

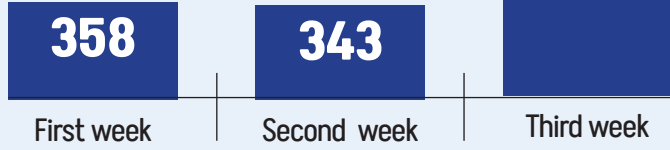


Villages sweat amid lengthy power cuts

Fuel shortage leaves plants struggling to meet even off-peak demand

AVERAGE HOURLY LOADSHEDDING in April (in MW)

SOURCE: PDB



ASIFUR RAHMAN

Power cuts across the country, especially in rural areas, have worsened with the mercury rising, as the government struggles to meet even off-peak demand due to shortages of gas, coal, and furnace oil to generate enough electricity.

Peak-hour shortages have exceeded 1,500 megawatts (MW) daily this week, similar to last week. With this shortfall, some areas are experiencing on average two to three hours of outages, though distribution companies say rural areas are suffering far longer power cuts.

Consumers under the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (REB) are reporting five to six hours of power cuts daily.

Yesterday, daytime peak demand reached 15,500MW at noon, against a generation of 14,069MW, leaving a shortfall of 1,462MW.

The shortage exceeded 1,000MW almost every hour yesterday, peaking at 1,840MW at 9:00pm. The Power Development Board forecast a shortfall of 2,932MW at midnight yesterday, showing that demand is going unmet even at night.

The average shortfall this week stood at 1,067MW, sharply up from 343MW last week and 358MW in the first week of April.

Data shows rural areas in Khulna, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Cumilla have faced the most severe cuts, with shortfalls exceeding

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WITH MAA'S GUIDANCE ... Clutching her notes, an SSC examinee does last-minute revisions as her mother leans in, guiding her under a shared umbrella on a parked rickshaw just outside Motijheel Government Girls' High School exam centre in Dhaka yesterday -- a fleeting moment of care and hope before a major academic milestone.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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PM assures press freedom at first meet with NOAB

AGENCIES

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday reiterated his government's firm stance on press freedom.

He made the remark at a meeting with members of the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) at the Public Administration meeting room of the Cabinet Division at the Bangladesh Secretariat, said the prime minister's additional press secretary, Atikur Rahman Ruman, according to a BSS report.

Tarique, also chairman of the ruling BNP, said he regularly reads newspapers and watches television,

War to resume if talks fail

Says Trump as he rules out extending ceasefire; Iran yet to confirm participation in negotiations

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump yesterday said that he did not want to extend a rapidly expiring ceasefire in the US-Israeli war on Iran and that the US military was "raring to go" if negotiations were not successful.

He spoke shortly after the US military announced it had boarded a huge Iranian oil tanker at sea in international

waters, the first such move against Iran's crude exports. That could make it more difficult to revive peace talks with Iran, which has said it will not negotiate under the "shadow of threats" and while Washington enforces a blockade of its ports.

Washington has expressed confidence that last-ditch talks with Iran will go ahead in Pakistan, and a senior

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Iran says truce ends at midnight GMT; US president says it expires a day later

JD Vance delays departure for Pakistan

Iran foreign minister says US blockade 'an act of war'

Family of four brutally murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A couple and their two children were brutally murdered in their home, sending a shockwave through Bahadurpur village in Naogaon's Niamatpur upazila yesterday.

The victims were first bludgeoned and then their throats were slit.

They were Habibur Rahman, 35; his wife Popy Sultana, 27; their nine-year-old son Parvez, and three-year-old daughter Sadia.

Police and family members said the killings likely took place between 11:00pm on Monday and 5:00am yesterday.

Neighbours were shaken by the sight as they discovered the bodies after Fajr prayers. They went into the house, finding the door open, which seemed unusual.

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