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Major outage hits country

Technicians struggle for hours to fix glitch at national power grid; life, businesses severely disrupted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country yet again suffered electricity blackouts for hours yesterday due to national grid failure.

Power Development Board (PDB) sources said technical glitches in a transmission line at Ashuganj at around 11:45am caused local power units to shut down and soon led to cascading effect on almost all units across the country.

It was the second massive outage in a month after the national grid failed on November 16 in the wake of Cyclone Sidr leaving the nation without electricity throughout the day.

Electricity started coming back on after over two hours. By 10 last

night, the PDB was selectively supplying around 1,800 megawatts against a peak demand of 3,650 MW. Of this, Greater Dhaka was getting 770 MW.

Some areas in the city with a demand of around 1,200 MW on the weekend while a large portion of the country, however, did not have power till filing of this report at around 12:00am.

Earlier in the evening, the power development authorities said they were hoping to supply around 3,000 MW by 10:00pm and thus bring the power situation back to normal.

They said power plants at Ghorashal, Meghnaghat and Haripur were preparing to start generation. But it might take a few hours to bring them on line.

Business activities were severely disrupted due to the power failure that cut off water supply and affected other public utilities.

Hospitals and clinics in the city and elsewhere in the country struggled to cope with the blackouts. Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) officials said they only had the major operations done with the help of generator. But attending other patients properly was quite difficult.

Commuters had hard time finding transports yesterday evening. There were a few CNG-run three-wheelers or cabs on the road as most of them had to queue up for hours for fuel.

With the experience of last month's daylight blackout fresh in memory, people were frantically

calling PDB, Dhaka Electric Supply Authorities (Desa) and other power distribution bodies as well as the media houses, enquiring about the situation.

The power ministry has asked PDB member Transmission and Distribution to find out what caused the grid failure. A team was already off to Ashuganj from where the outage originated. Besides, a committee that was formed to probe the blackout of November 16 was asked to find out the causes here too.

A PDB source said, "It's still not clear to us why the grid failed. However, we do know that it all started at Ashuganj. The plants there were the first to trip and were

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V-Day back amid demand for war criminals' trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation today celebrates the 36th anniversary of its glorious victory over Pakistani occupation forces in the nine-month Liberation War with the demand for trial of the war criminals gathering momentum.

While a grateful nation pays homage to the three million martyrs for their supreme sacrifice for the long-cherished freedom of the motherland, the people imbued with the spirit of Liberation war have united vowing to bring to book local collaborators of the occupation forces.

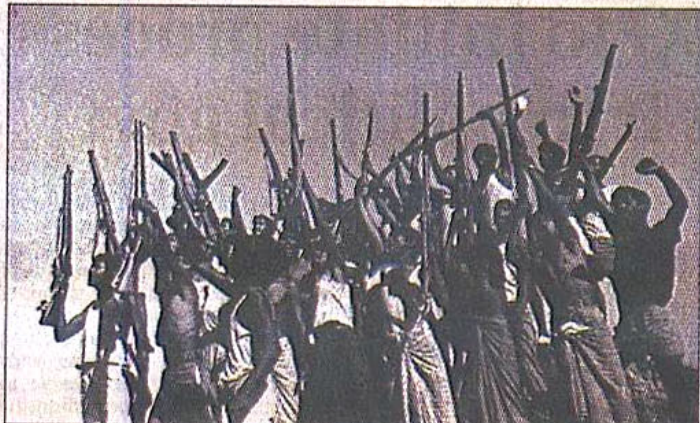
Recent audacious statements by leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami on the war of independence and war criminals made it clear once again that they are still disrespectful of the glorious war.

On this day in 1971, the nation achieved its final victory over the

occupation forces under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with a democratic, exploita-

tion-free and secular state in vision. But even 36 years after the independence, people's expectations

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FILE PHOTO

Jubilation of victory. Freedom fighters fire into the air at the surrender of Pakistani army on December 16, 1971.

