

Load shedding grips Dhaka again

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Due to inadequate power generation in several power plants load shedding started early this year. Dhaka city experiences frequent power outage in the last few days and the situation is likely to continue for the next month.

According to Power Division's System Control Centre in Katabon, during winter demand for electricity decreases. Daily demand in Dhaka city during this time of the year is around 1200MW. The centre confirms having a shortage of around 250MW daily. During the summer the demand reaches up to 1500 MW they said.

People living in Mirpur and Old part of Dhaka are experiencing the worst outage in Dhaka. There

is minimum 5 power cuts daily in Old Dhaka. Supply of Old Dhaka used to be 42MW per hour. It reached as low as 28 MW in the last few days. Out of 55 MW allocation per hour, Mirpur has 11MW shortage causing at least three power cuts every day.

Frequent power cut is causing immense suffering in public life. Production of garments factory is running low in the city. Office work is severely disrupted. Low-income workers including mechanics, laundry owners, motor workshops are the worst sufferer. Cyber cafe, computer compose centres are also suffering.

"We are having power cuts at least three times during the day. Each time it lasts for half an hour. During the night we have one power cut lasting for more than an hour", said Ruth Lipika Hira a resident of East Manipur.

Hira works for an NGO in the Mirpur area. She added, "In the office we have back up power. When the back up expires we have to sit idle".

Faisal Ahmed a resident of Shewrapara said, "It is almost like the load shedding in the summer time. We suffered immensely during the entire summer. The thought of load shedding during winter is unbearable".

"If this is the condition during winter then we wonder what will happen during summer. Things cannot go on like this", he added.

The situation is likely to continue till the first week of March.

The LDC official however said, "We are hoping that the situation will improve on the first week of March. Bibiana gas field in Sylhet will resume gas supply by then. The situation will ease after that."

"Chittagong, Siddhirganj and Ashuganj power plants are not reaching its daily target of power generation", he said. Dhaka city receives electricity from these power plants.

"Currently we are rationing the supply of gas, which is why several units of these power plants are almost on the verge of shutdown", he added.

"If we had 600 MW more for Dhaka we did not have to continue power outage during winter", he mentioned.



Forgotten and left out, Khilgaon lake full of rubbish.

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For the last few days this road, in front of Segunbagicha School, is dug up for the installation of sewerage line. The line which should have been implanted before paving the road shows a glaring

Khilgaon lake still a dumping ground

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

Efforts to revive the swampy and almost 'dead' lake in Khilgaon, one of the last remaining water bodies in the city, have ground to a halt due to lack of funds.

The Tk 5 crore project undertaken by the Public Works Department, aimed to re-excavate the 14-acre 'lost' lake and beautify the adjoining areas, came to a halt only months after it was inaugurated in February last year.

The project includes setting up two bridges across the lake linking Bagicha-North Shahjahanpur with Biswa Road, a children's park, a footbridge, and a lake sidewalk. It also involves cleansing and refreshing the water body, and a graveyard on 12 bighas of land on the lake's west bank.

However, a visit to the designated location revealed little evidence of the restoration process, with piles of garbage littering the murky streams of water and toxic substances flowing all over the water body.

Although signs of development work are evident at remote spots that seem to have been filled up with earth

alongside the lake, no beautification is apparent.

"We saw ministry workers evicting some structures alongside the lake during the beginning of the project and later labourers filled up the lake bank. That is all we have seen them doing," said Monirul Islam,

Corporation ward-35, said the lake has been dredged and the designated spot for the graveyard has been earth-filled.

"The 5-7 feet layer of household waste and polythene in the lake water has been removed. This should solve the problem of water-logging in

household, industrial and medical waste into its water over the last 35 years.

"Over the years, the lake has become a convenient spot for the residents to dump waste. The slums that have spawned in the lakeside areas do not help things either," said Khairuzzaman, a resident of Bagicha.

Akbar Ali Mia, executive engineer of PWD and the official responsible for the project could not be contacted for his comments. However, officials from his department told the Star City correspondent that the work has been halted briefly due to fund constraints.

"We are having some fund constraints, therefore the work is stopped now," said an official. "We look forward to resuming the work as soon as possible," he added.

Abdullah-al-Shafi, additional chief engineer of PWD, said he is hopeful that the work should be finished within the stipulated time.

"The project was scheduled to be finished in two years. We are bound to complete it within the third quarter of this year," said Shafi. "I am not sure if the work is in progress or not, but I heard there was some fund constraints," he added.

A visit to the designated location revealed little indication of the ongoing restoration process with piles of garbage littering over the murky streams of water and toxic substances flowing all over the water body

a resident of Bagicha.

The local ward commissioner expressed his optimism about how the project would beautify the area and give it a new outlook, but could not give any relevant information on the amount of work that have been completed.

Asked, Sazzad Jahir, the commissioner of Dhaka City

Malibagh, Shantibagh, Gulbagh and the adjoining areas," said Jahir.

"The beautification of the surrounding areas was supposed to begin after dredging is complete, but I am not sure how far the work has come," added Jahir.

The lake was tainted by indiscriminate dumping of

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