

# Country experiences 500MW loadshedding on weekend

## Tongi plant completes test-run after long wait

UNB, Dhaka

The country yesterday experienced over 500MW loadshedding in catering a nationwide demand between 3500 and 3600 megawatts of electricity.

This happened on a weekend holiday with chilly weather, when normally the demand for electricity remains at a lower level as most industrial units and public-private offices are closed and domestic consumers do not run their electric home appliances like fans and air-conditioners.

Officials at Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) said this could be a good indication for anybody else to guess the situation during the coming summer when the country's electricity demand will cross the 5000MW benchmark.

They said there might be a shortage of about 2000MW plus load-shedding during the peak-demand period in the months of the coming summer between May and

October, when normally heat wave hits the country.

According to BPDB official website, more than 25 small and large generation units, out of 70, at different power stations remained out of operation either for rehabilitation or maintenance or for gas shortage.

Of those, the authorities had to shut down a number of units due to short supply of gas.

"That's why we are producing a maximum of 2900MW against a reliable capacity of about 4200MW," a BPDB official told UNB.

Last week, BPDB Chairman ANM Rizwan hoped that the generation situation would improve in the coming summer when most of these closed units will resume operation on completion of their maintenance and rehabilitation.

But industry-insiders say the power board "could never have a good situation in the summer than that in winter as a huge number of

plants face troubles in hot weather."

Meanwhile, after a long wait, the much-talked-about 80MW Tongi power plant has successfully completed its test run running nonstop for 36 hours that ended at 6:00pm yesterday.

Manager of Tongi plant Abul Mazid told UNB that after a long pursuit for last couple of days the plant has been getting gas supply for a certain period in the off-peak hours.

He said in conducting the test-run, the plant was able to take its ever-highest load and generated 115 megawatts against its normal production capacity of 105MW.

"At one stage of testing peak-load, we found the machine even producing 121MW for some hours," he added.

He said the Chinese contractor, Harbin Power Engineering (HPE), is scheduled to hand over the plant to BPDB in August if it continues to run in good condition.

# Indian national held with forged visa

UNB, Chapainawabganj

An Indian trader falling prey to visa forgers is languishing at Sonamasjid immigration office for nearly three weeks.

Sukumoy Sarkar of Noorpur village in Birbhum district, West Bengal, came with one month's visa on November 12 for business purpose. As he needed extension of his stay, Sarkar got it done by Haradhan Visa Agent in Chapainawabganj town.

The visa extension for one month from the Rangpur Passport Office proved to be forged when he was returning home through the same Sonamasjid customs point on January 10.

Sakar told the police investigators that he paid Haradhan Tk 3,000 for extension of visa. He pleaded ignorance of the forgery.

Police are looking for Haradhan, who is allegedly long engaged in passport and visa forgery.

Some local business friends of Sarkar on Saturday tried in vain to settle the problem with immigration officials.

# Waheedul Haq

**FROM PAGE 1**

He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

The body of Waheedul will be kept today at Chhayanaut Bhaban from 9:30am to 11:30am, at the central Shaheed Minar from 12:00noon to 1:00pm and at the Jatiya Press Club at 1:30pm for the people to pay their homage.

Waheedul Haq was the founder of Chhayanaut, which played a vital role in igniting the flame of freedom among the people in the late 1960s prior to the country's Liberation War.

Apart from establishing the vanguard cultural organisation in 1961 along with some other enlightened persons, he also founded a number prominent cultural and poetry recitation organisations like -- Kanthashilon, Nalonda and Anandadhani.

Born to Mazharul Haq and Mewa Begum on March 16, 1933 at Bhawal Monoharia village under Keraniganj upazila, Waheedul was the eldest among three brothers and two sisters. His father was a member of Bengal legislative assembly in 1946.

His brother Rezaul Haq is also a journalist while another brother Ziaul Haq was a martyr in 1971.

During his 55-year long career in journalism, Waheedul served in the major English dailies of the country, including The Daily Star, where he worked as the joint editor. He was a shift in-charge of the daily Observer in the 1960s. Besides, he worked in The People, the Morning News and the New Nation.

He also taught at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) as a part-time teacher.

An eminent thinker, Waheedul was very active in political and cultural movements in the country over last half a century.

Once involved with left-leaning politics, he contested for parliament elections from Keraniganj. Later, he left politics and devoted himself in music.

Waheedul was also a pioneer in spreading secular spirit in the country. During the Hindu-Muslim riots in the 50s, he was there beside the minorities and always resisted the communal force.

Although he spent his whole life practising and tutoring Tagore song, he was very reluctant in bringing out an album. Bengal Foundation released one of his solo albums.

He formed Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilin Parishad in 1980. A multifaceted talent, Haq was also involved with filmmaking and film movements.

**Condolences**

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain, president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalist (BFUJ) Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, president of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) Altaf Mahmud, President of Jatiya Press Club Shawkat Mahmud along with various socio, political and cultural organisations expressed deep shock at the demise of Waheedul Haq.

In separate condolence messages, they observed that with the death of Waheedul Haq, the nation lost a courageous son and a great artist. The vacuum created by his death could not be filled ever, they observed.

The other personalities and organisation which expressed shock at the death of Waheedul Haq include, BFUJ and DUJ general secretaries Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan and Omar Faruque, general secretary of Jatiya Press Club Kamal Uddin Sobuj, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Ayesha Khanom, Srot Abirty Sangsad, Chhayanaut, Bangladesh Workers Party, Sangeet Bhaban, Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, Kanthashilon, Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association and Bangladesh Sports Writers' Association.



Asma Kibria, wife of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, bursts into tears while placing wreaths at the grave of the former minister at Banani Graveyard in the city yesterday on the occasion of his second death anniversary.

# US again accuses Pakistan of giving 'refuge' to Taliban

AFP, WASHINGTON

The United States has again charged Pakistan of providing "refuge" to Taliban militants fighting American and NATO troops in neighboring Afghanistan.

"The Taliban increased its insurgency in 2006. It's a real problem," US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns said.

"There is a problem of forces coming from Pakistan into Afghanistan to attack and then to

return to Pakistan to seek refuge and refitting," he said at a media briefing on US efforts to frame a new strategy in Afghanistan with NATO to ward off the renewed Taliban threat.

Pakistan helped the Taliban to power in Afghanistan in 1996 but dropped the hardline movement in 2001 after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States blamed on Al-Qaeda, whose leader Osama bin Laden was sheltered in Afghanistan.

Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf is now a key US ally in the "war on terror" but the country's lawless northwestern tribal areas have reportedly become a sanctuary for Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants who fled Afghanistan.

Two weeks ago, US spy chief John Negroponte charged that Pakistan was harboring Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, in an annual "threat assessment" to the US Congress.

# Joint forces evict land grabbers in Pabna

UNB, Pabna

The joint forces, in a drive yesterday, evicted illegal occupants from a cattle market and recovered the occupied land at Bansherbada in Inwardi upazila.

Police said the joint forces' team raided the cattle market at about 2:00pm and arrested seven criminals involved in grabbing the land of Mosaddek Hossain Sabu, chief engineer of the Roads and Highways Department in Khulna.

The arrested are identified as Ibrahim Hossain, organising secretary of Shahapur union Swachhshasebak League, Jubo League leader Rashedul Islam, and Awami League activists Ramzan Ali, Airlul, Dollar, Murad and Shamsul Islam.

# Obituary

UNB, Dhaka

Sumoti Roy, mother of BNP Joint Secretary General Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, died of old age ailments at her house in Mirzapur village of Keraniganj yesterday afternoon. She was 95.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has expressed her deep shock at the death of Sumoti Roy.

In a condolence message, she prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

In separate messages, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Dhaka Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka also condoled the death of Sumoti Roy.

# Death anniversary

The 36th death anniversary of Giasuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, former commissioner of Dhaka Division and member of the Board of Revenue, was observed yesterday, says a press release.

Giasuddin, also former chairman of Election Authority, died in a road accident in Dhaka in 1971.

Recitation from the Holy Quran and milad mahfils were held in Dhaka and Sylhet on the occasion.

Giasuddin left behind four sons - Faruk Ahmed Chowdhury, Inam Ahmed Chowdhury, Masum Ahmed Chowdhury and Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, foreign adviser to the caretaker government.

He was also the father-in-law of Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed.



Roads and Highways authorities bulldoze illegal structures at Jatrabari in the city yesterday.

# Four killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and 12 others injured in separate road accidents across the country yesterday and Friday evening.

A correspondent in Pabna reports: A female student of Pabna Edward College was killed in a road accident on the college compound yesterday morning.

Shabnam Mustari, a first year student of political science department, died on the spot when an engine-driven trolley hit her rickshaw and ran over her at about 11:00am, college sources said.

Immediately after the accident, agitated students put up a barricade on Pabna-Ishwardi highway and vandalised several vehicles.

Our correspondent in Satkhira adds: An eight-year-old boy was killed when a bus knocked him down at Kumira bus stand in Tala on Satkhira-Khulna road yesterday.

The boy, Nur Hossain, son of Abdur Rashid, was a student of class two at Kumira Government Primary School.

Police said the Satkhira-bound bus from Khulna hit the boy when he was crossing the road. He died on the spot.

Our staff correspondent in Khulna reports: One person was killed and five others were injured when a speeding truck knocked down a bicycle and then hit three rickshaws in Phulbari gate area of Khulna city yesterday morning.

Abul Kalam Shaikh, 40, who was riding the bicycle, died in the accident that took place at around 10:00am, witnesses said.

The injured people are Pannu Shaikh, 40, Ferdousi, 24, Nahida, 30, Antora, 18, and Jashim 6. They were taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

A mob caught driver Shafiqul Islam and helper Idris Ali of the Jessore-bound truck and handed them over to the police who also seized the truck.

