

Gas crisis goes on

Holiday staggering system fails to improve situation

HELEMUL ALAM

The city dwellers have got little respite from persisting gas crisis despite some government initiatives including holiday gas staggering system.

Residents of different areas of the capital alleged that the crisis remains almost the same, and they continue to suffer for this.

The areas include parts of Mirpur, Pallabi, Moghbazar, Uttara, Mohammadpur, Mugdapara, Bashabo, Gendaria, Jatrabari, Golapbagh and Rayerbagh.

The government introduced the gas staggering system last month to ease gas crisis in the capital.

Fatima Akhtar Bristi, a resident of Greenway area in Moghbazar, said gas crisis continues from 6:00am to 11:00pm every day over the last four months. It has not only increased sufferings of her family but also increased monthly expenditure.

"I have to spend additional Tk 1,500 every month for using fire wood for cooking," said Fatima.

She mentioned that she could not use LP gas for cooking as it would require around Tk 5,000 initially and then about Tk 1,100

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



CRISIS
A housewife in North Mugdapara, one of the places in the city affected by gas shortage, has to use wood stove for cooking while another housewife in Nayatola of Moghbazar applies gas stove to dry wet clothing. The photos were taken yesterday.



WASTE
PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ AND ANISUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh worst utiliser of Jica aid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith felt embarrassed yesterday when a high official of the Japan government pointed out that Bangladesh is the worst utilizer of Japanese aid among the South Asian countries.

"I was a bit embarrassed by his remark. The official said our annual utilization of the aid money has plunged to the lowest in South Asia," the finance minister told journalists in his Bangladesh Secretariat office yesterday afternoon following a meeting with Director General of Japan

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Second Padma bridge at Paturia gets nod

Estimated cost Tk 13,121cr; tender for Dhaka elevated expressway next month

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is going to construct a second bridge over the Padma River in Paturia at an estimated cost of Tk 13,121 crore or \$1.9 billion with private initiative and without foreign assistance.

The cabinet committee on economic affairs at a meeting approved in principle the proposal made by the communications ministry for constructing the bridge.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith chaired the meeting held at the Cabinet Division yesterday. The cabinet committee also approved proposals for appointment of consultant for the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Indo-Bangla power meet starts in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint steering committee on power exchange between India and Bangladesh yesterday started a two-day meeting to discuss feasibility study for coal-based power and setting up two coal-fired power plants with a total production capacity of 1,320 megawatt.

Headed by the power secretaries of the two countries -- AK Azad of Bangladesh and HS Bharna of India-- the committee yesterday reviewed the progress made regarding

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Thai diplomat dies in Tangail road crash

Princess Sirindhorn returns to Dhaka hrs earlier

STAR REPORT

Thai Minister Counsellor Pannee Lickanajule, also the deputy chief of Thai Embassy in Dhaka, was killed in a road accident at Mirzapur in Tangail yesterday.

As an entourage of Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Pannee was returning to Dhaka from Gaibandha. She was in a microbus of the princess' motorcade.

Pannee suffered serious chest injuries as her microbus collided head-on with an iron rod laden pick-up van on Dhaka-Tangail highway at Charpara around 1:15pm. The microbus plunged into a roadside ditch.

Police with the help of locals rushed Pannee to Mirzapur Kumudini Hospital where the doctors declared her clinically dead.

She was later flown to Combined Military Hospital, Dhaka in an air force helicopter around 4:30pm. "Doctors at the hospital declared Pannee dead at 5:05pm," said Administration Officer of Thai Embassy Shahjahan Reza.

The driver of the microbus escaped unhurt.

A three-member committee, headed by Tangail Additional District Magistrate Tajul

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7
MORE ON PAGE 12



Pannee Lickanajule



A frightened mother holds her children tight to the chest when BNP men during a procession try to torch a vehicle and a wave of panic spreads through the crowd in the city's Purana Paltan area yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



BCL, Shibir clash at Sylhet college

25 hurt; 25 rooms set on fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

At least 25 people were injured yesterday as Chhatra League activists clashed with Islami Chhatra Shibir men at the Sylhet Government College in Tilagarh over establishing supremacy on the campus.

