

Power outage starts creeping back

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Power outage has started creeping into the lives of city dwellers from the very beginning of summer though the authorities hope to provide better service this year.

With the SSC examination beginning today thousands of examinees in the port city expect uninterrupted supply of power during the examination to continue their study properly.

Students said their preparation are badly affected due to the frequent outage that begin every evening, forcing them to study by candlelight amid scorching heat.

Chittagong has experienced around 114MW of loadshedding during the peak hours on March 22 evening against the demand of 520MW.

Md Mahabub, a resident of Pathantuli area, said such a loadshedding in the early summer indicates a severe power crisis in the coming months.

Jahanara Faruq, a housewife of Nasirabad, said they are already facing power cuts almost everyday and god knows what will happen in the coming summer.

Power Development Board (PDB) officials, however, said a better condition prevails in the power sector in the region at present compared to the previous years.

They said eight power-generating units, out of ten, are functioning at three power stations in Chittagong region now. Two units at Shikalbaha Barge-mounted Power Plant are now out of order.

There is no mechanical fault now in the running units, they said.

PDB Chittagong Chief Engineer Md Abul Kashem said 462MW electricity was generated in these units on March 22



Shikalbaha Power Station.

against the demand of 520MW in Chittagong region.

Of the generated electricity, 56MW was supplied to the national grid keeping 406MW for Chittagong on that day, he added.

Sources said the Karnaphuli Hydroelectric Project at Kaptai, with all its five units functioning, is now generating 140MW to 150MW a day against the demand of 230MW due to below water level at Kaptai Lake.

PDB officials said the water level has declined due to less rainfall, causing poor generation of power.

Power generation at two units at Raosan Power plant each with 210MW capacity is not also up to the mark.

An official at PDB Chittagong

office said it is possible to generate up to 360MW electricity at the two units if the supply of required gas is ensured.

But inadequate supply of gas kept both the units limited generating only to 260MW for the last couple of months.

Meanwhile, the lone power generation unit at Shikalbaha (Thermal) plant, which remained closed since January 26 due to shortage of gas supply, resumed its generation on March 19.

But the 60MW unit with highest possible capacity of 40MW to 42MW is now producing only 37MW due to inadequate supply of gas.

One of the two 28MW units at Shikalbaha Barge Mounted Plant became out of order four years

ago while another was forced to suspend generation in January for non-availability of sufficient gas supply, sources at the PDB South Zone said.

Sources said Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Limited (Kafco), which remained closed for months together, is likely to resume soon to worsen gas situation.

Chief Engineer Abul Kashem said they hope to face less pressure this year as some more new plants will start power generation to add to the national grid.

He said they have, moreover, completed repair work in some old lines, transformers and substations in both the city and the region to keep them active in this peak season.

Devotees risk lives to visit hilltop temple

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Journey to the historic hilltop temple at Chandranath Hill in Sitakunda has become risky for the thousands of devotees as well as the visitors from home and abroad during the Chaturdashi Mela due to lack of renovation of the roads and steps to the temple.

The temple popularly known as Chandranath Temple is one of the most holy places for the Hindu community where thousands of devotees and tourists from home and abroad visit during the Mela (fair) that begins at end of February or early March every year.

The historic temple, nearly 1800 feet above sea level with three-kilometer zigzag hilly approach road and over 4,000 stairs, has long been in dilapidated and vulnerable condition posing risk to the devotees due to the indifference of the authorities concerned to the problem.

The temple has not seen any renovation for a decade although the temple committee receives thousands of taka as donations from the devotees and the tourists.

The devotees said they are to trek the long, bumpy, slim approach road and climb the rundown stairs through the hill to reach the hilltop temple, risking their lives.

Different spots of the three-kilometer approach road leading to the temple are now in such a bad shape one will find it difficult to even walk smoothly ahead. Many parts of the road have caved in so dangerously that just one wrong step will toss a tourist or devotee hundreds of metres down the hill within a blink of eye.

About two-third portion of the main road at the foothill,

which is known as 'No-2 Pool' area, has badly damaged with multiple cracks and uneven patches. The culvert that has remained damaged for many years has not been repaired and instead the shrine authorities have placed few bamboos there to make it crossable.

The 4,000 stairs are in deplorable state for long with most of them either broken or dilapidated and hence visitors require a cautious second thought before each of their footstep. Just a wrong step here too may prove fatal for them.

The situation gets worsened during the Shiv Chaturdashi Mela every year when thousands of devotees and tourists from home and abroad come here.

The Shiv Chaturdashi Mela takes place on the temple premises.

Many of the devotees gets injured while trek through the risky road and stairs as the authorities do little or nothing to make them aware of the possible danger during the three-day fair. Sometimes loss of lives in fatal accidents also takes place. Two devotees died in a tragic accident after slipping down the hill this year.

Jadunath Sen, a devotee from Banskhal, said he has been visiting the temple for last 10 years on the occasion of the fair but hasn't seen so far any renovation of the road or the stairs.

Shib Prasad from Boalkhali said a large portion of the stairs could have been renovated in past years if the authorities would have any plan or initiative. They could renovate at least 30 to 40 stairs annually, he added.

Shrine Committee General Secretary Sukhomoy Chakraborty refuting the allegations said the donations

from devotees and tourists have been spent on partial renovation of the temple, stairs, and running the administrative work.

He said Chaturdashi Mela is held at end of February or early March according to the

chaturdashi tithi.

A Sitakunda upazila official said the government has allocated Tk 5 lakh for the infrastructure development of the temple recently and a tender has already been floated in this regard.



