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Fire and smoke rise in the Fujairah oil industry zone after debris from an intercepted drone fell in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

TACKLING WAR FALLOUT Govt eyes power rationing to conserve energy

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government is preparing to conserve energy and possibly introduce power cuts and rationing as global fuel supplies remain under stress due to the ongoing Middle East war.

At an emergency meeting at the secretariat yesterday, officials discussed how to maximise the use of existing energy stocks and signalled a shift toward sector-wise rationing of electricity and fuel amid a deepening global energy crisis.

The ministry later issued a set of conservation directives and warned of possible short-term disruptions in power and fuel supply, which could slightly affect electricity generation and fertiliser production, officials said.

However, the ministry stressed that it would exercise "maximum caution" to avoid public suffering during Ramadan.

The government has asked the public to avoid decorative lighting, reduce the use of private vehicles in favour of public transport and use electricity and fuel more efficiently.

Traders and law enforcement agencies have been instructed to ensure that diesel and petrol are not sold in the open market in violation of regulations. District administrations, police and the Border Guard Bangladesh have been asked to intensify efforts to prevent fuel smuggling.

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Country not in danger due to US trade deal Says Khalilur after meeting Paul Kapur



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman has backed the reciprocal trade agreement signed by the interim government with the US on February 9 and said that the major political parties, BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, gave consent to the deal.

"We have not put Bangladesh in any danger by signing the deal. It is not at all in conflict with the 'Bangladesh First' policy," he told journalists after a meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs S Paul

War spreads beyond Middle East

At least 87 killed as US submarine sinks Iran warship near Sri Lanka; Tehran chokes off Strait of Hormuz; Iran death toll crosses 1,000

Israel vows to kill Iran's next supreme leader

US lawmakers set to vote on Trump's war powers

Iran postpones state funeral for Khamenei amid strikes

Israel orders southern Lebanon evacuated as campaign expands

EU rallies behind Spain as Trump threatens to halt trade

AGENCIES

More nations were drawn into the widening war in the Middle East yesterday, as a US submarine torpedoed and sank an Iranian warship off the coast of Sri Lanka and Nato air defences intercepted a missile fired from Iran toward Turkish airspace.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards yesterday said they had targeted armed



This frame grab from a video released by the US Department of Defense shows the periscope footage of a US Navy submarine firing on and sinking an Iranian warship in the Indian Ocean. PHOTO: AFP

UN probe says war breaks UN Charter, strike on Iran school shocking; Russia says US attacked Iran on false pretext

groups hostile to the Islamic republic in the autonomous Kurdish region of neighbouring Iraq, expanding its targets in the region.

Israel launched a new wave of air strikes on the Iranian capital and across Lebanon, where Tehran's proxy Hezbollah said it responded by targeting Israeli sites, including a military base near Tel Aviv.

Iran also claimed it had total control over the Strait of Hormuz, a key waterway for global energy transit, and where several ships have reportedly been attacked since the start of the war.

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Gulf states weigh response to Iranian strikes

AGENCIES

Gulf states are on the front line of the Middle East's newest war, and they are not happy.

Since the war began on Saturday, "Iran has primarily used ballistic missiles to attack Israel, but has relied on drones to attack Gulf countries", according to the think tanks Institute for the Study of War and the American Enterprise Institute's Critical Threats Project.

Israel's army said late Sunday that it was targeted by more than 50 drones "launched from Iran". The Gulf countries, meanwhile, were on the receiving end of more than 1,000 -- mainly Shahed-136s.

The United Arab Emirates says it has been targeted by more than 800 drones and nearly 200 missiles since the war erupted.

In Saudi Arabia, two drones hit the US embassy on Tuesday, while the massive Ras Tanura refinery on its Gulf coast went into partial shutdown after a strike.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Jordan were also targeted.

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Staffer kills teacher of Islamic University

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushiã

A female teacher of Islamic University in Kushiã was stabbed to death allegedly by a staffer yesterday.

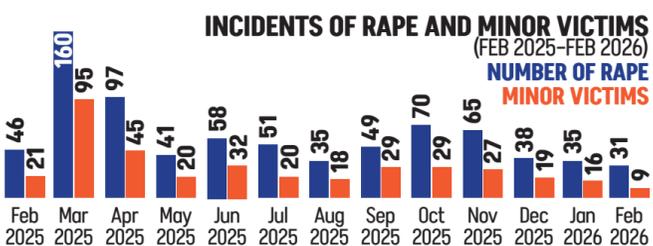
The victim, Asma Sadia Runa, 40, was an assistant professor and chairman of the social welfare department.

Police and the university authorities could not provide details about the motive behind the killing immediately.

Proctor Md Shahinuzzaman said Runa

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REPRESSION OF WOMEN, CHILDREN Protection promised but not delivered



NILIMA JAHAN

When the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Ordinance was promulgated in March last year, it was hailed by many as an "iron shield" for women and children in Bangladesh.

By setting a 90-day timeline for trial and redefining consent and age limits, the ordinance raised hopes that the

state was finally serious about ending impunity. It also included provisions for setting up specialised tribunals to deal with child rape cases.

However, one year on, available data tell a sobering story.

In the 13 months till February this year, 776 rape cases were documented by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a human rights organisation, highlighting the

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Focus on energy security Business leaders urge new govt during CPD, Star roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Business leaders and experts called on the government to shift focus from conventional infrastructure to urgent energy investment and policy reform to protect the economy and jobs amid an anticipated global energy shock stemming from the war in the Middle East.

"Stop all bridge and culvert projects and invest that money into energy," said AK Azad, managing director of Ha-Meem Group, at a roundtable styled "Looking into

Bangladesh's Development: Priorities for the Newly Elected Government in the Short to Medium Term" organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue and The Daily Star.

The current economic landscape requires a shift in strategy.

Today, thousands of gas connection applications remain stuck in government offices, effectively halting new industrial investments and the arrival of new machinery.

"As of today, the government's borrowing from the banking system stood at 32.19 percent, while private

sector borrowing is 6.1 percent. There is no money for us, or we couldn't take it, as we have no scope to invest due to a lack of gas connection."

The most direct indicator of the economic slowdown is the drop in GDP, which has declined from 4.22 percent in the previous fiscal year to 3.97 percent this year.

This decline is linked to a lack of new investment and decreased collections from VAT, income tax, and customs duties. Furthermore, the government has faced a significant

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