



thecitythatwas

In 1676, Shayesta Khan built Chakbazar Shahi Masjid, one of the oldest mosques in Dhaka, on a 10-metre high platform. The area of the mosque was 7840 square feet. The platform housed some shops. The rent of these those shops was used to upkeep the mosque. Naveb and Nazirs of Dhaka came here for Eid prayers. The mosque was a typical Shayesta Khan style, lost now due to reconstruction.

e-mail: starcity@thedailystar.net

City dwellers suffer as power outage getting worse

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Power outage has started creeping into the life of the city residents, although the hot days of summer are yet to come. The present situation indicates a severe power crisis in the coming

Due to the gap between power generation and demand that increases in every summer, the power supply authorities are being compelled to impose load shedding in different parts of the capital every day.

The Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa), Dhaka Electric Supply Company (Desco) and Rural Electrification Board (REB) are not getting enough supply from the national grid to meet the growing demand, sources said.

A high official of Desa said there was 200 megawatt shortage in electricity supply on February 10 that forced the supply companies to go for load-shedding -- 70mw in Desa area and 130mw in Desco and REB areas.

However, the deficit increases when power generation is disrupted due to shutdown of plants for mechanical reasons or shortage in gas

supply. Most of the power plants in Bangladesh use gas

The country is facing a daily power load shedding of up to 750 megawatts due to a drop in gas pressure in the national grid and shut down of a major power plant.

Power Development Board (PDB) sources said that against a peak demand of 3550 megawatts (MW), the PDB is now able to generate only up to 2700 mw of power.

"We are already facing power cuts almost every day. God knows what will happen in the upcoming summer," said Tania Ahmed, a resident of Mirpur.

Like her, most of the people in the city are apprehending a worse situation in the coming days. And the electricity distribution authorities do not have any contingency plan to face the possible power crisis.

"Students are the major victims of regular loadshedding that usually takes place in the evening. Power outage is disrupting the preparation for SSC and HSC exams," said Alimul Haque, a student living in Moghbazar.

Desa officials admitted the shortage of supply that has affected the city. "There will be

A significant number of factory owners and businessmen have generators or captive power generation facility as the state-run electricity supply companies cannot ensure uninterrupted supply to their industrial

units



a severe power crisis in the next summer," commented one of them. "This is because of generation shortfall and increased demand."

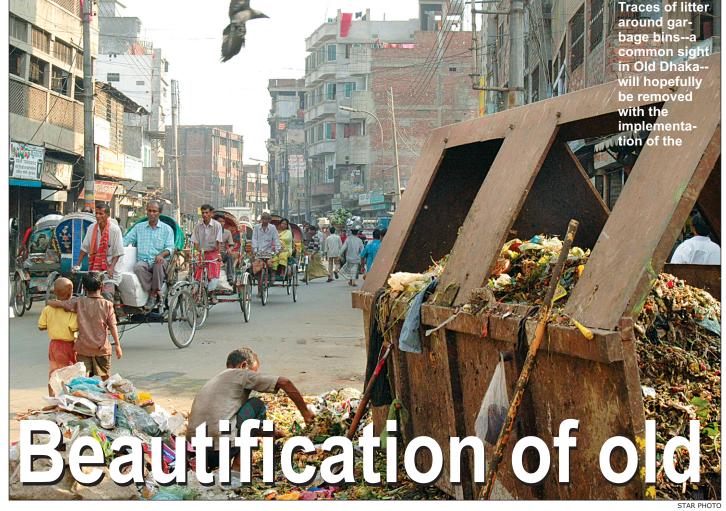
An official said mechanical troubles in the transmission and distribution system, old cables and poor infrastructure sometimes cause power outage but Desa has improved the system and infrastructure in the recent time.

A significant number of factory owners and businessmen have generators or captive power generation facility as the state-run electricity supply companies cannot ensure uninterrupted supply to their industrial units.

