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# The Daily Star

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# Half the country **BLACKED OUT**

National grid fails causing the biggest power outage in 8 years; electricity restored after 4 to 7 hours



**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The country yesterday suffered the worst power outage in eight years affecting more than half the country because of what officials said was a power trip in the eastern zone of the national grid.

It disrupted industrial production, water supplies and telecommunication services.

Millions of people suffered the sweltering heat as Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, Cumilla and Mymensingh were left without electricity for four to seven hours after 2:00pm.

Besides, there were uncertainties as to when the power



would be restored.

Around 10:00pm, a spokesperson of Bangladesh Power Development Board said power supply had been restored in 90 percent of the places.

Power Division Secretary Habibur Rahman said the problem began at a substation near Ghorashal when the demand for electricity suddenly dropped causing a surge that tripped one after another power plants.

"We will be able to come up with the exact cause very soon," he told The Daily Star.

A power trip happens when an electrical circuit gets a load beyond its capacity.

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The Daily Star

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Businesses take a hit

Most of them struggled to continue operation with standby generators

SUKANTA HALDER, REFAJET ULLAH MIRDHA and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Business and industrial activities were disrupted badly for several hours since yesterday afternoon in many parts of the country after a failure of the national power grid.

Many factories, including export-oriented garment units in Gazipur, Narayanganj, Savar and Ashulia, could not run their operations for more than six hours with standby generators. Many others had to suspend their operations early.

Shopping malls in the capital also suffered business losses due to the blackout. Operations of private offices were affected because of disruptions in telecommunication and internet connections. ATM booths of many commercial banks also went out of service.

Some banks had to wait till night to settle transactions through electronic networks.

Long queues of people were seen in front of many filling stations, who had to wait for hours to collect diesel

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## Patients suffered the most

Sweltering heat, water crisis make things worse

**STAR REPORT**

Children with pneumonia and shortness of breath in Chattogram Medical College Hospital could not be nebulised for a period yesterday, while nurses of Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute used mobile phone flashlights to administer injections. Caused by a failure in the national grid, the power outage that lasted at least three hours from 2:05pm disrupted life in the capital and across the country.

Electric supply started returning in some areas from 5:15pm, according to the power, energy and mineral resources ministry. Other areas experienced power outages till 9:30pm.

The blackouts in Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet and Mymensingh divisions also caused acute water crises in many homes.

But it was hospital patients who suffered the most discomfort, as well as danger, due to the blackout. At CMCH, the authorities ran their services on a limited scale, reports our staff correspondent.

Around 4:30pm, vulnerable patients in the children's health could not be nebulised. There were hundreds of patients in the ward.

Ward doctor Farhana Noorin told The Daily Star that the nebuliser was closed due to lack of electricity. The AC was not running, and neither were ceiling fans.

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## HUMAN TRAFFICKING 4 refugees die as boat sinks off Teknaf

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

At least four people including a child died as a Malaysia bound trawler carrying Rohingya refugees sunk off the coast of Teknaf, Cox's Bazar yesterday morning.

According to some survivors, the refugees were being trafficked to Malaysia by a local syndicate.

The bodies of three women and a child aged four or five, all of whom were Rohingyas, were recovered, said Mohammed Delwar, the contingent commander of Bangladesh Coast Guard's Baharchhara outpost.

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**POWER OUTAGE AT A GLANCE**

- Half of the country hit by sudden outage
- Transmission system malfunctioned in eastern region
- Power restored in 20pc area after 5hrs
- Mobile phone network disrupted
- ATM booths shut for hours for network failure
- Long queues at fuel stations
- Most part of Dhaka in dark for hours

**MAJOR BLACKOUTS IN COUNTRY**

- May 18, 2022:** 1.5 lakh clients were without electricity for two days in flood-hit areas of Sylhet, Sunamganj
- Sep 7, 2022:** 40-minute outage in western zone
- May 2, 2017:** Outage for up to 4hrs in 32 districts after glitches in 2 major transmission lines

**Nov 1, 2014:** 10-hour blackout caused by malfunction in Bheramara Power Plant

**Nov 16, 2007:** Cyclone Sidr caused a 12-hour blackout across the country.

**Dec 14, 2007:** 2-hour blackout for faults in a major power plant.

**Oct 29, 2003:** 3-hour outage as most power plants tripped. Normalcy returned after a day.

## 657 more infected with Covid

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh recorded another death from Covid-19 and 657 fresh cases in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With this, the number of total fatalities in the country rose to 29,372.

A woman in Mymensingh died yesterday.

The new cases brought the country's total caseload to 2,027,565, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The daily case test positivity rate was 13.8 percent.

The mortality rate and recovery rate remained unchanged at 1.45 percent and 97.02 percent, respectively.

In September, the country reported 40 Covid-linked deaths and 13,251 cases.

Bangladesh registered its highest daily caseload of 16,230 on July 28 last year and highest fatalities of 264 on August 10 the same year.



People carrying containers on rickshaw vans crowd a refilling station in the capital's Satrasta intersection yesterday afternoon to buy diesel for generators. The crowd got bigger as the capital and some others parts of the country saw a major power outage because of a failure of the national grid.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

# 3 Bangladeshi peacekeepers killed in blast



Jashim Uddin Jahangir Alam Sharif Hossain

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Three Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed and another was injured, as an improvised explosive device went off in Kaita area of the Central African Republic on Monday.

Jashim Uddin, 31, Jahangir Alam, 26, and Sharif Hossain, 26, died of injuries at a hospital in Bouar town, while Major Ashrafal Haque, who was injured in the explosion, is receiving treatment there, said a statement from the Inter Service Public Relations Directorate (ISPR).

They were travelling in a vehicle through the Kaita area around 8:35pm (local time) on Monday.

The four were taken to Mimusca Hospital in Bouar town where doctors declared three of them dead around 6:30am (local time) on Tuesday, said the release.

The other Bangladeshi peacekeepers deployed in the

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