INVITATION TO WAR CRIMINALS

President's V-Day party faces boycott

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sector Commanders' Forum and pro-Liberation War political and social organisations will boycott the Victory Day reception party at Bangabhaban hosted today by President Iajuddin Ahmed and his wife, protesting invitation to anti-Liberation War forces.

They have also vowed not to attend any state function to

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Notice

The Daily Star observes holiday today on account of the Victory Day.

However, the newspaper will come out tomorrow (Monday) under special arrangements. Today's 32-page issue includes 12-page Victory Day supplements.

BFB's FIRST MEETING Bodies formed to study 6 crucial areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Better Business Forum in its first meeting yesterday decided to form working committees on six areas to recommend measures for improving the country's business environment and help the economy grow.

To be headed by a co-chairman, these committees will be formed within December 31 with representation from both the public and private sectors and are expected to start working by January next year, a forum member said.

"I am very hopeful. If the committee recommendations are implemented quickly, there will be a positive impact on the country's economy and our growth rate will accelerate," Manzur Elahi, administrator of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said.

The government had appreciated the problems of the private sector, Elahi said after the first meeting of the forum chaired by its head Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office.

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Climate issue linked to development agenda

WB now pledges \$325m for Sidr programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World Bank Vice-president Praful Patel yesterday said the issue of climate change will be mainstreamed into Bangladesh's development agenda while the bank will provide \$325 million to Sidr relief and rehabilitation programmes.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Agriculture Adviser CS Karim, before leaving the country last night, Patel said the World Bank

(WB) preliminarily estimates that the economy of the country will suffer a dent of \$3 billion from the two floods and the cyclone of this year, with oil and commodity price shocks inflicting another \$1.6 billion in damages.

Patel added, "In the absence of any domestic price adjustment, rising oil and fertiliser prices are putting an inordinate fiscal burden on this year's budget." He said the caretaker government is also

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WAR CRIMINALS Constitution offered enough trial scopes

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The constitution provides the government with unlimited power to try the war criminals of 1971 by enacting any laws no matter whether those contradict the provisions of the constitution or not.

First amendment to the constitution in 1973 empowers the government to detain, prosecute and punish any person for war crimes the way it wants but the person cannot enjoy protection of law, protection in respect of trial and

punishment and seek remedy from the Supreme Court (SC) for enforcement of fundamental rights as enshrined in the constitution.

The constitution also empowers the government to hold trial of the war criminals in camera.

With the demand for trial of the war criminals growing, some quarters are skeptical that it would be possible to prove the war crimes due to lack of evidence after such a long period.

Eminent jurists however said the government can resume trial of

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Sector commanders for list of collaborators

SHAMIM ASHRAF

The sector commanders of the Liberation War have demanded drawing up a list of collaborators of the Pakistan occupation forces alongside preparing a complete and authentic list of the freedom fighters.

Though the government had recently said that it has been pondering about making a single list of the freedom fighters, it did not make any positive sign about preparing a list of the collaborators.

"At present, we're concerned only about the list of the freedom fighters," Secretary to Ministry of Liberation War Affairs Abul Kasem

Mahbubul Alam told the reporters on December 9 when asked about listing the collaborators.