But a Desa official said most of them do not use generators and still depend on the supply from the state-run companies. The huge demand in these factories creates extra pressure on the national

At present Desa has around 5,28,000 clients in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Tongi. Almost 43 percent of them are domestic clients. The rest are industrial and commercial users, government offices and service sector

A generator is put up for sale at Nawabpur wholesale market a common phenomenon ahead of the hot summer and the power cuts that come with it.



Dhaka underway

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Old Dhaka, which was not included in the capital's beautification project will be beautified in next three months, to the joy of its residents who thought that their part of the city was neglected.

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) will work as the chief supervising body according to directives of the Prime Minister"s Office (PMO)

According to the beautification plan, the road from Golap Sadarghat via North South road and English road has already

started. Three corporate houses -- Premier Bank, Pakiza Dyeing Ltd and Medinova Ltd -have already been awarded the contract and work has begun on the beautification of this stretch of road

"We will beautify the old part of the city and hope to complete the project before the monsoons," said Commodore Sohel Farouquie, member secretary of the Dhaka City Beautification Cell (DCBC).

Various other government agencies and private organisations will, under the supervision Shah Mazar at Gulistan to of the DCC, complementarily execute the beautification project on all the medians and

islands along the roads in this part of the city.

"We are executing our patriotic duty and are happy to have an opportunity to beautify the heritage-enriched old part of the city," said Syed Ahsan Habib, first assistant vice president of Premier Bank Limited, adding that the bank has already invited design proposals from interested organisa-

"It was an oversight by the authorities to neglect the beautification of the commercial hub of the city.ÊBut we are happy now that this oversight will be rectified," said Arefeen Choudhury, a resident of Nawabpur Road.

The companies assigned to maintain the sections beautified and nurtured by them, with a very few exceptions, are continuing to play a keen role in keep-

ing the city green. "We water the plants and grass twice a day and we will continue until the plants are well rooted," said Abu Raihan, an individual engaged by the Arkay Group to water the plants.

Dhaka, once well known for its greenery is getting back its lost beauty with plantation of greens and flower plants on the city roads and medians under the beautification pro-

DCC eyeing intersection grade-separation

SULTANA RAHMAN

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is reportedly planning to create intersection grade-separation double layers aiming at improving the traffic system and ensuring free flow of vehicles through the intersections.

Under the grade separation, the link roads would run beneath the main roads at intersections while the existing level of major roads at intersections would remain

Traffic engineering division of the DCC has taken the project. DCC officials said that the plan is at its primary stage and a feasibility study is needed before a final decision about implementation can be made.

Dhaka has atleast 69 intersections half of which face regular traffic congestion. According to the DCC's initial plan, the most congested intersections on Mirpur Road, Airport Road, Bishwa Road and the road leading to Jatrabari would come under consideration first.

"Grade-separation of intersections will increase the capacity of traffic flow through the intersections as the vehi-

cles will ply without stopping at signals. At present, vehicles coming from the Airport Road stop at Sonargaon intersection to allow the traffic from Panthapath to pass. But vehicles coming from both sides could ply at the same time after the grade-separation," said a DCC official related to the

The intolerable traffic congestion of Dhaka has become an everyday plight for residents. The city has a very inadequate road network which constitutes only 8 -10 percent of the total city area whereas the acceptable ratio is

traffic engineering division.

Dhaka has a total road network of approximately 2230km of which 25 percent are primary roads.

The width of the roads vary from 6 - 40m. The main roads are 15 - 25m wide, newly built roads are 40m wide while the roads in the old quarters can be as narrow as 6m.

Chief executive officer of the DCC Dr. MA Momen said that the double layer intersection plan was in its early stages. However, another DCC source claimed that the plan would be shelved as the city needed more flyovers to improve the overall traffic system.



The planned intersection grade-separation double layer may put an end to a seemingly endless and motionless line of vehicles at busy intersections. This photo was taken at the Maghbazar crossing.