

FAULT IN NAT'L GRID
Pakistan hit
with major
power outage

AFP, Islamabad

A massive power breakdown in Pakistan yesterday affected most of the country's more than 220 million people, including in the mega cities of Karachi and Lahore.

Local outages are common across Pakistan, and the national power system is a complex and delicate web where problems can quickly cascade.

The hours-long outage, the second in two years, was caused by a fault in the national grid at around 7:30 am (0230 GMT).

"According to initial reports, the system frequency dropped at the national grid in the morning which led to a massive breakdown," the ministry of energy tweeted.

Repair work was underway, with limited power restored in parts of the capital and the northwestern city of Peshawar.

Minister for Energy Khurram Dastgir said the grid should be fully functioning by 10:00 pm.



Sri Lanka ports' trade union stage an anti-government protest to propose tax reforms against its economic crisis, outside the ports authority in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Tackling birth rate
crisis 'cannot wait'
Says Japan PM Kishida

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's low birth rate and ageing population pose an urgent risk to society, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said yesterday, pledging to address the issue by establishing a new government agency.

Birth rates are declining in many developed countries, but in Japan the issue is particularly acute because it has the world's second-highest proportion of people aged 65 and over, after the tiny state of Monaco, according to World Bank data.

"The number of births dropped below 800,000 last year, according to estimates," Kishida told lawmakers in a policy address marking the start of a new parliament session.

"Japan is standing on the verge of whether we can continue to function as a society," he said.

"Focusing attention on policies regarding children and child-rearing is an issue that cannot wait and cannot be postponed."

The conservative leader said his policies were designed to support parents and ensure the "sustainability" of the world's third-largest economy.

Kishida added that he eventually wants the government to double its spending on child-related programmes. "We must build a child-first social economy to reverse the (low) birth rate," he said.

PROTEST CRACKDOWN
EU imposes new
sanctions on Iran
Tehran arrests 3 female journos

AFP, Brussels

The EU yesterday placed 37 more Iranian officials and entities on an asset-freeze and visa-ban blacklist over Tehran's bloody crackdown on protesters, officials said.

The fourth round of sanctions against Tehran over its repression of demonstrators was adopted by the bloc's foreign ministers meeting in Brussels. The full list of names was to be given in the EU's official journal later yesterday.

The bloc has already imposed sanctions on more than 60 Iranian officials and entities over the crackdown on protesters, including targeting Tehran's "morality police", Revolutionary Guard Corps commanders and state media.

But the 27 nation EU has so far stopped short of blacklisting the Revolutionary Guards themselves as a terror group despite calls from Germany and the Netherlands to do so.

Iran has warned the bloc against taking the move and EU officials are wary that it could kill off stalled attempts to revive the 2015 deal on Tehran's nuclear programme being mediated by Brussels.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell insisted that there needed first to be a legal ruling in an EU member state first before the bloc could make the move.

"You cannot say: 'I consider you a terrorist because I do not like you'," Borrell said.

"It has to be done when a court of one member state issues a legal statement, a

concrete condemnation."

Demonstrations have swept Iran since the September 16 death in custody of Iranian Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini, 22, after her arrest in Tehran for allegedly failing to adhere to the Islamic republic's strict dress rules.

The UK also yesterday sanctioned five more Iranian officials, including the deputy prosecutor general, over what it said was the "horrific violence" the regime was inflicting on its own people.

"These sanctions, alongside designations by the European Union and the United States, demonstrate the international community's unified condemnation" of Tehran, the government said.

Meanwhile, Iranian authorities have arrested three female journalists in the past two days, local media said yesterday, amid months of protests triggered by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini.

"In the past 48 hours, at least three female journalists, namely Melika Hashemi, Saideh Shafiei and Mehroush Zarei, have been arrested in Tehran," reformist newspaper Etemad quoted the Tehran journalists' union as saying.

The paper said the three women had been transferred to Evin prison, where many of those arrested in connection with the protests are being held.

It estimated that about 80 journalists have been arrested since the start of the unrest in the country four months ago.

No details were given on the reasons for the latest arrests.



If needed, use forex reserves

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commodity prices owing to the fallout of the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

The reserves stood at \$32.47 billion on January 18 in contrast to \$45.20 billion the year before, according to BB data.

In a recent paper, the commerce ministry said the opening of LCs for the import of unrefined sugar slumped to 28 percent year-on-year to 3.75 lakh tonnes in the last quarter of 2022. In the case of chickpeas, the figure dropped 47 percent to 75,319 tonnes and dates 30 percent to 21,980 tonnes during the corresponding period.

Md Mezbaul Haque, spokesperson for Bangladesh Bank, said the central bank has received the commerce ministry's letter.

"We have already taken appropriate measures to address the issue," he told The Daily Star.

Five essential goods-laden vessels have been waiting at the Chattogram Port for up to around two months for unloading 135 tonnes of imported goods as the importers could not clear the import bills due to payment-related complexities arising from shortage of US dollars.

Meanwhile, negotiations are underway to secure \$500 million to \$1 billion in loans from external sources under an arrangement backed by the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (Miga), the WB's cross border investment platform.

Senior Secretary Ghosh said it might take some time to receive the fund from the Miga.

"Ramadan is not far away. So, it won't be wise to wait for the Miga fund," he said.

Bangladesh wanted to avail itself of the Miga loan at a maximum interest rate of 4 percent, but the Agency offered the credit at an interest rate of 6 percent.

A commerce ministry official said Bangladesh usually takes out loans from international financial institutions at 2 percent interest rate.

As there is a lack of availability of the US greenback globally, the government is ready to get the loan at a maximum interest rate of 4 percent, the official said last week.

