

## Darkness deepens

**FROM PAGE 1**  
severely hindered. In the morning, a huge number of patients through the hospital and we cannot tell them go away."

Miseries of city dwellers have become unbearable as frequent load-shedding is worsening city life. With the mercury rising, people's suffering seem to multiply.

Power failures are not occurring only in the usual alternate hours during the day, it is taking place deep in the night as well. On Saturday, the government decided to shed 150-200 megawatts of power in Dhaka between midnight and 9:00am to meet the demand for irrigation in this bore season.

### NO AC IN PEAK HOURS

The government yesterday directed electricity consumers to turn off all air-conditioning units between 6:00pm and 11:00pm, the peak hours, with immediate effect.

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission in the directive also asked the consumers not to lower their room temperature below 25 degrees centigrade with their air-conditioning units during the off-peak hours.

All residential buildings, government and non-government organisation offices, business firms, markets and shops were instructed to follow the directives. Hospitals, residential hotels and restaurants have been kept outside the purview of the directive.

BERC Chairman Syed Yusuf Hossain made the decisions public yesterday at a press conference held at the BERC conference room.

Replying to a question on how the commission plans to implement their decision, Yusuf said the commission has currently no wing to monitor whether consumers are complying with the directives.

"The commission is not thinking about punishing anyone for violation of these directives. It is a moral obligation of the consumers to follow the directive for greater interest of the country," Yusuf said.

The chairman, however, said if electricity-supplying companies report to the commission about violations of the directives, the commission may issue warning letters to the consumers.

Clarifying the authority of the BERC, its member Selim Mahmud said the commission could penalise a consumer Tk 2,000 or three months jail or both for violating such directives.

Yusuf said the decisions were made to save a substantial amount of power and ensure uninterrupted power supply to boro cultivators and improve power situation for the SSC examinees.

He claimed electricity production and supply is currently experiencing a critical time due to poor investment in the sector

## Century-old

**FROM PAGE 16**  
He also directed the Public Works Department (PWD) chief architect and the chief engineer to check other structures of the building.

During a visit to the HC yesterday, it was found that the wooden floor, though built over a hundred years ago, still seems to be in a good shape. But it slightly jerks up and down if it takes extra load.

"The floor is not risky yet. But still we are examining it," said the superintendent engineer of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works yesterday.

When the trial would start, three members of the tribunal, prosecution and the defence, local and foreign observers and some other people would be present in the courtroom.

Insiders say the number of the people to be present in the courtroom might be several hundred.

So the government is taking steps for proper maintenance of the wooden floor so that it can bear the weight of a hundred people, the superintendent engineer added.

The historic HC building was originally the ballroom of the official residence of the governor of newly created East Bengal and Assam province following the partition of Bengal in 1905.

As the plan of making East Bengal a separate state was cancelled, the governor's residence later housed the Dhaka Intermediate College and afterwards in erstwhile East Pakistan became the High Court.

The old HC building facade, rising in three receding stages, in a typical European Renaissance style with a prominent porch under a triangular pediment, is supported on Corinthian columns.

Also a graceful dome, carried on slender columns and piers in a ring, crowns the building.

and growing demand. The commission expects that if the decision is fully implemented 200 to 400 megawatts of power could be saved.

The business community expressed mixed reaction to this decision. They said it would only aggravate people's annoyance.

Anis A Khan, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, termed the move unwise and impractical. He questioned the supervising policy of the government.

Shahjahan Bhuiyan, managing director of United Commercial Bank, said the move would cause serious displeasure among people.

"The government could have discussed the issue with the chambers, banks and other trade bodies before making the decision," he said.

President of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Anisul Huq said people generally do not use air conditioners until 10:00am. The monitoring would be very difficult as it takes only seconds to turn on and off air conditioners.

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## 11 AL men

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According to local sources, Moked Ali, president of ward No. 5 unit AL of Salimpur Union, and Montaj Ali Biswas, secretary of the same ward and an influential businessman, worked under the programme designed for extreme poor and drew Tk 120 per day.

Following the order of the upazila administration, Montaj yesterday returned the money, which he took for working in the programme.

"Names of around 300 workers were included in 11 projects under the EGP in Salimpur union. In every project, some ruling party men are working," said Md Israil Mondol, chairman of Salimpur Union Parishad (UP).

