

Govt to raise gas price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has planned to increase the price of gas in a bid to reduce the gap between pipeline and LP cylinder gas prices, State Minister for Energy Nasrul Hamid Bipu told parliament yesterday.

Hamid, however, did not give details as to when and to what extent the price of pipeline gas will be increased.

In a scripted reply, the state minister also said the government has been trying to encourage people to use LPG in order to reduce dependency on pipeline gas.

Currently, the price of an LP cylinder gas varies from Tk 1300 to Tk 1400 while the price of gas supplied to households (two-burner pipeline gas) is around Tk 450 in the capital.

In response to a query, Hamid informed the House that there is a stock of 14.94 tcf gas in the country as of July 2014 and it would be possible to supply the gas for next 14 to 15 years even if no new gas field was discovered within this time.

Replying to another query, the state minister said experienced and competent officials of Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration & Production Company Limited (BAPEX) are often leaving the lone state-owned gas and oil exploration organisation on regular basis due to its poor salary structure.

Hamid, however, said Bapex has taken various measures, including giving financial and other benefits, to stop the skilled officials from leaving the company.

Fakhrul gets

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18-party alliance during the blockade.

According to the charge sheet, a group of opposition activists, led by BNP leader Salauddin Ahmed, torched several vehicles after blocking Postogola-Narayanganj highway on December 9, 2012.

Later in the day, Kadamtali police filed the case against 77 opposition leaders and activists, including Salauddin. Fakhrul was named in the first information report as an instigator.

On August 22 this year, police submitted the charge sheet against Fakhrul and 60 other leaders and activists of the BNP-led 18-party alliance.

Attorney gen

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On Wednesday, after the apex court sentenced Sayedee to jail until death overruling the verdict of the International Crimes Tribunal-1, the attorney general said this was not the judgment he had expected.

The Tribunal-1 on February 28 last year passed the death sentence on the Jamaat leader for wartime killing, abduction, torture, rape and forced religious conversion.

Mahbubey Alam said the SC judges didn't mention the reasons on which the apex court's verdict was based.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, the top law officer of the state noted that depositions of prosecution witnesses were weak too.

Sayedee's counsels have placed arguments before the SC by pointing out the weaknesses of statements of prosecution witnesses, he said.

He observed that the statements given by politicians and intellectuals as prosecution witnesses before the International Crimes Tribunals in different war crimes cases were really "ridiculous".

According to Sayedee's counsels, Ibrahim's wife Momtaj Begum filed a case with Pirojpur Police Station in January 1972 in connection with the killing, and Sayedee's name was not mentioned in the case and the charge sheet.

A copy of the first information report (FIR) was submitted to the Tribunal-1, but the court passed the death sentence for the killing of Ibrahim without taking into cognizance the evidence, they claimed.

Contacted, Sanaul Huq, a senior member of the investigation agency dealing war crimes cases, refuted the allegation made by the attorney general saying no court had made a mention of weakness of investigation in any verdict.

"He [attorney general] himself visited Pirojpur for the documents, but he did get it. So, how can he blame the investigation agency?"

The district magistrate and superintendent of police of Pirojpur have informed the investigation agency that such documents do not exist, he claimed.

About the defence's claim of submitting a copy of the FIR, Sanaul said it was a forged document.

Now wait for verdict

Present status	Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General
Status in 1971	President of Jamaat's student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha of Rangpur
Arrest	August 22, 2012
Charges	Six
Charge Type	Genocide, mass killing, killing, rape, crimes against humanity
Place of occurrence	Rangpur
Indicted	November 12, 2013
Prosecution witness	19
Defence witness	One
Waiting for verdict since	September 18, 2014

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a rape victim.

Defence counsel Shishir Manir countered prosecution's arguments and prayed for acquittal of Azharul.

Alleged Al-Badr commander of Rangpur ATM Azharul Islam was indicted on six charges of murder, genocide and crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

The former president of Rangpur district unit Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, was charged with two acts of genocide that left more than 1,200 people dead.

The 61-year-old Jamaat assistant secretary general was also charged with torture, looting, arson, abduction, rape, mass killing and conspiracy to kill unarmed civilians in Rangpur.

Azharul, son of late Nazir Hossain and Ramicha Khatun of Batasan Lohanipara in Badarganj upazila of

Rangpur, was a student of Rangpur Carmichael College during the war.

The prosecution produced 19 witnesses and the defence brought in just one witness.

