

Loadshedding till Apr 15 likely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Loadshedding on an average at least three hours a day that has been causing untold suffering to the city dwellers since January is likely to continue till April 15.

Average loadshedding during this period was officially 50 megawatt (mw) daily, officials said. But the figure would be several times higher, sources said.

Power situation in Chittagong took a serious turn on Thursday when 360 mw Meghnaghat Power Plant tripped due to technical fault causing a loadshedding of 900 mw as against the demand of 3500 mw in the country.

On the day, Chittagong faced a loadshedding of 210 mw as against its demand of around

465 mw, PDB sources said.

It forced the port city to suffer power outage of four to five hours with an average loadshedding of 200 mw till the power generation resumed at Meghnaghat station in the early hours of Sunday.

Loadshedding on an average in Chittagong is around 100 mw daily.

Loadshedding is mainly due to suspension of power generation at one of the two units of 420 mw Raozan Power Plant, Power Development Board (PDB) sources said.

Chittagong has been under the grip of acute power crisis when the Raozan Power Plant suspended power generation from its 21mw No-2 unit in January for scheduled overhauling.

It forced the total power generation in Chittagong to

come down to some 220, less than half of the daily need here.

According to sources, some 630 mw power is generated here when all the power plants - Raozan Power Plant, Kaptai Hydro-electric Power Plant and Shikolbaha Power Plant - are in full operation.

Power generation at two units of Kaptai Power Plant remained suspended since they developed technical faults in July and August last year. It reduced the power generation here by some 80 mw.

The other three units were generating power below their capacity due to fall in the water level at Kaptai Lake. The "curve role" of water at Kaptai at present came down to around 85 Mean Sea Level (MSL) against the minimum requirement of 90 MSL, sources said.

At present around 100 mw power was available from Kaptai plant while 40 mw was coming from Shikolbaha and some 110 mw from Raozan unit No. 1 daily.

As such the total power generation here at present is 250 mw, but 220 mw hardly reaches the consumers due to system (technical) loss, sources said.

A portion of the shortage is being met from the national grid while the rest forced an average loadshedding of some 100 mw everyday, says a PDB official preferring anonymity.

Chief Engineer Liaqat Hossain Barobhuiyan said, "We are in a shortfall of production to go for the loadshedding. It is likely to continue till mid April."

"Until then we have to depend on the supply from the national grid," Barobhuiyan said.

LIFELINE TURNS INTO SORROW OF CHITTAGONG



Encroachment has alarmingly been choking Chaktai Khal (canal), which was once regarded as the lifeline of business activities at the traditional business centres of Khatunganj and Chaktai areas. Under the clutches of encroachers, the canal - backbone of sewerage system of the port city - has now emerged as 'sorrow of Chittagong', causing serious water-logging in the rainy season. A recently erected boundary wall several yards into the canal in one side and open latrines on the other side at Rahatterple area depicts onslaught on the canal.



Hindu devotees thronged the sea beach at South Kattoli under Sitakunda thana for taking a holy bath during the Baruni Snan, a religious festival, on March 18.

Swat Siege Day today

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Today is the historic Swat Siege Day.

On this day in 1971, over 300 people were killed as Pakistani occupation forces fired indiscriminately on a procession protesting against unloading of arms and ammunition from the ship Swat at Jetty No-17.

On hearing the news of unloading of arms from the ship, students, labour leaders and freedom fighters began organising the people with the help of political leaders to resist the evil design of the occupation forces.

An action committee was formed in this regard and they vowed not to allow the unloading of arms, even at the cost of their lives.

The action committee called a public meeting at the New Mooring Colony at 3.00pm on

March 24, 1971.

Thousands of people armed with lathi, bamboo sticks and iron rods started pouring in at the meeting venue for early morning and the venue turned into a human sea at around 4.00pm.

Awami League leader MA Hannan presided over the meeting. The leaders, including one Majid Meah, addressed the meeting. They called on the people to lay siege to the Swat and resist, at any cost, the unloading of arms.

As a militant procession started marching towards the Jetty No-17 where the ship was anchored, the Pakistani forces deployed near the meeting venue fired on the demonstrators indiscriminately without any provocation, leaving over 300 dead.

