
Ekata Express Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm Reaches Bahadurabad at 11:55 pm  
Upakul Express Leaves Dhaka at 6:00 am Reaches Noakhali at 1:35 pm  
Padma Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm

