

The Race Course ground, situated on the eastern side of Shahbagh, looked like a jungle during the company rule. The jungle was cleared up for an entertainment centre for the elite Nawabs of Dhaka who owned the area. Feasts and ball dances were organised for the Sahibs and Memsahibs who came to watch the horse races.

267 markets to come under stepped-up security

SULTANA RAHMAN

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has made a list of 267 shopping malls in the capital to step up security ahead of the month of Ramadan and Durga Puja.

The list of the markets identified as 'less protected' has recently been submitted to the home ministry for taking action, DMP sources said.

As law and order situation deteriorates during the Ramadan with increased incidents of mugging, the government has planned to take such measures, they added.

"We listed the markets where rush of people is high and money transaction is huge. Our previous experiences show higher incidents of mugging before Eid in these places," said DMP Commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman.

Karnafuli Garden City, Eastern Plaza, Rifles Square, Bishal Centre, Peer Yeamini Market, New Market and some other shopping centres in Chawkbazar, Uttara, Gulshan, Asad Gate, Paltan and Mirpur are among these markets.

"During Ramadan we fear increased criminal activities in the city markets. If the government steps up security by deploying more police force, it will have a



Detective Branch police rushed to Chadni Chawk Shopping Complex (right) as mobs lynch an accused eve teaser (left) in front of the market yesterday. Dhaka Metropolitan Police has decided to beef up security in the market areas ahead of Ramadan.

positive impact," said a shop-owner at Karnafuli Garden City.

DMP will deploy 1,500 more uniformed policemen along with plainclothes cops to maintain security in the listed markets and their surrounding areas.

As part of the anti-crime measures for the shopping malls, DMP also asked the market and shop owners to install closed-circuit television (CCTV).

"CCTV has already been installed at Meena Bazar, Agora in

Maghbazar, Karnafuli Garden City and a few other markets," the DMP commissioner said, hoping that the owners of other shopping malls will also install it soon.

Before the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr, 450 to 500 additional patrol police



will be deployed to check public sufferings and harassment by muggers. Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) will also be in action in the crime-prone zones, home ministry sources said.

The ministry officials said

police department will offer security for the businessmen who carry large amount of money during the Ramadan. DMP is going to make special arrangements for this and it be advertised through the media.

Rickshaw-free plan again delayed

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The absence of a co-ordinated approach is again threatening the smooth implementation of the plan to make more roads off-limit to rickshaws.

For the last three years, the

World Bank (WB) has continuously asked the government to make eight main and link roads rickshaw-free in order to ease the increasing traffic congestion in the capital. According to the plan, most roads should be free of rickshaws by the end of this year.

However, as the rickshaw-pullers who have suffered following the already imposed ban on non-motorised vehicles on a number of roads, have not been rehabilitated yet, the WB has given the government until July 31, 2006 to implement the scheme.

The WB has prioritised rehabilitation of rickshaw-pullers who used to ply on the stretch from Gabtoli to Azimpur. To rehabilitate around 40,000 affected rickshaw-pullers of this route, the Bank has taken up a nearly Tk 40 crore project. On the

otherhand, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) wants to make the two more roads off limits to rickshaws before the rehabilitation.

"The plan could be delayed again as the World Bank wants the rehabilitation process completed first," said an official of Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP), the plan implementing agency under Dhaka Transport Corporation Board (DTCB). The DTCB had fixed several dates in the past to ensure rickshaw-free roads but failed to meet the deadline reportedly due to political pressure.

The DCC wanted to make two roads rickshaw-free by August this year but the country-wide serial bomb blasts on August 17 forced it to reschedule the plan to the first week of November before the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) summit which will be held from November 12-13, said sources. The two roads in question are the ones from Elephant Road to Press Club and Shapla Chattar to Ittefaq intersection.

A World Bank team that visited Dhaka last year had several meetings with the DTCB and expressed its dismay over the

progress, according to a WB source. Displeased with the failure of the DTCB, the Bank extended the deadline for the implementation of the project.

Dhaka Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka denied that there was a chaotic situation over the issue. "After the withdrawal of rickshaws from these roads, a big number of rickshaw-pullers will become unemployed. As the World Bank has proposed to rehabilitate them, we now feel free to go ahead with the implementation of plan," said Khoka who is also the chairman of DTCB.

The eight roads that are waiting to turn rickshaw-free include the Rokeya Sarani (from Mirpur-10 to Farmgate through Taltola, Agargaon), New Eskaton Road to Circular Road (Bangla Motor Moghbazar Mouchak Malibagh Rajarbag), From the Technical intersection to Banani via Mirpur 1 and 2 and Kachukhet, Pagati Sarani (Kuril-Badda-Rampura-Malibagh-Mouchak), Zahir Raihan Road (Azimpur-Fulbaria-Tikatuli-Sayedabad) and North South Road to English road (Malibagh-Kakrail-Purana Paltan-Zero Paltan-Fulbaria-Sadarghat).