The Swat loaded with 5630-tonnage of arms and ammunitions, meant to be used for crackdown on the people and

freedom fighters, had arrived at the outer anchorage of Bay of Bengal from Karachi port at around 2.30pm on February 28 in 1971. It moved towards Chittagong port at around 4.30pm. The ship, whose draft was 21-feet, berthed at Jetty No-17 at night.

Soon after the ship had its unhindered berthing, the occupation forces started unloading the cargoes of the arms and ammunitions under the cover of darkness amidst stiff security cordon.

Pakistani occupation forces stopped the unloading midway after the incident. But by then, they unloaded 630-tonnage of arms and ammunition from the ship.

According to the berthing sheet, the master of Swat was captain S. Alam Chowdhury, whose nationality could not be known, and the pilot during berthing was Mokaddam, a non-Bengali.

The Swat left Chittagong port for Karachi with the remaining 5000-tonnage of arms and ammunition at around 3.30pm on April 18 in 1971. During the departure, one S Bokhari, a non-Bengali officer, was the port pilot.

The military activities at the Chittagong port area spanning from Jetty No-1 to New Mooring Naval Base were coordinated by Lt. Col. Abdur Rob of Pakistan Armed Forces from the Navy Fleet Club near Barik Meah High School.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations have taken up programmes in the city today in observance of the day.

The tragic incident that occurred 33 years ago still haunts many with pains and pangs. It also reminds us of heroism by the valiant freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the motherland.

theweekthatwas

Mayor for hanging bridge over Karnaphuli

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at a rally at Dock Booking ground on Saturday demanded construction of hanging bridge on the river Karnaphuli.

"A conspiracy is on to destroy Chittagong Port by constructing a pillar-based concrete bridge on Karnaphuli disregarding the observation of port and river experts," he said.

Mohiuddin said, "Concrete bridge would not be viable on Karnaphuli, rather it may expose vulnerability to all important ports. And that's why we can't accept any bridge other than a hanging one."

Bandar Awami League organised the rally to mark the Independence Day and Swat Ship Siege Day. Unit AL President and Ward Commissioner Mohammad Nurul Alam presided.

Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury also urged the authorities concerned for immediate dredging of Karnaphuli to enable port channel for hassle-free ship movement to and from Chittagong Port. Dr Afsarul Amin, Sultan Ahmad, Enamul Hoq Chowdhury, Sirajul Islam, Abdul Khaleque Chowdhury, Mahfuzur Rahman Khan and Jahur Ahmad also addressed the rally.

BNP against hanging bridge over Karnaphuli

Chittagong city BNP General Secretary Dastagir Chowdhury at a party rally on Sunday rejected the demand for a

hanging bridge on the river Karnaphuli. "Those who are speaking in favour of hanging bridge on Karnaphuli actually intend to hinder smooth development of the city," he told the rally organised by Halishahar Thana BNP on Sunday.

Thana BNP president Jamal Ahmad presided over the meeting. City vice president Shamsul Alam, BNP leaders Gias Uddin, Saber Ahmad, Abu Taher, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders Monjurul Alam, Habibur Rahman and Sourav Shanin addressed.

Photographic outing

A photographic outing organised by Centre for Photography and Visual Arts (CPVA) was held at Kumira Sea Beach and Sitakunda Eco Park on Friday.

Senior photographers Maududul Alam, Prof Ansar Ali, Dr Ibrahim Mohammad Iqbal and Basab Shil conducted a first-hand outfield training session for the learners of photography. A total of 30 young trainees took part in the daylong outing.

Seminar on gender perspective in mass media

Speakers at a seminar emphasised the need for greater role of mass media to stop repression against women.

"Media can play an important role in building positive approach towards women in Bangladesh, where repression and attack on them is a common phenomenon," they said.

The Forum for Development Journalism and Communication Studies

(Focus), Chittagong District Committee for Resisting Woman Repression and Gender in Media Forum, Dhaka jointly organised the seminar titled 'Gender perspective in mass media' at the auditorium of Premier University on Wednesday.

Focus president Prof Dr Moniruzzaman presided. Prof Giti Ara Nasrin of Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University presented the keynote paper.

Former member of Public Service Commission (PSC) and president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Chittagong University unit Prof Hamida Banu, resident editor of Prothom Alo Abul Momen and a teacher of city's Pahartali College Prof Ferdous Ara Alim discussed on the topic.