Of the injured, 20 are Shibir men while the rest are BCL activists.

The college authority suspended academic activities till March 10.

BCL men vandalised 25 rooms of the Shibir men at a student dormitory and set those on fire.

On information, fire fighters rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control.

BCL activists staged protest at about 11:30am after the name

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Dhaka in peril for river neglect

Seminar told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

River management failure has put the capital Dhaka "on the verge of extinction" just like other ancient capitals in the area that also went extinct for similar failures.

The warning was voiced by a paper presented at a seminar yesterday in celebration of 400 years of Dhaka City.

"Ancient capitals that were situated in the area were destroyed due to river erosion. It was river erosion that forced the people of this land to shift their ancient capitals. And now it is the dying rivers that are likely to force us to shift our capital once again," said Dr Iftekhar Iqbal who presented the paper titled An Environmental History of Dhaka.

Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organised the seminar titled The History, Heritage, and Urban Issues of Capital Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

ZIA RENAMING Opposition MPs skip JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-led opposition lawmakers did not join parliament yesterday as they took part in the protests against renaming of Zia International Airport.

Parliament was adjourned yesterday till 5:00pm on March 1.

BNP lawmaker ABM Ashraf Uddin Nizan yesterday told The Daily Star, "We could not join the House for today's proceedings as we have participated in the agitation programme."

Opposition lawmakers of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party joined the House on February 11 after remaining absent for 64 consecutive sittings since last June.

The opposition walked out of parliament for six times in five sittings they attended.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

BNP men clash with cops

Pedestrian run over by car during melee; police van set ablaze; 10 hurt; 13 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP activists and police clashed in the city's Paltan area yesterday, leaving at least 10 people injured.

Police picked up some 13 opposition workers from the scene.

BNP leaders claimed cops attacked their post-rally procession without provocation, while police said they had to charge baton to disperse "unruly party activists damaging vehicles on the street."

During the melee, a pedestrian named Nesaruddin, 48, was crushed to death by a private car at Paltan intersection.

His brother Jahiruddin said Nesar was a lawyer's assistant and not involved in politics.

Police and witnesses said after the BNP's Muktangan rally ended at around 5:30pm, some workers tried to set fire to a bus at Purana Paltan. But police charged baton and broke up the crowd.

In a few minutes, tension spread to Naya Paltan where BNP men got locked in a clash with the cops. Chase and counter-chase between them went on for around 45 minutes.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

ANTI-GOVT MOVEMENT BNP plans 'grand rally' next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will unveil fresh agitation programme from a grand rally at the Paltan Maidan next month to wage an anti-government movement.

The party yesterday announced to hold the grand rally in the capital and conduct a month-long campaign to protest renaming of Zia International Airport and the alleged conspiracy to kill its chairperson.

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, BNP senior joint secretary general, rolled out the programmes at a protest rally organised by Dhaka City unit BNP at Muktangan in the city.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star 19th ANNIVERSARY THREE PART SUPPLEMENTS

The Daily Star, the most widely circulated national English daily is bringing out a 240-page, four-colour Special Supplement to mark its 19th birth anniversary.

The central theme of this supplement is: **A Testing Year**. This Special Supplement will come out in three parts on the following dates.

- Part 1: Politics and Governance (23 February, 2010)**
- Part 2: Economy and Climate Change (24 February, 2010)**
- Part 3: Policies and Institutions (25 February, 2010)**

Eminent intellectuals, professional experts, distinguished members of academia and civil society, corporate sector leaders and journalists are contributing to this grand supplement.

The three-part supplement will be distributed FREE with the regular issue on three consecutive days of publication in greater numbers than usual so as to reach more readers who are likely to preserve the issues as reference.

Please book your copy now with your hawker