

GAS CRUNCH, POWER CUTS No sign of relief now

PM says it's hard to keep power plants running

- Yesterday's power generation was 13,228 MW against the demand of 14,000 MW
- Power plants need 1,600-1,700 mmcf gas daily but getting only 900 mmcf
- LNG supply to national grid dropped to 500 mmcf yesterday from around 854 mmcf on June 29



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that running power plants with imported gas, oil, and coal has become a financial burden for the state.

Her statement comes a day after she said she was thinking about asking authorities concerned to temporarily reduce electricity generation to save fuel.

Around 52 percent of the country's power production capacity is gas-based, 27 percent is produced with furnace oil, 5.86 percent with diesel, 8.03 percent with coal, 1 percent with hydro, 0.5 percent with other renewable energy and 5.27 is imported, according to Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) data.

Speaking at a programme, Hasina yesterday spoke about the government's problems in power generation for the second consecutive day while people are enduring severe power cuts for days mainly due to reduced natural gas supply to power plants.

Currently, Bangladesh has the capacity to generate 22,348 MW of electricity every day. The maximum demand was forecasted to be 14,000 MW yesterday, but the highest peak-time generation was 13,228 MW, according to BPDB.

Of the total power produced, 56 percent was used by households, 28 percent by industries, 11 percent was used commercially and 3 percent in agriculture.

The country started power rationing on June 30 to make up the shortfall.

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A woman helping a child into the train from ground level. With a platform of the Kamalapur Railway Station overcrowded with holidaymakers heading home for Eid, some passengers got down from the opposite platform and crossed the rail lines to board the Jamalpur-bound train. The photo was taken around 2:20pm yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

No plan to halt classes

Says education minister amid rise in Covid infections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no plan to close classrooms for Covid-19, Education Minister Dipu Moni said yesterday.

"We are observing the situation. We will make decisions keeping in mind the safety of students and others," she told reporters at her office.

The flood-affected students who lost their textbooks will be given new books, she informed. The government will then hold the SSC exams postponed amid the devastating floods in recent weeks.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced the inclusion of 2,716 non-government schools, madrasas and technical institutions in the monthly payment order (MPO) scheme, under which non-government teachers get their basic pays and certain monthly allowances from the government.

Of the 2,716 institutions, 2,051 are schools and colleges and 665 are madrasas and technical training institutions, Dipu Moni said.

Educational institutions that qualify for the MPO facilities, but have not been included in the scheme, are encouraged to apply to the authorities concerned in 15 days, she added.

Staring at a grim Eid

Rising cost of living chokes middle class

SUKANTA HALDER, MAHMUDUL HASAN and ABU TALHA

It is not any other Eid for many middle and lower-middle income families. They are cutting down expenses for the festival in the face of spiralling living costs.

But the prices of almost all essentials have gone up and to cope, the families are spending less on sacrificial animals, moving to cheaper homes, cutting down protein intake, and even selling off belongings.

The salary of Mamun Rashid, who works for a private company, increased by Tk 3,000 over the last one year but his monthly expenses went up about Tk 7,000 beyond his pay cheque.

He borrows Tk 7,000 every month. Rashid, the lone breadwinner for his family of four, said he dropped plans for sacrificing animals this Eid. He used to sacrifice one head of cattle every year sharing the costs with a few others.

"I am keeping no stone returned to

reduce the cost of living. For example, I used to go to work on ride-sharing motorbikes, but now I take a bus."

Despite all his efforts, paying for his children's education is still difficult. "I can't reduce my children's school costs even if I want to."

"I won't buy anything new for me or my wife this Eid. I am planning to buy some clothes only for my boy and girl."

"I now realise that we will have to go through even more difficult days ahead as prices of essential

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Next polls will be crucial

US report says further shrinking of democratic space may hurt Bangladesh's progress

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh's national election next year will be critical in determining whether the country moves towards greater democracy or greater autocracy, said a recently released policy document of the US.

"If democratic space continues to shrink in Bangladesh due to the increasing authoritarian nature of the central government, lack

of progress on achieving this objective could lead to increased political instability and human rights violations," said the US Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) on Bangladesh.

It could also undermine Bangladesh's economic progress, and impact Bangladesh's ability to serve as a net security provider, while negatively impact ties with the US and likeminded partners,

potentially deepening Bangladesh's engagement with malign actors, read the document.

The ICS, which details how the US maintains its relationship with the UN, international organisations and 180 countries, was approved on April 8 and made public in late June on the State Department website.

"Since the flawed elections of 2018, civic space has shrunk

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CHECKING COVID Ministries not doing their bit

Govt officials say at health ministry meet

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

More than a week has passed since the Cabinet Division issued directives to check the spread of Covid, but those still remain unimplemented due to slack response from the ministries concerned.

No monitoring team has been formed yet and the Health Services Division has yet to conduct any media campaign to encourage people to wear masks, said participants in a meeting at the Health Services Division on Tuesday.

"There is no team to monitor if the health safety rules are being

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Unicef voices concern over attacks on teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concerns over the recent attacks on teachers in Bangladesh, Unicef has called for ensuring their safety and security.

"Unicef is deeply concerned about the recent series of attacks on teachers in Bangladesh. Unicef stands with the country in condemning these attacks, and we call for the safety and security of teachers to be upheld," Sheldon Yett, Unicef representative to Bangladesh, said in a statement yesterday.

The UN agency came up with the statement

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AB Bank approved 2% Cash Dividend and 3% Stock Dividend



The 40th AGM of AB Bank Limited was held on July 06, 2022. The Meeting unanimously approved 2% Cash Dividend and 3% Stock Dividend for the year ended 2021. The Bank completed 40th year of successful operation on April 12, 2022.

In 2021, Profit after Tax of the Bank stood at BDT 72 crore which is 82% higher than the previous year. At the end of 2021, total assets of the Bank was BDT 41,336 crore where Net Asset Value (NAV) was BDT 2,556 crore.

Mr. Muhammad A. (Rumee) Ali and Mr. Shajir Ahmed have completed their tenor as Directors. Mr. Muhammad A. (Rumee) Ali expressed his desire not to seek re-election and Mr. Shajir Ahmed has been re-elected as Director. AGM also adopted Directors' Report, Audited Financial Statements. Shareholders also re-appointed ACNABIN, Chartered Accountants, as Statutory Auditor and M/s. S. F. Ahmed & Co, Chartered Accountants, as Corporate Governance Compliance Auditor of the Bank for the year 2022. Chairman of the Board Mr. Muhammad A. (Rumee) Ali, presided over the Meeting. Mr. Tarique Afzal, President & Managing Director, Honorable Directors of the Board and a good number of Shareholders attended the Annual General Meeting on digital platform.

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