A case was filed with Khanjahan Ali Police Station.

UNB adds: In Natore, four army personnel and a teenage girl were injured when a truck carrying the army personnel overturned in Naopara area of Sadar upazila on Natore-Bogra highway yesterday morning.

Police said the Bogra-bound army truck from Ishwardi skidded off the road and overturned at about 9:30am, hitting the girl, Nisha.

The injured army members -- Saiful Islam, Jakaria, Abu Bakar and Azizul -- were admitted to Sadar Hospital while critically injured Nisha, 15, was rushed to

Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

UNB Bagerhat correspondent adds: A UP member was killed and his two companions were injured when a speeding bus hit their motorcycle at Gaula in Mollahat upazila on Dhaka-Maowa highway on Friday evening.

Witnesses said the bus hit the motorbike near a pond in the

area, leaving the three seriously injured.

They were rushed to the local hospital. Later, M Akter Kazi, 43, member of Gaula union parishad, was shifted to Khulna Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Agitated local people demanded the bus protesting the accident.

# WEATHER TODAY

## Temperature may rise

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporarily partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may also occur at places over the river basins during early morning, Met Office said in a forecast.

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country, it added.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 29.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Sylhet and the lowest of 8.5 degrees at Srimongal.

**The sun sets in the capital at 5:41pm today and rises at 6:41am tomorrow.**

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature	Humidity in in celsius		
percentage	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.7	13.8	50	60
Chittagong	29.2	14.0	89	73
Rajshahi	27.4	10.6	89	67
Khulna	27.5	13.6	95	78
Barisal	28.0	12.1	95	68
Sylhet	29.5	13.4	64	52
Cox's Bazar	28.0	14.7	75	79



Lions District Governor Shahab Uddin Khan distributes winter clothes among the dwellers of the shanties that were gutted in a fire recently at Karwan Bazar in the city.

PHOTO: STAR

PHOTO: STAR

# Top JMB leaders seek 'mercy'

**FROM PAGE 1**

date of execution on a mercy petition when it is sent to the president.

In this case, the jail authorities will give the dates on the petitions today.

According to the jail code, the jail authorities are supposed to fix the date for execution within 21 to 28 days after getting the Supreme Court (SC) order rejecting a convict's appeal.

Sources said they usually fix the date on the 27th day after receiving the SC rejection order. Accordingly, the date of executions of these convicts would be February 17.

Whatever dates the jail authorities fix for executing the condemned militants, they will have to wait until the president's decision regarding their mercy petitions, Inspector General (Prisons) Brig Gen Zakir Hasan told The Daily Star last night.

The constitution empowers the president to grant pardon, reprieve and respite, and to remit, suspend or commute any sentence passed by any court.

If the president turns down the mercy petitions in this case, the jail authorities will again fix the date for execution and that will be within 21

to 28 days from the date of receipt of copy of his decision.

Senior assistant judges, Jagannath Pandey and Sohel Ahmed, were killed in a suicide bomb attack at Purba Chadkati in Jhalakathi town on November 14 in 2005 in the wake of a series of bombings by the militants across the country.

Additional District and Sessions Judge of Jhalakathi Reza Tarik Ahmed sentenced seven persons, including still absconding Asadul Islam alias Arif, to death by hanging, and acquitted one on May 29 last year.

The High Court (HC) on August 31 upheld the trial court's judgement.

Although the convicts repeatedly said after the trial court verdict that they do not accept any verdict by any worldly court and would not appeal against the verdict, they eventually made a U-turn after the HC verdict had upheld the death sentences.

After the HC judgement, Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhui said letters to the SC registrar, trying to justify killing of people for establishing Islamic rule, including the killing of the two judges. All judges, who

hold trials under Taguti (non-Islamic) laws neglecting Shariah, deserve death, the letters said.

Although the two top condemned militants, in their letters, did not seek leave to appeal against the death penalty, the SC registrar ordered a stay of their executions considering their letters as prayers for appeal.

The four other convicts had also submitted petitions, seeking leave to appeal against the HC verdict through the jail authorities.

The SC however rejected their appeal in November 28 last year.

Suicide bomber Mamun seemed visibly distressed when handing over his mercy petition to the authorities at Kashimpur Jail, sources said.

Mamun admitted that he had made a mistake, he regrets his acts and he begged for clemency, they mentioned.

Both Sunny and Awal handed over their mercy petitions at Dhaka Central Jail last night, while Khaled Saifullah handed over his petition to the authorities on Thursday at Rangpur jail.

## Roundtable

National Observers' Council will hold a roundtable on 'Fair and credible election: Some proposals'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.

## Discussion

Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research will hold a discussion to mark the second death anniversary of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria. Venue: Institute of Diploma Engineers. Time: 4:00pm.

## Discussion

Damien Foundation Bangladesh will hold a discussion to mark the World Leprosy Day. Venue: National Press Club.