Thousands of devotees climb the rundown stairs to visit the hilltop Chandranath Temple, risking their lives.

theweekthatwas

Seminar on capital market held

The three-month training programme on "Capital market" began in the port city on Sunday organised by Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) for the graduates and investors.

CSE President Nasir Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury inaugurated the programme at the CSE conference room as the chief guest.

Island Securities Limited General Manager Mohammad Mohiuddin discussed on "Capital Market in Bangladesh: Concept and Structure" while the CSE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) AB Siddique delivered the

address of welcome. CSE Director Bijan Chakrabarty, General Manager and Compliance Department Chief Mohammad Atiquzzaman, Systems Department Chief Abdul Motaleb and Deputy Manager Kamal Uddin Jalal were present at the programme.

Dental check-up programme held

Unilever Bangladesh Limited (UBL) organised a dental check-up programme for its employees and members of their families at Kalurghata Factory on Sunday.

The Company General Factory

Manager Rajib Barua inaugurated the programme titled "Pepsodent Dental Check-up" as the chief guest in the morning.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony Rajib said UBL organises several educational, health and recreation programmes for its officials, employees and their family members every year.

He said through the programmes the children of their families will be aware of different issues and able to express their latent talents.

Assistant Activation Manager AHM Hasan, Employees Union President AM Shahidul Alam and General Secretary Salim Anayet spoke at the function with Chief Factory Medical Officer Dr Syed Didarul Haque in the chair.

Senior Buying and Export Manger

Muslim Uddin, Soap Finishing Manager Ziaul Abedin, Factory Medical Officer Dr Imam Hossain Sobhani, Dr Fida Hasan and Mohammad Sahabuddin also attended the programme.

Community police to help reduce crime

Speakers at a meeting on Thursday said community police is an associate organisation of police and if this could be established everywhere of the country the crime would decrease.

They called upon all to cooperate with police at the meeting on "Community Police Committee" in the Halishahar 'A' Block and New 'A' Block areas in the port city.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Assistant Commissioner Mohammad Iltutmish was the chief guest at the meeting with local female Ward Commissioner Ferdous Ara Taher in the chair.

Halishahar Police Station Officer in-Charge (OC) Khondaker Rezaul Hasan, Social Worker Abdul Khalek Bhuiyan, Mohammad Selim, Tajul Islam and Golam Zamdani Jony also spoke at the meeting.

Workshop to heal scars of Sidr-hit people

Speakers on Saturday said sociodrama and sociometry is an effective work strategy for healing the psychosocial health of the Sidr-hit people.

Sociodrama and sociometry is one of the main processes of psychotherapy and it has been playing a vital role to address the scare, which affected the children's mind seriously during the cyclone, they said.

They were addressing at the inaugural session of a four-day workshop on "Using Sociodrama and Sociometry to Heal Persons Affected by Cyclone Sidr" at Karnaphuli HRDI in the port city. Bangladesh Therapeutic Theatre Institute (BTTI) organised the work-



Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed inaugurates the annual prize giving ceremony of the book reading programme organised by Bishwa Sahitya Kendra at Municipal Model High School on Friday.

shop. UNICEF Bangladesh Programme Communication Specialist (Education Section) Saydul Haque Milky inaugurated the workshop while American Society for Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama Board Member Dr Herb Proper and Melbourne Psychodrama Institute Trainer Danielle Forer conducted the workshop.

CU accounting deptt reunion held

Reunion of Chittagong University (CU) Accounting and Information Systems Department was held amid enthusiasm and recollection of memories on Saturday.

Hisab Biggyan Samity, an organisation of the former students of the department, organised the programme

at the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) Chittagong auditorium.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr M Badul Alam was present as the chief guest in the programme with the Samity President Prof Dr Manjur Morshed Mahmud in the chair.

Hundreds of former students gathered at the venue with their families and passed the time recalling memories of their student life.

A discussion meeting, cultural function and raffle draw were also held. Prof Amal Bhushan Nag was the special guest in the programme while other teachers of the department and university attended it.

Workshop on TB

A daylong workshop on Tuberculosis (TB) was held on Thursday organised by TB Control Project of Nishkriti under the

National TB Control Project at JM Sen High School in the port city.

Chittagong Civil Surgeon Office Programme Organiser Golam Mustafa Chowdhury was the chief trainer with Nishkriti President DK Sarker in the chair.

Bangladesh Teachers' Association Chittagong Regional Unit President AKM Abdul Wahab Chowdhury was the main speaker while Sunil Chakrabarty, Muhammad Emdadul Alam, Mohammad Jahurul Islam, Shanti Ranjan Chakrabarty also spoke at the workshop.

Reception to freedom fighters

Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) Chittagong Chapter accorded reception to 13

freedom fighters on the eve of the Independence Day at Chittagong Press Club auditorium in the port city on Saturday.

ADAB Central Treasurer Abdul Matin was the chief guest at the reception with ADAB Chittagong Chapter President SM Nazer Hossain in the chair.

Freedom fighter Anil Chakrabarty, Abu Taher Bangalee, Jahur Lal Paul, local daily Suprabhat Bangladesh Peshajibi Samannaya Parishad President Dr AQM Sirazul Islam, Ward Commissioner Shahidul Alam, District Social Entrepreneurs President Afsar Khan, Bangladesh Freedom Fighters' Chittagong Commander Mozaffar Ahmed, Bangladesh Teachers' Association Chittagong President AKM Abdul Wahab Chowdhury spoke the reception.



Renowned singer of West Bengal Moushumi Bhoumik sings a song at a programme organised by Theatre Institute Chittagong (TIC) on Sunday evening.