

GAS SUPPLY DISRUPTION IN CITY Titas, RHD trade blame

Thousands wake up to find no way to cook

HELEMUL ALAM and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Thousands of people in different parts of the capital suffered badly after being hit by a severe gas crisis as a Titas connection was damaged in Amin Bazar on the outskirts of the city on Monday night.

While Titas and Roads and Highways Department (RHD) officials traded blame for the situation, many of the affected people did not get the gas connection back till 8:00pm yesterday, when this report was filed.

Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd officials said the gas line was damaged by an RHD contractor.

The problem began after the feeder line was damaged around 9:00pm on Monday during a construction work of Salehpur bridge over the Turag river in Amin Bazar, Titas Director (Operations) Shafiqul Islam Khan said.

He said they were working on it and that they were trying to keep gas supply normal.

RHD officials, on the other hand, said the line was installed on RHD land without permission and that they were not aware of its presence.

Arguing that the RHD cannot be held responsible for the people's suffering, the officials said no such gas line should be installed so close to a main road.

Titas officials said they took due permission during the installation of the gas line.

In the meantime, thousands of people in Mohammadpur, SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Some motorcyclists get on the pavement while others follow the traffic rules and stay put in a gridlock near Shat Rasta intersection in the capital. The ones on the pavement are travelling under a sign set up there by police urging all to follow traffic rules.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

WRONG LOCOMOTIVES BR probing if those can be used

Forms another committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although two probe committees found that South Korean company Hyundai Rotem Company (HRC) supplied 10 locomotives to Bangladesh Railway breaching the contract, the BR has now formed another committee to determine whether those engines can be used.

The new committee has four members and is led by Prof Muhammed Mahbubur Razaque of Buet's mechanical engineering department. It was asked to submit its report within 10 working days.

The BR came up with the move although one of the two probe committees had recommended taking punitive action against HRC, and CCIC Singapore Pte Ltd, which the BR employed for the pre-shipment inspection.

"There are some SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Man murders wife, son, dumps bodies in lake

He then calls family to tell them where to find the bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

She took refuge in her mother's house to save herself from her husband's torture and keep her three-year-old son out of harm's way.

But her desperate bid to save herself and her son went in vain as both ended up dead, their bodies dumped in a lake near the Korail slum in the capital's Banani area.

Police yesterday recovered the bodies of Hashi Begum, 25, a homemaker, and her son Nirob Hossain.

"It's my brother-in-law Rubel Hossain who killed my sister and my nephew... He called me over phone in the morning and said he dumped their bodies in the lake and asked us to recover those," Hashi's brother Mehedi Hasan, a day labourer, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Mehedi and his family members rushed to the location and found the bodies of Hashi and her son floating in the lake. They then informed police.

Earlier on Monday afternoon, Rubel, a construction worker, came to the slum to take Hashi back to his house in Cumilla. But she refused to go back.

Later at night, several elderly neighbours sat with Hashi and Rubel to mediate between the couple.

"If you send me back to Cumilla with my husband, he will kill me this time," Hashi told the mediators, requesting them not to put pressure on her.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

The telephone call that never came

MARCH 24, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

THE FINAL MEETING

There was a final meeting between Awami League's team and President Yahya Khan's advisers on March 24 at 6:00pm. The reading of all the clauses and schedules of the draft proclamation, initially prepared by Yahya's advisers and subsequently modified by AL representatives, was concluded.

Kamal Hossain, a member of the AL team, asked Lt Gen Peerzada, principal staff officer to Yahya Khan, as to when the draft could be finalised. It was proposed from the AL side that Kamal Hossain and Justice Cornelius, adviser to Yahya Khan, should sit that very night and finalise the draft so that it could be presented before the president and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the next morning.

Cornelius was agreeable but Peerzada prevented him saying, "No, we have some discussions this evening, you may meet tomorrow morning."

When Kamal Hossain suggested fixing a time for the following day Peerzada intervened and said they would be informed about it over phone. Awami League



waited for the telephone call throughout the fateful day of March 25 but it never came. Even when Kamal Hossain finally left Bangabandhu at his residence around 10:30pm on March 25, Bangabandhu asked him whether he had received such a telephone call. Kamal Hossain confirmed that he had not. [Kamal Hossain, Bangladesh: Quest for Freedom and Justice, UPL, 2013, pp 102-103]

BANGABANDHU WARNS AGAINST CONSPIRACY
From morning till night, without any rest, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman continued to give speeches for the many processions that arrived at his doorstep.

"We don't want any more discussions; now we want an announcement," said Bangabandhu.

If there was no solution by tomorrow, he said, Bangladeshis would find it themselves. No conspiracy could hold them

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Tensions take hold on Sylhet border

BSF builds bunker on no-man's land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Border Guard Bangladesh jawans took up position on the Gokujata border in Sylhet's Beanibazar yesterday morning shortly after India's Border Security Force set up bunkers in the no-man's land between the countries.

On Monday morning, the BSF had stopped the reconstruction of a centuries-old mosque on the Bangladesh side at the edge of the border, said Lt Col Shah Alam Siddiqui, commanding officer of 52 BGB Battalion.

"The BSF stopped the reconstruction work entering Bangladesh territory and then unlawfully set-up bunkers 150 metres inside the no-man's land.

"In response, we also deployed forces at the border," he said yesterday.

A flag-meeting started at 5:00pm to settle the issue, but the outcome of the meeting could not be known as the BGB

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Natural soundscapes boost people's health markers



AFP, Washington

Spending more time in green spaces might be just what the doctor ordered, according to a study that quantifies the health benefits of natural sounds, from improved mood and cognitive performance to decreased heart rate and sensitivity to pain.

The paper was led by Rachel Buxton, a conservation biologist at Canada's Carleton University, and published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

"We tend to look at the acoustic environment from the perspective of noise pollution and how it disturbs wildlife, and how it has effects on visitors to parks and human health," she told AFP.

"A lot of us conservation biologists are really interested in the inverse of that: what are the health benefits of natural acoustic environments?"

Buxton and her colleagues carried out a literature review to statistically analyze the patchwork of

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

'I'll commit suicide' if I'm forced to be 'hospitalised'

Says Quader Mirza

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Abdul Quader Mirza, younger brother of ruling Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, yesterday said he would kill himself if he was forced by "conspirators" to be hospitalised as part of a political plot.

"Former Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad was forced to be admitted to CMH [Combined Military Hospital] before a national election. Similar things may happen to me. Conspiracy is going on against me. Obaidul Quader is thinking so being provoked by his

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



PRAYER TIMING MARCH 24

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:55 12:45 4:45 6:16 7:45
JAMAAT 5:30 1:15 5:00 6:20 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A thirsty crow sipping water from a puddle on a street near Doyel Chatter in the capital yesterday. The city witnessed a sharp rise in temperature over the last few days. Water becomes hard to come by for animals especially during this time of the year.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

UK COVID VARIANT Germany to enter strict shutdown

India's top gov't panel says no blood clot risk from Covishield, Covaxin AGENCIES

Germany will enter a strict shutdown for five days over Easter amid surging virus rates, Chancellor Angela Merkel and regional leaders agreed yesterday as criticism mounted over the government's handling of the pandemic.

As well as extending existing measures including keeping cultural, leisure and sporting facilities shut through to April 18, Merkel and Germany's 16 state premiers ordered a tougher shutdown between April 1 and 5.

Almost all shops will be closed during the five days, and religious services will be moved online over

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3