

Echoes of grandeur linger in Haturia's fading palaces

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The slow death of Lawachara forest

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Who cares about Bangladeshi women prisoners in India?

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Between dreams and debt

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Ceasefire takes hold in Gaza

Gazans start to trek home as Israeli forces pull back from several areas

AFP, Palestinian Territories

Thousands of displaced Palestinians trekked over the wastelands of Gaza to return to the ruins of their abandoned homes yesterday, after a ceasefire took effect and Israeli troops began pulling back under a Trump peace agreement to end the war.

The Israeli military said its troops had ceased fire at noon (0900 GMT) "in preparation for the ceasefire agreement and the return of hostages".

Three hours later, the US Pentagon confirmed Israel had completed the first phase of a pullback laid out in Trump's peace plan. Israeli forces still hold around 53 percent of the Palestinian territory.

The withdrawal set the clock running on a 72-hour deadline for Hamas to release the remaining hostages held in Gaza.

Israel, meanwhile, published the list of the 250 Palestinian prisoners it plans to release -- along with 1,700 Gazans detained since Hamas triggered the latest conflict with its attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. The list does not contain key Palestinian political prisoners.

As the ceasefire began under the first phase of the peace deal, long columns of Palestinians, exhausted by two years of intense bombardment and what the UN has warned were famine conditions, began a trek from the southern city of Khan Yunis towards their shattered homes further north.



IN RUINS, HOPE FINDS A WAY HOME

Palestinians return to their homes through a damaged neighbourhood in the aftermath of an Israeli operation in Gaza City after Israel's government ratified a ceasefire with Hamas yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



- Israel completes 1st phase of withdrawal: US envoy
- Forces still hold 53% of Palestinian territory
- Team of 200 US troops to 'oversee' Gaza truce
- US to deploy 200 troops to Israel for Gaza task force, no operations in Gaza
- UN unveils 60-day aid plan

The EU mission at the Rafah border between Gaza and Egypt will be reopening a pedestrian crossing on October 14, Italy said.

Under the ceasefire deal proposed by Trump, Hamas will hand over 47 remaining hostages -- living and dead -- from the 251 abducted during the attack two years ago.

The remains of one more hostage, held in Gaza since 2014, are also expected to be returned.

Leaders of Britain, France and Germany called on the UN Security Council to back the plan.

"We agree that the UN Security Council should give its full backing to the plan and support its implementation," the so-called E3 group of nations said in a statement.

Gaza's civil defence agency confirmed that Israeli troops and armoured vehicles were pulling back from forward positions in both Gaza City and Khan Yunis.

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Gas supply declining despite higher LNG imports

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The country's overall gas supply dropped further last fiscal year, despite higher LNG imports, due to a continued decline in domestic production.

The country requires around 3,800 million cubic feet of gas per day (mmcf) to stabilise the power supply and feed factories and industries.

In fiscal 2024-25, the average daily gas distribution stood at 2,526 million cubic feet of gas a day (mmcf), down from 2,715 mmcf the previous year.

While the government's expenditure for importing liquefied natural gas in fiscal 2024-25 stood at Tk 54,954 crore, up 28.9 percent year-on-year.

To import the high amount of LNG, the government had to provide more subsidies: about Tk 8,900 crore was expended on subsidies last fiscal year, up from Tk 6,000 crore in fiscal 2023-24.

On the other hand, domestic production has been decreasing constantly since 2018, the year the country started importing LNG.

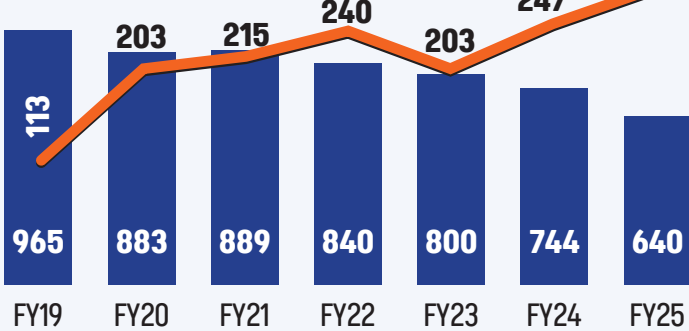
GAS SUPPLY TREND

In billion cubic feet

SOURCE: PETROBANGLA

LOCAL GAS PRODUCTION

LNG IMPORT



Since then, the volume of LNG imports has been increasing in every fiscal year, accounting for 30 percent of the gas supply.

"It was a bad precedent that the then governments moved for an import-driven gas supply strategy," said M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser to the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh.

Amid the rising concerns from experts and activists, the then-government in 2022 had announced a three-year plan to drill 50 wells by 2025 to add around 648 mmcf of gas from local sources.

Until the changeover in government in August 2024, the

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Syed Manzoorul Islam (1951-2025)

A voice of reason falls silent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Professor Emeritus Syed Manzoorul Islam of Dhaka University's English department, revered for his teaching, literary brilliance, and principled engagement with Bangladesh's cultural and civic spheres, breathed his last yesterday. He was 74.

Manzoorul, widely regarded as one of the pioneers of postmodern Bangla literature, died around 5:00pm while undergoing treatment at Labaid Hospital in Dhaka, Mazharul Islam, chief executive of Anyaprokash, confirmed.

Mazharul said Manzoorul's body will be kept at the Central Shaheed Minar around 11:00am today for the public to pay their last respects. After Zuhr prayers and

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Shahidul Alam freed, returns home today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acclaimed Bangladeshi photographer and human rights activist Shahidul Alam, after being released by Israeli authorities, is expected to arrive in Dhaka around 5:00am this morning.

Shahidul reached Istanbul on a Turkish Airlines flight yesterday around 2:30pm (local time), where he was received by Bangladesh Consul General in Istanbul M o h a m m a d Mizanur Rahman.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Turkey Md Amanur Rahman said Shahidul's return flight to Dhaka was scheduled to depart Istanbul at 6:45pm (local time).

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has expressed gratitude to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for his cooperation in facilitating Shahidul Alam's release and safe repatriation from Israel.

Following Shahidul Alam's detention by Israeli authorities, Bangladesh embassies in Jordan, Egypt, and Turkey were instructed to engage with the respective foreign ministries and take immediate

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Sediment buildup near the Shah Amanat Bridge on the Karnaphuli river has triggered a serious navigability issue. In response, authorities have been conducting an extended dredging campaign to restore the river's depth. However, the dredged sand is now being stockpiled at an illegal depot near the bridge and is reportedly being sold illegally. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Venezuela's Machado wins Nobel Peace Prize

AFP, Oslo

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded yesterday to Venezuela's opposition leader and democracy activist Maria Corina Machado, a "unifying" figure in what has become a "brutal" state, the Nobel jury said.

Woken in the middle of the night by a call from the secretary of the Norwegian Nobel Committee who informed her of the prize, the 58-year-old said she was confident the opposition would succeed in securing a peaceful transition to democracy in her country.

"We're not there yet. We're working very hard to achieve it, but I'm sure that we will prevail," she told Kristian Berg Harpviken in a video of the call posted to X.

"This is certainly the biggest

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