

KHOKA'S CORNER



A broken sewerage line in the middle of Malibagh-Rampura main road lies open for several days. Nobody knows who, when and on what purpose this line was opened.

ELECTRICITY OUTAGE

City dwellers gasp for respite

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

Summer has set in with load-shedding coming back in its full fury. From the very onset of summer, not a single day has passed without outages, making the city life unbearable.

Frequent power cuts at both day and night amid the scorching heat and sweltering humidity has virtually crippled the life of city people.

Sanyat Hossain, a candidate of

MW in the city due to the extreme hot weather while the current supply is 1,100 to 1,200 MW, leaving a shortage of around 600 to 700 MW each day.

Although Desa is obliged to reserve around 150 to 200 MW of electricity for the VIP areas, even that has become virtually impossible under the current conditions, said an official from Desa seeking anonymity.

The trickle-down effect of the power outages is hampering pro-

"Power goes out almost once in every two hours, and once it does it would not come back before at least another hour or so," said Shamim. "It is obviously hampering the business but I cannot feel enough compassion for the drivers and their passengers who have to wait for all those hours in this heat to refuel their cars with CNG."

The power failures in the recent weeks have also put its mark on the health care sector, stalling the operations of a good number of



Loadshedding cripples many business including an ice factory in Swarighat.

SHAFIQ ALAM

the ongoing Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination from Wari, said: "The situation has just become infuriating to unbearable. Due to power outages, my results might not turn out to be as good as I expect."

Exasperated with the load-shedding, Mohammad Hafeez from Rampura told this correspondent that he has not been able to sleep properly for the last few days.

"Although we are pretty much used to the load-shedding, things have become utterly intolerable for the past week or so. I could not sleep the whole night yesterday with the electricity going off in every hour or so throughout the night," said Hafeez.

Residents of Swaribagh, Golapbagh, Jashimuddin Road, East Rampura, Shantinagar, Chowdhurypara, Malibagh, Bashabo, Madartek, Khilgaon, Puaran Paltan, Mirpur, Shankar, Mohammadpur, Tejgaon and Paribagh are the worst sufferers.

According to sources from Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa), daily demand of electricity during this time of the year rises from around 1,500 MW to 1,800

duction in factories as well as office works. Mechanical engineering shops, laundry, motor workshops, medical clinics, computer compose centres and CNG refuelling stations are the worst victims.

Fish preservation has become very difficult due to shortage of ice as the factories cannot produce required amount of ice needed for preservation. Fish traders are facing severe difficulties in preserving fresh fish supplies coming from different districts.

Shahadat Hossain, owner of a laundry store at Gopibagh, said power went out just 5 minutes after he opened his shop at 10:00am on Wednesday. Electricity came back at around 12:30pm only to go out again after 5 minutes, for another hour of outage.

"There is a huge pile of clothes lying out there and I cannot iron them due to load-shedding. And now all my infuritated customers are reproaching me," said Hossain.

Shamim, an employee of Canada-Bangla CNG workshop, a gas refuelling station in Karwan Bazar, told this correspondent that they have to keep the station closed almost half the day due to the power outages.

health and diagnostic centres in Dhaka.

Although most of the privately owned medical diagnostic centres are equipped with power generators, a vast number of other private clinics and public hospitals that are facing severe complications in their daily operations.

Tanvir Alam, a retired government official, who suffered a heart attack Tuesday night, was rushed to a diagnostic centre at Paribagh, only to find the centre closed for outages.

Alam was in urgent need of a computerised tomography scanning and his family rushed him to another diagnostic centre in Elephant Road and found the area completely blacked out for load-shedding. Finally, they were lucky enough to get tests done at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital that night.

"We had to spend around four hours for the CT-scan that night, and thank to the almighty that the power did not go out during that time," said Nadia Sultana, daughter of Alam.

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The Satgumbad Mosque is situated at Mohammadpur, close to the Mohammadpur colony. The former name of this place was Jafarabad. The mosque was built by Nawab Shaista Khan. The date plaque of the mosque has disappeared but stylistically it can be dated to the later half of the 17th century A.D.

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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.

"It was my mistake. I even did not go through the file before signing it"

-- Lutfozzaman Babar

Former state minister for home Told investigators on the controversial purchase of 1,970 vehicles involving Tk 121 crore from the government coffers and a huge counterpart fund from a donor agency, on Thursday. Source: The Daily Star

"The present caretaker government is the result of our movement but ironically the sword is now pointed towards us"

-- Sheikh Hasina

Awami League Chief Told reporters at her Sudha Sadan residence in Dhanmondi on Monday night. Source: The Daily Star

"Since we have not assumed power with the mandate of the politicians we are not bound to follow their instructions"

-- Barrister Mainul Hosein

Law Adviser Told reporters at the PID auditorium, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star

"Of the 50 apartment buildings the company built, only one is faulty. This is not much"

-- Shahadat Hossain

Media Manager, Amin Mohammad Foundation (AMF) Told a reporter following cracks in a Dhanmondi apartment of AMF which experts termed as 'terribly flawed', on Monday. Source: The Daily Star

"I cannot remember the name of the company from where I did the soil test, but I did it"

-- Atikullah Khoka

Contractor of a faulty building in the Dayaganj sweeper colony Told a reporter over phone, on Monday. Source: The Daily Star

"The prices of essentials are comparatively lower than those of the neighbouring countries"

-- Mirza Azizul Islam

Finance Adviser Told reporters after a meeting of Social Compliance Forum for RMG at the commerce ministry, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"So far we can say that it is just a rumour"

-- Dr Biwas MK Zaman

National Professional Officer (Epidemiology), WHO Told reporters following Indian newspaper reports of sudden outbreak of smallpox in Bangladesh, on Saturday. Source: The Daily Star

Compiled by Durdana Ghias

BIWTA floating dockyard rusting for seven years

Towed to Dhaka from Barisal seven years ago to catch up with the booming dockyard trade, BIWTA even fails to kick-start the only modern dockyard facility

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

The only floating dockyard installed by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) by the river Buriganga at Gazir Ghat under Shyampur thana is sitting idle for the last seven years.