Giti Ara in her keynote paper urged for more appointment of women journalists in media. She called mass media a true friend, teacher and babysitter in modern civilisation. "The media teaches us lot of things including our behaviour, approach towards other and lifestyle. It has in a word become an indispensable part of our life nowadays," she said.

Gram Sarkar members' rally

Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Syed Shahidul Alam urged the members of Gram Sarkar to discharge their duties with utmost sincerity, courage and honesty to ensure a healthy and peaceful atmosphere in their respective villages.

He was speaking as chief guest at a rally of Gram Sarkar members at Hathazari Sadar Union on Thursday. Sadar UP Chairman Ali Azam chaired the rally. Assistant Superintendent of Police Nazrul Islam, Upazila BNP Presi-

Swadhinatar Boi Mela ends

A three-day Swadhinatar Boi Mela ended on Chittagong Shilpakala Academy premises on Sunday with a call to resist bad culture and protect the ideals of War of Liberation.

Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiquee inaugurated the book fair on Friday as chief guest. Prominent litterateur Ali Imam and poet Mohammad Rafique

were the chief guests on the second and closing day. Chattagram Academy organised the fair, fifth of its kind by the organisation.

Social scientist Prof Anupam Sen chaired the inaugural ceremony where Chattagram Academy Director Prof Anwara Alam made the address of welcome. Secretary General of the fair



Visitors crowd around a stall at Swadhinatar Boi Mela at the Shilpakala Academy on the closing day of the book fair on Sunday. Chattagram Academy organised the three-day book fair to mark the Independence Day.

dent Noor Mohammad, Professor Mirza Shahidul Alam, Upazila Education Officer Sirajul Islam Bhuiyan, Dr Muhammad Shamsul Alam and Officer in-Charge (OC) of Hathazari thana Mahfuzul Alam also addressed.

"Gram Sarkar members can help develop our villages and stop anti-

social activities," he added.

VC seeks cooperation

Chittagong University Vice Chancellor Prof AJM Nooruddin Chowdhury sought

cooperation from all, especially students, to keep a good and excellent academic atmosphere on the campus.

"I strongly believe that there will be no session jam in this university if we can keep that expected atmosphere," he said while speaking as chief guest at the freshers' reception and seniors'

farewell ceremony of CU Physics Association on Wednesday.

New chairman of Physics Department Prof Farazi Kamaluddin chaired the function. Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr Mohammad Shamsuddin was present as special guest.

Outgoing chairman Prof Dr Mobashsher Ahmed, Prof Md Adam Shafiqullah, Prof Dr Bikron Prasad Barua and students AHM Ahsanul Haq, ATM Sharifuzzaman and Shamsul Alam also spoke.

Human chain for safe water

Members of Organisation of Art for Children (Oach), a Chittagong-based NGO, formed a human chain at city's Jhautala Water Tank area on Sunday demanding safe water.

Local people also joined the human chain spontaneously. Later, a discussion on 'Water and disaster' was held with Ward Commissioner Shahnaz Malik Helen in the chair. Organisation leader Shamsul Momen Polash and senior journalist Mohammad Idris also spoke.

The speakers urged the authorities concerned to ensure supply of pure water in the slum areas in the port city.

Call for united movement for water

A five-day programme marking the World Water Day began in the port city on Sunday with a call for united movement to realise the right for water.

The speaker at the rally blamed

WASA, Chittagong for the water crisis. They said that a section of WASA officials and employees were engaged in selling water to different mills, factories and brick-fields at a higher price to deprive the city-dwellers.

On the opening day organised by different development organisations in collaboration with ActionAid Bangladesh, city dwellers staged demonstration including rally and human chain at Zhaoutala area in the city.

People at the rally raised a strong voice for ensuring their right for water and demanded an end to business with water.

Earlier, ward commissioner Shahnaz Malik Helen inaugurated the programme while Chattagram Nagorik Udyog Convener elderly journalist Md. Idris addressed the inaugural ceremony as the chief guest. Watch Executive Member Shamsul Hossain Palash attended the rally as special guest.

Hats and Bags founding anniversary

Bangladesh Hats and Bags Limited (BHBL), a Hong Kong-based company at Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ), took programmes to mark its 10th foundation anniversary here on Thursday.

BHBL General Manager Zhang Wen Sheng inaugurated the anniversary programmes on BHBL factory premises at CEPZ.

The programmes include blood donation, cultural function and raffle draw where the workers and employees of the factory participated spontaneously.