

Gas supply to be halted in parts of capital today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gas supply will remain halted in several areas of the capital for up to six hours today, as the gas distribution company is undertaking pipeline relocation work.

In a statement, Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company said that supply will remain suspended from 10am to 4pm at Tejgunipara, Tejgaon Girls' School, Karwan Bazar, Christian Para, Sonargaon Hotel and Kathal Bagan, Dilu Road, Paribagh, eastern side of Sonargaon road and western side of Kataban road areas.

According to Titas, supply will be disrupted to facilitate relocation of a gas pipeline from Tejgaon Rail Crossing to Sonargaon Hotel.

Adjacent areas of the affected locations may also experience low pressure in supply for the same reason, it further said.

"Pipeline relocation is part of a route alignment of utilities under the Dhaka Elevated Expressway Project," the company added.

Authorities concerned have expressed their regret over the gas supply disruption, the statement added.



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Contrary to many parts of the country that saw cloudy and stormy weather due to cyclone Yaas yesterday, Sylhet saw temperatures in the high 30 degrees as the sun beat down on the city. A man is seen pouring water from a deep tubewell site in Shahi Eidgah area to find some respite from the scorching heat.

BODY FOUND IN MOSQUE SEPTIC TANK

Extramarital affair led to killing: Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The murder of readymade garment worker Azharul Islam, whose dismembered body was recovered from septic tank of a mosque in the capital's Dakshinkhan on Tuesday, was preplanned.

His wife Asma Akter conspired the murder with the Dakshinkhan Sardar Para Mosque Imam Abdur Rahman, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) said yesterday.

Rab arrested Abdur on Tuesday morning, and collecting information from him, recovered the body of Azharul (30) from the tank.

Later, Rab have also arrested Asma on charge of the murder. While addressing reporters, Commander Khandaker Al Moin, legal and media wing director of Rab, said the murder took place due to extramarital affair between the imam and victim's wife.

Rab said in January year, Abdur used to visit the victim's home and teach Arabic to Azharul and his son.

At one point, Abdur engaged into a relationship with Asma. Azharul came to know about their relationship in March, and asked the Imam for not to come to his home anymore, said the Rab official.

But the relationship continued between them, and in late March, Asma and Abdur plotted to kill Azharul, said Moin.

At first, the plan was to kill Azharul by hiring someone, but Asma later advised the imam to kill Azharul in his room, he said.

Abdur even bought a SIM card and gave it secretly to Asma so that they can discuss about their murder plan. Their plan was to kill Azharul seven days before Ramadan but the plan was foiled as the victim fell sick and went to village home in Tangail, said the Rab official.

Finally on May 18, as per the plan, Asma sent his husband Azharul

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

MITU MURDER

PBI writes to UN agency office about ex-employee

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Investigators of Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) have now sent an official letter to local offices of a United Nations agency, seeking information about a former employee, in connection with the gruesome murder of Mahmuda Khanam Mitu, wife of former Superintendent of Police (SP) Babul Akter.

Inspector Sontosh Kumar Chakma PBI's Chattogram metro unit, and the investigation officer (IO) of the case, sent the letter to the agency's Cox's Bazar sub-office and office in Dhaka on Tuesday, seeking information about a woman who used to work for it in 2013.

Her name came to light after Mitu's father Mosharrif Hossain on May 12 filed the murder case with Panchlaish Police Station against former SP Babul and seven others, over Mahmuda Khanam Mitu's murder in 2016.

In the case statement, Mosharrif alleged that Babul was involved in extramarital affairs with the woman while he was in

Cox's Bazar as an Additional SP there. However, the woman's name is not mentioned as accused in the case.

Mosharrif alleged that Mitu had been mentally and physically tortured by Babul before killing, after she had come to learn of the extramarital affair.

Asked about the letter, Sontosh Kumar told The Daily Star, "For the sake of investigation of Mitu murder case, we have sent a letter to the UN agency's offices seeking some information about her."

However, he refused to disclose further information in this regard.

According to PBI sources, PBI asked the international organisation to provide the woman's full address, phone number, passport number and a copy of passport, her former address in Cox's Bazar, and her movement registers in Cox's Bazar.

