

# Power crisis to ease in 2 months

Ministers, officials hope 1,800MW additional electricity generation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The perennial power crisis in the country will ease in a couple of months with the addition of 1,800 megawatts (MW) from rental power plants, said ministers and power officials yesterday at a discussion in the city.

Mukto Akash, a magazine on housing, organised the discussion on the crisis in sale of real estate due to government's decision not to give new connections of gas and electricity at Bangladesh Institute of Planners.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed in

his speech as the chief guest said, "The power crisis will be resolved in a couple of months with quick rental contracts of production."

The Power Development Board (PDB) has set the target for generation of 5,500MW by June, including the current production of 3,800MW said ASM Alamgir Kabir, PDB chairman.

Setting up two coal-based 1,320MW power plants and importing 500MW from India are also in the government plan to address the power shortage that has heavy impacts on the economy, he said.

"The total power generation at

present falls short by 800MW, compared to the capacity, due to shortage of gas supply," said Kabir.

A one-third reduction in the present consumption pattern, prevention of wasteful use and efficient consumption would resolve the ongoing loadshedding, he said.

The country has a daily demand for 7,500MW, 3,500MW in the capital alone, said State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Brig Gen (Retd) Mohammad Enamul Haq.

Engineer Md Abdul Awal, former president of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh, in his

keynote paper said around 10,000 apartments could not be sold due to lack of electricity and gas connections last year.

The realtors called for equitable distribution of electricity and not stopping connections as the sector consumes only around 24 to 28MW electricity.

Hossain Monsur, chairman of Petrobangla and Kazi Golam Nasir, general secretary of Institute Architects Bangladesh, also spoke at the discussion chaired by Dr M Anwar Hossain, vice-chancellor of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology.

# 'Prepare urban health strategy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Increased community awareness, continuous care for pregnant women and proper referral system by community health workers can play an important role in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality in urban slums, said speakers yesterday.

They were speaking at a programme titled 'Urban maternal, neonatal and child health initiative: Approaches, challenges and achievements' organised by Brac at its auditorium in the city, disseminating on its Manoshi project under six city corporations.

Representatives of different donor and non-government organisations stressed the need for preparing urban health strategy soon in cooperation with health and LGRD ministry.

Speakers said 57,43,398 people were brought under the project by setting up 418

'birthing huts' in different slum areas, as they are the most at risk due to absence of an Urban Health Strategy.

While presenting the keynote paper, Kaosar Afsana, associate director of Brac Health Programme, said "Maternal mortality ratio was 141 per 100,000 live births at Dhaka slums in 2010, whereas the MDG target is 143 by 2015. Urban neonatal mortality rate is 13 per 1,000 live births while nationwide it is 37."

Dr Timothy G Evans, dean of James P Grant School of Public Health, Brac University, moderated the session.

Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Prof Khandakar Shefayetullah; Mohammad Humayun Kabir, secretary of the health ministry; National Prof M R Khan; Prof MQK Talukder; Prof Latifa Shamsuddin and Prof Nazmun Nahar and Prof Kishwar Azad also spoke.

## One killed, 17 shops gutted in N'ganj fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

At least one person died due to suffocation and two others were injured in a fire that gutted 17 shops at Madanpur area under Bandar upazila of Narayanganj early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Helal, 45, son of Latif Mia of the village and a fruit trader of the area.

Ahsanul Kabir, deputy director of Narayanganj Fire Service and Civil Defense said the fire originated from an electric short circuit in the area adjacent to Islamia SuperMarket.

Helal died on inhaling poisonous gas while he and the two others injured were trying to douse the flames, he added.

On information, two units of fire fighters from Bandar and Demra put out the fire after a one and a half hour effort.

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