



No respite from power crisis this year

Daylight saving plan last hope for improving situation

SHARIER KHAN

Scorching heat and irrigation pressure have pushed the "official" power demand up to 5,050 megawatt (MW) while failure of some rental power projects to launch operations deepened the ongoing power crisis.

The official power demand would hit 5,300-5,400 MW in June-July, said sources in the Power Development Board (PDB). The unofficial demand, which is already 6,000 MW, would hit 6,300-6,400 MW.

"This would mean that the present official load-shedding of 1,200 MW to 1,500 MW would shoot up to 1,500 MW to 1,800 MW. The unofficial load-shedding would be more than 2,200 MW," said a source.

The four-month old Awami League government is still studying the energy sector to find the best solutions, a top source of the energy ministry said.

"Nothing is what it seemed before. We are running short of gas and we can not pursue large power projects like Sirajganj or Meghnaghat-2 and -3 without ensuring primary source of energy," the source said.

This scenario is worsened by the failure of four rental power projects, with 155 MW capacity, to come into operation by February. These projects were originally supposed to come into operation last year. Their failure upset the government's target of adding 742 MW power to the total output by June.

With persistent gas crisis, which keep affecting 550 MW to 700 MW power generation, the only way some respite can be offered to the country is to introduce Daylight Savings system from June.

"We are trying to scientifically map the peak hours," says Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, adviser to the prime minister on energy ministry, adding, "We see that

load-shedding often takes place much ahead of the peak hours."

He added that the calculation is yet to be done on how much power could be saved by the one extra hour of day light saving. But it would surely be beneficial and would cut cost in other sectors, imposing a lifestyle change. "But the benefits outweigh the disturbances," he said.

The energy ministry sought opinions of 18 other ministries earlier this month on this matter. "Most of the feedback is positive," Chowdhury noted.

A PDB official said, "I don't see why we have to think so much about introducing this system. Many countries around the world—including Sri Lanka—have daylight savings system. If there was no benefit in it, none would have followed it year after year."

He added that introduction of daylight



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Harvest of boro crops begins in Keraniganj on the outskirts of the capital. Even though this is usually a happy time for most farmers, the farmer of this bumper harvest was yesterday concerned with dropping paddy prices.

Upazila Parishad law goes against SC verdict

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Provisions of the newly-enacted Upazila Parishad Act, 2009, that empower lawmakers to meddle with the functioning of upazila parishads, go against a Supreme Court (SC) verdict.

"The members of parliament are entitled to ask for any information and raise grievance against any of their electorates before the House but cannot interfere with the local administration," asserted the SC in the verdict delivered on April 27, 2006.

The new Upazila Parishad Act empowers local lawmakers to interfere in the administration of the parishads as the law made them advisers to the parishads in their constituencies and the parishads have to "accept the

suggestions of the lawmakers".

Moreover, the parishads are not allowed to send development plans to the government for implementation without recommendations from lawmakers.

Elected representatives of the upazila parishads have been demanding the scrapping of some provisions of the act so that the parishads could work independently.

The SC's April, 2006 verdict said the scheme of the constitution is that the members of the parliament and the ministers would perform their functions centrally, keeping in broad view the necessity of the country as a whole while functioning of the local government bodies envisaged under Articles 59 and 60, shall be confined to the needs of the local area.

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Criminals open fire at RMG factory

3 security men shot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three security guards of a garment factory sustained bullet injuries as a gang of unidentified criminals sprayed bullets on them in the city's Pallabi yesterday.

The injured were identified as guard supervisor Abdul Aziz, 50, guards Kawsar, 25, and M Amzar Hossain of Epyllion Knitwear Ltd at sector 7 on Road-6 in Pallabi.

The injured were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The condition of Azad was stated to be

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MEETING WITH PM Kawmi madrasa leaders to help govt fight militancy

UNB, Dhaka

Kawmi madrasa leaders yesterday promised to help the government in identifying the patrons of militancy and bringing them to book.

The madrasa leaders under the banner of Bangladesh Kawmi Madrasa Education Board were speaking at a view-exchange meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Jamuna in the evening.

They decided to withdraw their rally scheduled for April

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Steps taken to up PM's security

Ministers say as Indian media reported warning of 'assassination attempt'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken necessary measures to ward off terror attacks following India's warning of plots to assassinate top political leadership including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday told reporters, "We have asked the law enforcement and intelligence agencies to be on high alert so that no-one can harm the prime minister. Besides, people will always be there to resist the schemes—be they local or international."

