

Frequent power outage, water crisis paralyse life in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Acute crisis of water compounded by frequent power outage has made the city life quite unbearable as four out of six power plants of Khulna Power Station (KPS) remain inoperative for long.

The 60-megawatt power plant was shut down from July 5, 2006, while another 110-MW plant has remained out of order since March 31 this year both due to major technical glitches.

On the other hand, the two barge-mounted power plants were also shut down early this year for the same reason.

The residents have been experiencing load-shedding of over 12 hours a day on an average in the last two weeks.

Source close to KPS said only 335 MW of electricity was

supplied against the total need for 628 MW on April 23 in 10 districts of Khulna division.

As a result, the dwellers are facing frequent power cut, voltage fluctuation and electricity shortage at brief intervals, creating widespread discontent among them.

The smooth production at mills and factories is also being seriously hampered.

Sources of Khulna unit of Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters' Association said huge quantity of processed export quality shrimps preserved at the factories have already got rotten due to severe power interruption.

According to chief engineer of KPS, there is no possibility of improvement of this alarming situation unless and until 110 MW and 60 MW plants are put into power generation to help resolve the crisis.

KPS is providing electricity at this crisis period after taking 200 megawatt from national grid and different power plants under West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited, he added.

On the other hand, crisis of drinking water in almost all places of the city has now taken an acute turn as Khulna Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) can meet only 40 percent of the total demand of the people.

But the Wasa sources claim that they are meeting at least 50 percent of the total demand.

The total demand for water in the metropolitan city per day is 24 crore litres. But Wasa is not able to supply more than 10 crore litres a day. As a result, vast areas of the city are still out of the Wasa network due to manifold reasons.

Fire in three factories in city

Seven injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire broke out in three separate factories in the city yesterday, leaving at least seven workers injured.

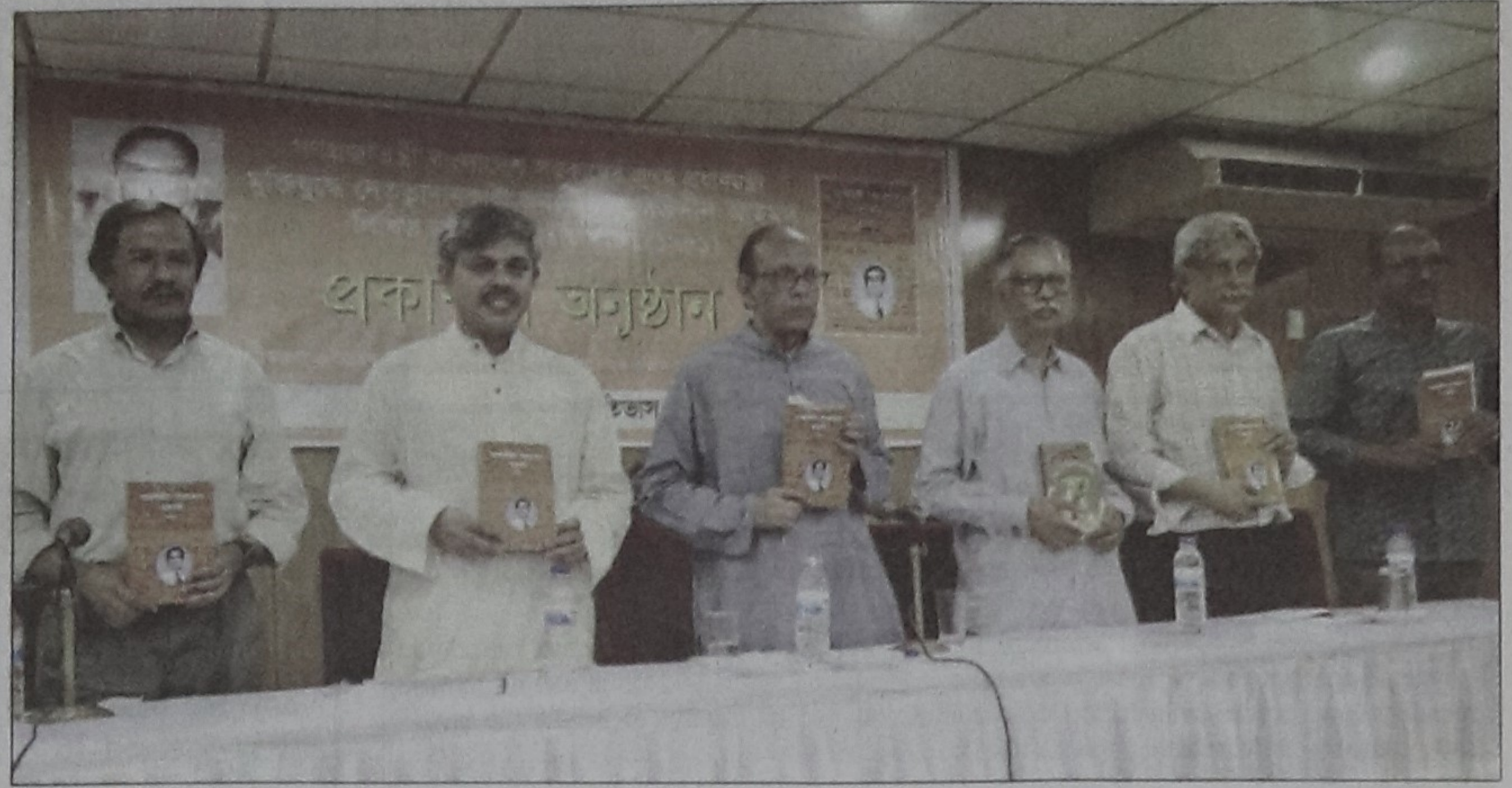
The seven workers were injured in a fire at Balaka Blade Factory at Tejgaon industrial area in the evening. Other fire incidents took place on the 3rd floor of ABM Garments at Mirpur 14 in the afternoon and at a sandal factory at Shyampur early yesterday.