Babul got two books -- "Taliban" written by Ahmed Rashid and "Best Kept Secret" by Jeffery Archer -- as gifts from the woman in 2013, and he reportedly wrote about his

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

POLICE ATTACK ON DEMONSTRATION

Injured RMG worker's family seeks adequate compensation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family of Kanchan Miah, a ready-made garments worker who was critically wounded by the police while protesting for an extension on Eid holidays, demonstrated for compensation at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Kanchan Miah, worked at a factory owned by Ha-meem group. He was peppered with hundreds of rubber bullets by police on May 10 at Tongi, leaving him disabled for the near future.

This incident had happened when the workers of Ha-Meem Group's Creative Collections Ltd and That's It Garments Ltd were demonstrating near their factories in Gazipur, demanding that they get their due Eid holidays.

Workers' rights leaders informed that because of the close range of the shots, Kanchan's intestines were permanently damaged, and over a hundred centimetres of his intestine had to be dissected out. Kanchan is currently expelling excretion through a colostomy bag.

The exact number of bullets he was hit with could not be ascertained because they go into the hundreds, said Taslima Akhter, labour leader of Bangladesh Garments Sromik Samhati.

"I am not asking for alms. I am asking for compensation

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

COVID-19 SURGE IN CHAPAINAWABGANJ

Patients rush to Rajshahi as district hospitals struggling

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

With district-level hospitals unable to provide adequate facilities, Covid-19 patients have been rushing into Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in the divisional headquarters.

The situation turned worse since increase in the infection rates in the frontier district of Chapainawabganj, where the district administration imposed a seven-day lockdown since Tuesday.

"We are struggling to accommodate patients," RMCH director Brig Gen Shamim Yazdani told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said they could accommodate 30 new patients yesterday -- 15 of them from Chapainawabganj -- as some 13 patients died in last 48 hours.

RMCH, that has a capacity of taking in 150 Covid-19 patients, was treating 162 patients yesterday.

Of the patients, 86 were from Chapainawabganj alone as the district started seeing a surge in infections two weeks after Eid.

Directorate General of Health Services could arrange only 41 ICU beds in four hospitals in two districts of Rajshahi and Bogura for Covid-19 patients, among eight districts in Rajshahi division.

The six other districts -- Joypurhat, Pabna, Sirajganj, Chapainawabganj,

Naogaon and Natore -- have no ICU support, according to information by the divisional health directorate.

The RMCH director said they were lobbying hard for five more ICU ventilators for the last year.

"Serious patients don't go to the hospitals in the district," Dr Zahid Nazrul Chowdhury, Civil Surgeon of Chapainawabganj, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Those patients directly go to Rajshahi," he said, adding that they referred only four patients since coronavirus outbreak in the country in March last year.

Chapainawabganj hospitals have the capacity to provide 20 litres Oxygen per minute, but patients requiring ventilators need to visit Rajshahi, he said.

The district health chief said they have been pleading with the government for providing ICU support since the beginning of the pandemic, but those facilities were yet to reach them.

The division's infection detection rate was recorded at 28 percent on Tuesday, when samples of 988 persons were tested and 275 came out positive.

But in Chapainawabganj alone, 59 percent of samples tested from 270 people were positive; the district's infection detection rate was 55 percent the day before.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Where are they now?

Tale of three boys from the iconic "Muktijuddhe Tin Kishore" photo

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Three young boys in their teen years, one standing, ready to throw a grenade, two others kneeling down, their rifles pointed afar; the photograph drips with their grit and intent, and it has become a symbol of the Liberation War. The photo, "Muktijuddhe Tin Kishore", is an ubiquitous presence in newspapers and invitation cards marking Victory Day and Independence Day events. It even hangs on the walls of the liberation war affairs ministry.

The three boys from the photo -- Abdul Khaleque, the one with the grenade; Abdul Mazid (middle), and Mujibur Rahman -- are all from Tangail's Musuria village, under Delduar upazila. Of them, Khaleque and Mazid are still alive, while Mujibur passed away in 2016.

The photo was shot by Naib Uddin Ahmed, one of the most important documenters of the Liberation War of the Tangail-Mymensingh region.

Sadly, none of the three subjects of the photograph went on to live very comfortable lives, with two of them being ravaged by financial insecurity.

Khaleque now lives on a piece of land leased by a company at Foy's Lake area in Chattogram. Out



The photo of Mujibur, Mazid, and Khaleque is one of the most recognisable images of the 1971 war.

of work, he has to depend on the freedom fighters' monthly allowance to manage his family of five. Due to extreme poverty, Khaleque had to leave Kushtia Polytechnic Institute in 1974, in only his third semester.

Mujibur Rahman used to pull rickshaws and struggled throughout his life to run his family of five, until succumbing to cancer in 2016, in an almost untreated state, lamented Khaleque.

Mazid perhaps fared a little well. He went on to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Brood fish release sample eggs in Halda river

Full spawning expected today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Brood fish in Halda River have released sample eggs starting Tuesday night. Halda is the sole natural spawning ground for carp-like fish in South Asia, and the fish have laid eggs in various points of the river.

Egg collectors got 200-500 grammes of eggs on average since Tuesday night at Noyahat area of Gourdura union.

Hathazari upazila administration beefed up their surveillance to prevent netting of mother fish in Halda. Kamal Soudagor from Noyahat area, a seasoned egg collector told The Daily Star that they started coming across the eggs since Tuesday night and are hoping to see full spawning today.

Professor Manzoor Kibria, an eminent Halda researcher told The Daily Star that these sample eggs are laid by brood fish in preparation for a full spawning.

He reaffirmed that a full spawning is expected by today.

Ruhul Amin, upazila nirbahi officer of Hathazari upazila told The Daily Star they increased surveillance as poachers become active in this time to catch mother fish.



Although Chapainawabganj is in lockdown in light of sharply rising Covid-19 cases, agricultural products like paddy and mangoes have to be transported to other parts of the country. Rajshahi district administration has put up a check-post on the entry-point from the neighbour district to ensure health guidelines. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Rajshahi students attend symbolic 'class' on street

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A group of students demonstrated yesterday by holding a symbolic class on the street in the city's Shaheb Bazar area, demanding immediate reopening of all educational institutions.

During the demonstration, they placed a six-point demand including vaccination of all teachers, students, and officials of the educational institutions.

The students, under the banner of General Students' Committee, held the hour-long demonstration since 11:30am.

Ishtiaq Ahmed, the committee's convener, chaired the demonstration attended by over 50 students from different schools, colleges, and universities in the city.

They also demanded that authorities of the respective campuses be given their own authority to deal with the Covid-19 situation, its containment, treatment and other factors.

They demanded that entry tests for universities be held immediately, resumption of all suspended examinations, and opportunity for infected students to appear for their supplementary exams later.

A rally -- that was held simultaneously with the demonstration -- was attended by local student leaders.



Over 50 students joined a token "class" on the streets of Shaheb Bazar area in the city, demanding resumption of classes and exams and holding of admission tests.

PHOTO: ANWAR ALI

Biker killed in road crash at Hatijheel

Another dies in Joypurhat

STAR REPORT

A motorcyclist died after his bike collided with another bike in Dhaka's Hatijheel area yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Anwar Hossain (35), a staffer of a garment factory.

Anwar was passing the New DIT Road near Hatijheel around 8am. Suddenly, another motorcycle coming from the opposite direction collided with his bike. The collision left Anwar with a head injury, said Sub-inspector Enamul Haque of Hatijheel Police Station.

Pedestrians took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, he said.

Another motorcyclist, who sustained minor injuries, fled immediately with his bike.

The SI said they came to know deceased's name from an office ID card recovered from the body. Police are trying to learn more details, he said.

The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

In Joypurhat, a man was killed and another injured as a shallow engine-run three-wheeler overturned in Akkelpur upazila on Tuesday night, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

The deceased -- identified as Rezaul Islam (42) -- was from Sahapur village in Sadar upazila.

The injured -- Shajahan Ali (40), driver of the vehicle -- was taken to Joypurhat Modern Hospital.