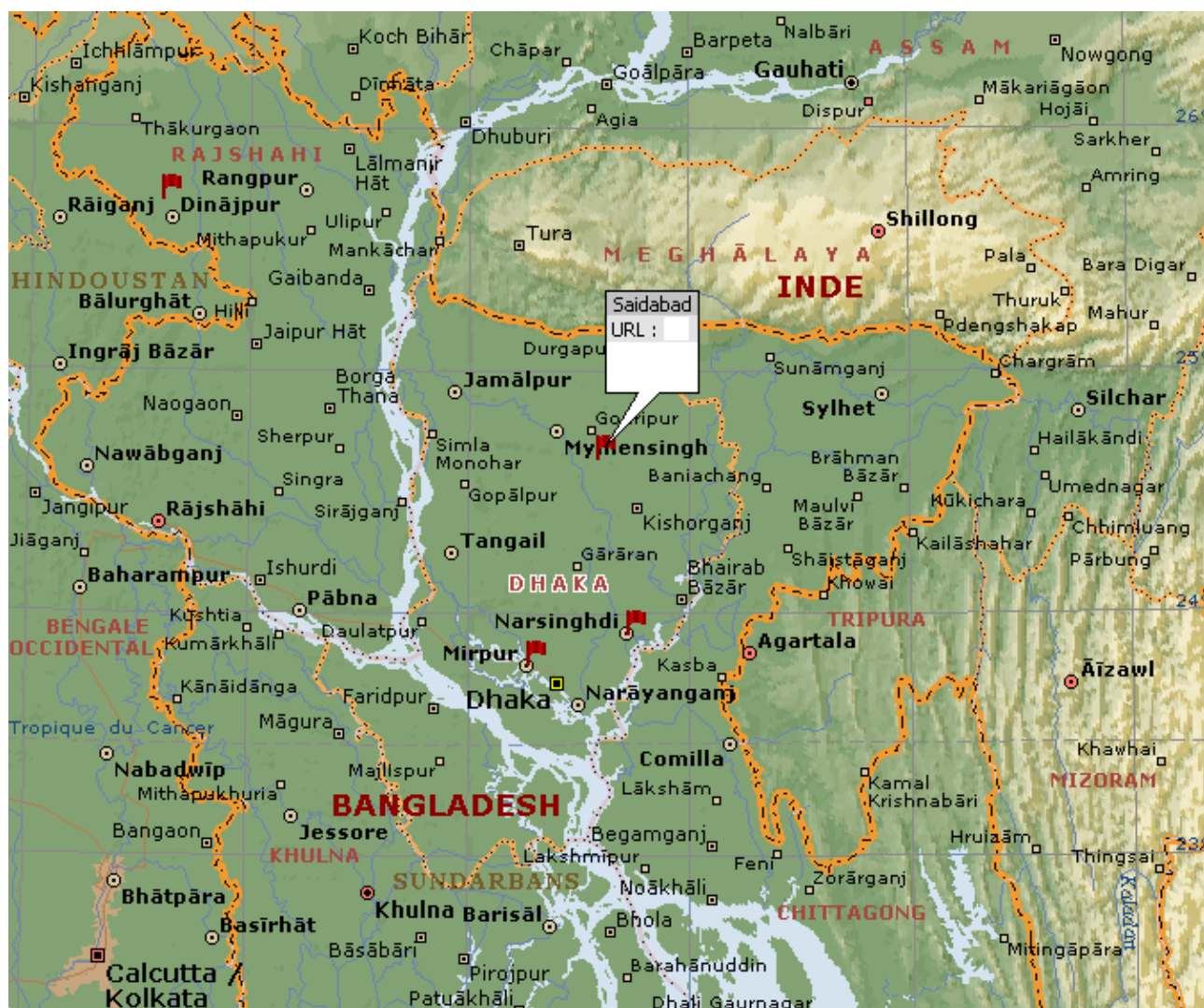


06 BAN 8 – 06-09-19 Narsingdi

Laboratoire des frondeurs.org



Distance Dhaka - Narsingdi \approx 40 km.

