

# The Daily Star

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## Dry run for gas burners

Homes, industries go without gas on sudden demand surge

**STAR REPORT**

A sudden rise in gas consumption and the ongoing severe winter chill have led to a major supply debacle in and around the capital yesterday.

Gas supply to thousands of consumers both domestic and industrial in the capital and the industrial zones in Savar, Manikganj and Jaydevpur declined to almost nil, sources said.

Hundreds of industries have complained to the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd. (TGTDC) for the poor supply, who said their production has been seriously hit.

Gas supply shortfall in the city

during the winter is nothing new as low temperature affects flow in the pipelines. But this year, with a sudden rise in gas consumption from the Titas network, the supply dropped unusually.

According to Gas Transmission Company Limited (GTCL) sources, Titas has been consuming between 750 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) to 800 mmcf of gas some 30 to 40 mmcf higher than usual. The country's total gas consumption is 1240 mmcf.

Titas Gas Managing Director Abdul Baset admitted that gas supply has dropped in and around the city and said more gas is required, as the city's power con-

sumption has increased. He added that in the last one year, Titas had to ensure gas supply to generate an additional 500-megawatt (MW) of power.

On Saturday, the Power Development Board (PDB) started the 210 MW Ghorashal fourth unit power plant after completion of rehabilitation works. This has suddenly put pressure on Titas. However, the 360 MW Haripur power plant had to be shut down yesterday much to the relief of Titas.

Meantime, at least 20 residential areas in the capital have been facing poor gas pressure during the day for the last couple of weeks. However, the situation turned

serious in the last two days. The most affected areas include Mohammadpur, Shyamoli, Mirpur, Uttara, Moghbazar, Shantinagar, Rampura, and Kamalapur.

"For the last couple of days, we don't get gas from morning to dusk. Our neighbours are also facing the same problem," said Atiqul Alam, a resident of Mohammadpur, yesterday.

Titas sources said the minimum gas pressure should be 40 to 60 pound per square inch, but in many worst-hit areas, the pressure has

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



Sri Lankan midfielder Hamsa (R) tries to put Pakistan playmaker Quadeer Ahmed under pressure during their SAFF Championship match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## India bounce back, Pakistan in last four

SPORTS REPORTER

India roared back in the race for third South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship, thrashing Afghanistan 4-0 in their second Group A match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Rookie forward Ashim Biswas and substitute midfielder Alvito D' Cunha scored two apiece to keep the semifinal hopes of the defending champions alive.

Pakistan meanwhile have already made it into the last four from this group with a 2-1 victory against Sri Lanka in the first match of the day with Zahid Niaz and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



## Victim's elder sister gives deposition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Simin Hossain, third prosecution witness in the Shazneen rape case and elder sister of the victim, gave her deposition before court yesterday.

Kazi Rahamat Ullah, Judge of the Second Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Saber released

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Organising Secretary of the Awami League (AL) Saber Hossain Chowdhury was freed from the Mymensingh jail yesterday morning upon receipt of the bail order.

The AL leaders, including Motia Chowdhury, Syed Ashraf Islam MP and Advocate Rahmat Ali MP, and Saber's family members received him at about 10.40am.

Leaders and activists of the district AL and its front organisations started gathering at the jail gate since early morning. They

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



## Scrap ordinance, demands AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League yesterday demanded immediate revocation of the Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance, 2003 and warned that the government would have to face trial in future for non-compliance.

AL made the demand in a resolution adopted at a presidium meeting at its Dhanmondi office in the city with Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The resolution said the ordinance was promulgated violating the Constitution just to indemnify Prime Minister Khaleda Zia from the "offenses she made by violating human rights". It was her decision to deploy army, it said.

"She (Khaleda) should be tried for this. In the past, president Ziaur Rahman had promulgated ordinance to indemnify the killers of Bangabandhu and his family mem

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## SC Bar wants indemnity repealed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association yesterday demanded immediate repeal of the Joint Forces Indemnity Ordinance 2003.

The ordinance should be withdrawn immediately to uphold the constitution, preserve the country's image and ensure security of the citizens, the bar association observed.

It also urged the MPs not to adopt

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Indemnity ordn rankles BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Resentment has surfaced in the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), especially among the cabinet members, over the Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance 2003, as the majority opposed it.

Secrecy over the ordinance has also annoyed most ministers and policymakers and made them feel ignored.

Many said the ordinance was

promulgated at the advice of a handful of people who considered neither the future of the party nor widespread criticism both at home and abroad.

Highly placed sources said most policymakers were fully unaware of the ordinance. Even many cabinet ministers had been in the dark until they took part in the special cabinet meeting on Thursday.

The cabinet meeting was due to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## Impunity encourages HR violations in Bangladesh

Irene Khan tells *The Daily Star*



NAZMUL ASHRAF

Secretary General of Amnesty International Irene Khan has put "systemic violation" of human rights in the country down to a "culture of impunity and lack of accountability".

"Lack of action against culprits, political violence, corruption, illiteracy and poverty together have resulted in human rights violation in the country over the years," she told *The Daily Star* in an interview last week.

"Death in torture is our major concern. But investigation into, trial of and conviction in such cases are rare in this country."

"Politics has always played a key

role in acts of human rights abuse under successive governments. The culprits go unfettered due to political influence on the process of investigation."

Politicisation of key institutions of the state is another concern of the London-based human rights watch

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

### WEATHER WATCH

Dhaka Highest 17.1°C Lowest 10.8°C  
Tekinai 25.4°C (highest in the country)  
Chudanga 7.7°C (lowest in the country)  
Weather is likely to improve from today.  
Another cold wave may hit after January 16.