Absence of dredging, inadequate supply of electricity and insufficient workforce are major reasons behind the inoperable state of this safe docking technology, according to BIWTA officials.

This type of floating dockyard needs a standard river depth for its sinking function while sufficient current is required to drain vessel wastes during the repair work, said experts.

During the then Pakistan era, the German-built dockyard was initially installed in Barisal in 1967 as a feasibility study recommended Barisal as the most suitable place in entire Pakistan for the installation of such dockyard.

BIWTA officials told Star City that the dockyard was brought to the river Buriganga from Barisal in 2001. "Considering huge business potential in Dhaka and Narayanganj, this dockyard with high docking capacity was brought to the river Buriganga," a top official at the dockyard said.

Installation of such a huge facility needs some time and the BIWTA is making arrangements for proper instalment of the dockyard, he added.

About the advantages of a floating dockyard, he said, a floating dockyard takes only two hours for docking and undocking a vessel as opposed to a 'slipway' dockyard that takes at least six days for the same job.

"Unlike the slipway docking system, this docking technology does not damage vessels as it does not pull the vessels onto the dock for repair work," he added.

A power sub station was recently established by the BIWTA



The only floating dockyard of BIWTA sits idle for the last seven years.

submerged dock and the dock lifts up the vessel above water for repair work, he added.

The dockyard however needs a certain depth for dipping under water. This depth is not available at Gazir Ghat, he observed.

BIWTA dredged the dock area recently, but illegal sand and brick traders operating on the riverbank ruined the depth within a short time, he added.

A power sub station was recently established by the BIWTA

to solve the power problem at the dockyard, "but the authorities still need to repair one of the two generators of the dockyard for ensuring continuous power supply," he said adding. The dockyard could be very profitable by repairing privately owned vessels if it was fully functional.

The work began with an estimated cost of Tk 81.27 crore in July 1998 when Awami League was in power. The BNP-led government stopped the work after taking office in 2001. Then the work remained suspended for three years.

After some revisions the gov-

SWADHINATA STAMBHA

Design of glass tower yet to be finalised

DURDANA GHIAS

Construction work of Swadhinata Stambha (Independence Monument) in Suhrawardi Udyan may take a couple of months more to complete as the design of the 100-foot glass tower is yet to be finalised, said officials of Public Works Department (PWD).

Akkas Ali Mollah, superintendent engineer, PWD, and project director of Swadhinata Stambha, said the first phase of the project is expected to be complete within a month.

"First phase of the construction work (without the glass tower) would be completed by June 30. The second phase, which includes the glass tower, may take more time as the design of the tower has not been finalised," he said.

Sources said that almost 90 percent of the monument's work has been done.

But the work is getting delayed due to frequent revisions of its components and budget. It has been dragging on for the last nine years.

The work began with an estimated cost of Tk 81.27 crore in July 1998 when Awami League was in power. The BNP-led government stopped the work after taking office in 2001. Then the work remained suspended for three years.

After some revisions the gov-

ernment revived the project at the end of 2004 curtailing the cost to Tk 76.03 crore. The then prime minister Khaleda Zia hurriedly inaugurated the monument on October 22, 2006 without the glass tower.

According to the original design the height of the tower was 100 feet and the estimated cost of its construction was Tk 1,75 crore. The design was revised in 2001 increasing the height to 150 feet.

The tower's design was changed for the second time in August 2004 lowering the height to 100 feet and the cost to Tk 1.75 crore again.

On the basis of the last revised project proposal (PP), tender was invited four times but no firms responded to the bidding.

The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs had asked the Department of Architecture to plan a 100 feet tower. The PWD estimated that this tower would cost Tk 5.60 crore, much higher than the earlier estimate.

Due to the increase in expenditure the Planning Commission asked the ministry to prepare a fresh PP (project proposal) for the tower.

Sprawling over an area of 67 acres the memorial has been designed to honour all the martyrs and heroes of the Liberation War. It includes murals depicting the history of the war and the struggle for

freedom from 1948 to 1971.

The memorial also includes an underground theatre, an underground museum, an amphitheatre, a display gallery and a decorative fountain.

Suhrawardi Udyan, formerly known as the Race Course Maidan, was selected for the memorial because Pakistan Army surrendered here on December 16, 1971.



An aerial view of Swadhinata Stambha in Suhrawardi Udyan.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered his historical speech of March 7, 1971 on this ground urging all to prepare for a fight to liberate the country.

Frequent visitors to Suhrawardi Udyan said that most parts of the park are open to the public and the overall atmosphere of the park improved. But until the Swadhinata Stambha opens, the park would not get back its glory.

Sohel, a young man who comes regularly to the park, said, "We play cricket, football and golf in the field. We have access to most parts of the park. The overall atmosphere of the park is better now."

SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN