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# Ensure power, keep candles ready too

Edu ministry asks Power Division, HSC exam centres

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The authorities have asked the Power Division to make sure there is uninterrupted electricity during the coming HSC exams, but also told the exam centres to keep candles at hand.

In a recent letter to the Power Division, the education ministry said there should not be any power cuts from 11:00am to 1:00am and 2:00pm to 4:00pm on exam days.

Meanwhile, the education boards across the country last week asked the exam centre secretary to make arrangements so that exams were not interrupted because of power cuts, said Prof Tapan Kumar Sarkar, chief of the inter-education board coordination committee and chairman of Dhaka Education Board.

Prof Tapan said power cuts were not as frequent these days.

“The power division has confirmed that there will be no load shedding during the exam hours,” he added.

As the Higher Secondary Certificate exams begin today, many students expressed concerns that power cuts would affect their performance during the tests.

The students had to prepare for the exams amid frequent power cuts and many expressed fears that there would be load shedding during the tests.

Nurani Islam Nisha, an examinee of Bogura Government Azizul Haque college, said she could not study from 6:30pm to 7:00pm because of load shedding yesterday even though she has to appear at the test the next morning.

“If there are power cuts during our exams, we will be in trouble and it will affect our grades,” she said.

Sohran Hossen Shanto, an examinee from Kochashahar

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All-rounder Ben Stokes celebrates after Chris Woakes struck the winning runs as England qualified for the T20 World Cup semifinals with a nervy four-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in their final Super 12 match yesterday, sending hosts and defending champions Australia out of the tournament in the process. Story on page 11.

# Tigers up for Pakistan challenge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be hoping to conclude their Super 12 journey on a high, motivated by their slim shot at a semifinal berth, when they take on Pakistan at the Adelaide Oval today.

The match is schedule to begin from 10:00am BST.

Shakib Al Hasan and Co. have had their best performance in a T20 World Cup, winning two matches against the Netherlands and Zimbabwe before putting up a great fight in a five-run loss to India in their last outing.

However, there will be many ifs and buts, especially with Bangladesh's passage to the semifinals also depending on other results.

Liton Das smashed a 27-ball 64 when the Tigers began their chase of a daunting 185-run target against India. But an inability to tackle pressure situations yet again cost them victory.

Pacer Taskin Ahmed has also been in terrific rhythm while Mustafizur Rahman has remained economical and effective.

In the tri-nation series that preceded the World Cup, the Tigers lost both

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## BUSINESS

### BB eases cap on lending interest rate after 31 months

The Bangladesh Bank has allowed banks to raise the interest rate on consumer loans to 12 percent from 9 percent after economists have long repeatedly suggested it withdraw the cap on all loans to contain inflation, bankers said yesterday.

Banks have been maintaining the 9 percent interest rate on all loans except for credit cards since April 2020.

The decision to allow the interest rate to go up comes at a time when a delegation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is in talks with various state agencies as part of its assessment before sanctioning a credit support of \$4.5 billion to Bangladesh. It is advising the central bank to allow the interest rate to be market-driven.

STORY ON B1

# Gas supply crunch hurting industries

Says FBCCI chief, asks govt to keep interest rate at 9pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The local industries will suffer from a fall in production if the government cannot improve the energy supply to the industrial plants soon, said a top leader of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The supply of gas in the industries has not improved yet, while load-shedding has been going on, said Md Jashim Uddin, president of FBCCI – the country's apex trade body.

In fact, the rationing of electricity, which was proposed by the FBCCI, to improve gas supply to the industries, turned into load-shedding that worsened the power supply to the plants, he said at the Economic Reporters' Forum Dialogue held at the forum's Dhaka office.

Jashim said the government should import Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from the international spot market, even for exorbitant rates, to ensure gas supply to the industries.

In this case, it can remove the 47 percent tax on the import of LNG and the 24 percent on diesel to make them cheaper for the industries, he said.

“If necessary, we will pay the additional cost of imported LNG and diesel bought at higher prices.”

The price of LNG in the international spot market crossed \$35 per unit now because of the Russia-Ukraine war that began in February.

It was earlier sold at \$5.0 per unit. Responding to a query, Jashim did not agree with a proposal of diverting gas from fertiliser factories to the industries.

Rather, the government should allow investment in countries like Iran and Qatar to produce fertiliser both for the country and for export purposes.

The government should also cut off illegal gas connections to ensure supply to the industries, he suggested.

The FBCCI chief further said the government should not increase the bank loan interest rate as there is a possibility of negative impact on the inflow of local investment and also in industries, as the cost of businesses will go up in the time of economic crisis.

Recently, a group of economists have been suggesting that the government increase the interest rate on bank loans

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# Bangladesh not running out of gas, it hasn't explored

Say experts at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Instead of exploring for gas, Bangladesh had taken the easy way out by importing gas, said experts at a discussion at the capital yesterday.

Bangladesh is not running out of gas, it has not explored even a fraction of the possible locations, said Badrul Imam, energy expert and former professor at the Department of Geology at Dhaka University, calling Bangladesh one of the least explored countries in the world in terms of gas.

He was speaking at a seminar on the electricity and fuel crisis at the Mozaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Convention Hall of Dhaka University.

“We have only explored one-third of Bangladesh for gas and only explored 10 percent of the sea,” he said.

“Whenever oil companies come to explore ... they only focus on easily accessible gas fields. We do not mine for gas that is difficult to find. We do not mine for gas in the sea,” added the geologist.

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# Rare freshwater croc caught near Hardinge Bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KUSHIA

A crocodile was caught in a fisherman's net near the Hardinge Bridge on the Padma in Kushtia's Bheramara upazila on Friday night.



Forest department officials identified it as a freshwater crocodile and released it back into the river that same night, GM Md Kabir, officer of Kushtia Forest Department confirmed.

He said, “The crocodile was caught in the net of fisherman Abul Kalam Azad. It was 2.5 feet wide and six feet long.

It was brown in colour and weighed about 35kg.” He added that freshwater crocodiles are quite visible in the Indian part of the Padma.

“It might have entered when the Farakka Dam's gates were opened most recently during the monsoon.”

Such crocodiles, according to him, had never been spotted in the Bangladesh part of the Padma before.

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Raniganj Bridge, over the Kushiya, is the longest bridge in Sylhet district. The construction work of the bridge has finished recently and it is now being cleaned and decorated for inauguration. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



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## Ghana's Ayew lives in father's shadow

REUTERS

Ghana captain Andre Ayew is heading to an extraordinary 10th major tournament and has won a record tally of caps for his country, yet he still lives in the shadow of his father.

A career that started as a teenage prodigy, taking in stints at Olympique de Marseille, Swansea City, West Ham United and Fenerbahce, and first playing international

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