



A sign reading “No Gas” is placed at the entrance to a filling station in the capital, where a supply crisis of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) due to some technical issues left pumps dry for most of the day. The photo was taken in Paribagh yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

City kitchens go cold amid gas crisis

FROM PAGE 1

a roadside restaurant as he had no gas supply at home.

He said food prices had risen overnight: on Friday, a plate of rice cost Tk 15, but it cost him Tk 20 yesterday.

Aminul Islam, a manager of the restaurant, blamed the rise in price for liquefied petroleum gas for the menu getting pricier.

Since the middle of last month, the standard 12-kg LPG cylinder has been selling for Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,500, up from Tk 1,350.

The number of people buying food from his restaurant surged. “We used to cook 20kg of rice daily, but today

we had to cook 30kg,” Aminul added.

Ferdousi Jahan Rose, a homemaker from Mohammadpur, said her family could not cook anything yesterday morning. “We reheated whatever food was left in the fridge with an electric oven. It wasn’t enough for the four people, but we somehow managed,” she said.

The crisis has even forced restaurants to abandon gas altogether.

One such eatery is Purobi Restaurant in Farmgate, which was forced to use firewood due to shortages in both piped gas and LPG supply, said Sultan Mahmud Hasan, a staffer at the restaurant.

The valve burst had been fixed

and the damaged pipeline under the Turag repaired, said Kazi Mohammad Saidul Hasan, general manager (operations) of Titas.

But water has entered the pipelines of households in several localities including Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, Lalmatia and Aminbazar as a result of the punctured pipeline under the Turag.

“However, water that entered household gas lines remains a major challenge. We have flushed water out of some lines, but it has re-entered in some cases. At this stage, it is not possible to say exactly when the problem will be fully resolved,” Hasan told The Daily Star.

DB detains ‘shooter, 2 others’

FROM PAGE 1

Swেচ্ছহাষেবক Dal’s Dhaka North City unit, was shot dead on January 7 when assailants opened fire on him and another man, Abu Sufian Bepari Masud, general secretary of Tejgaon Van Workers’ Union, in an alley near Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

Sufian sustained bullet injuries and is undergoing treatment at a hospital.

Within hours of the attack, CCTV footage of the incident spread on social media.

The footage shows two suspects sitting with a sack in an alley behind a restaurant. As soon as they spotted Musabbir, they pulled a pistol from the sack and shot him from behind. Musabbir collapsed to the ground,

but later got up and attempted to flee.

During the chaos, his mobile phone fell, which the shooters took before fleeing.

The footage also shows a bearded man standing beside the shooters.

The day after the murder, Musabbir’s wife filed a case with Tejgaon Police Station against four to five unidentified individuals. Following this, the DB launched an investigation.

Multiple DB teams carried out coordinated raids early Saturday in Gazipur and Manikganj, according to DB officials. Zinnat was arrested from Gazipur’s Boatbazar area, while Billal and Riaz were picked up from Manikganj.

Billal is the bearded man seen in the CCTV footage; he planned the

murder, which was later executed by shooters Zinnat and Rahim, with Riaz acting as an associate, according to the DB officials. The suspects had previously attempted to kill Musabbir but failed.

Rahim, who remains on the run, is Billal’s brother.

Several other individuals have been taken into custody for interrogation as part of the investigation.

Contacted, DB Chief Shafiqul Islam denied that any “shooter” had been arrested.

Around 60 people have been questioned so far in connection with the murder, but no arrests have been made, said Shafiqul, also an additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Dhaka pushes Washington to lower tariffs

FROM PAGE 14

Bangladeshi visa seekers if the overstay by the tourists declines substantially in the future.

Hooker made the suggestion during a meeting with Rahman on Friday, according to a statement by the Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC yesterday.

The US has recently announced that Bangladeshi applicants for visit and business visas must submit bonds ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000.

Over the past year, the US has repatriated about 300 undocumented Bangladeshis and is seeking the return of more than 4,000 others with pending cases.

During the meeting, Rahman also briefed Hooker about the preparations and arrangements for the upcoming general elections and expressed

appreciation for the support of the US to the interim government during its tenure, including for the elections.

Hooker said the US continues its strong support for the democratic transition in Bangladesh and looks forward to free and fair elections in February.

On broader regional issues, Rahman conveyed Bangladesh’s interest in principle in joining the proposed international stabilisation force for Gaza.

