

CNG stations to remain shut from 3:00pm to 9:00pm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has revised the operating hours of CNG refuelling stations during Ramadan to ensure uninterrupted gas supply to the power sector during iftar.

The decision was announced in a notification issued yesterday by the Energy and Mineral Resources Division.

According to the notification, CNG refuelling stations across the country will remain closed daily from 3:00pm to 9:00pm until March 14.

Previously, CNG refuelling stations remained closed from 6:00pm to 9:00pm. Under the new directive, the shutdown period has been extended from three hours to six hours.

The notification said the move aims to address low-pressure conditions in the gas distribution network and meet the increased demand for gas in the power generation sector during Ramadan.

Meanwhile, to facilitate smooth travel on highways ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, all refuelling stations will remain open round the clock from March 15 to March 25.

After Eid, from March 26, CNG refuelling stations will revert to the previous schedule and remain closed daily from 6:00pm to 9:00pm.



Fishers cast their nets from small boats in the Kazibacha river in Batiaghata of Khulna. During high tide each day, they head to mid-river to catch shrimp, bele and other native fish. At day's end, they sell their catch at nearby markets, earning between Tk 600 and Tk 1,000.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



Malaysian PM greets Tarique

Both leaders emphasise enhancing bilateral ties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar bin Ibrahim yesterday called Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to congratulate him on assuming office.

The telephone conversation took place around 3:00pm, according to the PM's office.

During the call, Anwar expressed Malaysia's willingness to work closely with Bangladesh on various bilateral issues and strengthen cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman thanked his Malaysian counterpart for the congratulatory message and conveyed his commitment to advancing relations between the two countries.

Tarique also expressed hope that Bangladesh and Malaysia would continue to work together for shared development and prosperity.

Fading memories of language heroes

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In 2008, the district council built the Abdul Jabbar Library and Memorial Museum in Panchua, despite the family's preference for Shimulkuchi. The museum contains no personal belongings of Jabbar, and visitors often leave disappointed. The library holds about 4,000 books, and Martyrs' Day programmes are organised annually on its grounds.

"Visitors mainly want to see Shaheed Jabbar's personal belongings, but we have none to display," Librarian Md Kaisaruzzaman told this correspondent.

Meanwhile, in Shimulkuchi, where Jabbar's family resides, there is no proper road connecting his house to the main thoroughfare. The one-kilometre stretch is partly earthen and partly broken, forcing visitors to cut through a paddy field on foot.

In front of the house, a Shaheed Minar built three decades ago by Jabbar's son, freedom fighter Nurul Islam Badal, stands neglected. Renovated in 2010 with district council funding, it has since fallen into disrepair.

Speaking to this correspondent, Jabbar's granddaughter, Afroza Khanam, lamented the lack of basic facilities like a proper road to their house and spoke of the financial hardship currently afflicting the family.

In 2007, Jabbar's nephew Atik Ullah donated one acre of land for the Language Martyr Abdul Jabbar Foundation, registered in 2010.

Initially operating from a tin-roofed room, the structure later collapsed in a storm, leaving only a signboard on the property.

Atik told this correspondent that the family was still in possession of Jabbar's personal belongings, and they could arrange for the memorabilia to be displayed if a museum were built in Shimulkuchi.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Mymensingh District Council CEO Shah Md Kamrul Huda said, "The council does not have the authority to independently take up a project to build a museum to preserve the memories of Shaheed Jabbar in Halaughat, but a government directive can make it possible."

On the road issue, he said, "If his family formally submits an application, the district council can take steps. Considering historical significance and local hardship, the road should be built."

About an earlier proposal to rename Panchua to Jabbar Nagar, the official said, "There was a government pledge to rename Panchua as Jabbar Nagar, but it did not materialise. To revive the initiative, we would now require

a formal application from residents. Once submitted, the process can move forward."

REMEMBERED ONLY IN FEBRUARY Language Movement martyr Abdus Salam's family home is in Laxmanpur village of Daganbhuiya upazila, Feni. In 2008, the village was renamed Salamnagar, and a library and memorial museum were built there in his memory. Despite the name, the



Language martyr Abdus Salam library and memorial museum in Feni's Daganbhuiya upazila.

museum holds no personal artefacts previously belonging to Salam.