The Miga itself will not provide the loan to Bangladesh. Rather, it will manage the fund from international financial institutions, he added.

Ukraine storing arms at nuke

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push European allies to do the same.

In the battleground, the fighting is centred on the town of Bakhmut in Ukraine's east, where Russia's Wagner mercenaries and Ukrainian forces have been locked in a battle of attrition.

Russia's defence ministry said for the second straight day on Sunday that its forces were improving their positions in Ukraine's southern region of Zaporizhzhia, though

a Ukrainian military spokesperson told the state broadcaster the situation there was "difficult" but stable.

In Kyiv, a top ally of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday corrupt officials would be rounded up and jailed as part of a zero tolerance policy, after the most high-profile graft allegations since Russia invaded burst into public view.

On Sunday, anti-corruption police said they

had detained the deputy infrastructure minister on suspicion of receiving a \$400,000 kickback to facilitate the import of generators into wartime Ukraine last September.

Separately, a newspaper investigation published on Saturday accused the Defence Ministry of overpaying suppliers for food for its soldiers. The ministry said the report contained "signs of deliberate manipulation" and was "misleading".

Only Awami voters

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constituencies will be held on February 1.

Ragebul Ahsan Ripu, general secretary of the Bogura District Awami League, who will contest the polls as the AL candidate was seen in the video.

"... you have to go to the people who really do Awami League politics in your wards and ask for their vote. You confirm their votes first. Confirm the votes of your family members then. You should not go to these people who will not vote for us," he was heard in the video as saying.

"...those who don't vote for us don't even need to go to the polling stations. That's the way it is. Only those who vote for us will come to the polling stations. Those who don't vote for us won't come to the polling stations."

After listening to this, the leaders and workers who were present there broke into applause and said, "OK... OK."

When asked about this, Raj first told The Daily Star that it was in Gokul when the election campaign did

not start properly.

"No, there was no speech like that, anywhere in any campaign. But the speech is being propagated differently. What I said had a different meaning."

"I said only those who are our people will come to vote. Since BNP is not part of this election, the BNP voters will not come to cast vote. That was the point. We have to bring people who vote for us," said Raj.

2 police officers detained over Paris shooting

AFP, PARIS

Two police officers have been held for questioning in the French capital Paris after shooting dead a man they said was threatening them, a source familiar with the case told AFP yesterday.

The as yet unidentified man allegedly first threatened a dog with a pistol just after 8:00 pm (1900 GMT) Sunday near the busy Place de la Republique square in central Paris, another source said.

Two children die

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surveillance team to the spot, she added.

Contacted, office of the Faridpur civil surgeon was unable to provide any further information in this regard.

So far, three people have died after being infected with the virus this year.

[Our Faridpur and Rajshahi correspondents contributed to this report.]

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
LGED, Madaripur
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No: 46.02.5400.000.07.136.22-233
Date: 23/01/2023

e-Tender Notice
Tender No. e-Tender Notice : 34/2022-23

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works :

Location	T-ID /Method	Name of the Work	Tender Closing	Remarks
Shilbchar	779986 (LTM)	LGED/MAD/VRRP/IOU/22-23/W-18 Rehabilitation of UNR-8, H/O Sekim Ali Khalashi to Kabilpur Madrasa Road From Ch. 00m-1465m (Road ID:354875039)	09-Feb-2023 Within 12:00 PM	
	779987 (LTM)	LGED/MAD/VRRP/IOU/22-23/W-19 Rehabilitation of UZR-1, Bhadrasoni GC Academy to Matbarkandi Reg. Primary School Road From Ch. 00m-800m (Road ID:354875038)		
	779988 (LTM)	LGED/MAD/VRRP/IOU/22-23/W-20 Rehabilitation of UZR-5, Jinar Gate to UZR-8 Road via Matbarkandi GPS Road From Ch. 00m-2230m (Road ID:354874014)		

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system Portal have to be deposited on line through any e-GP registered banks Branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) and also from e-mail: zen.madaripur@lged.gov.bd or call to 0661-62445.

Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

(Md. Ashraf Ali Khan)
Executive Engineer
LGED, Madaripur
Tel: 0661-62445(Off)
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GD-113

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate of Primary Education
Section-2, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216
www.dpe.gov.bd

Memo No.: 38.01.0000.005.07.331.22-2297;
Date: January 23, 2023.

Corrigendum to Invitation for Tenders (International)

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE)'s Invitation for Tenders (International) vide Ref No. 38.01.0000.005.07.331.22-2206; dated: December 11, 2022 for procurement of 41000 Nos. Multimedia Projector for Government Primary Schools under Package No. GD 101.04-GD 101.08 & GD 301.04-GD 301.08 published in The Daily Jugantor (দৈনিক যুগান্তর), The Daily Kaler Kantho (দৈনিক কালের কণ্ঠ), The Financial Express and The Daily Star on December 12, 2022 is hereby amended as follows:

Sl. No.	Conditions to be amended	Previous Provision	Amended Provision
17.	Tender Last Selling Date	Date: 01/02/2023 Time: 4:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs)	Date: 08/02/2023 Time: 4:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs)
18.	Tender Closing Date and Time	Date: 02/02/2023 Time: 2:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs)	Date: 09/02/2023 Time: 2:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs)
19.	Tender Opening Date and Time	Date: 02/02/2023 Time: 2:15pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs)	Date: 09/02/2023 Time: 2:15pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs)

All other aspects of the Invitation for Tenders (International) will be unchanged.

Md. Namigul Haque
Director (Procurement)
Directorate of Primary Education
For and on behalf of
The Program Director, PEDP4

GD-110