In response, Hooker said that the US is willing to work together with Bangladesh on this important matter.

In November last year, the UN Security Council passed a US-sponsored resolution which backs US President Donald Trump’s 20-point plan for ending Israel’s war on Gaza. Among the clauses

was one that supported the creation and deployment of an international stabilisation force to provide security and oversight of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza.

In a separate meeting with Assistant Secretary of State Paul Kapur, Rahman discussed issues of mutual interest, including the forthcoming election in Bangladesh, US-Bangladesh bilateral relations, the Rohingya crisis, the US visa bond, trade and investment and other regional issues.

As a special invitee, Rahman attended the swearing-in ceremony of Brent Christensen, the newly appointed US Ambassador to Bangladesh, held in the State Department. Christensen is expected to join the US Embassy in Dhaka tomorrow.

Venezuela eyes talks

FROM PAGE 14

world’s largest proven oil reserves.

At a White House meeting on Friday, he pressed top oil executives to invest in Venezuela’s reserves, but was met with a cautious reception – with ExxonMobil chief executive Darren Woods dismissing the country as “uninvestable” without sweeping reforms.

Trump said foreign firms had enjoyed no meaningful protections under Maduro, “but now you have total security. It’s a whole different Venezuela”.

He also stressed that the companies would deal only with Washington, not Caracas, when exploiting Venezuela’s oil resources.

Trump earlier said that oil companies promised to invest \$100 billion in Venezuela, whose oil infrastructure is creaky after years of mismanagement and sanctions.

He had earlier announced a plan for the United States to sell between 30 million and 50 million barrels of Venezuelan crude, with the money to be used at his discretion.

He promised any funds sent to Caracas would be used to buy only US-made products.

In the meanwhile, Washington has maintained maritime pressure on oil tankers in the Caribbean, where it seized a fifth tanker carrying Venezuelan crude – oil that would be sold, Trump said.

State-owned oil company PDVSA confirmed in a statement that one vessel was returning to Venezuelan waters, describing it as the “first successful joint operation” with Washington.

Anxious relatives waited outside Venezuelan jails for a glimpse of their loved ones as the authorities began releasing political prisoners – a move Washington claimed credit for.

“When I heard the news, I broke down,” said Dilisia Caro, 50, waiting for the release of her husband Noel Flores, who was jailed for criticising Maduro.

Venezuela began releasing prisoners on Thursday in the first such gesture since US forces removed and detained Maduro in the deadly January 3 raid.

Some relatives still gathered outside the prison had waited more than 36 hours to see their family members.

“We’ve been living with this uncertainty for several days now... We are worried, we are very distressed, filled with anxiety,” said one woman, awaiting the release of her brother.

In Nicaragua, meanwhile, authorities have arrested at least 60 people for reportedly expressing support for Maduro’s capture, according to a local human rights group.

Trump told Fox News he would meet next week with Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, whom he earlier brushed

aside as lacking the “respect” to lead Venezuela.

Exiled Venezuelan opposition figurehead Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia said that any democratic transition in the country must recognise his claim to victory in 2024 presidential elections.

Maduro was proclaimed the winner of the vote, but his re-election was widely seen as fraudulent.

Gonzalez was hoping Friday for the release of his son-in-law, who was detained a year ago in Caracas.

Maduro was seized in a US special forces raid accompanied by airstrikes, operations that left 100 people dead, according to Caracas.

US forces took Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores to New York to face trial on drug-trafficking and other charges.

Rodriguez insisted Thursday her country was “not subordinate or subjugated” despite her pledge to cooperate with Trump.

Angry protesters rallied in the streets of Caracas on Friday demanding Maduro’s release in the latest of a daily series of demonstrations.

“We don’t have to give one little drop of oil to Trump after all that he has done to us,” said one protester, Josefina Castro, 70, a member of a civil activists’ group.

“Our Venezuelan brothers died (in the attack), and that hurts.”

3 from Ctg family

FROM PAGE 14

Sundarpur Union of Fatikchhari upazila.

On Friday, the family members went to Salalah to visit a shrine. While returning, the car carrying five people hit a camel and overturned on the road, leaving three dead and two injured.

“We assured the family of providing maximum support if they want to bring the bodies back to Bangladesh,” said Sayed Mohammed Ibrahim, Fatikchhari upazila nirbahii officer.