Fire brigade sources said a fire started at a rooftop tin-shed storeroom of the blade factory at around 6:10pm. Three units from Tejgaon fire stations rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control at around 7:00pm.

Police said injured seven workers of the factory were rushed to Mohakhali Metropolitan Hospital.

Two firefighting units of Mirpur fire stations brought the fire of the garment factory under control. There was no report of casualties but some cloths were burnt in the incident, fire brigade sources said.

Shyampur police said a fire gutted a tin-shed sandal factory at around 12:10am and several units brought the flame under control after a one-hour effort.



Guests hold copies of a book titled 'Tajuddin Ahmed's Diary' (third part) at its publication ceremony at the Planning and Development Academy auditorium in the city yesterday. From left are Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam, Anisul Haque, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, Justice Gholam Rabbani, Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and litterateur Zakir Talukdar.

PHOTO: STAR

Call for more budgetary allocation for education sector

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon, also the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on education, yesterday said it is necessary to increase budgetary allocation in the education sector.

He urged all to work for increasing the literacy rate to this end as the country's development and progress depend on education.

He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of an education fair at the chief

The two-day fair showcasing early childhood care and development (ECCD), pre-primary, primary and literacy materials began at Residential Model College playground at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday.

Organised jointly by Plan Bangladesh, Unesco, Unicef, Save Alliance and Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), the fair is a part of Global Action Week (GAW) 2009 being observed from April 20-26.

CAMPE in collaboration

with its partners has been organising different events to observe GAW 2009 at national and local levels. Every year the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) marks the week in April across the world.

Rashed Khan Menon said the issue of mass literacy is involved with the development and poverty reduction of the country.

Around 48 percent people live below the poverty line in the country and these people are deprived of basic education, he said adding that condition of women is more

vulnerable though they are the driving force of micro-credit.

Tasneem Athar, deputy director of CAMPE, said it is not possible to alleviate poverty without proper education and literacy as it taps potential of the people and also increase the ability to take decisions.

She hoped that the government make education its highest priority in the upcoming budget.

Azizul Haq, director-in-charge of CAMPE, and representatives of Plan Bangladesh, Unesco, Unicef and Save Alliance also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Nari Pakkho, a women's rights organisation, render songs at a meeting in memory of Nasreen Huq, former country director of Actionaid and a human rights activist. The organisation arranged the event at its office in the city yesterday to mark the third death anniversary of Nasreen.

Student beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A student of master's degree was beaten to death at Ekrampur in Narayanganj last night following a quarrel during a cricket match.

The victim was identified as Sohel, 24, a student of Haraganga Degree College in Munshiganj. His family lives in the CSD Godown staff quarters in Narayanganj.

The quarrel between Sohel and some local youths took place during the cricket match in the afternoon, the police said.

The youths again attacked Sohel in the area at about 8:30pm and beat him up. Critically injured Sohel was rushed to Narayanganj 200-bed Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

'Fix price of IRRI paddy at Tk 750 per maund'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Krishak Samity demanded the government fix the price of IRRI paddy at Tk 750 per maund.