In the 1960s, then-MP Khaja Ahmad took Salam's blood-stained shirt and photographs from his father, promising to donate them to the museum. The items were later stolen along with other memorabilia. Today, only a widely circulated hand-drawn portrait remains.

Locals say the library remains largely



The dilapidated shaheed minar built in memory of Abdul Jabbar in Shimulkuchi village in Mymensingh's Halaughat upazila. There is no road leading to the shaheed minar and his family home.

unused except on February 21, when the upazila administration organises cultural programmes on its grounds. The library currently holds about 2,500 books. During the 2024 floods, several shelves and books were damaged.

Librarian Lutfur Rahman told

The Daily Star, "Some books were ruined by the flood, while others were salvaged and are now readable. Visitors mainly come to see Salam's personal belongings, but since we have none, they leave disappointed."

Adjacent to the library is the Language Martyr Salam Government Primary School, established in 1995 and nationalised in 2013.

Headteacher Akhshi Rani Das said the library lacks a children's corner.

"If a children's corner were available, students could learn about the Language Movement and history. We often discuss events of 1952 in class, and such a space would help children develop reading habits from an early age," she told this correspondent.

Among Salam's siblings, only his younger brother Abdul Karim is still alive, though old age has left him unable to recognise anyone.

His nephew, Md Mamun, said, "No one checks on us except in February. Though neglected all year, our importance is suddenly remembered then."

A FORGOTTEN HERO

Shafiqur Rahman is one of the most neglected among state-recognised language martyrs. Unlike others, no memorial museum or facility exists in his name, and no public structure has been dedicated to him.

In 2023, Dhaka South City Corporation named the road from Doyel Chatter to Shikkha Bhaban after him. A few of his photographs are preserved at the Language Movement Museum of Bangla Academy.

Born in West Bengal, Shafiqur moved to erstwhile East Pakistan with his family following the partition in 1948. In February 1952, he was working as a clerk in the Accounts Section of the Dhaka High Court.

Among his family, only his daughter Shahanaaz survives. She lives in the capital's Uttara. Her brother and Shafiqur's only son, Shafiqul Islam, passed away in 2013.

"We donated all of my father's memorabilia and personal belongings to the Language Movement Museum. As a martyr's family, we currently receive a monthly allowance of Tk 10,000, which had been suspended for five years and was reinstated only last year," Shahanaaz told The Daily Star.

She added, "We repeatedly approached government offices to establish a museum or facility in his name. My brother tried many times while he was alive, but nothing happened. Now I am old and have given up those hopes. Yet if the government wished, something could have been done."

Govt plans 100-day energy push

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An already known gas field to enhance production while a workover well involves drilling an abandoned well to extract any leftover gas.

By fiscal year 2026-27, it targets an additional 652 million cubic feet of gas per day from 46 wells. Two more drilling rigs are also expected to be added to ongoing exploration.

At present, Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (Bapex) operates five rigs and rents four.

The plan also advances liquefied natural gas (LNG) infrastructure. Authorities will review proposals from interested firms and appoint a transaction adviser to implement a land-based LNG terminal under a public-private partnership model.

They will also move ahead with another floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU).

At the same time, decisions will also be coordinated on pipelines to carry gas from Bhola to the mainland and expand transmission networks to handle additional LNG supply.

Reducing system loss, including theft and leakage, is another priority.

The government aims to cut losses to 6.25 percent within the first 100 days from the current 6.38 percent, and bring them down to 4 percent by 2030. Officials estimate that existing losses waste about 173 million cubic feet of gas daily, costing Tk 4,094 crore annually.

Separately, a framework is expected to be developed to continue liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) imports through Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation. A pre-feasibility study has been planned to assess government-to-government, PPP and other models for LPG terminals in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar.

Authorities also plan to appoint an operation and maintenance contractor for the single point mooring facility, designed to transmit fuel oil from deep sea mother vessels to Eastern Refinery through pipelines. Although commissioned in 2024, the project has yet to become operational due to delays in appointing an operator.

Within the same window, a project director will be appointed for the modernisation and expansion of Eastern Refinery PLC, along with a

project management consultancy. The interim government has already approved the long-pending plan to raise refining capacity to 45 lakh tonnes a year from 15 lakh tonnes, with several donors expressing interest in financing the expansion.