Sources close to the Prime Minister's Office said the

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Administration limps as reshuffles go on

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The civil administration saw widespread changes including making many officers OSDs (officer on special duty) in the first 100 days of Awami League (AL)-led grand alliance government, hampering smooth functioning of the bureaucracy, and governance as a whole.

Although the new government took a few praiseworthy steps since the assumption of office early January, many believe fair and

professional handling of the bureaucracy could have resulted in better governance.

Activities in Bangladesh Secretariat, the administrative hub of the country, have almost come to a halt due to lack of assertiveness and commanding skills of most of the ministers. An increasing number of contractual appointments to key positions also hampered the functioning of the administration.

Many ministers and bureaucrats believe

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CHAINED FOR SAFETY... Eight-year-old Chanmukh Basak was born free. Although her father deserted her mother Soma Basak while Chanmukh was still young, Soma didn't give up hope. She took up a job in a garment factory in the city to support herself and Chanmukh. But because Soma lives alone and doesn't have anyone to babysit her daughter while she is at work, she chains her daughter in the tiny compound of their abode in Enayet Bazar, Goalpara to ensure that the little girl doesn't get lost in the "big, bad" city. Chanmukh is unchained only on the days her mother gets a holiday. On those days, she is able to move "freely" with her playmates, seen in the picture.



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

JMB TORTURE VICTIMS MP's men return two cheques

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Local Awami League (AL) lawmaker's men in Bagmara yesterday returned only two cheques, each worth Tk 1 lakh, out of 19 they took away after prime minister's adviser HT Imam on Wednesday distributed those among the victims of Bangla Bhai-led gangs.

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Muhith to announce bailout plan today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith today is going to announce the much-expected recession package for the industries affected by the global melt-down.

The package would be announced before the press at the ministry conference room at 11:30am.

The minister held a meeting with the high officials on

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Cyclone Bijli fizzles out with no major damage: 5 killed

STAR REPORT

Life was returning to normal in the coastal districts and the Chittagong and Mongla ports and Chittagong airport resumed operation as the weakened cyclone Bijli turned into a land depression yesterday morning.

Bijli hit Chittagong-Cox's Bazar coast at around 7:30pm Friday, weakened gradually with rainfalls and fizzled out yesterday morning as it entered Rangamati.

Though there were no major casualties or damages, five people were killed during the cyclone in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong and Noakhali Friday night, while 12 people were injured, said Deputy Secretary for Food and Disaster Management Sultanul Islam at a press briefing yesterday.

As much as 1,200 hectares of standing boro crops and houses were damaged and thousands of trees uprooted in strong wind, Islam added.

The almost 24-hour power snap caused due to damages to power transmission lines in Bandarban was repaired yesterday evening. People who took shelters in the cyclone centres began returning home.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Secretary Syed Farhaduddin Ahmed said, "All the vessels that were sent to safe points at the outer anchorage are being brought to the jetties."

No damage was marked at the port, he added. About 6,000 fishing trawlers returned safely from the sea before the cyclone hit the coast, said Mujibur Rahman, president of Cox's Bazar Boat Owners Association, reports A Correspondent in Cox's Bazar.

Deputy Commissioner Monzur Alam Bhuiyan said about 3 lakh people were evacuated from the coast and taken to 534 shelter centres. More than 4,000 volunteers and 107 medical teams were on hand to face the disaster, the DC added.

Those who took shelter in different cyclone centres started returning home Friday midnight.

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Govt mulling smaller PMO

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is mulling over reducing the manpower of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), private television channel desh.tv reported yesterday.

At present, 93 persons are serving in different posts of the PMO, including advisers, secretaries and directors.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam yesterday said though the government did not take any

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31 Hizb-ut Towhid men sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A Kushtia court yesterday sent to jail 31 Hizb-ut Towhid men, including its regional chief, who were arrested on Friday.

Police prayed for placing the Islamist militants on a seven-day remand, and the court fixed today for hearing it.

Earlier on Friday, they were arrested from Hizb-ut's office 'Pathar Disha' at Barabazar in the town during a secret meeting there.

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Congratulations



Mr. Mohammad Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan, Chairman of Meghna Group is seen receiving the award from the Chief Guest Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed, Governor, Bangladesh Bank.

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