THE CHARGES

1. Abduction, confinement, torture and murder of Durgadas Adhikari and seven other civilians between March 24 and April 3, 1971.
2. Massacre at Mokshedpur Dhap Para adjacent areas on April 16 during the war.
3. Massacre at Jharuarbeel area and killing around 1,400 unarmed civilians on April 17, 1971.
4. Abduction and murder of four Hindu teachers of Carmichael College and others on April 30 during the war.
5. Rape at Rangpur Town Hall between March 25 and December 16, 1971.
6. Torture on Shawkat Hossain and Rafiqul Hasan between November and December 1, 1971.

Sporadic violence

FROM PAGE 1
Trains and launches operated on schedule, but long-haul buses stayed off the streets. The shutdown is to end at 6:00am today.

Jamaat called two 24-hour hartals for yesterday and Sunday demanding release of its leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee who was convicted by the Supreme Court on Wednesday of committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War and was sentenced to imprisonment until death.

Police detained two pickets in Mirpur when they were trying to bring out a procession on Chirikhana Road at Rainkhola around 7:00am, said Syed Asaduzzaman, sub-inspector of Mirpur Police Station.

UNB reports: Jamaat-Shibir men brought out processions at Shyamoli and Mohakhali level crossing in the morning, but were dispersed by police.

In Narayanganj, Shibir men vandalised at least seven vehicles when they brought out a procession in the town's Golachipa around 8:30am. Police said as they tried to disperse the agitators, a chase and counter-chase took place between them and pickets. A picket was detained in the area.

In Rajshahi, police fired blank shots to disperse stick-wielding demonstrators when they tried to bring out a procession at the city's Dingaduba around 7:00am, said Tanvir Haider, deputy commissioner (headquarters) of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police.

Motihar police said they rounded

up at least 11 leaders and activists of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) unit Shibir for creating anarchy on the campus during hartal hours.

Shutdown supporters in Bogra vandalised a truck at Arelia on Bogra-Noagaon highway early yesterday.

Police said pickets hurled brick bats at the truck. As the driver tried to speed off, the truck skidded off the road. The driver sustained minor injuries.

Jamaat-Shibir men damaged another truck and a CNG-run autorickshaw in Kaloni and Khandar areas of the town early in the day.

In Sylhet, police fired shots to disperse Jamaat-Shibir men and remove a barricade on Sylhet-Sunamganj road at Bolaura area around 11:30am. Police detained five pickets from the spot.

Vandals also damaged three trucks at Ambarkhana intersection and a microbus at Khasdobir area in the city in the morning.

In Chittagong, a team of Rapid Action Battalion-7 recovered four crude bombs in Halishahar yesterday morning.

Law enforcers picked up 18 Jamaat-Shibir men from Satkhira, seven from Feni, three from Pirojpur Sadar upazila and five from Kurigram yesterday and the night before.

Our correspondents in Narayanganj, Rajshahi, Bogra, Sylhet, Chittagong, Satkhira, Feni, Pirojpur and Kurigram contributed to the report.

PM terms Sayedee

FROM PAGE 1
Hasina, also the Leader of the House, said this while giving her concluding speech for the prorogation of the parliament session.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury yesterday read out the prorogation order of the president.

The apex court on Wednesday commuted Sayedee's death sentence handed down by the International Crimes Tribunal-1 last year to jail until death. He was convicted of killing, abduction, torture, rape and forced religious conversion during the Liberation War in 1971.

Hasina said, "Sayedee was known as a propagator of religion among people, but after the verdict people will treat him as a rapist, killer, robber and criminal as well as a war criminal."

He is a horrible person even though he is a sweet talker, she said.

She questioned the logic behind the hartal enforced by Jamaat-e-Islami. "Did Jamaat want Sayedee's death sentence? Is that why they called the hartal?"

About the 16th amendment bill, which empowers parliament to remove Supreme Court judges for misbehaviour and incapacity, the premier said the bill protects the independence of the judiciary.

"Earlier, the fate of a judge was decided by only three people and now two-third majority will be required to impeach a judge in parliament and after the lawmakers' decision, the president's approval is needed as well," she said.

Hinting at former caretaker government adviser Moïnul Husein, she criticised him for forming a political party with the killers of Bangabandhu.

She, however, did not mention his name.

"This person once had come to me to become an adviser. These people are isolated and they have failed and they have no popularity. They want to mislead people. Instead of a democratic government, they always want unconstitutional regimes since only then they get honoured and are given a flag," she said.

In her speech, Opposition Leader Raushan Ershad lambasted Hasina for her failure to stop food adulteration.

