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POWER GENERATION

# Overcapacity a new headache

*Rose to 60pc last year amid fall in electricity demand during pandemic; experts warn of financial risks for govt*

ASIFUR RAHMAN

As much as 60 percent of the country's power generation capacity remained unutilised in 2020 because of a lack of demand for electricity.

The growing overcapacity has significant financial implications for the government and might affect the costs of electricity, experts said.

The unused capacity was 57 percent in 2019, said a report by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) released on Wednesday.

The power generation against capacity was 45 percent in fiscal year 2017-18 and around 48 percent the year before, according to Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) data.

Power plants have the daily capacity of generating 20,383MW of electricity, but the maximum power generation in a day was 12,738MW, according to the BPDB.

Power generation growth was just 1.26 percent in 2019-20, barely keeping pace with population growth. The IEEFA report attributed it to the economic impacts of Covid-19.

If power generation doesn't increase by 10 percent over the next five years, the utilisation will fall below 40 percent, the report warned.

Meanwhile, power plants capable of generating 15,294MW are being constructed and around 21,000MW will be added to the national grid by the end of 2025. By the same time, about 5,501MW existing capacity will be reduced, said the BPDB annual report from 2020.

In accordance with the demand, between 8,000MW and 12,000MW of electricity is being generated every day.

Engineer Shamsul Alam, energy advisor for the Consumer's Association

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Bangladesh batsman Mushfiqur Rahim and all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan walking off the field after a job well done at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The duo guided Bangladesh to a seven-wicket win in the second ODI against West Indies, clinching the series for the hosts with one match left to play.

PHOTO:  
FIROZ AHMED

# Dispel people's fear by taking vaccine first

Dr Zafrullah urges PM  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoshasthaya Kendra Trustee Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury yesterday urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to take the Covid-19 vaccine first and dispel people's fear regarding inoculation.

One-third of the Indian population are not willing to be vaccinated although there is no need to be afraid of vaccines, he told a press conference at Gonoshasthaya Hospital in the capital's Dhanmondi.

There are concerns over proper distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, he said, adding that working class people are more exposed to viral infections and should be inoculated.

"Only those doctors who have been treating Covid-19 patients should be given the vaccine. Similarly, only the traffic police should be vaccinated... It's frustrating that those who are supposed to get the vaccine are not getting it."

The government is  
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# Tricked, sold to a pimp for Tk 20,000

*20-yr-old victim narrates in case statement her ordeal at Daulatdia brothel; 14 rescued*

NILIMA JAHAN and SUZIT KUMAR DAS

After her father died, around two years ago, Rimu came to the capital from Jamalpur and started working at a readymade garment factory.

The woman, now 20, was then tricked into prostitution by an acquaintance.

As the coronavirus pandemic struck, Rimu became jobless and faced extreme financial hardship. Knowing about it, the female acquaintance offered her a job and took Rimu with her.

The woman then sold her to a pimp -- Nazma, 65, a former sex worker at Daulatdia brothel -- on April 23 last year in exchange for Tk 20,000, read a case statement recorded at Goalanda Police Station in Rajbari.

On Wednesday, Rimu called emergency helpline 999 from a customer's mobile phone and shared her experience.

On information, a police team, headed by Abdulla Al Tayebir, officer-in-charge of Goalanda Police Station, conducted an operation inside Daulatdia brothel and

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# Biden declares war on coronavirus

*Signs flurry of orders to contain crisis; more than a million vaccinated in India*

AGENCIES

New US president Joe Biden embarked on a "wartime undertaking" to battle the pandemic in the world's worst-hit country, while Germany's Covid-19 death toll passed 50,000 yesterday as it reeled from a second wave.

With infection rates spiralling, vaccine rollouts still in their infancy and the global death toll now past two million, the possibility of life returning to normal seems as far off as ever.

Germany survived the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic relatively unscathed compared to its European neighbours, but is now reeling as new, more contagious variants of the virus run rampant and authorities warn of a tighter lockdown on the continent's biggest economy.

On his first day in office Thursday, Biden signed a flurry of executive orders, including mask-wearing and quarantining requirements, and reversed predecessor Donald Trump's decision to quit the World Health Organization (WHO).

The new president is seeking to vaccinate 100 million people in 100 days, increase the use of masks and testing, expand the public health workforce and offer more emergency relief to those struggling with the restrictions.

