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HEATWAVE

Power supply mostly stable

Demand still low as many factories yet to reopen after Eid

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Power supply to households remains largely stable nationwide, as many energy-intensive sources such as mills, factories, offices, and shopping malls are yet to reopen following the Eid holidays.

The notable drop in energy demand also allowed the Power Development Board (PDB) to maintain an uninterrupted supply to homes during Eid, despite concerns about power cuts due to load-shedding, especially in rural areas, in the days leading up to the holidays.

Moreover, the government shut down most fertiliser factories during the holidays to increase gas supply to the power generation sector.

Meanwhile, the supply of imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) increased by 400 million cubic feet per day as Summit Group's Floating Storage And Regasification Unit resumed operation last week following a two-and-a-half-month-long maintenance.

However, the electricity demand is expected to spike when industries and offices resume operating in full swing and the temperature gets hotter in the third week of April, as forecasted by the Met Office. Mild to moderate heat waves have already been sweeping across the country since April 11.

Power generation remained steady as usual between

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A Palestinian man mourns over the body of a loved one who was killed following Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh, Thailand to sign 6 MoUs

PM to leave for the SE Asian nation April 24



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Thailand may sign at least six MoUs on trade, investment and cooperation in energy and tourism sectors during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to the Southeast Asian country on April 24-29.

Discussing a free trade agreement between the two countries may also be a top priority, said foreign ministry officials.

"Bilateral trade is over \$1.5 billion, but

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US to oppose Palestinian bid for full UN membership

REUTERS, United Nations

The United States yesterday was poised to vote against a Palestinian request for full United Nations membership, a US official told Reuters, blocking the world body from effectively recognising a Palestinian state.

"It remains the US view that the most expeditious path toward statehood for the Palestinian people is through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority with the support of the United States and other partners," the US official said.

The 15-member council is scheduled to vote on a draft resolution that recommends to the 193-member UN General Assembly that "the State of Palestine be admitted to membership of the United Nations."

A council resolution needs at least nine votes in favor and no vetoes by the US, Britain, France, Russia

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

West sanctions Iran drones over Israel attack

Gaza pounding continues as UN chief warns Mideast on brink of 'full-scale regional conflict'

AGENCIES

Israel launched more deadly strikes on besieged Gaza yesterday as Western governments unveiled sweeping sanctions against Iran's military drone programme in response to the country's unprecedented attack on its arch enemy Israel.

World powers have been watching nervously since Israel vowed to retaliate against Iran for the weekend assault, with fears soaring that escalating tit-for-tat attacks could push the region towards wider war.

Further stoking tensions, Iran yesterday warned that if Israel struck Iranian atomic sites during its expected retaliation, Tehran would in turn target Israeli "nuclear facilities".

And more than six months into the bloodiest ever Gaza war, the Israeli army said it had bombed dozens of targets in the territory, as Qatar said efforts to broker a truce have stalled.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stressed that Israel "reserves the right to protect itself" against Iran.

The Islamic republic last weekend carried out its first ever attack to directly target its

regional foe but Israel, backed by its allies, intercepted most of the 300 missiles and drones, and suffered no deaths.

Iran's attack was retaliation for an April 1 air strike, widely blamed on Israel, which levelled its consulate in Damascus and killed seven Revolutionary Guards.

The international community has urged de-escalation since Iran's attack, which came after months of violence involving Israel and Iran-backed groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

"The Middle East is on a precipice," UN chief Antonio Guterres warned yesterday.

"One miscalculation, one miscommunication, one mistake, could lead to the unthinkable --- a full-scale regional conflict that would be devastating for all involved," he told the UN Security Council.

The United States, Israel's top ally and military supplier, has made clear it won't join any Israeli attack on Iran, instead unveiling new sanctions on Thursday against the country's military drone programme.

"We are holding Iran accountable," US President Joe Biden said, adding that he had

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To make a friend happy, we cannot antagonise others

Says army chief about engaging more with Myanmar military

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafuiddin Ahmed yesterday said Bangladesh military does engage with its Myanmar counterpart but with considerable apprehension.