However, Salimpur Union AL Secretary Md Babul Malitha, also the secretary of the union committee of EGP, refused the allegation and said the project is going on well. The AL men are involved in some projects to ensure proper work, he added.

"During a primary investigation, we have found 11 workers who are solvent but their names are included in projects of ultra poor in Salimpur union. We asked them to return the money. If we find any more rich man, their names will be excluded," said Md Jakir Hossain, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Ishwardi.

According to upazila project office, over 2,200 ultra poor from seven unions of Ishwardi upazila are working in 63 projects under the EGP this year. "The union project committee recruits the extreme workers. It's not easy to get information about all these people," said Ishwardi U p a z i l a P r o j e c t Implementation Officer Md Rabiul Awal.

The finance minister suggested Petrobangla should send the CNG price hike proposal recommending a 4-times hike so that the Energy Regulatory Commission can deeply consider the price hike proposal.

Energy Secretary Mesbahuddin Ahmed made a presentation on the proposal LNG terminal while PM's Advisor Dr Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury Bir Bikram and State Minister for Power Mohammad Enamul Haque, among others, were present.

## Five Jamaat leaders asked to appear in court Apr 28

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked the Jamaat-e-Islami ameer and secretary general and three others to appear before it on April 28 in connection with a case filed against them for hurting religious sentiment of Muslims.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mehedi Hasan Talukder issued the summons against Matiur Rahman Nizami, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and three others after the plaintiff appealed to the court for issuance of arrest warrants against them.

Secretary General of Bangladesh Tarikat Federation Syed Rezaul Haque Chandpuri filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on March 21.

The case stated that Dhaka City Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Rafiqul Islam Khan compared Nizam to Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) at a discussion in Dhaka on March 17, which hurt the emotions of Muslims.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Abdullah-Al Mamun had fixed yesterday for passing an order on the case.

The three other accused are Jamaat Nayebe Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayeede, Rafiqul Islam Khan and city president of Chhattr Shibir ASMYahia.

Earlier on Monday, the High Court granted anticipatory bail up to April 4 to five Jamaat-Shibir leaders after they appeared before it and sought the bails in the cases filed in Khulna, Chandpur, Rangamati and Lalmonirhat.

The vacation bench of Justice Md Shahidul Islam passed the order and also asked the petitioners to move the bail petitions before a regular bench on April 4.

## Tigers squad

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Masrafe only played the first one-day match against the visitors.

Bangladesh have been placed in Group A with Pakistan and Australia. They begin their campaign against Pakistan in St Lucia on May 1.

## Biman

**FROM PAGE 16**  
launched its new logo and livery as part of its objective to re-brand and revive its image infusing dynamism in service.

The initiative of re-branding was taken during the tenure of caretaker government based on a deal to purchase 10 aircrafts with Boeing, an US aircraft manufacturer.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the new logo and livery on February 3.

Meanwhile, the airline has leased four aircrafts with the new look from different companies while Biman-owned eight are carrying the original appearance.

Insiders believe that the Biman board would go in line with the decision by the cabinet that observed that the new livery does not represent Bangladesh well.

They said it would take time to implement the decision as some aircrafts have been painted with the new logo. But the aircrafts expected to join the fleet will get the original look.

## Muhith suggests

**FROM PAGE 16**  
from Tk 8 in 2008 during the last caretaker government.

The finance minister's directive on the increase of CNG and electricity prices came at a time when the country has been experiencing severe power and gas crises.

Responding to a question on how it would morally be justified to increase power tariff and also the CNG price when the people are not getting minimum power and gas supply, the finance minister said, "Increasing power production and power price will go hand-in-hand. We have to provide a huge subsidy to power sector".

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## CAAB asked

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Quader wanted to know the role of the "on duty" CAAB officials at the airport on that day of Mir Kasem's departure.

"The on duty CAAB officials at the airport alone were not responsible for the incident. It was the duty of the immigration officials to prevent anyone from going abroad," a CAAB high official told The Daily Star last night seeking anonymity.

It was alleged that Kasem Ali, whose name was among the 40 suspected war criminals, left for Saudi Arabia on March 24, a day before the government established the war crimes tribunal and its investigation and prosecution agencies.