On Thursday alone the US registered 4,045 new deaths and more than 192,000 new cases.

The death toll in the world's worst-hit nation has now passed 406,000 -- more than its total combat and non-combat losses in WWII.

Biden has also restored top infectious diseases doctor Anthony Fauci to a leading, visible advisory role in the White House, after Trump complained about the expert's warnings on Covid.

Fauci was back in the briefing room Thursday -- also pushing the message that public trust should be rebuilt.

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# Two children, balloon vendor killed in gas cylinder blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Cox's Bazar

Three people, including two children, were killed and nine others injured as a gas cylinder, used for inflating balloons, exploded at a school playground in Cox's Bazar's Maheshkhali upazila yesterday morning.

The cylinder exploded suddenly when a vendor, named Mohammad Alamgir, was inflating balloons at Matarbari High School playground around 10:30am, said Mohammad Abdul Hi, officer-in-charge of Maheshkhali Police Station. Several makeshift stalls were being built on the playground marking an annual programme of Azizul Ullum Madrasa, Mohammad Ullah, chairman of Matarbari Union Parishad, told The Daily Star.

Two children died on the spot while vendor

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# Butterflies create jet propulsion with clap of wings



AFP, Paris

The whimsical, wafting flight of butterflies may not give the impression of top aerodynamic performance, but research published on Wednesday suggests their large flexible wings could be perfectly designed to give them a burst of jet propulsion.

Scientists at Lund University in Sweden set out to verify a decades-old theory that insects "clap" their wings together, squeezing out the air between with such force that it thrusts them forward.

In their aerodynamic analysis of free-flying butterflies published in the journal Interface, they showed that the clap function does generate a jet

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# 7-year-old raped in Bagerhat

Rapist yet to be held  
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A seven-year-old girl has allegedly been raped by a man in Bagerhat Sadar upazila.

Her mother filed a case against Enam Sheikh, 22, of Mulghar village of the upazila, with Bagerhat Model Police Station on Thursday night.

Yesterday morning, the victim's mother said she and her younger child went to a doctor in Bagerhat town on January 5. Her husband went to work as he is a labourer. So, the victim was at home alone that day.

Taking the chance, Enam took her daughter to the back side of his father's shop and raped her, the mother said.

She said her daughter disclosed the incident and they informed Enam's elder brother Zakir Sheikh about it. He told them that he would look into the matter.

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# 'GUNFIGHT' WITH BGB Rohingya 'yaba dealer' killed in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Bandarban

A Rohingya man, suspected to be a yaba trader, was killed in a "gunfight" with the members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Naikhyangchhari upazila of Bandarban early yesterday.

The dead is Abdur Rahim, 25, of Kutupalong Rohingya camp, said Lt Col Ali Haider Azad Ahmed, commanding officer (CO) of 34th BGB battalion.

BGB men also recovered 50,000 pieces of yaba pills, one hand-made pipe gun,

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Workers without any safety equipment knock down an old building in the capital's Farmgate area. Many workers die and suffer serious injuries because of such flagrant disregard for safety. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO:  
PALASH KHAN

# Cold-related illness sees rise in North

*Children, elderly suffer the brunt; fog disrupts vehicular movement, ferry service on several routes*

STAR REPORT

Cold-related diseases are spreading in different northern districts due to the ongoing gloomy and foggy weather. Children and the elderly are the worst sufferers, said health workers.

Besides, vehicular movement and ferry operations on different routes remained suspended for several hours yesterday in different areas due to dense fog.

Yesterday's Met Office bulletin said, "Moderate to thick fog may occur over the river basins of the country."

"Light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country from midnight to morning," it added.

"Night and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country."

The weather forecast for the next 24 hours was released at 9:00am yesterday.

Yesterday's lowest temperature was recorded at 9.6 degrees Celsius in Tentulia of Panchagarh.

In Thakurgaon, the number of patients with cold-related diseases is increasing in different hospitals.

"My child has been suffering from pneumonia. That is why I have been staying in the hospital with my child for several days," said Jarina Khatun while talking to The Daily Star at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital yesterday.

Most of the 145 children, who are being treated at the  
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**PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 23**

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:15	5:43	7:15
JAMAT 6:05	1:15	4:30	5:47	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION