



# The Daily Star

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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE  
**LIFE**  
style



## 'CHAOS AND ORDER'

French-Bangalee photographer's solo deals with both separation and harmony

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## THE KING HOLIDAY

Actors of civil rights film "Selma" march in tribute to the leader

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# Blockade to continue

Announces Khaleda after 16-day confinement; extra police withdrawn from her office; '48-hr hartal in capital, Dhaka dist, Khulna div from tomorrow'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday appeared in public for the first time in two weeks and announced that the blockade would continue until the government created a congenial atmosphere for a free, fair election.

Khaleda had been confined to her Gulshan office since law enforcers locked it on the night of January 3. The last time she spoke to the press was on January 5, when police stopped her from coming out to join a planned showdown.

Around 2:30am yesterday, the government withdrew the law enforcers, water cannons and police vans from in front of her office.

"Lift all restrictions on democratic and



constitutional rights. Make the abnormal situation normal. Give people peace and comfort. Stop politics of provocation, falsehood and conspiracy. Return to the people their rights to vote that you snatched away. And take steps immediately for holding an acceptable election," she urged the government.

After an emergency meeting with some senior party leaders, Khaleda made the call at a press conference last night at her office.

Although now apparently free to leave her office, she has decided to stay put.

On January 5, the BNP-led 20-party alliance called the nonstop blockade in response to Khaleda's confinement and the

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With restrictions lifted, cars and rickshaws ply the road in front of BNP chairperson's political office in Gulshan yesterday. Police vans, water cannons and a huge contingent of law enforcers that had been barricading the road for more than two weeks were withdrawn early yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# Schools struggle to stay open

Some already declared closure amid panic, thin attendance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of English medium schools in the city have suspended classes apparently due to the BNP-led alliance's nonstop blockade that has seen a vicious spate of violence and arson attacks throughout the country over the last two weeks.

Without citing any reason, management of the institutions sent text messages to the guardians, saying the schools "will remain closed until further notice".

"I have received an SMS today [yesterday] from the school about the closure," said a mother whose child goes to Sunbeams School in Dhanmondi.

The Daily Star got similar responses from guardians of a number of schools including South Breeze School, Oxford International School, Playpen and Tiny Tots.

A parent whose son studies in class-I at Dhanmondi Tutorial found a notice at the school gate that read classes would remain

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# Power utilities press for big hike in tariff

22pc hike at retail, 18pc at bulk level proposed; hearing starts today at BERC

SHARIER KHAN

The country's power utilities are seeking a massive hike in electricity tariff as they continue to incur losses due to ever increasing use of costly imported petroleum which has seen a steep fall in global rates recently.

The utilities have asked Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (Berc) to approve 18 percent hike for bulk power and 22 percent for retail. The five-day hearing of the petition begins today.

According to the Power Development Board

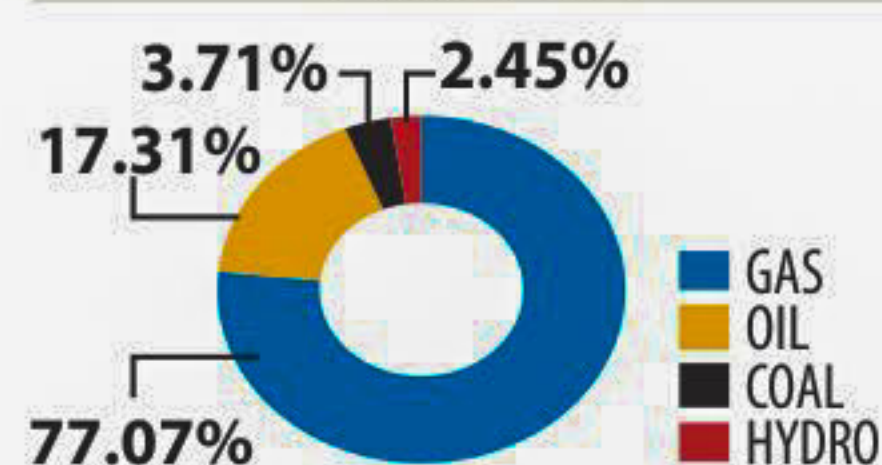
(PDB), the cost of per kilowatt hour (or a unit) power now stands at Tk 6.10. But it is sold to various distributors like Desco at the rate of Tk 4.7 per unit. The PDB is asking the Berc to allow this rate to be raised to Tk 5.55 /unit and the remaining losses of Tk 4,000 crore a year will be borne by the government as subsidy.