However, the government is in the dark about the trace of Mir Kasem Ali, according to Home Minister Sahara Khatun though its high-ups expressed disappointment over the incident. The government also directed authorities to investigate the matter.

She told this yesterday to reporters after a meeting on the ministry's nine directorates' activities at the ministry that she did not know whether

he was in the country or abroad.

When asked about how Mir Kasem left the country for Saudi Arabia, the home minister said she would not be able to say anything before getting the investigation report.

"We asked the investigation agencies to probe the issue," she said.

Sahara however said, "I have seen the news in different newspapers."

About list of the war criminals, Sahara said the investigation agency is probing the issue. "A minister does not prepare a list personally," she added.

State minister for Home Shamsul Hoque Tuku, home secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder and senior officials of nine directorates of the home ministry attended the meeting.

Sahara claimed 42 per cent progress in 31 projects involving Tk 509 crore has been achieved by the ministry.

She said she proposed the government to sanction Tk 487 crore for purchasing vehicles for law enforcement agencies.

## Turkey pledges

**FROM PAGE 16**  
skills and experience, according to PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, who briefed newsmen.

During the meeting, Hasina called upon the Turkish government and entrepreneurs to import Bangladeshi readymade garments, ceramics, pharmaceutical items, leather goods and tea, as the country produces these goods up to international standards.

She informed the outgoing envoy that Bangladesh is already exporting these items to various European countries.

The premier noted that Bangladesh and Turkey are working closely in different multilateral forums, including the UN, the D-8 and the OIC for global peace and stability.

Hasina appreciated the Turkish decision of operating Dhaka-Istanbul flights, as people-to-people contacts have increased in recent times.

She said this would also facilitate trade and business between the two countries.

The Turkish envoy eulogised the dynamic leadership of Hasina and hoped for Bangladesh to turn into a developed country by 2021.

He also expressed gratitude to the government and the people of the country for extending their all out cooperation throughout his stay in Bangladesh.

The premier reiterated

## CEC

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"After receiving the draft from the ministry, a gazette notification will be issued making the rules of business," a senior official said.

The last caretaker government made the EC Secretariat law through promulgation of an ordinance, freeing the secretariat from the control of the Prime Minister's Office and providing it with financial autonomy.

The act had vested the authority to control the EC Secretariat in the CEC alone, but the two election commissioners strongly opposed it and met the then chief adviser to have it changed. The chief adviser termed the act unconstitutional, officials said.

The Awami League-led government ratified the ordinance in parliament in February last year.

As per the rules, a meeting convened by the CEC will not discuss anything that is not on the agenda.

But if there is any emergency, the CEC may allow discussion on such unscheduled issues, says the draft rules of business.

The CEC may also ask for other commissioners' opinions on any issue in writing. "If an election commissioner does not give his opinion in the next two days, it will be presumed that he agrees with the move," it says.

As per the rules, the EC secretary will brief the media as the only authorised representative of the commission and no one else can talk to them if not authorised by the commission.

## Bodies of 21 babies found in a China river

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Project under the Agriculture Ministry, the Establishment of Five Institutes of Marine Technologies at Munshiganj, Faridpur, Chandpur and Bagerhat Project under the Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry, the Strengthening D E S C O ' s E l e c t r i c Distribution Network (revised) Project under the Power Division and the Mobarakpur Oil/Gas Exploration Well Digging (revised) Project under the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry and the Chittagong Wasa's Emergency Water Supply Project under the Local Government Division.

Finance Minister and Alternate Chairman of Ecene AMA Muhith, Planning Minister AK Khandakar, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraf Islam, Law Minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed, Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen, Commerce Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan, among others attended the meeting.

"Penalise those instead of shutting them down so that people get the services," the premier was quoted by a minister as saying at the weekly cabinet meeting held at the Secretariat.

Talking to The Daily Star, Zia Ahmed, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission said, "BTRC has not yet received any direction from the telecom ministry regarding cabinet observation."

The telecom watchdog in a massive drive recently shut down five private land phone operators including RanksTel, Dhaka Phone, National Phone, People's Tel and WorldTel for their alleged involvement in illegal VoIP business.

Among the private landline operators, RanksTel is the market leader with more than 3 lakh subscribers followed by Peoples Tel's 1.6 lakh and National Telecom's 1.38 lakh subscribers. Dhaka Phone has 77,000 subscribers while WorldTel has 14,000.

According to DB police, Biddyt informed that Nazimuddin went to Kolkata and contacted Dakat Shahid to kill the ward councillor.

Asked to comment on Awami League General Secretary and LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam seeking information about war criminals from BNP, Delwar said Ashraf's words were just an "eyewash" for the public.

If they were sincere, they would have had an open discussion about the matter with the opposition earlier, he said.

Like the countrymen, BNP also wants the trial of real war criminals, but they [the government] are not sincere over the matter, he added.

According to Delwar, everyone thinks that the government is preparing a new list of alleged war criminals as it wishes to serve its own political agenda. This creates enough doubt over whether there would be a fair trial, he said.

The press briefing was arranged to protest against the alleged obstruction of BNP leaders and workers from joining the party's grand public rally at Lalidighi Maidan in Chittagong on Monday.

Delwar strongly protested the obstruction, saying the government's "fascist" character has again been exposed following the obstruction.

The BNP secretary general thanked the people of greater Chittagong for making the Lalidighi rally a success defying attacks, obstruction and barricades.

BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi was also present at the briefing.

## Poor performers

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## GRAFT CASE 12 municipal councillors land in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Dinajpur

The Chief Judicial Magistrate Court of Dinajpur yesterday sent 14 officials of Dinajpur municipality including its acting mayor Md Altaf Hossain to jail rejecting their bail prayers in a Tk 62 lakh corruption case.

The other accused, who were sent to jail, are 12 former and incumbent councillors of the municipality and its accountant.

Sheikh Mesbah Uddin, assistant director of Dinajpur Anti-Corruption Commission, filed the case in 2008 against 26 employees of Dinajpur municipality for embezzling Tk 62,32,000.

Chief Judicial Magistrate AKM Fazlul Haque pronounced the verdict.

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## Crime gangs grip

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One of Prakash-Bikash brothers is also in jail while the other is still out in the capital, and running the operation in a part of Tejgaon industrial area, Tejgaon, and Farmgate. Which one of them is in jail was however not disclosed by the law enforcers.

All the rest are currently in India, Dubai, and Nepal -- from where they are successfully running their extortion operations, and getting the loot sent to them on a regular basis, the amount of which is in the crores of taka, the sources said.

Shahadat's area of operation stretches from Mirpur to Dhanmondi.

Subrata Bain and Jishan operate in Bangla Motor, Moghbazar, Malibagh, Shahbagh, Motijheel, and Shegunbagicha areas.

Tanvirul Islam Joy runs his operation in Mohammapur, Dhanmondi, and Hazaribagh areas, while Ashique dominates in Karwan Bazar area.

Dakat Shahid's gang, which operates in the old part of the city, and in Keraniganj across the Buriganga river, has been the largest in the capital since 2005.

Shahid recently made news headlines after his assassins had killed Dhaka City Corporation ward no 70 councillor Ahmed Hossain, and goldsmith Prem Krishna Roy in Old Dhaka on February 9, and March 4 respectively.

Dakat Shahid's gang was hired by a union parishad chairman of Keraniganj for Tk 50 lakh for killing Ahmed Hossain, while Prem was killed by Shahid's assassins as Prem's family had refused to pay Tk 10 lakh demanded by Shahid as extortion.

Law enforcers detected 21 assassins on Shahid's payroll, who kill on orders from their chief.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Sanwar of the Detective Branch (DB) told The Daily Star yesterday that Shahid's professional assassins were identified on the basis of information given by several of his arrested cohorts. Six of the professional assassins are currently behind bars.

He said those assassins already killed 10 persons in the city over the last two years, due to refusal to pay demanded tolls.

Dakat Shahid is currently running his gang from the border area between India and Nepal, according to police.

His gang is over 120 strong who are active mostly in Islampur, Tantibazar, Koratitola, Nawabpur, Sutrapur, Alubazar, Moulvibazar, Patuatali, Gulistan, and some parts of Keraniganj.

DB sources said some entrepreneurs of the city also have become informants for Shahid, just to keep themselves safe from his wrath. They inform Shahid about possible targets in the city.

AC Sanwar said police are currently looking for a middle aged woman who frequently travels to India to meet Shahid. The woman is currently acting as the second-in-command of Shahid's criminal network in the country, Sanwar added.