"Many Myanmar military leaders have international sanctions [against them], so, there is a risk of putting ourselves into trouble when we do that [further engagement]."

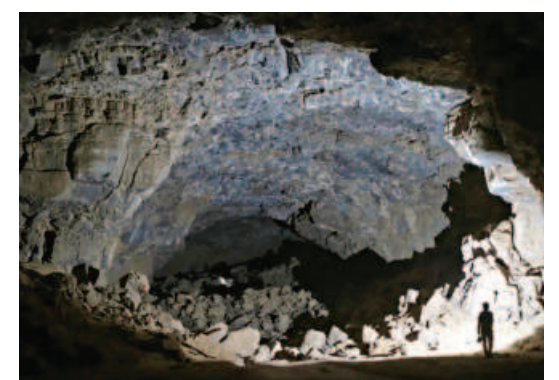
He made the statement as the chief guest of seminar titled "Defence Diplomacy: Strategy for Bangladesh", organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) at its auditorium in the capital.

"We are friends to all, but to make one friend happy, we can't antagonise others. It's a dynamic we need to take into consideration."

"Military personnel don't only learn how to fight in a war, they also learn to avoid war in the interest of their nation."



SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Humans hid in Saudi lava tube for over 7,000yrs

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A lava tube in Saudi Arabia served as shelter to ancient humans for over 7,000 years, archaeologists have said in a new study.

While previous research established that Northern Arabia was a dynamic site of evolution and cultural development of ancient humans, the timing of their occupation and connection with the nearby Levant remained poorly understood, mainly due to poor preservation of organic remains in the arid conditions of the region.

Now, though, archaeologists are increasingly studying caves and underground settings in the region where ancient materials are sheltered from sun, wind and high fluctuations in temperature.

In the latest study, researchers assessed an archaeological site from a lava tube called Umm Jirsan located in the volcanic field of Harrat Khaybar in Saudi Arabia, about 125km north of Medina.

Taliban pull 2 TV channels for 'violating Islamic values'

AFP, Kabul

Two Afghan television channels have been taken off the airwaves for "violations against Islamic and national values", a Taliban government spokesman said yesterday.

Rights monitors warn Taliban authorities have been cracking down on media freedoms since their return to power in 2021 as they enforce an austere vision of Islamist rule.

Ministry of Information and Culture spokesman Khubaib Ghufraan said the "Barya" and "Noor" TV channels had been suspended on Tuesday for failing to abide by "journalistic principles".

"They had programmes creating confusion among the public and their owners are abroad," he told AFP. "The media violation commission suspended their operations."

He said "their owners have even taken stands

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GEMS OF THE FOREST

The axis deer, chittra horin in Bangla, is one of the more precious belongings of the Sundarbans. This herd was seen wandering outside of the mangrove forest to eat grass under the open sky. The axis deer's natural range includes India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Its population is abundant in the Sundarbans but it is locally extinct in central and north-eastern Bangladesh. Axis deer is a gregarious animal and forms matriarchal herds headed by adult females. Though the IUCN listed it as "Least Concern", its population has decreased in some areas due to hunting and deforestation. In Bangladesh, it is protected under the Wildlife (Preservation) (Amendment) Act, 1974, of Bangladesh -- this has positively impacted its global conservation status.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Maldives court frees former president Yameen

AFP, Male

Jaile d former Maldives president Abdulla Yameen



was freed yesterday after the High Court overturned his conviction and 11-year prison sentence on graft and money-laundering charges.

A three-judge High Court bench in the Indian Ocean archipelago nation held that Yameen's 2022 trial had been unfair and ordered a new trial.

"The lower court ruling was not fair," Judge Hassan Shafeeu said while reading out a lengthy decision that was broadcast live.

The decision came ahead of Sunday's parliamentary elections, in which Yameen is fielding candidates from a political party he formed while serving his sentence.

Yameen was convicted on two charges after a

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