Shafuil is a businessman in Oman and has been residing in the Middle Eastern country for a long time, his business partner Muhammad Parvez told local reporters.

EC clears 51

FROM PAGE 1

“Over the last week, I have gone through a very different kind of experience. People at home and abroad have sent their good wishes and prayers. When I spoke to people on the streets, many told me they were praying for me,” she told reporters after attending the hearings.

Meanwhile, at least 16 Jatiya Party candidates regained their candidacy yesterday through appeal. They include Abdul Hannan from Shariatpur-3, Mostafa Jamal from Narsingdi-1, and Salauddin Khoka from Narayanganj-4.

Hearings were held for five candidates of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, and all five regained their candidatures.

At the same time, one candidate each from Bangladesh Congress, Islami Oikya Jote, Jagpa, AB Party, Insaniyat Bangladesh, and Bangladesh Supreme Party; two each from Bangladesh Jasad and Basad; and three from Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis, as well as 15 independent candidates, also had their candidatures restored.

Pro-AL teacher

FROM PAGE 14

duty unethically,” said Sohanur Rahman, an executive member of Cucus.

After learning of Roman’s presence on campus, Cucus leaders informed the dean’s office. When Roman



learned of their move, he attempted to flee the venue. He was later handed over to the proctor’s office, according to Sohanur.

“There is no hiding the fact that he was a pro-AL faculty,” said CU Proctor Hossain Shaid Shohrwardhy.

No decision has been taken on Roman yet, said Shohorwardhy, also a professor in CU’s marketing department.

Japan PM mulling snap election in coming weeks: reports

AFP, Tokyo

Japan’s Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is considering calling a general election in the coming weeks to capitalise on strong public support for her government, media reports said Saturday.

Takaichi was appointed Japan’s first woman prime minister in October and her cabinet is enjoying an approval rating of around 70 percent.

But her ruling bloc only has a slim majority in the powerful lower house of parliament, hindering its ability to push through her ambitious policy agenda.

11 parties ‘close to reaching seat-sharing deal’

FROM PAGE 14

Khelafat Andolan, Amar Bangladesh Party (AB Party), Bangladesh Nezame-Islam Party, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (Jagpa) and Bangladesh Development Party (BDP).

The alliance initially comprised eight parties, with the NCP, LDP and AB Party joining later.

Ahsanul Mahbub Zubayer, assistant secretary general of Jamaat and a member of its election management committee, told The Daily Star, “We have more or less reached a conclusion. The announcement will be made jointly.”

Ashrafat Alam, joint secretary general of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, said once candidates are finalised for specific constituencies, other aspirants would be asked to withdraw.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish Secretary General Maulana Jalaluddin Ahmed said, “First we sit with Jamaat, and then Islami Andolan to resolve the issues with them. After that, we may have to sit with the NCP. That’s how it’s going.”

“In some seats, Jamaat has stepped aside but Islami Andolan has

US judge to block Trump move to end thousands of LatAm migrants’ legal status

REUTERS, Boston

A federal judge said on Friday she will block US President Donald Trump’s administration from cutting short temporary legal status for 10,000 to 12,000 migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that allowed them to reunite with family members in the United States.

US District Judge Indira Talwani said during a hearing in Boston she will issue by Monday a temporary restraining order sought by immigrant rights advocates who challenged the US Department of Homeland Security’s decision last month to terminate all family reunification parole programs for citizens from the seven nations.

The migrants are among 15,000 who entered the United States through the family reunification programs. They would have been forced as of Wednesday to return to the countries they came from or face deportation as a result of the department’s action.

Talwani, who was appointed by Democratic former President Barack Obama, expressed “frustration” with Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem’s decision to strip them of

lawful status, saying the department had not established it had given them the legally required notice it was doing so.

“I have a group of people here who are trying to follow the law, and I’m saying to you that we, America, also need to follow the law,” Talwani told a lawyer with the U.S. Department of Justice.

Justin Cox, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, called the agency’s move “outrageous,” saying 30% of the affected migrants were children, many of whom would be yanked out of schools.

Justice Department attorney Katie Rose Talley countered that Noem had broad discretion to terminate the migrants’ grants of parole. “There’s nothing unlawful about that,” she said.