Sur le contexte de l'évènement : A Dhaka, émeutes d'ouvriers demandant des augmentations de salaires ; dans plusieurs villes de la périphérie, ils affrontent les policiers et s'attaquent aux usines (cf. suite 06 BAN 9). En parallèle, des hartals à répétition programmés par l'opposition se régénèrent en de gros affrontements avec la police.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/09/18/d6091801011.htm>

Committed to PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO KNOW

Vol. 5 Num 822

Mon. September 18, 2006

Front Page

Outraged by outage

Highest-ever 2200MW power shortage as 19 generation units shut down

Star Report

As 19 power generation units remain shut down, the country is reeling under perennial power cuts with daily power supply shortfall exceeding 2200 megawatts (MW) -- the highest power shortage in the country ever.

According to the data from the Power Development Board (PDB), against the 'official' demand of 4,300 MW yesterday, the country's power plants were producing 3,126 MW in the peak hours. But according to the power demand chart of the Rural Electrification Board (REB), Dhaka Electric Supply Authorities (Desa) and its company Dhaka Electric Supply Company (Descos) and the PDB, the demand for power was 5,400 MW -- leaving a wide demand supply shortfall.

The PDB officially shows a lower level of load shedding to tone down the government's failure in the power sector, sources said.

However, frequent power disruptions and low quality power supply in the city and elsewhere in the country have reached a new height. All parts of the city regularly undergo power cuts for hours.

"For instance, the power went off in our area at 7:30pm Saturday," a Mirpur section 2 resident said, adding, "It came back at 8:30pm. Then it went off again at 9:30pm and returned at 10:30pm and again went off at 11:30pm and returned at 12:30am."

"But that's not all. The power had gone off at 8:00am in the morning on Saturday and came back at 9:00am. Then it went off again at 10:00am and came back at 11:00am. It again went off at 2:00pm for another hour. This is not an exceptional incident. This happens every day here," he added.

In Karwan Bazar, no business establishment would spend a single day without running their own power generators for at least three hours. Some days this load shedding can extend to eight hours.

The frequency of load shedding is minimum four times and it can be as frequent as eight times.

In Green Road, it has become a routine for everyone to face four to five hours of power cuts a day in at least three phases.

Chittagong city witnessed 230 MW of load-shedding yesterday. The Raozan unit-2 tripped on Saturday which left the port city with a staggering 300 MW of load-shedding, reports our staff correspondent in Chittagong. The Raozan unit-2 resumed operation yesterday morning but the power situation did not improve much.

The picture is bleaker in the rural areas. According to our district correspondents, rural power consumers hardly get a few hours of electric supply a day.

PDB sources said as of yesterday, a number of power plant units including the Meghnaghat 450 MW, Sikalbaha 28 MW, Ghorashal 40 MW and 210 MW, Ashuganj fifth 150 MW, Haripur 100 MW, Shahjibazar 70 MW, Khulna 60 MW, Bheramara 20 MW, Baghabari 71 MW, Tongi 80 MW, Barapukuria 250 MW, and Baghabari 90 MW remained shutdown. A number of them have been shutdown for routine maintenance while the others have serious technical problems.

"For instance, the Meghnaghat 450 MW plant has gone for a 15-day maintenance shutdown and it will resume production later this month. On the other hand, the Ashuganj 150 MW and the Haripur 100 MW plants have technical problems. We don't know when they would resume operation," said an official.

Mindless expansion of power distribution

"The government failed to install any new power project in the last five years except for the 80 MW Tongi power plant which remains shutdown most of the times due to its sub-standard quality. In contrast the government in the last five years has doubled the number of power consumers -- mostly in the rural areas," quips a PDB official.

Increasing the number of power consumers has given hundreds of crores of taka worth of business to a number of ruling party men who are involved in construction of power poles. At the same time, it helped the parliamentarians show off to their constituencies that they have 'brought power' to their areas.

Last week the Executive Committee on National Economic Council (Ecne) approved different power distribution projects worth Tk 2000 crore -- but none related to power generation. One of these projects specifically target at increasing power consumers by another 10 lakh.

The country currently has about 85 lakh power connections covering around five crore consumers. Five years ago, this number was around 50 lakh connections. In 2002, the country generated 3100

MW power and stayed even with the demand of 3100 MW. Now in 2006, the country generates 3300 MW of power even though its number of consumers has nearly doubled.