Raushan, a Jatiya Party presidium member, also criticised Hasina for frequent power cuts, appalling roads and garbage disposal situation of the capital.

"Your [Hasina's] government has failed to ensure safe food for the people. Formalin is being used in almost all food items. How can you [Hasina] claim yourself to be the daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman?"

"You can stop the misuse of formalin within a day if you wish," she said.

Pointing to a law enacted by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government to stop food adulteration, Raushan questioned Hasina why the latter had failed to implement that law.

"Being the daughter of the Father of the Nation, you are not thinking about people," Raushan asserted.

Lawmakers from the treasury and the opposition benches were seen smiling repeatedly when Raushan was criticising Hasina.

Describing the sorry state of the capital's amenities, Raushan called upon the premier to have a first-hand experience. "You should see how people are living in the city. No one will give you real information about this ..."

Yea or nay?

FROM PAGE 20

hose opposed to independence say a split could slow economic growth, affect the United Kingdom's defense capability, threaten the unity of other countries and tip the balance in favor of people who want Britain to leave the European Union.

Those in favor say that is just scaremongering and see a bright future for an independent Scotland in Europe, a fairer society and good defense and economic cooperation with London.

The issue has divided families and friends but also electrified this country of 5.3 million in months of debate.

One group of "Yes" voters marched to an Edinburgh polling station with a bagpiper playing "Scotland the Brave", while on the city's main Princes Street, overlooked by its castle, "Better Together" campaigners handed out leaflets saying "Vote No." "It's not worth the risk. There's no going back."

Leaders of both sides have urged Scots to consider the long-term implications of answering "Yes" or "No" to the question: "Should Scotland be an independent country?"

Alex Salmond, the 59-year-old nationalist leader, told hundreds of supporters in Perth at a final rally: "Scotland's future must be in Scotland's hands ... This is our opportunity of a lifetime and we must seize it with both hands."

The independence movement says Scots should be able to choose their own leaders and make their own deci-

sions rather than be ruled from London. Supporters of the union say Scotland is more prosperous and secure as part of the United Kingdom and the ties that bind its peoples are too tight to be undone.

Salmond has said Queen Elizabeth should stay on as Queen of Scots. She has remained above the fray, in keeping with the constitution, but said on Sunday she hoped Scots would choose "carefully".

WHAT WOULD BE LEFT?

The prospect of breaking up the United Kingdom, the world's sixth-largest economy and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, has prompted citizens and allies alike to question what would be left, while the financiers of the City of London have warned of market turmoil.

British politicians, banks and businessmen have closed ranks to warn of economic hardship, job losses and investment flight should Scots decide to go it alone. Defense would also be a big question - Britain's submarine-borne nuclear arsenal, part of NATO's defenses - is based in Scotland's Firth of Clyde.

The United States has made clear it wants the United Kingdom, its main ally in Europe, to remain together.

"The UK is an extraordinary partner for America and a force for good in an unstable world. I hope it remains strong, robust and united," U.S. President Barack Obama said.

European leaders have warned that an independent Scotland would have to rejoin the European Union and

could face resistance. Spain has been especially vocal, fearing it would further inspire separatists in Catalonia and the Basque Country.

Many of those voting for independence felt rule from London had opened too wide a gap between rich and poor. "I want a different kind of Scotland, a socially just Scotland," said Lisa Clark, a church worker, after casting her vote for "Yes".

Five surveys showed support for independence at 48 percent, compared with 52 percent for the union, while a fifth poll showed it even closer at 49 percent to 51 percent. Another showed unionists at 53 percent and separatists at 47 percent.

The surveys also showed as many as 600,000 voters were undecided, making the vote too close to call. Polling stations close at 2100 GMT and a result is expected early on Friday.

In Glasgow, there was a carnival-like atmosphere, with some people wearing blue-and-white face paint. A man running a financial services business and a hotel on the Isle of Skye had come down to his hometown Glasgow to cast a "No" vote.

"I think it's a great concept, but working in finance I can see the difficulties," he said, giving his name as Eddie.

Salmond has employed a mix of shrewd calculation and nationalist passion to haul the "Yes" campaign from far behind to within a whisker of winning his dream of an independent Scotland. But the momentum needs to continue if he is to win.

India, China pledge to end border row

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The nuclear-armed neighbours fought a brief but bloody war in 1962 over the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in the eastern Himalayas, and are still embroiled in a bitter dispute over the territory.

Last year India accused Chinese troops of intruding deep into Indian-held territory, sparking a three-week stand-off that was only resolved when troops from both sides pulled back.

