



The bleak state of gas supply across parts of the capital is dimming the light on many a families' everyday life. While a majority of the day sees nothing from the pipeline, the rest isn't that good either, with the pressure being very low. As a result, residents are resorting to costlier and awkward alternatives to cope. These photos were taken from North Mugdapara area yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

It's 2022. We're cooking with firewood.

Dhaka residents forced to search for alternatives as gas crisis deepens

HELEMUL ALAM

Sharmin Akhtar goes to bed after 2:30am every night. This is different from her usual routine, as she always went to sleep around 12:00am. But after the gas crisis hit North Shahjahanpur hard a couple of weeks back, there's no way Sharmin can go to sleep early without cooking for the next day.

"We don't have gas all day, from 6:00am all the way till 3:00pm," she told this correspondent yesterday. "And the gas we get from 3:00pm isn't anything to write about. The pressure is so low we can barely cook anything."

Faced with the same crisis, South Shahjahanpur's Badrul Alam Chowdhury has to spend Tk 150 to buy breakfast for the family of four every day. In a bit of double whammy, this is an even graver burden for him given the rising price of daily essentials.

"This is making life very hard," he said. "We just sub-let one of the rooms in our three-bed apartment to help ease the pressure on our wallet."



This is not just the picture in North and South Shahjahanpur, the gas crisis is weighing down across the city. Maniknagar, Rajabazar, Jigatola, Mohakhali, Adabor, Banasree, Mirpur, Pallabi, Gandaria and parts of Old Dhaka are facing the same problem.

The crisis is pushing people to find myriad ways to cook their meals. "We are often using firewood to cook our lunch and dinner," said Babul Shikdar, a resident of Shipahibagh of Khilgaon.

Gandaria's Dipan spoke of spending money to pay bills for the gas line from Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd, while having to buy cylinders in addition. "We haven't had

gas in a while. What are we being billed for?" he asked while speaking to this correspondent yesterday.

Contacted, authorities of neither Bangladesh Oil Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) nor Titas had anything to good to say for the residents.

They blamed the shortage of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) supply for the crisis, saying it might take until March to be resolved.

"We are getting less LNG as Summit Group's floating storage regasification unit in Bangladesh, one of the country's two LNG importing facilities, has halted LNG imports from the last week of November due to a damaged mooring

line," said a Petrobangla official.

"It may not be fixed until February 20," he said.

Even last month, the supply of LNG was 560 mmcf (million cubic feet per day), which has come down to 420 to 430 mmcf now, said the official.

The country's gas demand is around 3,700 mmcf (million cubic feet per day), but we're only getting 2,600 to 2,700 mmcf, said a Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Ltd (RPGCL) official.

The country needs at least another 525 mmcf of imported LNG to keep the supply normal, he said.

He said during the winter, condensate gets deposited in pipelines and if enough gas is not available at source, the supply gets disrupted.

The official said a fresh mooring line was supposed to be built by mid-January, but it will take at least till February 20 as many workers got Covid-19.

"We are hoping Summit will be able to restart their operation by February 20, which will enable us get another 800 mmcf LNG gas from March," he said.

He said they are now running oil-based power plants to reduce the dependency on gas.

Since September 19, the government has also started to keep the CNG filling stations closed every day for four hours with the view to provide uninterrupted gas supply, said another official.

Contacted, Managing Director of Titas Md Harunur Rashid Mollah echoed the same, saying an additional problem is that renovation works of a well of Chevron's gas field is also ongoing. He hoped the problem will diminish from February 1.

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SHARMIN AKHTAR
Resident of North Shahjahanpur

As if Covid-19 restrictions don't apply to them

500 BCL activists take part in annual hall council at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

BCL's Dhaka University unit held its annual hall council yesterday, breaking the government and university's restrictions to curb Covid-19 transmission.

According to university students and staffers witnessing the festivities surrounding the council, at least 500 activists of the ruling party-backed student organisation -- who joined the council -- were seen not maintaining social distance and wearing masks during the event at the TSC field.

This comes at a time when in-person classes have been stopped since January 21, following a government order to keep educational institutions closed until February 6.

The same government order also prohibits the gathering of over 100 people for any political, social or religious event. Complying with the guidelines, DU authorities, too, urged all university-based organisations not to hold rallies or mass gatherings on the campus.

Requesting anonymity, many resident students of DU alleged that BCL leaders instructed them to participate

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Flouting government and university's restrictions to curb Covid-19 transmission, Dhaka University unit of BCL held its annual hall council at TSC field yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Unable to control rice price hike

Says agriculture minister

UNB, Dhaka

The price of rice is increasing beyond control despite a record production and the highest stock in silos, Agriculture Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said yesterday.

Since rice is the staple food, the country will have to further boost the grain production at any cost, the minister said at a meeting to review the progress of his ministry's annual development programme at Secretariat.

"We are unable to control the price hike," he said.

He urged scientists, agriculture extension officials and others concerned to work sincerely for increasing food production.

He asked officials not to waste time in lobbying to become projects directors in the hope of earning extra money through corruption and irregularities. "The project directors are recruited after considering professional skill, eligibility and leadership quality," he said.

He said those who are in charge of projects have to maintain transparency in spending funds.

Razzaque also asked the officers to monitor the project work strictly.

According to the ministry, it has 71 projects in FY2021-2022 with a total allocation of Tk 2,928 crores. So far, 32 percent work has been implemented till December 2021, higher than the national ADP implementation of 24 percent.

Real-life 'Aynabaji'

Cousin serving life-term instead of main convict, who got arrested after going for job to go abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It's like a real-life retelling of "Aynabaji", the popular film.

In exchange of money, a man has been serving life-term imprisonment in a murder case in place of the main convict, while the real convict roams around freely.

What's more, the convict has been involved in drug trade for years. He even forged his identity and secured tourist visa for the United Arab Emirates to evade justice.

The scam came to light as Rapid Action Battalion arrested Shohag alias Boro Shohag (34) on Saturday, after he went to Mitford Hospital to get his Covid jab before departing the country.

Rab said, Shohag was arrested in 2010 after shooting a man dead in the capital's Kadamtali area. Four years later, he got out of jail in bail and went into hiding.

In the meantime, on December 28, 2017, a Dhaka court handed him life imprisonment in absentia.

He then managed to convince his drug-dependent cousin -- Md Hossain (35) -- to surrender before court, impersonating as Shohag. Since 2018, Hossain has been languishing in Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

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PRAYER
TIMING
JAN 31



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5:35	12:45	4:15	5:46	7:15
Jamaat	6:10	1:15	4:30	5:50	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

IN REMEMBRANCE



We fondly remember **Late Aziz H. A. Sattar**, the founding Managing Director of GMG Group of Industries, on his 29th death anniversary. He was a pioneer and a role model of industrialization in this country. His unfathomable depth of knowledge, vision, uphill struggle and firm determination may inspire all of us. Today we solicit doa for his departed soul.

Family members, well wishers & employees
of
GMG Group