<http://www.newagebd.com/2006/sep/20/front.html#18>

35 hurt as police attack demo for power

Staff Correspondent

Several thousand people in Dhaka, Narsingdi and Munshiganj staged demonstrations on Tuesday demanding uninterrupted power supply.

At least 35 people were injured as the police attacked the agitators while vandalising the Narsingdi Palli Bidyut Samity office in the afternoon.

In Dhaka, several hundred people gathered at Mohakhali and blocked up the road in front of the wireless gate at about 7:30pm. There was a tailback on the road till 9:00pm following the blockade programme.

In Narsingdi, workers of different power loom factories and other industrial units attacked the local Palli Bidyut Samity-2 office at Chowala at about 5:30pm.

The demonstrators vandalised the office and its furniture and set fire to the motorbikes parked inside the office. The employees took shelter on the rooftop of the three-storey office building to escape public wrath.

The police later went to the spot, charged batons and fired rubber bullets on the agitating workers, leaving at least 35 people injured. Two of them — Kamal Ahmed and Raju — sustained serious injuries. Kamal was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for better treatment.

The police also fired teargas shells on the demonstrators to bring the situation under control.

In Munshiganj, several hundred people observed a five-minute work abstention, protesting against the frequent power outages.

They gathered in front of the supermarket in the town to take part in the programme announced by the Bidyut Unnayan Sangram Committee.

Committee leaders said sufferings of the people caused by frequent power outages knew no bounds. They also threatened to launch tougher movement, if the situation did not improve within the next 24 hours.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/09/20/d6092001011.htm>

Front Page

Country reels from outage onslaught

50 hurt in police action as people attack Narsingdi Palli Bidyut office; 5-minute work abstention at Munshiganj

Rashidul Hasan

Life has become virtually impossible in the capital and elsewhere in the country as continuing severe power crisis has affected the nation with all consequences.

City dwellers have been suffering from frequent load shedding for long periods while industrial production has also dropped due to power failure.

The worst victims in the capital are the electronics markets, engineering workshops and the cyber cafés.

Meanwhile, at least 50 textile workers were injured in Narsingdi as police charged baton on them for attacking the Palli Bidyut Samiti office at Choala in the town yesterday demanding uninterrupted power supply.

People of Munshiganj observed a five-minute work abstention yesterday morning protesting severe power outage in the district.

SCENARIO IN CAPITAL

Frequent outages for several hours a day have made life immensely difficult for most households in Dhaka.

"We are used to load shedding," said Happy, a resident of Mirpur, "but now the situation has become absurd and unbearable.

"Milk and other food items in the refrigerator go stale due to load shedding. My children and elderly mother cannot sleep at night. I have never experienced such load shedding in my life," Happy told The Daily Star in anger and exasperation.

Students are also severely affected as load shedding in most areas generally takes place in the evening.

Besides, the load shedding has affected the daily supply of water to households and industries.

Habibur Rahman of Bangladesh Engineering, a workshop at Chankharpul, said, "Electricity was available in my factory only for three hours a day in the last three days. All orders from the customers are pending...I could not even pay the last week's salary of my workers," he said.

Workers of another factory in the same area said the factory remains open from 9:00am to 9:00pm, but they can hardly work for two or three hours a day because of power failure. "How will the owner pay us if there is no output from the factory?" they said.

Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) President Fazlul Haq told The Daily Star, "We are facing 12 hours' load shedding a day. How can we run our factories in this situation?"

Exports might fall if the situation lasts long, he said, adding that some machines have gone out of order due to tremendous fluctuation in voltage.

A salesperson of an electronic shop at Motaleb Plaza in the capital said they cannot display the electronic products for the customers due to load shedding.

Businessmen at the shopping complex claimed that electricity is available for hardly four hours and that too not at a stretch.

The cyber café business is also facing acute problems due to severe load shedding. "Customers do not agree to pay if the electricity goes during their work," said the proprietor of Speed Cyber Café at Hatirpul.

Hospitals are also not out of load shedding. Delwar Hossain, assistant director of Brighton Hospital, told The Daily Star, "We have been facing four- to five-hour load shedding daily for the last four days. We bought 120 litres of diesel for the generator on September 17."