CASE CONCERNED BIDEN-ERA PROGRAMS

The move, part of Trump’s aggressive immigration agenda, followed actions to cancel hundreds of thousands of humanitarian parole grants that allowed foreign nationals to temporarily live and work in the United States.

The Homeland Security Department announced on December 12 it was ending family reunification parole programs that Democratic President Joe Biden’s administration created or modernized in 2022 and 2023, effective January 14.

Free speech key

FROM PAGE 2

Chowdhury said the media had become largely free after August 5, 2024, when the Awami League regime was ousted.

“But it is still very restricted. I say ‘restricted’ because we cannot be as courageous as we want to be due to mob violence.”

He added that it is deeply disturbing when newspaper offices are set on fire.

Observing that Tarique faces stiff challenges ahead, Matiur said, “If attempts are made to face these challenges only from within one party, past mistakes will be repeated. We may again reach a situation from where it will be very difficult to return.”

Amar Desh Editor Mahmudur Rahman said that late journalist Ruhul Amin Gazi, a cancer patient, was pushed towards death without medical treatment after being kept in jail in a fabricated case. The mainstream media remained silent at the time.

He also said that some activists of the now banned Chhatra League handed veteran editor Asaduzzaman Asad over to the police for arrest. “Asad had to remain in jail for years, and even when his wife died, he could not be by her side.... There was no strong protest from the media then either.”

Mahmudur added that 80-year-old Shafik Rehman was also forced to live in inhumane prison conditions. “He had to sleep on the floor during winter and suffer hardships Even during this period of fascism, very few people stood by him.”

Referring to journalist Kanak Sarwar, he said that for broadcasting a speech of Tarique Rahman, Kanak had to remain in jail for nearly a year. “Kanak’s sister was also kept in jail for months in a false drug case, yet the media’s conscience did not awaken.”

Jugantor Editor Abdul Hye Sikder said, “The interim government did not work for the rehabilitation of unemployed journalists. How will freedom of expression come? When I do not eat and my family does not eat, you must stand by us.”

He said that in tomorrow’s

Bangladesh, the media must be treated as a friend. “The media is not an enemy. The media tries to speak the truth.”

Daily Inqilab Editor AMM Bahauddin said that journalism over the past 18 years had been extremely difficult, adding that his newspaper was also shut down at one point.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said, “We want democracy, we want independent journalism, and we want good governance.”

He added that political parties do not speak much about the issue of climate change. “Bangladesh is one of the frontline countries, and we are already seeing the impact of climate change in the coastal areas. My request is that climate change be given priority.

“We are one of the richest countries in the world when it comes to water resources, but we are polluting all our rivers.... It is quite incredible how we are moving towards river pollution and doing nothing about it. Another issue is our groundwater [decline]. We have to address this.”

This was the first time Tarique Rahman met with journalists and editors since his return to Dhaka on December 25 following a 17-year exile.

At the event, BNP Media Cell Convener Moudud Hossain Alamgir Pavel said the party’s 31-point agenda, including 12 key pledges for journalists, would be implemented if the BNP is voted to power.

According to the party, a “Media Commission” will be set up comprising a former Supreme Court judge, media professionals, and experienced and credible figures, to ensure complete freedom of the press and comprehensive reforms in the media sector.

Among the two dozen editors and journalists present at the programme, Kaler Kantho Editor Hasan Hafiz, bdnews24.com Editor-in-Chief Toufique Imrose Khalidi, Daily Naya Diganta Editor Salahuddin Muhammad Babar, Ekushey Television CEO Abdus Salam, and Dhaka Stream Editor Iftekhar Mahmud, also spoke.

The move triggered the sharpest confrontation between Jamaat and Islami Andolan. An analysis shows candidates from the two parties are in direct contest in at least 240 constituencies, including several where senior leaders from both sides are running.

Sources involved in the talks say Islami Andolan has recently shown greater flexibility. Over the past few days, the two sides have reached tentative understandings in around 40 constituencies, though Islami Andolan continues to press for additional seats.

Jamaat may concede a few more seats after another round of assessments based on popularity and candidate merit.

According to Jamaat sources, the NCP is likely to be allotted around 30 seats, while LDP and Khelafat Majlish may receive seven seats each. AB Party has already been given two seats, which could rise to three, while BDP is expected to get two seats. Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish may receive up to 15 seats.

Jagpa spokesperson Rashed Pradhan also voiced optimism, saying his party is likely to be allocated at least two seats.