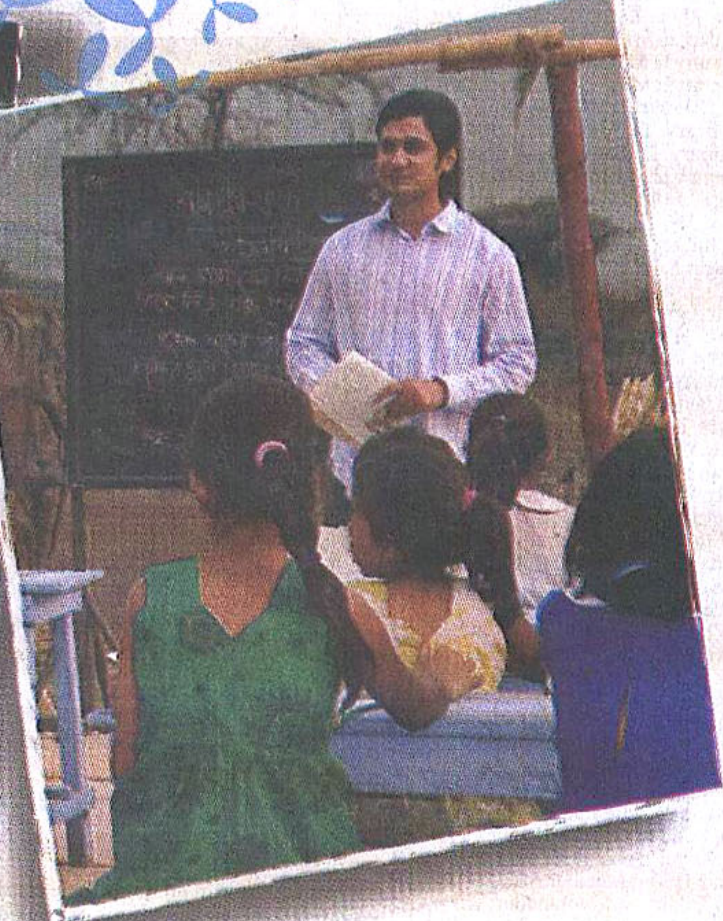
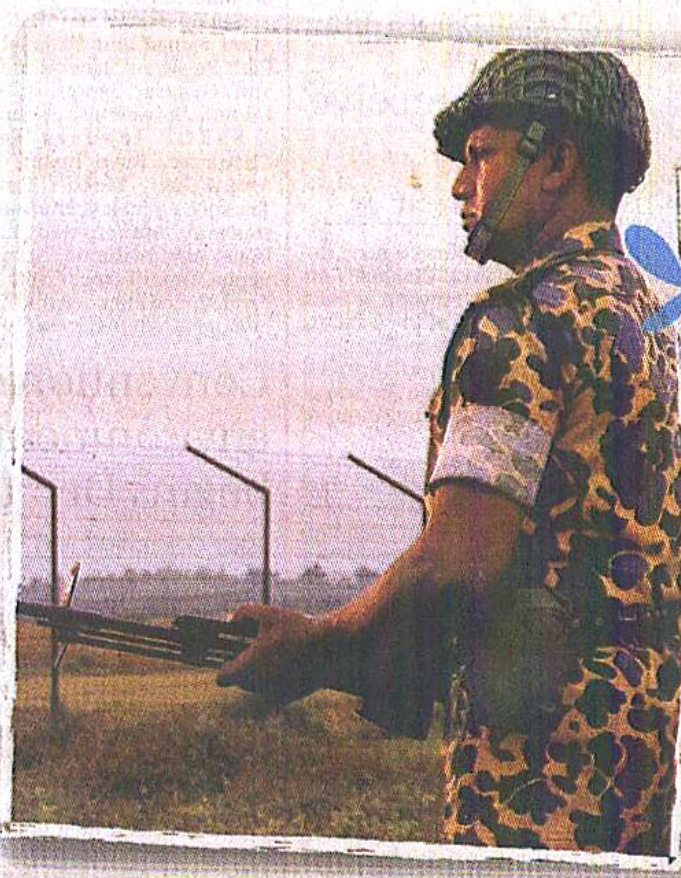
However, the decision to prepare the single list is yet to be finalised.

As the demand for the trial of the war criminals is getting stronger in the wake of recent audacious statements by Jamaat-e-Islami leaders about Liberation War and war criminals, the demand for listing those who had opposed and acted against the Liberation War had also been reiterated.

"It is high time to list the collaborators and try them for their offences. The whole nation is now

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আমরা তোমার নতুন সেনা



আমরা ছাড়া আর কে পারে
দেশকে এমন করে ভালোবাসতে

গ্রামীণফোন