There has also been a severe crisis of compressed natural gas (CNG) at filling stations due to the ongoing power crisis. Long queues of CNG-run vehicles at the filling stations in the capital are a regular sight.

State Minister for Power Anwarul Kabir Talukder admitted to the BBC Bangla Service last night that load shedding has been quite severe for the last few days. "But this has happened due to the irregularities before my taking over the office," he said.

"It is unfortunate that no technical audit has yet been done, so, we do not know the exact condition of machines at different power plants," Talukder added.

Meanwhile, sources at the Power Development Board (PDB) said 18 of the 61 power plants are out of production at present.

The country has a daily demand for over 5,000MW electricity while the production deficit is more than 1,500MW, the state minister told the BBC.

However, sources claimed the deficit has exceeded the 2,200MW mark.

UNB reports: Over 1,000 workers, who turned violent due to erratic power supply to their factories, stormed into the Palli Bidyut Samiti in Narsingdi building at about 4:00pm and damaged documents and furniture on its ground and first floors.

They also set fire to 12 motorcycles of the office, two transformers worth Tk 2.5 crore and a special circuit breaker of the control room.

Palli Bidyut Samiti employees took shelter on the top floor of the three-storey building to escape the public wrath.

On information, police rushed to the spot and fired rubber bullets and charged baton on the workers. They also fired five teargas shells to bring the situation under control.

In Munshiganj, hundreds of people gathered in front of the Super Market in the town and spontaneously took part in the five-minute work-abstention programme called by the Bidyut Unnayan Sangram Committee.

The committee leaders alleged that they get electricity for hardly six hours a day.

They threatened to go for tougher movement if the situation does not improve within the next 24 hours.

<http://libcom.org/news/more-clashes-in-bangladesh-the-issue-of-energy-20092006>

More clashes in Bangladesh - the issue of energy

Submitted by Ret Marut on Wed, 20/09/2006 - 12:09.

Textile workers in Narsingdi, central Bangladesh, yesterday fought police in protests against irregular power supply to their factory workplaces.

They are not paid for time lost to interruptions. Over 1,000 fought with officers as they laid siege to the electricity company offices, setting fire to company vehicles, 2 transformers and a circuit

breaker. 50 workers were hurt as cops baton charged, fired rubber bullets and tear gas. 10 cops were also injured by thrown missiles.

Energy is an important political issue in Bangladesh - there have been regular countrywide protests and riots this year over intermittent supplies, as well as the recent insurrection against the proposed Phulbari opencast mine project (previous libcom.org coverage). Alongside the inconvenience of cuts in domestic supplies, cuts in power to workplaces mean cuts in wages.

Due to maintenance problems/equipment failure the national supply is only functioning at little more than half its capacity at present. Interruptions occur several times daily and some areas only receive a supply for 6 hours per day. Several foreign investment projects have failed due to government corruption, bureaucracy and state reluctance to sanction often unpopular energy projects. In a country where arable land is limited, open pit coal projects - and other forms of energy development - are not environmentally friendly, eat up scarce land resources and destroy thousands of homes.

The deals agreed with foreign energy investors mean the majority of energy generated is for export, and the behaviour of foreign capital has also encouraged a general cynicism towards them. The American company, Occidental, had a major pipeline explosion in 1997 and issues of compensation for environmental damage have still not been fully resolved; Occidental pulled out of Bangladesh several years ago, leaving the wrangling over compensation to be dealt with by Unocal, which took over their interests. There were also two incidents last year at facilities run by the Canadian company, Niko Resources. Here too there is confusion over what is happening about related compensation claims.

In the **south west**, jute mill workers at **Khulna** ended a 2 week strike (libcom.org coverage); they have received owed back wages and the employers have agreed to consider other demands such as "regularisation of their jobs, allocation of sufficient funds for jute purchase, smooth supply of power and opening of the laid off mills".

<http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/09/22/d60922012416.htm>

Committed to PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO KNOW
Vol. 5 Num 826
Fri. September 22, 2006
Front Page

Power Outage

Bullet-hit protester dies at DMCH

Staff Correspondent

The textile mill worker bullet-hit during Tuesday's blockade of the Palli Bidyut office at Chaola in Narsingdi succumbed to his injuries yesterday morning at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Kamal Hossain, 30, was hit by a bullet in the chest on Tuesday as Narsingdi police opened fire on a huge crowd blockading the Palli Bidyut office demanding uninterrupted power supply in the area. Critically injured Kamal was rushed to DMCH Tuesday night.

