

## Darkness deepens

Patients suffer as DMCH, other hospitals face severe load-shedding

STAR REPORT

The ongoing electricity crisis took heavy toll on the patients as Dhaka Medical College Hospital experienced three hours of power cuts yesterday, causing halt to services and immense sufferings to patients.

The hospital authorities were forced to suspend surgeries and pathological tests. As daylight barely reaches the wards, it was dark there.

Failing to tackle the worsening electricity crisis, the government yesterday directed all electricity consumers to keep their air conditioners switched off from 6:00pm to 11:00pm until further notice.

The suffering of DMCH patients without fans and lights was unbearable. Three emergency and children's wards were also out of power. It was the first such power failure in years that caused services to be stopped.

The backup generators were able to supply electricity to only intensive care sections.

Director of the DMCH Brig Gen Shahidul Haque Mallik admitted the suffering of patients. "But the generator was not... We were able to deliver intensive care... the Intensive Care Unit, Coronary Care Unit, emergency wards and the labour ward had power," he

claimed.

He said they informed Power Development Board of the matter and it assured them of no future power cuts at DMCH.

A large number of patients who went to the outdoor section seeking treatment returned as no pathological tests could be done between 11:30am and 1:30pm.

Akash, a 14-year-old boy, went to DMCH from Rugganj in Narayanganj around 10:00am with his mother.

"The doctor asked me for an x-ray and some blood tests but as there was no power I had to wait two hours. But at 1:30pm when power was restored the authorities at the outdoor section said that it was time for them to close and asked me to come another day," he said.

Hospital sources said hundreds of pathological tests could not be conducted yesterday. Many indoor patients had to go

to different diagnostic centres for their tests.

Power outages have become a usual phenomenon at most city hospitals.

Director of Shaheed Suhrawardi Hospital Mujibur Rahman told The Daily Star, "If the power goes in the morning, x-ray, ultra sonogram and other pathological tests are

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**Govt orders keeping ACs switched off during peak hours**

Discuss with opposition before trial  
Delwar asks govt UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain has said the government should first discuss the trial of the alleged war criminals with the opposition before starting the trial process.

The BNP secretary general made the remarks at a press briefing at his residence in the old part of the city yesterday.

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CAAB asked to explain Mir Kasem's departure Sahara in dark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The civil aviation and tourism ministry yesterday sought explanation from the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) on the departure of Mir Kasem Ali, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader, through the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Civil Aviation Minister GM

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## WAR CRIME TRIAL Evidence collection begins

RASHIDUL HASAN

The investigation agency formed for trying war crimes yesterday visited the Liberation War Museum at the city's Segunbagicha and collected 10 books, booklets and two CDs on war crimes committed during Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971.

Led by chief investigator Abdul Matin, a team of the agency talked with Mofidul Hoque, member secretary and a trustee of the museum, and sought cooperation in collecting documents on the perpetrators of war crimes.

The investigation team went through different newspapers, paper cuttings and other documents related to the Liberation War.

Meanwhile, the government has beefed up security at power, gas, and water supply installations, radio and television stations, important government buildings, and at the courts across the country to thwart any sabotage to hinder the trial of war criminals.

"Along with the regular security system, additional security measures have been taken at these installations," Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder told The Daily Star last night.

In another development, Faridpur police have moved to collect evidence against four alleged high-profile war criminals, including Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed.

"Instructed by the police headquarters, we are working for the prosecution team [of the tribunal] and collecting evidence against four alleged war criminals--Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Abdul Quader Molla, television anchor Abul Kalam Azad Bachchu and Kazi Imdadul Haque alias Ingu Kazi," a high-ranking police officer in

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PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Load-shedding at DMCH. Doctors attend this patient under torchlight. Let's not dare mention life supports for serious patients. This photo was taken yesterday at 4:30pm.

ILLEGAL VOIP Subscribers suffer as 5 operators still shut

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 6.5 lakh customers of five private landline operators have remained offline till yesterday despite the Prime Minister's directive not to shut down their services.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday directed the authorities concerned to fine telephone operators involved in "illegal" VoIP business instead of shutting those down.

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## Crime gangs grip city

Dakat Shahid leads the largest gang; around 100 extortionists groups, 21 professional assassins are active

MUKHLESUR RAHMAN

Extortions and killings in the capital by crime syndicates have reached such a level that quarters of the society that used to be unquestionably safe are also no more immune to becoming victims.

From roadside tea stall owners to members of the parliament, successful entrepreneurs, and home or land owners -- none are spared by the gangs led by dreaded criminals. Dakat Shahid leads the largest gang, according to law enforcers.

On an average, twenty persons were killed in the capital each month in connection with extortion efforts in the last six months, according to Dhaka Metropolitan Police sources.

Around 100 extortion gangs operate in the city, 12 of which are very big with the names of their chiefs on the most wanted list of the law enforcers, the sources said.

Most of the chiefs of the big gangs are currently hiding abroad or in jail, but their gangs have already become so efficient in their operations that the chiefs are still being able to run the rackets from wherever they are.

Some of the most notorious gangs are led by Dakat Shahid, Shahadat, Subrata Bain, Jishan, Tanvirul Islam Joy, Sweden Aslam, Prakash and Bikash brothers, and Ashique.

Sweden Aslam is currently in jail while his extortion operation is still on in Tejgaon industrial area.

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Business tycoon gave shelter to killers

Dakat Shahid's men tell DB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday claimed of getting important information from Dakat Shahid's two accomplices who killed the Dhaka City Corporation ward councillor Ahmed Hossain, also a Jubo Dal leader.

Dakat Shahid, now absconding in India, had instructed the two -- Nazimuddin Ahmed and Biddyat -- to kill Ahmed Hossain and goldsmith Prem

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