The government will also undertake a coordinated programme to complete geological surveys for coal and other mineral resources, including heavy minerals in rivers and offshore areas.

Policy reform forms another pillar of the agenda, with planned amendments to key energy regulations, including the Energy and Power Sector Master Plan. A time-bound action plan will be drawn up to split Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited into three entities and consolidate eight subsidiaries under BPC into five companies.

Capacity building is also in focus, with seminars, in-house training programmes for energy stakeholders, and new laboratory facilities planned for the Bangladesh Petroleum Institute.

Family, future plans keep Yunus busy

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his residence in Gulshan within a month or after Eid, although no date has been fixed.

Yunus started residing in Jamuna on August 8, 2024, after being sworn in as the chief adviser of the interim government.

A close associate said Yunus is preparing documents and organisational matters related to his return to the Yunus Centre, the institution that promotes his social business philosophy worldwide. He is also spending time with family members, particularly his ailing wife.

"He is now mostly preparing works and documents related to his return to the Yunus Centre and spending time with his close ones," an aide said. "He is also thinking about new initiatives for youths, but nothing has been finalised yet."

Those initiatives are expected to draw on his long-standing "Three Zero" vision — zero poverty, zero unemployment and zero net carbon emissions — a framework he has championed globally in recent years. However, aides emphasised that no concrete programme has yet been announced.

At Jamuna, Yunus follows a routine. He begins his day with a walk along the lanes inside the compound. After breakfast, he starts work around 10:00am.

Unlike during his tenure in office, his schedule now allows more time for visitors. He has instructed staff to accommodate those who wish to meet him, as long as arrangements remain manageable.

"He has clearly told us that anyone who wants to meet him should be given the opportunity," a source said. "Earlier, due to official engagements, many people could not meet him. Now he wants to listen to them."

Visitors come from different walks of life. Some are eager to hear about his experience leading the interim government; others seek insight into his plans or discuss professional matters.

Assisting him in managing invitations — particularly from abroad — is Lamia Morshed, former chief coordinator for the Sustainable Development Goals. According to aides, a backlog of foreign invitations accumulated during his time in office.

"A huge number of foreign invitations were pending," another associate said. "She is sorting out where he would join in person and where he would deliver virtual lectures."

Yunus is scheduled to visit Japan next month to attend a five-day conference. Details of the visit will be revealed later, he added.

Beyond professional commitments, much of Yunus's attention is on his family. After office hours, he spends time with his ailing wife. In the late afternoon, he takes another walk around 5:00pm before settling into the evening.

He spends the evening with close friends and relatives, and enjoys lighter moments with his daughter's two cats, Minu and Kairo.

"For now, he is calm and focused," a close associate said. "He is reflecting on his experiences and preparing for the next chapter of his work and public life."

Nation honours

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Tarique later led his cabinet colleagues to lay another wreath, and placed one as chairman of the BNP. At 12:18am, he, along with his wife Zubaida Rahman and daughter Zaima Rahman, offered tributes on behalf of the family.

After the prime minister's departure, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer and Leader of the Opposition Shafiqur Rahman led his 11-party alliance in placing a wreath at 12:23am and offered doa. Leaders of the alliance, including National Citizen Party's Nahid Islam and Hasnat Abdullah, accompanied him.

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan, and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan placed a wreath. Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin, foreign diplomats, invited guests, senior military and civil officials, and Dhaka University teachers also paid homage.

Thereafter, barefoot and wearing black badges, people from all walks of life streamed to the altar with flowers, bowing their heads in respect.

On this day in 1952, students and citizens defied Section 144 and took to the streets of Dhaka to protest the then Pakistani government's refusal to recognise Bangla as a state language, and its imposition of Urdu as the sole state language of Pakistan.

Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and

others were killed in police firing as a procession emerged from the Dhaka University campus.

Their sacrifice became a seed of resistance, inspiring the nation's struggle for rights and, ultimately, independence.

The day is observed globally as International Mother Language Day after UNESCO recognised February 21 in 1999.

In separate messages marking the occasion, the president and the prime minister called for collective efforts to uphold linguistic diversity.