In a statement on Thursday, Samity President Ahmedur Rahman Azmi and General Secretary Morshed Ali said farmers are incurring a huge loss since the present market price of IRRI ranges between Tk 300 and Tk 350 while the production cost ranges between Tk 450 to Tk 500.

If the present trend of price continues, farmers would lose interest in growing rice in future, which eventually would threaten the food security, they added.

The leaders also demanded budgetary allocation for establishment of more godowns in the country.



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

A visually impaired person demonstrates the use of Braille typewriter at a stall of Sightsavers International at an education fair at the Residential Model College in the city yesterday. The fair was organised as part of Global Action Week-2009.

World Malaria Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Malaria Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe today with the theme 'Counting malaria out'.

Malaria causes more than one million deaths across the world.

The day was designated to raise awareness among the people and join the fight to wipe out the deadly disease from the world.

Health and family welfare ministry with Brac and other organisations have chalked out special programmes at 70 upazilas in 13 malaria-prone region of the country.

The programmes include seminar, rally, street drama, folk songs and health camps.

As part of the programme a discussion meeting will be held at Rangamati Tribal Cultural Institute Auditorium at 10:00am today.

Jyotirindra Bodhiprio Larma, chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, will attend the programme as chief guest while Health and Family Welfare Secretary Sheikh Altaf Ali will be the special guest.

At Khagrachhari, a procession will be brought out from the Shilpakala Academy at 7:30am. It will be followed by a discussion at 10:00am at the same venue.

The Bandarban district authorities will bring out a procession from the Deputy Commissioner's office at 7:30am. It will be followed by a discussion at the office of the Civil Surgeon at 10:00am.

Similar programmes will be held in Cox's Bazar, Moulavibazar and Sunamganj.

Khulna Wasa chairman resigns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Liakat Ali has stepped down as the chairman of Khulna Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) citing his inability to provide the city dwellers with desired services.

He is also the editor of the Dainik Purbanchal and president of Khulna Divisional Press Club Federation.

Liakat in his resignation letter submitted on Monday said it would not be possible for him to live up to the people's expectations.

"I had taken the responsibility as the first chairman of Khulna Wasa with a view to modernising as well as making it an effective one. But since my takeover, it has appeared to me that it would not be possible for me to make Khulna Wasa a service-oriented body," he said.

The caretaker government appointed Liakat the first chairman of the newly established Wasa on September 1 last year.

Formulate policy to check dust pollution

Speakers urge govt

BSS, Dhaka

Dhanmondi area joined the programme, said a press release.

Speakers at the meeting said dust pollution is a severe threat to public health apart from archaeological objects.

They said a large number of people have been suffering from various diseases like asthma, tuberculosis and bronchitis due to dust pollution.

Eminent Architect Prof Dr Shamsul Wares, Chairman of Save the Environment Movement and Council for Prevention of the Dust Pollution at Dhanmondi. Earlier, a road sweeping programme was held from Road No 4/A to Abahani Ground.

A large number of people including students and teachers of different universities of

Speakers at a meeting yesterday called upon the government to formulate a policy and implement it properly to check dust pollution in the city.

They also urged government and non-government organisations to create mass awareness about dust pollution and its adverse impact on health.

The meeting was organised jointly by Save the Environment Movement and Council for Prevention of the Dust Pollution at Dhanmondi. Earlier, a road sweeping programme was held from Road No 4/A to Abahani Ground.

A large number of people including students and teachers of different universities of



PHOTO: STAR

Save the Environment Movement takes out a procession at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday to raise awareness about dust pollution.

1,742 bottles of Phensidyl seized, two arrested

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 1,742 bottles of Phensidyl syrup were seized in Savar and Dinajpur and two drug peddlers were arrested on Thursday.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members in a drive arrested two drug peddlers along with 1,107 bottles of Phensidyl from Maniknagar Balur Math Mahalla in Savar.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab conducted the drive and arrested drug peddlers Anwar Hossain and Syemuddin. A case was filed.

In another anti-drug drive in Dinajpur, BDR jawans recovered 635 bottles of Phensidyl from a bus at Birampur Rail Gunti area on Dinajpur-Gobindaganj road.

Sources said the jawans of Katla BDR special camp raided the Dhaka-bound bus of Salma Paribahan from Parbatipur and recovered the Phensidyl packed in seven cartons.

None was arrested in this connection.

The Daily Star

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