An uneasy calm settled over village Chaola after Kamal's body was sent there. Extra forces have been deployed in the area to prevent any untoward situation.

Local sources said the local textile mills geared up to increase their production for extra profit on the eve of the Eid-ul-Fitre, but frequent power outages in the area had been foiling their bid.

Thousands of textile mill workers and locals blockaded the Palli Bidyut Samity 2 office at Chaola on Tuesday protesting frequent power cuts in the locality.

Palli Bidyut authorities claimed that the mob ransacked documents and furniture in the office and set fire to 12 motorcycles and two transformers worth Tk 2.5 crore.

The police rushed to the scene, clubbed the crowd, lobbed tear gas shells and at one stage opened fire on the mob to control the situation, Narsingdi police sources said.

Around 50 people were injured and two including Kamal sustained bullet injuries during the police action.

http://www.chinapost.com.tw/i_latestdetail.asp?id=41351

Bangladesh police clash with angry residents rioting over power outages (2:12 p.m.)

2006/9/28

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)

Riot police on Thursday fired tear gas at hundreds of demonstrators in Dhaka who attacked government offices and smashed vehicles to protest two days of near-constant power outages in the Bangladeshi capital, witnesses said.

The violence occurred in Dhaka's northern Mirpur district where nearly 1,000 stone-throwing demonstrators rampaged through the streets, according to an Associated Press reporter at the scene.

No casualties were reported.

"The mob was becoming violent. We tried to prevent them from destroying government property," a police official at the scene said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Violent protests broke out in the city's southern Saidabad district late Wednesday, when demonstrators blocked roads and smashed vehicles, private TV station ATN Bangla reported. Police and protesters did not clash in Saidabad, according to the report.

Bangladesh, a tropical delta nation of 144 million people, is often hit by power cuts.

But the outages have become more frequent in Dhaka and other parts of the country since Tuesday, when a unit that normally produces 210 megawatts of electricity a day went out of action at the Ghorasal power station near Dhaka, the government's Power Development Board said.

Some Dhaka residents have had to make do with just two hours of electricity a day.

Public anger over the outages is stronger than usual this time because the power cuts have affected devotees trying to offer special evening prayers for the holy month of Ramadan.

"When we go to mosques for prayers there is often no electricity. This is unacceptable," said Abdur Rahim, a resident of Mirpur.

The frequent power outages have also hit water supplies in the city because water plants rely on electricity, residents say.

The impoverished South Asian nation usually produces only 3,000 megawatts of electricity per day, as compared with total demand of around 4,500 megawatts, according to the board. The government says demand for electricity has shot up due to industrial growth in the country.

Police killed at least 18 demonstrators in protests against power outages in the southwestern district of Chapainawabganj in January.

<http://libcom.org/news/more-energy-riots-electrickery-in-bangladesh-28092006>

More energy riots - electrickery in Bangladesh

Submitted by Ret Marut on Thu, 28/09/2006 - 22:49.



Two hundred people, including police, were injured in Bangladesh as more riots and demonstrations have erupted in protest against regular interruptions to electricity supplies.

The nineteen hours of violent clashes began yesterday evening (Wednesday 27th).

"...We had been experiencing an unusual on-again, off-again electricity supply that we had not seen ever before, causing immense sufferings ... throughout the night in abnormally hot and humid weather. We had been constantly sweating inside our houses amid sweltering heat," said a resident of Senpara area in Mirpur.

Some Dhaka residents are presently only receiving 2 hours supply per day.

The rioting broke out in Dhaka's northern Mirpur district, where nearly 1,000 stone-throwing demonstrators took to the streets, and it soon spread to other parts of the city including the Shanir Akhra and Keraniganj areas. A main road through Mirpur was barricaded for several hours and at least two buses were torched. Government offices were attacked and power plants damaged.

