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RAJANIKANTA FOREVER
The poet's 150th birth anniversary celebrated at Chhayanaut
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The failure to bring perpetrators to justice creates a vicious cycle
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WHERE IS LORCA'S GRAVE?
To unearth civil war mystery, experts will search Spanish 'killing field'
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BLACKOUT

Without power for 10 hours

Bheramara glitch sorely tests authorities' troubleshooting ability

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The country plunged into the worst blackout in seven years yesterday as a malfunction in Bheramara power plant snapped the Bangladesh-India transmission line, triggering failures throughout the national grid.
People across the country were left without power almost for 10 hours since 11:30am, overshadowing the government's much-lauded achievement in the sector since 2009.
"A sudden technical glitch in the power system in Bheramara led to collapse of the entire power grid," said Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power and energy.
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With the torch of her mobile phone a nurse checks up on a patient at the High Dependency Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday evening. The blackout left the unit with no lights and air conditioning. Key lifesaving equipment were running with generator backup.
PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Disaster averted

Hospitals ran on extra life

STAR REPORT
Amzad, 18, was crying in pain, standing in front of the emergency unit of National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation.
He broke his left hand in a bus accident but could not get it operated on as the hospital's operation theatre was closed following the power failure yesterday.
Jharna, 30, writhed in pain too. She needed an immediate diagnosis but the ultrasonography machines at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital had no power.
These are only a few instances of sufferings that people at city hospitals went through amid the nationwide outage since 11:30am.
As the blackout continued long after sundown, hospital authorities became worried about power supply to the ICU, CCU and emergency wards, which were running with generators.
The hospitals, however, saw off the outage
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MAJOR BLACKOUTS in country

- NOV 16, 2007**
Cyclone Sidr caused 12-hour blackout. It took several days to restore normalcy in power supply (demand 3,600MW)
- DEC 14, 2007**
Two-hour blackout for fault in a major power plant. Normalcy returned after 10 hours.
- OCT 29, 2003**
Three-hour outage as most power plants tripped.

BIGGEST BLACKOUTS ACROSS GLOBE

- INDIA, 2012**
It suffered world's two biggest blackouts on July 30 and 31. Caused by tripping of circuit breaker, the July-31 outage affected 62 crore people in 22 Indian states.
- INDIA, JANUARY 2, 2001**
This blackout affected 23 crore people.
- INDONESIA, AUGUST 18, 2005**
Transmission line failure triggered a blackout

Date with darkness

Dhaka life goes haywire as major outage shuts amenities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
By nightfall, a sense of insecurity, uncertainty and anxiety befell the city yesterday.
The daylong countrywide power outage caught the people living in the capital off guard, shutting amenities and raising safety concerns.
"I haven't stepped out of my house since this afternoon," said Anwar Hossain, a resident of the city's Kathalbagian area, around 10:00pm last night.
"Only a few minutes ago, I heard people screaming 'Chhintai Chhintai (mugging, mugging)' from the road in front of my house. I haven't even gone to mosque for my evening prayers. With the whole neighbourhood in darkness, we don't feel safe inside our house either," he said over the phone.
Even staying in the comfort of home was not easy for people.
"At the moment, my parents and I are sitting at home in complete darkness. We have only one candle left and we are saving it for emergency," Kotha, a private school teacher, told The Daily Star over the phone around 8:00pm.
Visiting different areas of the city, this correspondent found many people frantically looking for alternative ways to illuminate their residences. And candles and kerosene were their immediate choice. But hurdles were there as well.
"All the candles were sold out before it was dark. I looked at all the shops in and around Rajabazar's Jahanara Garden area. But there was not a single candle available in those shops," said Ansar Uddin, who had come to nearby Karwan Bazar looking for candles after failing to get any from his own area.
This situation came as a boon for some traders; they doubled the price of candles.
A shopkeeper in Karwan Bazar at 7:00pm was found asking Tk 10 for a candle which otherwise is sold at Tk 5.
Failing to get their hands on candles, some people were seen buying lanterns and kerosene from Karwan Bazar.
The daylong outage affected those living in the high-rises as well.
"I am pregnant and I had to take the stairs all the way down from the 13th floor as lifts were not working. It was really painful," said Kanta, a private firm employee.
With no power supplies, many buildings were left without water.
Authorities of a number of hostels in Farmgate area asked their boarders to move elsewhere as they could not provide them with water and electricity.
The city streets wore a deserted look by 9:00pm. Though Saturday means long queues of cars and
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- #### IMPACT
- Hospitals worst hit
 - Water in short supply
 - Mobile, internet service disrupted
 - Most ATM networks on the blink
 - Airports cut services
 - Jails without generators
 - No street lights in Dhaka and elsewhere
 - Extra costs for running businesses
 - Rush for candles, kerosene

Down digitally

ABDULLAH MAMUN and SUMAN SAHA
Many saw their mobile phones lose signal, internet users went offline, people could not get money from ATMs, and shopping centres counted huge losses during the nationwide power outage yesterday.
Telephonic communication, fixed and wireless internet, and data services experienced huge disruptions due to the blackout that began at 11:30am. The power outage triggering from Bangladesh-India power substation at Bheramara had a domino effect resulting in the worst blackout in seven years.
From yesterday evening, base stations of mobile phone carriers started shutting down with their batteries running out of juice.
Usually when there is no power, carriers use battery and generators to keep their networking equipment going.
"If the blackout prolongs the whole network might collapse," said TIM Nurul Kabir, secretary general of the Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh yesterday evening.
There are more than 22,000 base stations in the country, according to Kabir.
Since yesterday evening, a number of base stations shut down in different places across the country, making many people unreachable via mobile phones, according to officials of the carriers.
An official of a mobile phone operator said it would be impossible to continue to provide people with their service if power was not restored last night.
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Generators get VVIPs going

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The president, the prime minister and other VIPs of the country had the taste of a unique experience yesterday.
For the first time in seven years, they saw power outage in their residences and offices, although it's a daily phenomenon for the common people of the country.
The president's office-cum-residence Bangabhaban, the PM's official residence Gono Bhaban and the parliament Speakers' residence had no electricity supply from the national grid for more than eight hours beginning from around 11:30am, when the entire nation plunged into one of the worst-ever blackouts of the country.
However, thanks to the positions they hold, alternative power supply through generators was ensured at their places.
Sometime after 3:00pm, power supply to the
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Dhaka loses its neon glitz and even the street lights and all that is bright are headlights of cars and a few buildings powered by generators. The photo of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue was taken at Farmgate during the blackout yesterday evening.
PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

WAR CRIMES TRIAL Mir Quasem's verdict today

Jamaat's 2-day hartal on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The International Crimes Tribunal-2 is set to deliver its verdict today in the case against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Mir Quasem Ali for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.
Quasem, the alleged chief of Chittagong Al-Badr Bahini, an auxiliary force of Pakistani army, was shifted to Dhaka Central Jail from Kashimpur jail in Gazipur on Friday.
Meanwhile, the Jamaat will enforce the second bout of its countrywide 72-hour hartal today, protesting the capital punishment of its Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami for committing crimes against humanity.
The shutdown will start at 6:00am today and end at 6:00am on Tuesday. The party on Thursday enforced a countrywide 24-hour strike.
Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Arunav Chakraborty, deputy registrar of the tribunal, said necessary measures including security arrangements have been taken ahead of the verdict.
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