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POWER SITUATION

Not improving anytime soon

Say experts; Nasrul Hamid hopeful things will change in two weeks

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Nobody knows exactly when the power cuts will end.

Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power and energy, hopes the situation will improve within two weeks because the government is trying to get coal, gas, and other fuels to run power plants.

But officials and energy experts believe that only a drop in temperatures or rain will reduce the outages. Since only then the demand for power would fall, with fewer people turning their ACs on, to the level of current power generation.

However, with the weather being what it has been for two weeks, there is no hope that power consumption will fall to the level of power generation, said an official of Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB), wishing anonymity.

The Met office predicts rain in Dhaka after June 9. But that will only bring a temporary respite to people who are currently spending hours in the heat with no power.

Yesterday's highest temperature in the country, 41 degree Celsius, was recorded in Rajshahi, while in Dhaka it was 37.1 degree Celsius.

The government yesterday ordered government primary schools to remain closed this week because of the scorching heat.

The civil surgeon of Nilphamari on Sunday said health facilities in the districts were seeing more patients arriving with diarrhoea and treatments were getting interrupted due to power cuts.

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Workers of a tannery are playing a board game on a mobile device as the machines do not work due to a power outage. Different trade associations have been complaining that businesses are suffering due to the frequent power cuts in recent days. The photo was taken at Savar Tannery Estate yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



People in pain due to inflation, power cuts

Says PM, urges frugal use of electricity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said inflation and power cuts are making people suffer.

Power generation is being disrupted due to the rising prices of gas, coal, and fuel all over the world. "It is not possible to buy [gas, coal, and fuel] even with money," she said while addressing the commissioning ceremony of "Chilahati Express", an intercity train.

"For this, I know people are facing a few problems this summer," she said.

Later in the day in parliament, Hasina asked people to be frugal in consuming power.

"I will request everyone to be economical in using electricity. We have to practice austerity in every sector," she said in parliament yesterday while taking part in the discussion on a condolence motion on the death of ruling Awami League MP and former minister Alfaruk Amin.

Hasina said the government has provided everyone's homes with electricity as promised. She said the crisis of fuel, coal or gas is worldwide. "Still, our efforts continue," said the head of government.

"Steps have already been taken to buy coal so that we can restart power plants," she added.

Hasina said the government has signed agreements with Qatar and Oman to purchase fuel and

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Pry schools to stay shut June 5-8

Heatwave to continue for five to six days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All government primary schools across the country will remain closed for four days from today because of the ongoing heatwave.

The primary and mass education ministry issued a press release in this connection yesterday.

Mahbubur Rahman, public relations officer of the ministry, said the authorities of kindergartens can also follow the order if they wish.

Most parts of the country have been facing scorching heat since the last week of May. The temperature may not drop until June 9, said experts.

"There is no chance of significant rain in the heatwave-affected areas. There is a chance of rain after June 9," said Meteorologist Hafizur Rahman.

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Turning plastic perils into a prize

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The country has been seeing a worsening plastic waste problem over the last decade and a half, and recently, a small step has been taken towards possible mitigation.

For the last one year, Nazir Hossain, around 50 years old, has been turning plastic waste -- which causes harm to the environment when left in landfills or allowed to pollute lakes, rivers and oceans -- into low-cost tiles for pavements, rooftops and bathrooms.

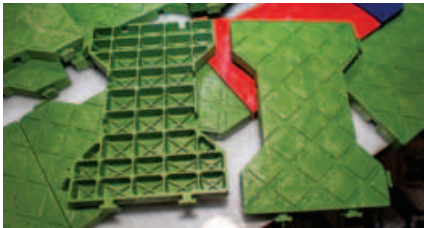
His working life has been dominated by plastic. He worked in a plastic factory for nearly 20 years since the early 1990s. In 2012, he became an entrepreneur making pattern moulds for plastic items at his own Hossain Engineering Workshop in Kamrangirchar.

Then one day, inspiration struck.

"I noticed that the pavement in front of my workshop was made with earthen tiles. I then wondered if we could use discarded plastic on this mould to make tiles," he said.

But he was not sure of how the process would turn out, and so communicated with a local NGO named Resource Integration Centre (RIC) about his idea.

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Plastic most lethal among all waste

Some businesses hold out hopes with waste recycling initiatives

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Plastics are silently piling on the environmental miseries of Bangladesh, one of the most climate change-vulnerable countries in the world.

Among all wastes, plastic is found to be the most hazardous for this densely populated developing nation, where the garbage collection system is largely inefficient and, to some extent, non-existent. Thus, the plastic shopping bags or food wrappers that we use for a few minutes to hours will continue to exist in the environment for hundreds of years.

The developed world is dealing with the overwhelming plastic menace with a three-way approach -- reduce, reuse and recycle. A reality check can reveal why Bangladesh is precariously poised. The country has a law for reducing the use of plastic, but it stumbles on implementation. And a World Bank study in 2021 states, 69 percent of



the disposable plastic products in the country are left uncollected and only 31 percent are recycled.

Plastic recycling could play a pivotal role in mitigating the impact of plastic pollution, which persists on land and waterbodies, threatening a wide array of riverine and marine ecosystems in the country.

As per a 2021 World Bank study, the per capita plastic use in Bangladesh has tripled to 9kg in 2021 from 3kg in 2005. In Dhaka, the amount is 24kg, almost three times higher than that of other urban areas of the country.

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BUSINESS

Exports fetch \$50.5 billion in Jul-May

Bangladesh's exports bounced back in May after declining in the preceding two months, riding on increased shipment of garments, according to data released by the Export Promotion Bureau yesterday.

Exporters shipped \$4.84 billion worth of goods in May, up 26.6 percent year-on-year. It was \$3.83 billion in the same month a year ago.

Overall exports in the July-May period of the fiscal year of 2022-23 soared 7.1 percent year-on-year to \$50.5 billion with the major export earning sectors, excluding garments, registering a decline.

STORY ON B1



Wastes, mostly plastic, clog the Chaktai canal in Chattogram city's Chawkbazar area. It takes hundreds of years for plastic materials, including single-use plastics, to degrade in the environment. A holistic approach, based on reduce, reuse and recycle, is needed to save the country from this kind of pollution.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

14-PARTY ALLIANCE New US visa policy sparks friction

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Partners of the ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance were divided over the new US visa policy yesterday as left-leaning parties at a meeting welcomed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's firm stance.

They said Bangladesh should not bow to US pressure and all should thank Hasina for her stance.

The AL and other partners of the alliance, however, opined that the government should resolve the issue diplomatically. They considered the PM's stance tactical with an aim to boost the morale of her party leaders and activists, sources said.

These views came up at the meeting of the allies with 14-party coordinator and AL leaders Amir Hossain Amu in the chair at his Eskaton home yesterday afternoon.

According to meeting insiders, Amu, at the beginning, said only the proposed budget and the new US visa policy were on the agenda.

Some leaders of the alliance said they want to talk about the current power supply situation and price-hike of essentials.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on May 24 announced a new visa policy for Bangladesh. He said the US will deny visas to people believed to be responsible for or complicit in undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Samyabadi Dal General Secretary Dilip Barua, Jatiya Party (JP) General Secretary Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Bangladesh Tariqat Federation Chairman Syed Nazibul Bashar

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BSRM has achieved the 'SDG Brand Champion Award' 2023 in recognition of our green initiative in converting 'SLAG' into usable product