The violent protests began after the breaking of the Ramadan fast on Wednesday evening. It was reported that the observance of evening prayers had apparently been hampered during Ramadan by a lack of electrical light in mosques. After this break-fast hundreds of youths poured into the streets from their houses in Senpara and adjoining areas and attacked local power offices, barricaded roads, and damaged or set afire scores of motor vehicles, including police and RAB (Rapid Action Battalion - paramilitary police) vans during the protests. In the Keraniganj area about 20,000 people came out into the dark to protest power cuts and set fire to police vehicles, throwing some proletarian light on the situation.

But religious concerns were not the real issue; the present events are a continuation of a long-running struggle in the country over unreliable energy supplies. Power cuts affect daily life in various important ways. Life in city slums becomes even more unbearable when denied basic air conditioning of domestic fans during sweltering, humid weather. Workers lose earnings when production stops in the factories. Domestic water supplies are affected as the reservoirs and distribution system are dependent on electricity. Consumers are charged a regular meter rental fee

whether or not supply is maintained. (In effect, you pay for the mere possibility of receiving electricity.)

"Farmers report not receiving electricity for days, and then when they do get a supply it is only for a maximum of four to five hours. Farmers are demanding that electricity supplies be continuous, and that they should pay only for the electricity that they actually receive."

Farmers' crop irrigation systems are also usually dependent on electrical pumps to draw the water from deep wells and bore holes. The effect of water shortages on rice crops have lead to fears of food shortages later in the year. Farmers fear economic ruin if the crops are lost.

On 4th January 2006 up to 12,000 people, many farmers, took to the streets under the banner of the Palli Biddut Shangram Parishad (Rural Electricity Movement Association) in the northern town of Kansat to protest against failures in power supply. Police fired live ammunition with AK47s, rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the crowd, who responded with sticks and machetes. Local news reported around 300 people were injured, including nearly 20 cops. At least 2 men were killed and 50 suffered bullet wounds. The repression did not stop the protests; on 23rd January at least 7 more were killed with over 100 injured by cops. A young boy later died from his injuries. (Later estimates put the number dead from these 2 protests as at least 18.) On 5th April 2006 at least four people were killed when local members of the ruling Bangladeshi Nationalist Party mounted bomb attacks on another farmers' rally.

The government claims that increased industrial demand is to blame for the power cuts and, as a token gesture, has announced its intention to turn off illuminated billboards and to restrict supplies to shopping malls. The national electricity system is suffering multiple breakdowns and maintenance problems and is working at less than two thirds capacity at present - it is inadequate for modern growing demands and is in a poor state of disrepair. It is not expected to return to its normal (inadequate, unreliable) capacity for several weeks.

Further unrest is also expected next month in the Bangladeshi garment industry now that talks between employers, government and workers representatives have failed to reach any agreement about setting a minimum wage or implementing other concessions promised after the major workers revolt in the industry in May-June.

All of the above shows the diversity and depth of struggles the working class continues to fight and the crisis the ruling class faces in Bangladesh.
(See also our earlier report)

<http://www.cyberpresse.ca/article/20060928/CPMONDE/609281353/1014/CPMONDE>

LE JEUDI 28 SEPTEMBRE 2006
À CAUSE D'UNE ÉNORME COUPURE DE COURANT
Violente manifestation au Bangladesh

Agence France-Presse
Dacca

Des milliers de manifestants au Bangladesh se sont violemment affrontés avec la police à cause d'une gigantesque coupure de courant électrique dans la capitale Dacca, en plein mois de jeûne du ramadan, ont indiqué jeudi des témoins et les forces de l'ordre.

Les affrontements ont démarré dans la banlieue de Dacca mercredi soir -juste après la rupture du jeûne du ramadan- et se sont poursuivis jeudi, a constaté un photographe de l'AFP.

"Les gens ont les nerfs à fleur de peau parce qu'après avoir jeûné toute la journée, ils n'ont pas d'électricité le soir", a expliqué un policier.

Des policiers anti-émeute ont tiré des gaz lacrymogènes pour disperser la foule qui a brûlé des voitures et mis à sac des bâtiments, ulcérée par des pannes électriques à répétition depuis mercredi.

Quelque 50 manifestants et 30 policiers ont été très légèrement blessés.

Ailleurs dans la capitale, des manifestants ont bloqué la circulation ou fait le siège de la compagnie d'électricité de la ville.

La pénurie d'électricité est fréquente au Bangladesh et les coupures de courant peuvent durer six heures par jour à Dacca.

Le Bangladesh -l'un des pays les plus pauvres du monde- aurait besoin de dix milliards de dollars dans les dix prochaines années pour investir dans son réseau de production d'électricité, selon la Banque mondiale.

En juillet, pendant la Coupe du monde de football, des émeutes avaient éclaté dans le pays à cause de coupures de courant qui privaient les fans de retransmission télévisée.

Dix-sept personnes étaient mortes il y a quelques mois dans des manifestations contre la pénurie d'électricité.

str-har/sas-nr/gr



Photo AFP

<http://lcn.canoe.com/lcn/infos/lemonde/archives/2006/09/20060928-174233.html>

Mise à jour: 28/09/2006 17:42

Bangladesh

Une émeute fait 200 blessés

LCN

Au Bangladesh, une émeute de plusieurs heures a fait plus de 200 blessés dans les rues de la capitale.

L'émeute a duré une partie de la nuit et de l'avant-midi. On a érigé des barricades et mis le feu à plusieurs véhicules.

Les manifestants protestaient contre les pannes de courant qui sont presque constantes depuis deux jours.

Cela entraîne aussi des pénuries d'eau potable puisque les usines d'épuration ne peuvent fonctionner sans électricité.

La police a dû utiliser des balles de caoutchouc et des gaz lacrymogènes pour disperser la foule.



LCN

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,-6112004,00.html>

Police, Residents Clash After Outages

Thursday September 28, 2006 6:16 PM

By FARID HOSSAIN
Associated Press Writer

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) - Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas Thursday at demonstrators violently protesting two days of near-constant power outages in Bangladesh's capital, witnesses said.

About 200 protesters were injured in the clashes, which saw government offices attacked and vehicles smashed in Dhaka, the United News of Bangladesh agency reported.

Police did not give an injury figure. It was not immediately clear if any security officials were hurt.

Power cuts often hit Bangladesh, an impoverished nation of 144 million people.

But outages have become more frequent since Tuesday, when a unit that normally produces 210 megawatts of electricity a day went off-line at the Ghorasal power station near Dhaka, the government power board said.

Some Dhaka residents have been getting just two hours of electricity a day.

The violence broke out in Dhaka's northern Mirpur district, where nearly 1,000 stone-throwing demonstrators rampaged through the streets.

It spread to other parts of the city, witnesses and the news report said.

“The mob was becoming violent. We tried to prevent them from destroying government property,” a police official at the scene said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

The protesters put up barricades on a major Mirpur thoroughfare for hours, and torched at least two buses.

Violent protests broke out in the city's southern Saidabad district late Wednesday, when demonstrators blocked roads and smashed vehicles, private TV station ATN Bangla reported.

Lawmakers from the country's main opposition Awami League party walked out of a parliamentary session Thursday, protesting the power outages.

“This government is so inefficient that it can't even provide electricity,” senior opposition lawmaker Abdur Razzak told the legislature before the walkout.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's five-year term expires next month. An election is due in January.

Public anger is stronger than usual during this outage because the power cuts have affected devotees trying to offer special evening prayers for the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. Most Bangladeshis are Muslims.

“When we go to mosques for prayers, there is often no electricity. This is unacceptable,” said Mirpur resident Abdur Rahim.

The outages have also decreased water supplies in the capital, where water plants rely on electricity, residents say.

Bangladesh usually produces 3,000 megawatts of electricity a day, but has a total demand of around 4,500 megawatts, according to the government power board.

The government says industrial growth has increased demand.

In January, police killed at least 18 demonstrators in protests against power outages in the southwestern district of Chapainawabganj.

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=26384

BD blackouts trigger violent protests

DHAKA: Police fired tear gas and fought running battles with thousands of protesters on Thursday as Bangladesh reeled under the strain of massive power cuts, officials and witnesses said.

In the capital Dhaka, police in riot gear used batons to disperse demonstrators after they torched cars and ransacked an office as anger boiled over at the escalating number of power outages. Officers said riots were triggered when people broke their Ramazan fast on Wednesday evening only to find that there was again no electricity.

