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# PM slams those opposing gas price hike

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said those who are criticising the gas price hike have failed to understand the reality and didn't see the development works carried out by the government.

Hasina said the import cost of each cubic feet of LNG was Tk 61.12, but it was being sold at Tk 9.80 by providing a sizeable subsidy of Tk 51.80.

"We need to provide a subsidy of Tk 19,310 crore. If we add tax and VAT, the figure would be Tk 30,000 crore."

The Petrobangla and other companies had proposed hiking the price by 102 percent. Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) felt that it was necessary to increase the price by 75 percent. The hike, however, was by only 32.80 percent keeping in mind the burden on the people, the PM said.

The leader of the House said gas was important for industrialisation and development of the country. "We don't have enough gas. We are exploring gas fields."

She said criticism over the gas price hike was unfortunate. "People who are criticising don't see development. They don't understand the reality."

As Bangladesh does not have sufficient gas, it needs to import LNG at a high price, she added.

Refuting the claim of Deputy Opposition Leader Raushan Ershad that gas prices were cut in India, the PM said the price was comparatively still less in Bangladesh than in India.

"It is said that the gas prices were cut [in India]. The price of household gas in India is Rs 30 [around Tk 37]

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The compound of a college in Gowainghat upazila's Alirgaon union has been inundated by flash flood triggered by continuous downpour over the last couple of days and onrush of water from the hills. Inset, an elderly woman in her home which has been inundated by flash flood in Lalmonirhat Sadar's Bagdora village.

PHOTO: COLLECTED/S DILIP ROY

# Flash floods hit North, hill dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many areas in the country's northern, north-eastern and hilly regions have been inundated by flash floods, causing thousands of people to suffer.

Incessant rain and an onrush of water from the upstream have caused the floods, while some rivers are flowing over the danger level.

Road communication between Bandarban and other districts remained suspended over the last two days, as roads in Satkania Upazila's Bazalia area remained submerged, reports our correspondent in the district.

Many parts of the district town have also already been inundated. Crop lands in these areas have gone under water, while ponds have been overflowing.

District administration officials are trying to evacuate the affected people and provide them with food and other necessary support, Baghaichhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer

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# 10-year-old girl raped in running train

Suspect handed over to police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Passengers handed a man to railway police, alleging that he had raped a 10-year-old girl inside the toilet of the Jamuna Express on Wednesday night.

Samrat, 20, a porter in Kamalapur Railway Station, yesterday confessed to taking the first grader inside a toilet and raping her inside the moving train, said Rusho Banik, sub-inspector of Dhaka Railway Police Station.

"Samrat gave a confessional statement before the court of judicial magistrate Razib Hasan," the officer said.

The girl told police that she went to visit Kamalapur Railway Station.

"Samrat convinced the gullible girl to get into the train. As the train left the station and crossed Tejgaon, he took her inside a toilet and raped her," the SI said.

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# Youth demographic not being utilised

Experts urge proper planning, coordination to ensure jobs

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

Rabiul Islam completed his diploma in Architecture and Interior Design from Kurigram Polytechnic Institute in December 2015, but he is still to get a decent job.

The 25-year-old is now doing another course under a scholarship programme, financed by the Islamic Development Bank, in Dhaka in the hope of securing the job.

"I completed a diploma course, but I could not acquire the skills which are in demand in the job market. May be one of the main reasons is that we hardly had any practical classes," a frustrated Rabiul told The Daily Star recently.

He added that only 10 to 12 students from his batch of 96 are in comparatively better jobs. The others either gave up studies or were pursuing higher degrees.

Like Rabiul, thousands of others his age are not employed even after completing their studies. And this is how Bangladesh is failing to maximise the opportunities of its demographic dividend -- a situation when working age population surpasses the non-working one -- due to a lack of proper planning and coordination, experts said.

Some 68 percent of the country's population are of working age, between 15 and 64, according to the 2017 data of the United Nations Population Division.

This provides a one-time "demographic window of opportunity" before the dependency ratio rises again with the growth of the elderly population.

However, according to experts, it is not automatic or guaranteed that this one-time demographic window of opportunity will actually lead to a "demographic dividend".

A nation achieves demographic dividend once in its lifetime, they said.