Details of the latest incident remain sketchy. An Indian army official who asked not to be named said there was "an ongoing situation" with Chinese soldiers in Ladakh, while a local lawmaker told AFP around 1,000 Chinese troops had crossed into the Indian side of the disputed area.

MUSCULAR FOREIGN POLICY

Modi has rolled out the red carpet for Xi, hosting a private dinner in a luxury riverside tent in his home city of Ahmedabad on Wednesday.

India's newly-elected leader is eager to secure Chinese funding to fulfil his election pledge to overhaul his country's crumbling infrastructure, which

has held back economic growth in the country of 1.2 billion people.

But he has also signalled he will pursue a more muscular foreign policy than his centre-left predecessor Manmohan Singh, who critics say was too soft on China.

China, meanwhile, is keen to foster warmer ties with its western neighbour at a time of heightened tensions with Japan and several Southeast Asian nations over disputed sea territory.

But while the two sides have been at pains to stress cooperation ahead of the visit, much remains that divides them.

China has cultivated close ties with India's arch foe Pakistan, and its growing influence over other South Asian nations have sparked worries of a deliberate strategy to encircle India.

The presence in India of the Dalai Lama is another source of tension.

Speaking to reporters in Mumbai yesterday, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader said Xi was "more open-minded" than his predecessor Hu Jintao.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner supports "meaningful autonomy" for Tibet within China rather than out-

right independence, but China accuses him of covertly campaigning for Tibet's independence.

Tibetan students protested against China outside the venue where Xi and Modi held talks, shouting slogans before being taken away in police buses.

CHINA TO BOOST INVESTMENTS

Xi pledged greater investment from China, already India's biggest trading partner, with annual two-way commerce of more than \$65 billion.

He said China, which built the world's largest high-speed rail system from scratch in less than a decade, would look to develop faster train lines in India and develop industrial parks in Gujarat and Maharashtra states.

India has been pushing for more investment to narrow the trade deficit with China, which has soared to more than \$40 billion from just \$1 billion in 2001-02.

"When our two countries work with each other for common development, we can bring benefits to the 2.5 billion people in China and India," Xi said.

Natural fertilisers

FROM PAGE 2

it initially. So I began using it on my crops," said Helal.

However, it did not take him long to make the concept popular to others. Meanwhile, Hunger-free World, an NGO, came to know about this initiative in the village and arranged for training more farmers in natural compost in 2003.

"I was hired to train other farmers in vermicompost," Helal said, adding that his expertise increased his income.

He then set up a bigger compost plant to expand the business.

As the idea of natural farming expanded, some farmers came up with the thought of making a bio-pesticide, a

"Balainashak", from juice extracted from neem and mahogany trees.

"We used Balainashak till 2010. Although some still use it, most others have opted for pheromone," he said.

Mahashwerchanda thus has become a milestone in natural farming. Both in terms of fertilisers and pesticides, farmers of this village rely on nature instead of harmful chemicals. Farmers from neighbouring villages are also following suit.

"Even farmers from nearby districts come to buy vermicompost from us," he said.

In the span of a little more than a decade, Helal Uddin now owns seven

acres of land and his monthly income stands at Tk 50,000 from the sales of compost and vegetables.

"I have never given up since I learnt natural farming. The most important thing about it is: it protects soil, environment and above all, the health of people," he said.

The vegetables he produces are mostly sold locally. A businessman from Dhaka also buys vegetables from him. Sometimes, though, his vegetables remain unsold in the local markets.

"If there is a market arrangement to sell the vegetables grown naturally, our products could be sold at better prices," he added.

Hitler's food

FROM PAGE 20

hour, and every time we were frightened that we were going to be ill. We used to cry like dogs because we were so glad to have survived."

Surrounded by white fluffy toy polar bears, Ms Wölk told her story in the same Berlin apartment where she was born in 1917. The daughter of a German railways employee, she enjoyed a carefree youth and had Jewish friends until the Nazis came to power in 1933.

She became one of Hitler's food tasters by accident. Bombed out of her Berlin apartment in 1941, and with her husband Karl drafted into the army, she sought sanctuary in the home of his mother in the East Prussian town of Partsch, which is now Parcz, Poland. Located some 400 miles east of Berlin, the town happened to be right next door to Hitler's Wolf's Lair headquarters.

The mayor of the town, an ardent Nazi, forced Mrs Wölk to become a food taster. Every day an SS guard picked her and the other girls up in a special bus and took them to a school building, where they had to taste the Nazi leader's meals.

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