In his message, the prime minister urged all to preserve the country's linguistic heritage, ensure the proper cultivation of Bangla, and protect cultural identity.

He said the government remains committed to advancing democracy, honouring the Language Martyrs, the heroes of 1971, the victims of the 2024 mass uprising, and all who sacrificed for democratic ideals.

The day is a public holiday. The national flag flies at half-mast at educational institutions, government and autonomous offices, and private establishments across the country.

Newspapers have published special supplements, television channels are airing special programmes, while the cultural affairs ministry and social and cultural groups have organised observances nationwide.

US Supreme Court strikes

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impose duties of up to 15 percent for up to 150 days on any and all countries related to "large and serious" balance of payments issues. It does not require investigations or impose other procedural limits.

"We have alternatives, great alternatives," Trump said. "Could be more money. We'll take in more money and we'll be a lot stronger for it," Trump said of the alternative tools.

Trump said his administration also was initiating several Section 301 unfair trade practices investigations "to protect our country from unfair trading practices of other countries and companies."

Trump's decision to lean on other statutes, including Section 122, while initiating new investigations under Section 301 had been widely anticipated. But the 10 percent tariffs he announced yesterday can only remain in effect for 150 days, and Section 301 investigations generally take months to complete.

MAJOR SETBACK

Still, this marks Trump's biggest defeat at the Supreme Court since returning to the White House last year.

While Trump has long relied on tariffs as a lever for diplomatic pressure and negotiations, he made unprecedented use of emergency economic powers in his second term to slap new duties on virtually all US trading partners.

These included "reciprocal" tariffs over trade practices that Washington deemed unfair, alongside separate sets of duties targeting major partners Mexico, Canada and China over illicit drug flows and immigration.

The court noted yesterday that "had Congress intended to convey the distinct and extraordinary power to impose tariffs" with IEEPA, "it would have done so expressly, as it consistently has in other tariff statutes."

The Supreme Court's three liberal justices joined three conservatives in Friday's ruling, which upheld lower court decisions that tariffs Trump imposed under IEEPA were illegal.

Conservative Justices Brett Kavanaugh, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito dissented.

Chief Justice John Roberts, in delivering his opinion, said, "IEEPA contains no reference to tariffs or duties." A lower trade court ruled in May that Trump overstepped his authority with across-the-board levies and blocked most of them, but that outcome was put on hold as the government appealed.

With the White House already bracing for a negative outcome, KPMG

chief economist Diane Swonk warned that "tariffs ruled illegal can be rapidly reinstated via other levers."

"Financial markets rallied on the news, but that is premature," she added. **"MUCH-NEEDED CERTAINTY"** Nonetheless, business groups cheered the ruling, with the National Retail Federation saying this "provides much-needed certainty" for American firms and manufacturers.

"We urge the lower court to ensure a seamless process to refund the tariffs to US importers," the federation said.

But the justices did not address the degree to which importers can receive refunds. This will likely be litigated.

Kavanaugh warned that this process — as acknowledged during oral arguments — could be a "mess".

EY-Parthenon chief economist Gregory Daco told AFP the loss of IEEPA tariff revenues for the US government could amount to around \$140 billion.

Delighted Democratic leaders pounced on the ruling, with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer lauding the outcome as a "win for the wallets" of US consumers.

But top Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee Elizabeth Warren cautioned there remains "no legal mechanism for consumers and many small businesses to recoup the money they have already paid."

The Budget Lab at Yale University estimates consumers face an average effective tariff rate of 9.1 percent with Friday's decision, down from 16.9 percent.

But it said this "remains the highest since 1946," excluding 2025.

CONSTRAINED AMBITION

The European Union said it was studying the court ruling and will remain in close contact with the Trump administration.

Britain plans to work with the United States on how this affects a trade deal between both countries, while Canada said the decision affirms that Trump's tariffs were "unjustified."

Striking down the emergency tariffs "would constrain the president's ambitions to impose across-the-board tariffs on a whim," said Erica York of tax policy nonprofit the Tax Foundation.

But it leaves him other statutes to use for tariffs, even if they tend to be more limited in scope — or require specific processes such as investigations — York told AFP.

"The ruling dismantles the legal scaffolding, not the building itself," said ING analysts Carsten Brzeski and Julian Geib of Trump's trade restrictions.