Following the PDB's proposal, the power distributors also proposed that the Berc increase the average retail price to Tk 7.47 /unit from the present average of Tk 6.10 /unit. The retail price is charged

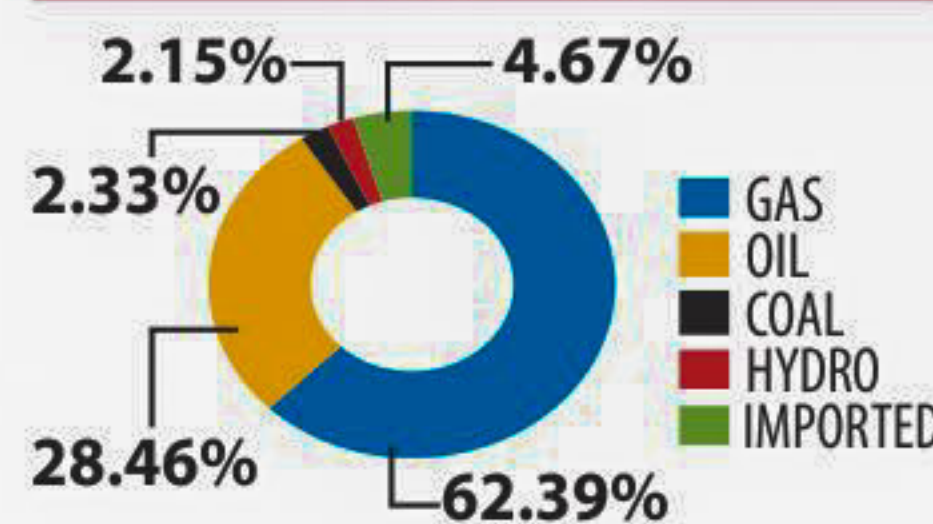
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## PRIMARY ENERGY FOR POWER GENERATION

2012-13



2013-14



## After Viber, Tango, 3 other apps blocked

STAR CORRESPONDENT

Three more voice and messaging services -- WhatsApp, Mypeople and Line -- have been blocked on security grounds.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) took the action yesterday, a day after Viber and Tango, two other messaging apps, were blocked "temporarily" for the same reason.

The ban on the two apps was extended till tomorrow midnight and it will be effective for the other three as well, officials said.

Md Sarwar Alam, secretary and spokesperson of BTRC, said on instructions from the law enforcement and intelligence agencies, the BTRC asked mobile phone and cable operators and internet gateways to suspend the services.

However, the applications were alive through some fixed lines.

For carrying out subversive activities, pro-blockade activists were maintaining communications among themselves using those free smartphone applications, intelligence officials say.

Some social networking sites, including Facebook, are also under observation of the agencies as criminals

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As part of increased vigilance by law enforcers, a BGP team escorts a tank lorry in Patenga of Chittagong yesterday to resist attacks from supporters of the ongoing blockade enforced by the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

PHOTO: STAR

# Blasts, arson go on

Despite BGB-police protection, not enough buses on roads; cops shoot one 'bomb thrower' in capital

STAR REPORT

Sporadic incidents of violence marked the 14th day of the indefinite countrywide blockade as pickets clashed with law enforcers, exploded crude bombs and carried out arson attacks and vandalism in several districts yesterday.

At least 19 vehicles were torched all over the country. At least nine of them were set ablaze in different parts of the

capital and in its adjacent areas including Narayanganj, according to fire service officials.

Meanwhile, Police shot an alleged blockader in the capital's Shahbagh while he was fleeing after hurling a crude bomb at a bus around 8:00pm yesterday.

Nur Mohammad, 25, was shot in the left leg and is undergoing treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Rashidul Islam Rashed, the

driver who was steering the bus, was also rushed to the DMCH with injuries in his hand and leg, said Abdul Azim, sub-inspector of Shahbagh police station.

The shooting incident happened one day after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had directed the police administration to hunt down petrol bomb makers and throwers on Sunday.

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## Jamaat leader killed in 'gunfight'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Narail Jamaat-e-Islami leader was killed in a "gunfight" with Detective Branch (DB) of police at Motijheel in the capital early yesterday.

The dead, Imrul Qayes, 35, was the ward-1 councillor of Narail municipality and also the president of the Jamaat ward unit.

He was shot nine times and each bullet pierced through the body, said Dhaka Medical College morgue sources after the autopsy.

Imrul's family sources alleged that detectives had picked up the Jamaat leader from a house at Wari in the early hours of Saturday.

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## NEWS ANALYSIS

# Enough, no?

MARTIN SWAPAN PANDEY

An office is locked, a blockade is called, death and destruction follow.

But today we begin with Selina Begum, a blind and widowed mother, who lost her only child in an arson attack on Sunday. We begin with Selina because, we hope, our prime minister and our opposition party leader are mother enough to be able to grasp the pain of losing a child, the only child that is. When Sohagh, just 18, set out for his first day at work as a truck helper on Friday, he promised his mother that he would return home with "plenty of food".

This very phrase -- plenty of food -- speaks volume about how the mother and the son spent days or even months and years without some good food on their plates and how the two lonely souls assured and reassured each other that things would change and that better days would come. Better days did come, for Sohagh got the job that would fetch them Tk 3,000 a month. But in the end, what Selina gets is the charred body of her son. In so receiving the body, Selina becomes the mother of a nation pitched into madness. At least 25 people have died in two weeks for something not of their own making.

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# Foreign diplomats denounce violence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Condemning the ongoing political violence, a group of foreign diplomats in Dhaka yesterday urged the government to hold constructive dialogue with the opposition to find a peaceful solution to the current political crisis.

They made the call at a meeting with Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali at State Guesthouse Padma in the afternoon.

Briefing the diplomats, the foreign min-

ister said the BNP is a "terrorist" party. It resorted to arson and destructive activities causing loss of many lives and property, said a diplomatic source.

"Any dialogue with the BNP will be possible only after it behaves responsibly and severs ties with the Jamaat," the source quoted the minister as saying.

Ambassadors and representatives of the

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