The road stretching from the New Elephant Road to Press Club is likely to be made rickshaw-free before the SAARC summit, which is scheduled for November 12-13.

STAR PHOTO

Old Dhaka still suffers from electricity problems

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

The electricity crisis in Old Dhaka has reduced after one of the biggest failures in recent times.

After a continuous unavailability of electricity for three days last week, angry residents brought out processions from Chankharpu to Nazimuddin road and damaged waterworks substation of the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA).

Although there is an improve-

ment in regular supply residents of Lalbagh complain that there is only one feeder (electricity transmission equipment) from Hajariabagh to Posta. Therefore if one transmitter bursts electricity in the entire area powered by the feeder fails.

"We have requested the ward commissioner to apply to Desa to install at least one more feeder," said an official of a local plastic company from Lalbagh.

Superintending engineers from Lalbagh and adjoining circles said

the demand of electricity is 100 to 150 Megawatts (MW) daily but they are able to supply only 80 to 90 MW of electricity. The deficit is due to lack of infrastructure apart from increasing the transmission capacity to solve the existing problems.

Desa sources earlier said that a 33 Kilowatt (kw) transformer of the Hasanabad grid substation, which supplies power to the Lalbagh substation and disperse electricity to the adjoining areas, went out of order recently.

The power the area receives is 70 mw, 80 mw less than the daily demand. Due to the transmitter failure, this power-supply level came down as low as 30 mw transmitted over a single line. The outcome was 15 to 16 hours of load shedding daily and without electricity the water supply halted which added to the crisis

With this transformer not functioning, the areas under Lalbagh sub-station -- Lalbagh, Narinda, Bangla Bazar, Bangshal suffered the most. Other affected areas are Central Jail, Shoari Ghat, Chawk Bazaar, Bakshi Bazar, Nazimuddin road, Posta, Kamrangir Char, Islampur, Nababganj, Rahmatganj, Kazi Reazuddin road.

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Akkas Mondal, an English road resident said: "There was absolutely no water supply. With the intense heat children became sick; there were no water for drinking or for household chores."

Other residents from areas around Lalbagh echoed similar

complaints.

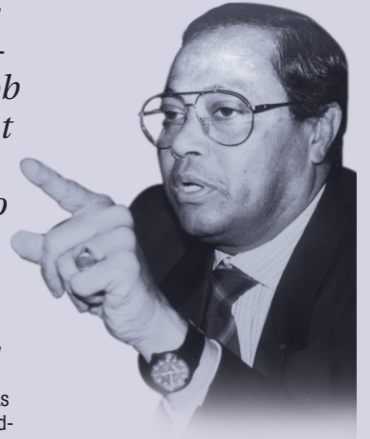
A superintending engineer from the Lalbagh circle said there was still a shortage of five to 10 mw electricity and areas around Lalbagh are still experiencing a 2-3 hour crisis of electricity at night.

A resident James Ahmed from Lakshmi Bazar and Humaira Islam from Bangshal areas said there is still a constant load shedding of one hour. Once the electricity is stopped at 9:00, it does not come back before 11:00 pm.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"I like the private satellite TV channels to do their job in parliament but the speaker does not allow them to do so"



-- Moudud Ahmed
Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister

Told newsmen after his address as chief guest at a seminar on 'Broadcast Media Liberalisation in Bangladesh' in the capital, organised by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), on September 26. Source: The Daily Star

"It is now clear that the Jamaat and its allies are involved in the bomb blasts at shrines and other places in the country. In these circumstances, it is not possible to belong to the politics of BNP, which now appears to be an associate of Jamaat"

-- Najibul Bashar Maizbhandari
BNP's international affairs secretary, who resigned from the party last week

Said in his resignation letter addressed to the BNP chairperson and the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. He resigned from the party protesting the government's 'failure to act' against Jamaat-e-Islami, on September 26. Source: The Daily Star

"The government's responsibility is to ensure security of the people. When it fails to do so, it tries to eye-wash the public, by arranging a farcical trial"

--Ruhul Quaiyum, Son of Abdul Quaiyum
Main accused, now in jail for the killing of former finance minister SAMS Kibria

Told a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club pleading Quaiyum's innocence and claiming that his father is a victim of ruling party's internal conflict, on September 28. Source: The Daily Star

"I then moved to Afghanistan and received training in fighting. Afghan leaders had given me a rifle to fight the former Soviet Union troops and I returned to the country with it"

-- Mufti Abdul Hannan
A top Islamist militant leader

Told journalists on his arrest in a dramatic nightlong drive by Rapid Action Battalion in the city, on October 1. Source: The Daily Star

"Earlier people used to run away from police batons but now they chase police with guns"

-- M Saifur Rahman

Planning and Finance Minister Said at the inauguration of Batexpo-2005, a three-day apparel fair, in the city justifying the formation of the elite anticrime force Rapid Action Battalion, on September 29. Source: Prothom Alo