“People came out on the street to protest against the power cuts. They were angry and the police had to fire tear gas and baton charge them to disperse them,” police officer Mahmudul Hasan told AFP.

The clashes began in the northwest outskirts of Dhaka late on Wednesday and continued into Thursday morning, an AFP photographer at the scene witnessed.

“The angry mob threw bricks and stones. Police used more than 100 rounds of tear gas,” said another police officer, Mahbub Alam. Around 30 police and 50 protesters suffered mostly minor injuries in the violence, he said, which had subsided on Thursday.

“Thousands of people put timber logs on (the) road. There is complete anarchy there and the police cannot even get there to tackle the situation,” said police officer Mohammad Gaffar. In the

northeast city of Sylhet, hundreds of people besieged electricity offices late on Wednesday causing traffic grid lock, said district police intelligence officer Shahjahan Mia.

“People became emotional because after fasting all day, they did not get electricity in the evening,” he said. In the central district of Narsinghdi, close to the capital, angry mobs also blocked highways for several hours on Wednesday leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded, added district police chief Mir Rejaul Alam.

In July, many parts of the country saw riots also triggered by power cuts, during the World Cup. Fans furious at not being able to watch matches on television laid siege to electricity offices.

http://rawstory.com/news/2006/Bahraini_police_protesters_clash_at_09292006.html

From New Nation Online Edition
Front Page

Power Minister Anwar Talukder resigns

By Staff Reporter

Fri, 29 Sep 2006, 11:18:00

State Minister for Power Major General (retd) Anwarul Kabir Talukder resigned yesterday, a day after electricity-riot in the capital city.

"I have decided to resign from the government taking the responsibility for failures to improve the power situation," he told reporters last night at his official residence.

He said he would send his letter of resignation to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia this morning.

With Anwarul Kabir Talukder-two State Ministers of Power resigned from the government within a short span of four months time for failure to improve erratic power situation across the country. His predecessor Iqbal Hossain Mahmud had to quit earlier.

About 100 police personnel and hundreds of peoples were Thursday when the power riots broke in the city.

Meanwhile, the power supply situation in the city and different places in the country was more or less stable yesterday since it was a public holiday and comparatively less humid day.

Besides, a senior official in the Power Development Board told The New Nation that increase of power generation from some power units including Ghorashal also helped keep the situation in control.

The official hoped that the power supply situation could be normal today since it is also another holiday when the demand remained comparatively less. However, none could say what the situation would be in the weekdays.

Referring to the government measures to conserve power by keeping major shopping malls closed for four hours and cutting electricity supply to billboards in the city, he said it would also save around 25 megawatt of power per day.

State Minister for Power Anwarul Kabir Talukder yesterday told reporters that the authorities were

trying to find out whether there was inefficiency of power officials behind the outages over last two days.

"Action will be taken against persons whose inefficiency would be proved," he said.

Terming the outrages motivated, the state minister said those who do not want welfare and development of the country carried out the destructive activities.

Meanwhile, over 25,000 people have been sued in at least 10 separate cases for violent agitation against power outages and destroying public property in the city over the last two days.

Police filed eight cases with different police stations in the city while the Lalbagh Power Office authorities and a trader of Kotwali area filed one each.

Police also detained several hundred people from different parts of the city since Thursday night.

Pallabi police filed two cases under sections 147, 148, 332, 353 and 427 accusing over 8,000 people for assaulting police personell and damaging public and private property.

Kotwali thana filed a case accusing over 600 people while a local trader Nandalal filed another case accusing over 700 people for damaging his property.

Mirpur police filed a case accusing some 3,000 people and Jatrabari police over 2,000 people.

Keraniganj police filed a case accusing over 7000 unidentified people and Kamrangirchar police accused unknown 200 to 300 people.

Besides, Lalbagh power office authorities filed a case accusing about 3,000 people and Ramna police about 50 people.

Meanwhile, over 200 people led by Abdul Hamid Khan and Sabuj Khan yesterday staged demonstration in front of DESCO and WASA offices at Uttara in the city demanding uninterrupted power and water supply.

They also submitted a memorandum to Shafiqul Islam Chowdhury, Deputy General Manager at DESCO Uttara Office, in this regard.