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# TRAWLER CAPSIZE 17 fishermen still missing

M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL

Perennial poverty have lately forced hundreds of fishermen to sail their vessels into the Bay of Bengal for deep sea fishing, ignoring a government ban.

Of them, at least 26 went missing on Saturday as two fishing trawlers, one led by Monir Majhi of Char Madraj and another by Shajahan Majhi of Faridabad, sank in the Bay, said police in Bhola's Char Fashion upazila.

Shamsul Arefin, officer-in-charge of Char Fashion Police Station, said seven bodies of the missing fishermen were recovered in Cox's Bazar and two more were rescued alive on Wednesday.

Seventeen of the missing fishermen are yet to be traced, he said, adding police, Coastguard, Navy and local fishermen are searching for the fishermen who remained missing.

Monir Majhi was one of the two fishermen who survived the storm-ravaged sea and made it to the coast. He was rescued in a critical condition from Cox's Bazar Sea Beach on Wednesday.

Monir said he was sailing his vessel with 14 other fishermen. "All my co-workers went missing as the vessel sank after being hit by rogue waves," he added.

Another fisherman Jewel was rescued

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# Sugary drinks raise risk of cancer



AFF, Paris

Consumption of sugary drinks such as soda and fruit juice is linked to a higher risk of developing certain kinds of cancer, researchers reported yesterday.

The consumption of sugary drinks has exploded worldwide in recent decades and the high-calorie beverages have already been associated with an elevated risk of obesity -- itself recognised as a leading cancer risk factor.

A team of researchers in France wanted to assess the associations between heightened consumption of sugar drinks and the risks of overall cancer, as well as several cancer types, including breast, prostate and bowel cancers.

They surveyed more than 100,000 adults, with an average of age of 42, 79 percent of whom were women.

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# 'Yaba dealer' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An alleged yaba trader was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

Abdul Malek, 36, was the son of Mokbul Hossain from the district's Natun Pallanpara area, said Prodip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station.

A team of police conducted a raid in Lengurbeel Mathchara area around 12:15am.

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PRAYER TIMING JULY 12

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-10 12-30 5-00 6-55 8-17  
JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A Jacobin Cuckoo resting on a tree in Chapainawabganj.

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN

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# The Jacobin's Bangladeshi summer

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

A visitor bird and seen often during summer, the Jacobin Cuckoo has made yet another appearance in Bangladesh during its mating season.

The bird migrates all the way from Africa and returns right before winter.

Scientifically named Clamator Jacobinus, the bird belongs to Cuculidae family. In Bangla, it is known as "Pakra-Papia".

The bird is found especially in the south of the Sahara in Africa and the in Indian sub-continent, including Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Just this summer, the bird was spotted thrice in Chapainawabganj.

The Jacobin Cuckoo is a medium sized bird, measuring 33cm in length.

An adult Jacobin Cuckoo has a glossy black or dark-brown back and its chest and belly are white. There is a white patch on each black wing and a white tip on its black tail feathers. The crest and the bill too are black.

# States must pay for media abuse

Says UK FM; warns of deteriorating situation in KSA, China

AFF, London

Countries that abuse journalists should pay a "diplomatic price", British Foreign Minister Jeremy Hunt told a conference on media freedom Wednesday, adding that liberal democracies must also "practise what we preach".

Hunt, who is battling Boris Johnson to become Britain's next leader, raised the murder of dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the jailing of activists in China and Vietnam and the murder of reporters in Mexico.

"If we act together we can shine a spotlight on abuses and impose a diplomatic price on those who would harm journalists or lock them up for doing their jobs," he said.

The Global Conference for Media Freedom in London, co-hosted with Canada, brings together 60 ministers and around 1,500 journalists, activists and academics from 100 different countries.

The hosts are hoping for pledges about action to protect press freedom and cooperation between states on responding to specific cases.

Britain and Canada want to create a group of "like-minded countries to lobby in unison where media freedom comes under attack", Hunt told a press conference.

"It's easier to speak up when you're not alone," added Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland.

Britain has also pledged £3 million (\$3.75 million) to kick-start a global fund to provide legal advice and safety training to journalists, and a further £15 million to help independent media.

However, Hunt conceded that his own country itself must "do better", after being ranked 33rd in the 2019 world press freedom index by campaign group Reporters

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